



MANAGEMENT TRAINING IN NEGOTIATIONS

MDP for International Centres of
Excellence

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Con la colaboración de:



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1. Introductions of staff and participants

1.1 Interview the person next to you and obtain the following information :-

1. How much of your studies/work experience has been international?
2. Have you travelled abroad much? If so, why ?
3. Have you noticed any differences in the way meetings and negotiations are conducted in other countries?
4. Do you think good negotiators have an innate personal skill or can you be trained to negotiate?
5. Do you consider negotiating an art or a skill?
6. Do you know anything about the "dos" and "don'ts" of negotiating?

1.2.1 : INTRODUCTION

Negotiating forms an intrinsic part of our lives. We all negotiate instinctively almost since the day we were born. But when it forms a part of our professional life and the outcome could mean either the success or failure of an important contract for our company, it would be no bad thing if we had a clear idea of what we are doing, and even more when we are dealing with people from other countries and cultures.

In this seminar my intention is to provide company managers, commercial executives, academics and managers of all levels and sectors with the necessary tools with which they will feel more confident when faced with delicate and complicated international negotiations. Following these rules and suggestions your negotiations will stand a much better chance of success.

1.2.2. : OBJECTIVES

1. To show that the art of negotiating is at the fingertips of anybody who is determined to acquire its skills.
2. To help participants to understand and recognize the strategies and tactics most commonly used in all negotiations both in the commercial and labour world.
3. To teach and put into practice the steps of business negotiations so as to help participants acquire a methodology which will boost their confidence and guarantee more successful negotiations in the future.
4. To teach and put into practice the specific language of English negotiations always emphasizing the importance of COMMUNICATION and social skills.
5. To create an awareness of cultural differences, their importance in the global world of business and the importance of understanding and adapting to them.

1.2.3 : METHODOLOGY

"Learning by Doing"

Following my conviction that the only way of LEARNING IS BY DOING, the seminar will be dynamic, interactive and participative. Working always IN TEAMS AND IN ENGLISH, you will have the opportunity of working to the maximum of your ability. In a very short time you will be motivated by your progress and your participation will automatically increase; your confidence in your communication skills will grow and you will acquire new business skills to enhance your English presentations, meetings and negotiations, not forgetting your social skills in international relations.

Each seminar will consist of a) an initial discussion, b) a ppt. exposition on a point of theory and c) a practical simulation. Any materials used (videos, cases, exercises, games) have been compiled over the years from authentic British and American management training materials.

1.3. Read the text below and in your groups discuss the questions :-

INTRODUCTION TO “THE ART OF NEGOTIATING” by Gavin Kennedy.

We live in an age of negotiating. Almost all aspects of our lives are subject to some form of negotiation. Everybody negotiates, sometimes several times a day. We are so used to negotiating that we do not realize what we are doing.

Nations negotiate, governments negotiate, employers and unions negotiate, husbands and wives negotiate (so do lovers and mistresses), and parents negotiate with their children.

Pick up any daily newspaper and mark all items that have anything to do with negotiating. You might be surprised at their number. International politics, of course, dominate the news, whether it is the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) Russia and the United States or the Middle East Negotiations between Israel and Egypt or any of a dozen important negotiations on sensitive issues around the world.

Unions negotiating new wage contracts with companies also attract extensive news coverage. Slowdowns, strikes, bans and lockouts are familiar dramas. They make labour disputes far more public than, say, commercial disputes, which occur with similar frequency but less visibility. Industrial relations disputes receive more publicity because both management and unions seek to win public support for their point of view. Commercial negotiations are conducted in private, partly to give competitors as little information as possible and partly to protect the companies' public images.

Community action groups negotiate with their local government departments on property taxes, road crossings, traffic lights, welfare facilities, town planning, and in public sector housing, questions of rents, tenancy rights and amenities. Local governments in turn negotiate with central government departments largely about funding budgets.

Most commercial dealing is underwritten by laws of contract. However, negotiating a contract is not the end of the matter- if it were; many lawyers would have much less to do. Circumstances can, and do, arise where the terms of the contract are open to differing interpretation or where something happens which is not explicitly covered by the negotiated agreement. An airline, for instance, may discover that the promised performance of an aircraft is not being matched by experience, or unforeseen technical problems might have emerged. It is not simply a matter of returning the aircraft to the store and demanding a replacement. The plane will continue to fly but the commercial circumstance in which it does so will be open to negotiation.

Retailers negotiate their margins with their suppliers. Injured parties or their dependents, negotiate compensation either in or out of court. Marriage settlements, not so long ago, were negotiated by the parents of the prospective couples. The size of the dowry could be decisive, far more than the compatibility of the prospective partners. Today, it is more common for negotiations to take place in a divorce settlement. Lawyers specialize in representing clients in these negotiations and they have recently extended their operations to cover negotiations when non-married couples separate. This in turn, has created an interest in pre-marital negotiations on the criteria by which property will be divided in the event of a divorce or separation.

The sexes spend a large part of their relationships negotiating. Husbands, wives, lovers and mistresses negotiate or go under. Marriage involves a series of negotiated compromises because neither party has absolute power over the other. Parents deal with the world's most natural negotiators- their children. A baby soon learns to negotiate the rate of exchange of noise for food. Later on, the child negotiates the relative proportions of cabbage and ice-cream, where and when to play, what to watch on TV, when to go to bed and when to go to sleep.

Children usually are better at negotiating than adults because they have few inhibitions and they are only concerned with the present, not the future. As adults we lose some of these advantages as our perceptions alter.

All these types of negotiations have one thing in common which makes negotiating necessary: the parties involved have varying degrees of power but not absolute power over each other.

We negotiate because we do not control ourselves and everybody else. In circumstances where one person has control over another it may be possible to dispense with negotiations. But in most circumstances negotiations remain a possibility and for many circumstances they are a necessity.

What others do affects what we do. What others want affects what we can have. What we see, others see differently. What we think is in our interests, others think is against theirs. What we believe others should do is protested. What we regard as necessary, others regard as inconvenient. Though we trust our motives, others do not. And so it goes on. Other people view their interests differently from the way we view them.

The right to differ is regarded in democracies as a fundamental right. Children exercise this right from an early age. They may not always get what they want but they seldom desist from demanding that their views be noted by their parents. We carry this behaviour into life beyond the family circle. It pervades almost everything we do at work and at play. Given that everybody demands the right to have a viewpoint, it follows that we must find a way of handling the mutual right to differ.

That is what negotiations are about.

Introduction to "The Art of Negotiating" by Gavin Kennedy.

In your groups answer the following questions on the text

According to Gavin Kennedy :

1. When is negotiating necessary?
2. When is negotiation not possible?
3. In what fields of life is negotiation an intrinsic part?
4. What is his definition of negotiation?

2. In this session you will listen to a presentation about the skills and attitude involved in negotiating and getting those desired results. At any point in the presentation feel free to make comments and ask questions.

3. CASE STUDY : “THE SLOW PAYER”

3.1 This case deals with the problem of credit control and unpaid invoices.

ZS is a Spanish company based in Valencia. It produces, bottles and exports fruit juices to all European Union countries. The company is having problems with its UK importer, Ways Distributors Ltd. Over the past eight months delay in payment has become a regular practice and by now a large amount of money is overdue. The UK is an important market for ZS and the business relationship with Ways has been exemplary until now. After 2 reminder letters and several phone calls, ZS decides to send its representative to Ways' base in Dover and discuss terms with their chief accountant, Mr. Smart.

3.2 Vocabulary check.

Complete the following paragraph by selecting the correct word from the list below.

Customers who receive goods on credit are known as d..... All credit controllers know that some customers will be s..... p..... who always have a stock of ready excuses. They justify any d..... in payment of an o..... a..... by accusing the supplier of o..... them or by demanding documents such as delivery notes as a p..... of d.....

Sometimes they claim that there have been i..... errors. And when they do finally pay, further delays occur because they have sent a p.....-d..... cheque to the c.....

Some suppliers, tired of sending r....., hand their credit control over to a d..... c..... a..... . Indeed many firms actually sell their customers' debts at a reduced value to a specialist company; this procedure is known as f..... debts.

<i>Delays</i>	<i>damaged in transit</i>	<i>slow payers</i>	<i>creditor</i>
<i>Invoicing</i>	<i>post-dated</i>	<i>overcharging</i>	<i>outstanding</i>
<i>Debtors</i>	<i>proof of delivery</i>	<i>reminders</i>	<i>reminders</i>
<i>Overdue amount</i>	<i>debt collection agency</i>		

3.3 Being diplomatic.

These are the words of Pedro García, general manager of ZS Valencia when he discovers the huge debt which has accumulated over the past 8 months. However, when he comes face to face with a senior manager of Ways his wording will be very different.

“The money from Ways is late again! We’ve told them umpteen times about those unpaid bills but all they say is that it’s not their fault and blame us for making mistakes with the invoices, saying that we’re asking for too much money! If they can’t do what they promised they should let us know! It’s not easy for them but they’ve got to see our point of view. I’m thinking about putting some of those unpaid bills in the hands of someone who can get us the money. I don’t want to do it because we’ve always got on well in the past, but these days, getting a cheque with next month’s date on it makes life very hard work. They should read the credit terms

Re-read his words in the tone of voice you think he would use.

3.4 : A telephone call.

Pedro García decides to make a person-to-person call to Ways´ General Manager, Mr. Smart. The latter tries to be reassuring but asks for more time and commits himself to nothing. He invents all kinds of obstacles to avoid García´s visit.

Read your role card and role-play the dialogue between Pedro García of ZS Valencia and Mr. Smart of Ways Distributors.

Role A

You are Pedro García, general manager of ZS Valencia.

You make a person-to- person call to Ways´ general manager, Mr. Smart.

You are angry about your customer´s constant delays in paying their invoices.

At the present time, there are 5 invoices pending, going back to last November. It is now March 16th.

You have already sent 2 polite reminders.

YOUR TACTICS

Firstly remind him of his company´s responsibilities and the terms of sale.

Refer to the problems which the outstanding debts are causing your company.

Make indirect hints at serious legal action but do not make threats at this point.

Be firm about some immediate action.

Try to make an appointment for a personal meeting next week.

Role B

You are Mr. Smart of Ways Distributors Ltd.

You receive a call from Pedro García, general manager of your suppliers in Spain.

You know that you have payments overdue due to your cash flow problems and it is impossible to settle your account right now.

You have received reminders but you have ignored them, knowing that you could not pay the debt.

YOUR TACTICS

You try to develop a friendly atmosphere in order to make his task more difficult.

You try to be reassuring but you ask for more time and commit yourself to nothing.

You deny any personal responsibility for the problem.

You appeal for his understanding of your problem.

You invent all kinds of obstacles to avoid his visit.

3.5 A letter of complaint

Z.S.
Avda. del Mediterráneo, 68,
Valencia,
Spain.

March 2 (1)-- 2011.

Mr. D. Smart,
Chief Accountant,
Ways Distribution Ltd.
DOVER,
D34 5LY,
England.

Ref. : Reminder letter of 10.10.10
Ref. : Reminder letter of 12.12.10
Ref. : Account with Z.S. Valencia. (encl.)

Dear Mr. Smart,

(2) ----- I again (3)----- your attention to your account with us which, (4)-----
----- my two previous reminders, is still (5)----- . I trust that there must be a
misunderstanding or a problem of which we are not (6)----- . However, I must (7)-----
you that our stipulated period for payment is 30 days. As you can see in the copy of your
account, which I (8)----- for your reference, you now have five (9)-----
outstanding.

(10)----- our excellent relationship in the past, we are very (11)----- to
take (12)----- action. However, as things stand, (13)----- the matter is solved
within the next ten days, we would have to cancel all further (14)----- and put the
case into the hands of our (15)----- . As I by no means wish to have to take these
(16)----- measures, I propose a meeting on your (17)----- next week as I
will be in the U.K. on other matters. I sincerely hope that by then we will be able to solve
this pressing issue.

Please confirm your (18)----- to a meeting on the morning of Wednesday March 23rd
and indicate an appropriate time and place. For haste, please fax or phone your reply (19)-
----- .

Yours (20)-----,

Pedro García Márquez.
Commercial Manager.

3.6 PREPARING THE NEGOTIATION. Time 30 minutes

Read your negotiation role card and prepare your meeting in Dover.

Study your Company's account summary to consider :-

- . How much you think is the total debt.
- . Your own position regarding each invoiced amount.
- . Your opponent's possible arguments.
- . A course of action which you can propose in preference to his suggestions.

3.7 THE NEGOTIATION. Time 45 minutes.

You are now face to face with your opponent. Your time is limited. In this time your objective is to :-

- . Agree as to the outstanding debt.
- . Decide on the terms of payment.
- . Agree on proposed terms for the future.

Role card A. The creditor

You represent Z.S. Before your trip to Dover next week you have asked the Accounts department to extract a detailed list of Ways' Account movements over the past 8 months. Carefully check the figures with Accounts before you leave.

There may be errors!

INVOICE NUMBER	PRODUCT	QUANTITY	VALUE (£)	INVOICE DATE	PAYMENT RECEIVED
25391	83 ^a	30 pallets	3,750	21 October	3 March
26535	84 ^a	10 pallets	1,500	19 November	outstanding
	83 ^a	20 pallets	2,700		
28288	84 ^a	20 pallets	3,100	10 December	3 March
28289	85 ^a	20 pallets	3,200	10 December	outstanding
00821	83 ^a	30 pallets	4,050	3 January	outstanding
00822	83 ^a	20 pallets	2,600	3 January	15 March (Post-dated cheque)
00823	84 ^a	20 pallets	3,100	3 January	outstanding
00824	84 ^a	20 pallets	3,250	3 January	outstanding

The amount outstanding is very high and overdue. Your credit terms are clearly stated on the invoice: "30 days. A 10% early settlement discount for payment within 15 days of invoice date".

You wish to

- establish an atmosphere of collaboration.
- find the cause for the delays in payment.
- establish the total outstanding amount
- discuss when the outstanding amount will be paid
- improve relations for the future (for example by organizing a payment system).

Preparing the negotiation

Read your negotiation role-card and prepare your meeting:

Study your Company's account summary to consider:

- how much you think is the total debt
- your own position regarding each invoiced amount
- your opponent's probable arguments a course of action which you can propose in preference to his suggestions

Role card B. Ways Distribution Ltd.

You are Mr. Smart, chief accountant of Ways Distribution Ltd., a Company which, amongst other things imports food from Spain. You are having cash-flow difficulties and so are delaying payments to several suppliers, including ZS in Spain. You have so far been successful. However, ZS are tired of telephoning and are sending a representative to see you.

On the phone you have used every excuse to delay payment - postal delays, holiday periods, staff illnesses, strikes, faulty goods. You should continue to make such excuses. Also ZS have made some invoicing errors, so check the prices and quantities carefully.

Your assistant has prepared some notes for you on all transactions over the problem period. Unfortunately they are rather incomplete:

INVOICE NUMBER	PRODUCT	QUANTITY	VALUE(L)	ACTION
25391	83 ^a	30 pallets	3,750	Cheque sent end Feb. (Say November)
26535	84 ^a	10 pallets	1,500	
	83 ^a	20 pallets	2,700	Price change?
28288	84 ^a	20 pallets	3,100	Paid end Feb. (Say Nov)
28289	85 ^a	20 pallets	3,200	
00821	83 ^a	30 pallets	4,050	Wrong amount
00822	83 ^a	20 pallets	2,600	ZS' mistake so sent cheque 10 March
00824	84 ^a	20 pallets	3,250	

Use every excuse you can think of. You may have to promise to make some payments soon, or even immediately. Remember the cash-flow!

3.3.6 FEEDBACK PRESENTATION

One member of your team feeds back to the class on the result of your negotiation and the phases of its development.

4 : CULTURAL AWARENESS IN INTERNATIONAL NEGOTIATIONS

4.1 CULTURE, CUSTOMS AND ETIQUETTE

Test your knowledge on international customs and etiquette with this quiz :-

CHINA

You are invited to someone's house. Which of these may cause offence?

1. Blowing your nose
2. Refusing an offer of food
3. Not removing your shoes before eating.

SAUDI ARABIA

You want to hire a car to tour the country. Is this permitted?

1. Yes, but you must take a test first.
2. Yes, but only if you are male.
3. No. Tourists have to travel by camel.

SWEDEN

You go out for a meal. How many glasses of wine can you drink before driving back to your hotel?

1. Two
2. Any amount - there are no drink driving laws.
3. None

ITALY

You'd like to visit the Duomo (cathedral) on a hot day. To show respect, what should you cover?

1. Your feet
2. Your thighs and shoulders
3. Your head and ears.

USA

While peacefully drinking a can of beer in Central Park, you are approached by the police. Why?

1. It's forbidden to drink alcohol in Central Park
2. You are required to use a glass or straw
3. You aren't allowed to drink alcohol in Central Park unless the can is covered.

INDIA

An Indian friend invites you to a traditional meal. How should you eat?

1. With your left hand only
2. With your right hand only
3. With both hands

THAILAND

On a bus the only free seat is next to a Buddhist monk. Should you take it?

1. Yes, but only if you are male.
2. Buddhist monks aren't allowed to travel by bus
3. Yes, but you must bow first

JAPAN

You're staying in a Japanese hotel and decide to relax in a traditional, shared bath. What shouldn't you do in the bath tub?

1. You shouldn't take too long
2. You shouldn't talk to the other bathers
3. You shouldn't wash yourself.

Putting your foot in it on questions of etiquette or protocol can mean losing an important Business deal. It is as important as that. Think of any questions of customs or etiquette in your country which could cause offence to the extent of cooling the relationship.

Cultural stereotypes are almost invariably wrong but it is quite difficult not to have preconceptions about how different nationalities behave. Maybe that is why ethnic jokes remain so popular even though they are politically unsound.

Discuss with a partner and complete the following jokes with the nationality of your choice

1. Why are the so good at business?
When you´re boring you try harder.
2. Why are the such good losers?
They´ve had more practice than anyone else.
3. How do you know it´s a(n) on the phone?
They´ve reversed the charge.
4. What do you do when a(n) invites you to lunch?
Fix a doctor´s appointment.
1. What do you do when a(n) gives you their word?
Ask for their signature.

4.2 BOARDROOM CULTURE CLASH

Try to put pressure on a JAPANESE in a negotiation and you will be met with a stony silence. Hold an informal fact-finding meeting with a GERMAN and you can expect a battery of searching questions. Disagree with the FRENCH on even a minor point and they will take great pleasure in engaging in spiritual verbal combat.

Good business relationships are built on cultural awareness. World-wide it´s the “nice guys” who do more business than the forceful, aggressive, nasty ones. We like to deal with “nice” people. But what constitutes “nice-guy” behaviour in a boardroom in Miami or Tokio or Berlin is not necessarily what we expect of a nice guy in Madrid. Hence the need for all international executives to be aware of the nuances of style and behaviour which characterize different nationalities.

THE AMERICANS take great pride in their sales techniques. They will always go for the “hard sell” even though you are anxious to buy their product. Remember they are the pioneers of all the psycho-sales techniques which we are all familiar with. Who hasn’t been visited by a door-to-door salesman in the past with their encyclopaedias or brushes. The former would require a week’s training for the salesman while he learnt word for word his presentation. Any mistake in his presentation wording could mean losing a sale. The latter would simply require the old technique of “foot in the door” and rely on the tired housewife to buy to save her a trip to the shops or simply to dazzle her with your wonderful, new product.

Internet and security have done away mostly with these techniques. Now the Americans are concentrating on telephone selling and web pages. However, they have been and still are the pioneers of the psychology of all business skills. Systems and procedures matter to them. In the post-sale feedback meeting their superiors will be as interested in how the deal was struck as the result in itself. They tend to use a highly individualistic and informal style of negotiation in which straight speaking and pressure tactics are important. Negotiation is seen as a competitive process of offer and counter-offer and decisions are made often at the negotiating table itself.

THE BRITISH are much more formal in their protocol, their language and their style. Their behaviour is cool, distant and very professional. First names are an indication of familiarity and therefore would never be used in a negotiation situation. The only acceptable body contact is a shake of the hand. They have great respect for age and authority and therefore like to deal with senior executives. Their evasive looks, inexpressive body language and their ironic sense of humour and mastership of the “understatement” can create communication difficulty for their straighter counterparts.

In spite of this the British do tend to emphasize the establishment of sociable and sensitive relationships, and to see the negotiating process itself in terms of problem-solving rather than hard bargaining. Their meetings always begin with ritual “small talk” : the weather, your trip, sunny Spain but, beware! Don’t mistake this for an introduction to familiarity, No personal questions! And remember the three tabu subjects for a Brit : politics, religion and income.

THE JAPANESE treat the negotiating process as a ritual in which the principle of harmony is uppermost. This requires the painful and painstaking establishment of good personal relationships as the first step in the process. The Japanese ask a lot of questions in order to detect points of weakness and they rarely make important decisions or concessions during the negotiations. Direct pressure is rarely used and they will not respond to pressure tactics. Because of the need of “behind the scenes” consensus and harmony-building activities, negotiations take much longer. In all far- East and mid-East countries business is built on trust over a long period of time.

THE SPANISH are natural and spontaneous. They are unimpressed by the most meticulously prepared meeting and pay much more attention to people, hence the “restaurant” culture where probably more than a fifty per-cent of important decisions are taken. In the importance of trust and human relations they resemble the Japanese or the Arabs although they are quicker to trust and hence quicker to take decisions.

In cross-cultural meetings the Spanish reserve their opinion unless completely sure of themselves.

THE ITALIANS also feel that the main purpose of a meeting is to assess the mood of those present and reinforce team spirit. There may be a lot of animated discussion at a meeting in Italy but the majority of decisions will be made elsewhere in secret.

THE SCANDINAVIANS The Scandinavians resemble the Americans in that they value efficiency, novelty, systems and technology. They are firmly profit-oriented. They want results.

THE GERMANS are direct and to the point. No preliminaries. They may begin the meeting with all the difficult questions. They want to be convinced that you are as efficient and quality-conscious as they are. They will be cautious about giving you too much business until you have proved yourself. They will demand prompt delivery and expect you to keep your competitive edge in the most price-sensitive market in Europe. Succeed and you will enjoy a long-term business relationship.

THE FRENCH will shake hands on a deal sooner than the Germans but will also withdraw much more easily if you fail to come up with the goods. The French enjoy heated discussions. They are direct and prefer to meet disagreement head-on. In this they clash with the British who prefer to diffuse tension with humour.

TRUE OR FALSE? After Reading the above text discuss whether the following statements are true or false :-

1. In meetings the French tend to be more aggressive than the Germans.
2. The Arabs have nothing in common with the Japanese.
3. The French generally don't appreciate the British sense of humour.
4. The Spanish are hesitant to express opinion in cross-cultural meetings
5. The Americans are as interested in the strategy of the negotiation as the result itself.
6. The Germans want quality at any price.
7. The British want results and are not interested in people.
8. The Japanese react well to pressure techniques.

9. The Italians rarely take a decision at the negotiation table.
10. The Germans take some convincing but once you are in you are there for life.

POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

Here are some facts about BRITISH negotiating techniques. In groups discuss the facts and compare them with your negotiating style :-

- The British normally prefer short-term results to long-term commitments. At the same time they feel more at ease with propositions which imply stability and continuity rather than change and innovation.
- *The Spanish*

- The British prefer to deal with senior executives. It is assumed that age means authority.
- *The Spanish*

- The British tend to be cool, distant and professional. They don't use emotional arguments.
- *The Spanish*

- British executives do not go to great pains to prepare a meeting. It is not necessary to establish an agenda.
- *The Spanish*

- A meeting with the British begins with small talk : the weather, the traffic, your trip. Strictly no personal questions, not even "Where are you from?"
- *The Spanish*

- The British are the masters of the "understatement". At initial stages they never express an opinion or commit themselves to anything. At the most they will insinuate or make indirect comments. They do not like pressure tactics or ,for example, criticism of a competitor.
- *The Spanish*

- Humour plays a great part in British negotiations. It is their defence weapon with which they show disagreement, weaken their opponent's arguments, and diffuse embarrassing conflict. It consists of implying the opposite to what is being said and not explaining the obvious.
The Spanish
- The British, unlike the Americans, do not like hard bargaining. They find it, by nature, embarrassing to be squabbling over prices and discounts. Therefore it is important that your initial offer is not too inflated but as near as possible to your real objectives.
The Spanish
- British culture is very hierarchical but even so in Business the TEAM is very important. They will always look for a consensus among the negotiating team before presenting a proposition to the managing body who will finally take the decision.
The Spanish
- Their decisions tend to be based on established norms or similar preceding situations rather than personal feelings or ideas. Hence your proposals will stand more chance of success if they obey the established norms of the company, not looking for innovation.
The Spanish
- The decision-making process often takes time, deliberately. They have no embarrassment in communicating a negative decision.
The Spanish
- Once in business the British are very direct and frank. They say very clearly what they think.
The Spanish

PROTOCOL

- A brief handshake is the most usual greeting. Ladies do not always shake hands. It is advisable to wait for them to initiate the handshake.
The Spanish.....
- No kind of physical contact is acceptable in public, eg. Kisses, hugs, pats on the back). They usually a physical distance from the person they are talking to. They gesticulate very little and often do not look you straight in the eye.
The Spanish
- The most correct verbal greeting is “How do you do?” To which you reply “How do you do?” Do not mistake this for their concern about your health. It is incorrect to reply “Very well thank you” or anything similar. “Nice to meet you” is too informal, although very normal with the Americans.
The Spanish.....
- You will always address the British by their surnames preceded by Mr., Mrs., or Miss until THEY decide to change to first name terms. This could take years. If you are on first name terms, do not keep repeating their name during the conversation. It sound patronizing and would be disliked.
The Spanish
- Exchanging visiting cards is not necessary. However, if your name is complicated or difficult for them it would be a gesture to offer yours.
The Spanish
- British manners are quite gentlemanly, especially with the ladies. It is normal to stand when a lady enters the room; to open the door for her; to hold her chair while she sits down.
The Spanish

- The British are constantly saying “Sorry” for the slightest nudge, inconvenience, physical contact. You should do the same.
The Spanish
- TABU topics of conversation : Politics, religion, sex, the Royal Family, Northern Ireland, Gibraltar, The Falklands, comparisons with the USA. What CAN you talk about? They are very proud of the history of their Empire, sports (football, rugby, athletics), animals (specially dogs and horses).
The Spanish
- In meetings you are usually offered tea or coffee. No offence is taken if you refuse. Over lunch it is very normal to continue discussion in the pub. Midday meals are light and only take one hour.
The Spanish
- Gifts do not form a part of inter-company relations. More acceptable is an invitation to a meal or a show (theatre, opera, musical).
In Spain.....
- It is not customary to invite you to their homes as family privacy is greatly valued and very seldom used for business purposes. Should the case arise, the most appropriate gift is chocolates, wine or champagne.
In Spain.....
- Although the British as a whole are not the most well-dressed nation, all executives dress in the traditional suit and tie, laced shoes, shirts with no pockets. Try to avoid striped ties and shields as they could resemble their old school ties and jackets. Elegance and good clothes are appreciated and admired.
In Spain

