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**Business ethics**

**Business ethics** (also **corporate ethics**) is a form of [applied ethics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Applied_ethics) or [professional ethics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Professional_ethics) that examines ethical principles and moral or ethical problems that arise in a business environment. It applies to all aspects of business conduct and is relevant to the conduct of individuals and entire organizations.

Business ethics has both [normative](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norm_%28philosophy%29) and descriptive dimensions. As a corporate practice and a career specialization, the field is primarily normative. Academics attempting to understand business behavior employ descriptive methods. The range and quantity of business ethical issues reflects the interaction of profit-maximizing behavior with non-economic concerns. Interest in business ethics accelerated dramatically during the 1980s and 1990s, both within major corporations and within academia. For example, today most major corporations promote their commitment to non-economic values under headings such as ethics codes and social responsibility charters. Adam Smith said, "People of the same trade seldom meet together, even for merriment and diversion, but the conversation ends in a conspiracy against the public, or in some contrivance to raise prices."[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-0)Governments use laws and regulations to point business behavior in what they perceive to be beneficial directions. Ethics implicitly regulates areas and details of behavior that lie beyond governmental control.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-1) The emergence of large corporations with limited relationships and sensitivity to the communities in which they operate accelerated the development of formal ethics regimes.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-2)

History

Business ethical norms reflect the norms of each historical period. As time passes norms evolve, causing accepted behaviors to become objectionable. Business ethics and the resulting behavior evolved as well. Business was involved in [slavery](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slavery),[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-3)[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-4)[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-5) [colonialism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colonialism),[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-6)[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-7) and the [cold war](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cold_war).[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-8)[[10]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-9)

The term 'business ethics' came into common use in the United States in the early 1970s. By the mid-1980s at least 500 courses in business ethics reached 40,000 students, using some twenty textbooks and at least ten casebooks along supported by professional societies, centers and journals of business ethics. The Society for Business Ethics was started in 1980. European business schools adopted business ethics after 1987 commencing with the European Business Ethics Network (EBEN).[[11]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-10)[[12]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-a1-11)[[13]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-12)[[14]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-13) In 1982 the first single-authored books in the field appeared.[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-14)[[16]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-15)

Firms started highlighting their ethical stature in the late 1980s and early 1990s, possibly trying to distance themselves from the business scandals of the day, such as the [savings and loan crisis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Savings_and_loan_crisis). The idea of business ethics caught the attention of academics, media and business firms by the end of the [Cold War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cold_War).[[12]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-a1-11)[[17]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-16)[[18]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-17) However, legitimate criticism of business practices was attacked for infringing the "freedom" of [entrepreneurs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Entrepreneurs) and critics were accused of supporting [communists](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communist).[[19]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-18)[[20]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-19) This scuttled the discourse of business ethics both in media and academia.[[21]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-20)

Overview

Business ethics reflects the [philosophy of business](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosophy_of_business), one of whose aims is to determine the fundamental purposes of a company. If a company's purpose is to maximize shareholder returns, then sacrificing profits to other concerns is a violation of its [fiduciary responsibility](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fiduciary_responsibility). Corporate entities are legally considered as persons in USA and in most nations. The 'corporate persons' are legally entitled to the rights and liabilities due to citizens as persons.

Economist Milton Friedman writes that corporate executives' "responsibility... generally will be to make as much money as possible while conforming to their basic rules of the society, both those embodied in law and those embodied in ethical custom".[[22]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-mf1970-21) Friedman also said, "the only entities who can have responsibilities are individuals ... A business cannot have responsibilities. So the question is, do corporate executives, provided they stay within the law, have responsibilities in their business activities other than to make as much money for their stockholders as possible? And my answer to that is, no, they do not."[[22]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-mf1970-21)[[23]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-22)[[24]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-23) A multi-country 2011 survey found support for this view among the "informed public" ranging from 30-80%.[[25]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-24) Duska views Friedman's argument as [consequentialist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consequentialist) rather than [pragmatic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pragmatic), implying that unrestrained corporate freedom would benefit the most in long term.[[26]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-Duska-25)[[27]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-26) Similarly author business consultant [Peter Drucker](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Drucker) observed, "There is neither a separate ethics of business nor is one needed", implying that standards of personal ethics cover all business situations.[[28]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-27) However, Peter Drucker in another instance observed that the ultimate responsibility of company directors is not to harm—[*primum non nocere*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Primum_non_nocere).[[29]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-28) Another view of business is that it must exhibit [corporate social responsibility](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_social_responsibility) (CSR): an umbrella term indicating that an ethical business must act as a responsible citizen of the communities in which it operates even at the cost of profits or other goals.[[30]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-29)[[31]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-program-30)[[32]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-31)[[33]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-32)[[34]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-33) In the US and most other nations corporate entities are legally treated as persons in some respects. For example, they can hold title to property, sue and be sued and are subject to taxation, although their [free speech](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_speech) rights are limited. This can be interpreted to imply that they have independent ethical responsibilities.[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)] Duska argues that stakeholders have the right to expect a business to be ethical; if business has no ethical obligations, other institutions could make the same claim which would be counterproductive to the corporation.[[26]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-Duska-25)

Ethical issues include the rights and duties between a company and its [employees, suppliers, customers and neighbors](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stakeholder_concept), its [fiduciary](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fiduciary) responsibility to its [shareholders](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shareholder_concept). Issues concerning relations between different companies include [hostile take-overs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Takeover) and [industrial espionage](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Industrial_espionage). Related issues include [corporate governance](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_governance);[corporate social entrepreneurship](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_Social_Entrepreneurship); [political contributions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Campaign_finance_reform); legal issues such as the ethical debate over introducing a crime of [corporate manslaughter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_manslaughter); and the marketing of corporations' ethics policies.[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)]

Functional business areas

**Finance**

Fundamentally, finance is a social science discipline.[[35]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-Dobson.2C_p._xvii-34) The discipline borders [behavioral economics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Behavioral_economics), sociology,[[36]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-35) economics, accounting and management. It concerns technical issues such as the mix of debt and [equity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Equity_%28finance%29), [dividend policy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dividend_policy), the evaluation of alternative investment projects, [options](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Options_strategies), [futures](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Futures_exchange), [swaps](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swap_%28finance%29), and other [derivatives](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Derivative_%28finance%29), [portfolio](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portfolio_%28finance%29) [diversification](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diversification_%28finance%29) and many others. It is often mistaken[[*who?*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3AAvoid_weasel_words)] to be a discipline free from ethical burdens.[[35]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-Dobson.2C_p._xvii-34) The [2008 financial crisis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subprime_mortgage_crisis) caused critics to challenge the ethics of the executives in charge of U.S. and European financial institutions and financial regulatory bodies.[[37]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-36) Finance ethics is overlooked for another reason—issues in finance are often addressed as matters of law rather than ethics.[[38]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-a153-37)

**Finance paradigm**

[Aristotle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aristotle) said, "the end and purpose of the polis is the good life".[[39]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-38) [Adam Smith](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adam_Smith) characterized the good life in terms of material goods and intellectual and moral excellences of character.[[40]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-39) Smith in his [*The Wealth of Nations*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Wealth_of_Nations) commented, "All for ourselves, and nothing for other people, seems, in every age of the world, to have been the vile maxim of the masters of mankind."[[41]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-40)

However, a section of economists influenced by the ideology of [neoliberalism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neoliberalism), interpreted the objective of economics to be maximization of [economic growth](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic_growth) through accelerated [consumption](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consumption_%28economics%29) and [production](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manufacturing) of [goods and services](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Goods_and_services).[[42]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-41) Neoliberal ideology promoted finance from its position as a component of economics to its core.[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)] Proponents of the ideology hold that unrestricted financial flows, if redeemed from the shackles of "financial repressions",[[43]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-42) best help impoverished nations to grow.[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)] The theory holds that open financial systems accelerate economic growth by encouraging foreign capital inﬂows, thereby enabling higher levels of savings, investment, employment, productivity and "welfare",[[44]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-43)[[45]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-44)[[46]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-45)[[47]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-46) along with containing corruption.[[48]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-47) Neoliberals recommended that governments open their financial systems to the global market with minimal regulation over capital flows.[[49]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-48)[[50]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-49)[[51]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-50)[[52]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-51)[[53]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-52) The recommendations however, met with criticisms from various schools of ethical philosophy. Some [pragmatic ethicists](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pragmatism), found these claims to unfalsifiable and a priori, although neither of these makes the recommendations false or unethical per se.[[54]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-53)[[55]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-54)[[56]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-55) Raising economic growth to the highest value necessarily means that welfare is subordinate, although advocates dispute this saying that economic growth provides more welfare than known alternatives.[[57]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-56) Since history shows that neither regulated nor unregulated firms always behave ethically, neither regime offers an ethical [panacea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panacea).[[58]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-salinger-57)[[59]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-58)[[60]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-59)

Neoliberal recommendations to developing countries to unconditionally open up their economies to transnational finance corporations was fiercely contested by some ethicists.[[61]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-60)[[62]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-61)[[63]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-62)[[64]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-63)[[65]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-64) The claim that deregulation and the opening up of economies would reduce corruption was also contested.[[66]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-65)[[67]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-66)[[68]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-67)

Dobson observes, "a rational agent is simply one who pursues personal material advantage ad infinitum. In essence, to be rational in finance is to be individualistic, materialistic, and competitive. Business is a game played by individuals, as with all games the object is to win, and winning is measured in terms solely of material wealth. Within the discipline this rationality concept is never questioned, and has indeed become the theory-of-the-firm's sine qua non".[[69]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-68)[[70]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-69) Financial ethics is in this view a mathematical function of shareholder wealth. Such simplifying assumptions were once necessary for the construction of mathematically robust models.[[71]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-70) However [signalling theory](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Signalling_%28economics%29) and [agency theory](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Principal-agent_problem)extended the paradigm to greater realism.[[72]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-71)

**Other issues**

Fairness in trading practices, trading conditions, financial contracting, sales practices, consultancy services, tax payments, internal audit, external audit and [executive compensation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Executive_compensation) also fall under the umbrella of finance and accounting.[[38]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-a153-37)[[73]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-72) Particular corporate ethical/legal abuses include: [creative accounting](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Creative_accounting), [earnings management](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Earnings_management), misleading financial analysis [insider trading](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Insider_trading), [securities fraud](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Securities_fraud), [bribery](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bribe)/kickbacks and [facilitation payments](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Facilitation_payment). Outside of corporations, [bucket shops](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bucket_shop_%28stock_market%29) and [forex scams](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forex_scam) are criminal manipulations of financial markets. Cases include [accounting scandals](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Accounting_scandals), [Enron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enron), [WorldCom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/WorldCom) and [Satyam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Satyam_scandal).[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)]

**Human resource management**

[Human resource management](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_resource_management) occupies the sphere of activity of [recruitment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Recruitment) selection, orientation, [performance appraisal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Performance_appraisal), [training and development](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Training_and_development), [industrial relations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Industrial_relations) and [health and safety](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Occupational_safety_and_health) issues.[[74]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-a102-73) Business Ethicists differ in their orientation towards labour ethics. Some assess human resource policies according to whether they support an egalitarian workplace and the dignity of labor.[[75]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-74)[[76]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-75)[[77]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-76)

Issues including [employment itself](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/At-will_employment), [privacy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Workplace_surveillance), compensation in accord with [comparable worth](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparable_worth), [collective bargaining](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collective_bargaining) (and/or its opposite) can be seen either as inalienable rights[[78]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-pin-77)[[79]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-78)or as negotiable.[[80]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-79)[[81]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-80)[[82]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-81)[[83]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-82)[[84]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-83) [Discrimination](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Discrimination) by age (preferring the [young](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ageism) or the [old](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seniority)), [gender](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sex_discrimination)/[sexual harassment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sexual_harassment), [race](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Racial_discrimination), [religion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious_discrimination), [disability](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Disability), weight and attractiveness. A common approach to remedying discrimination is [affirmative action](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Affirmative_action).

Potential employees have ethical obligations to employers, involving intellectual property protection and [whistle-blowing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whistle-blowing).

Employers must consider [workplace safety](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Occupational_safety_and_health), which may involve modifying the workplace, or providing appropriate training or hazard disclosure.

Larger economic issues such as [immigration](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immigration), [trade policy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trade_policy), [globalization](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Globalization) and [trade unionism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trade_union) affect workplaces and have an ethical dimension, but are often beyond the purview of individual companies.[[78]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-pin-77)[[85]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-84)[[86]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-85)

**Trade unions**

Unions for example, may push employers to establish [due process](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Due_process) for workers, but may also cost jobs by demanding unsustainable compensation and work rules.[[87]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-86)[[88]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-87)[[89]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-88)[[90]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-89)[[91]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-90)[[92]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-91)[[93]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-92)[[94]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-93)[[95]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-94)[[96]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-95)

Unionized workplaces may confront [union busting](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Union_busting) and [strike breaking](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strike_breaking) and face the ethical implications of work rules that advantage some workers over others.[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)]

**Management strategy**

Among the many people management strategies that companies employ are a "soft" approach that regards employees as a source of creative energy and participants in workplace decision making, a "hard" version explicitly focused on control[[97]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-96) and [Theory Z](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theory_Z) that emphasizes philosophy, culture and consensus.[[98]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-97) None ensure ethical behavior.[[99]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-98) Some studies claim that sustainable success requires a humanely treated and satisfied workforce.[[100]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-99)[[101]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-100)[[102]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-101)

**Sales and marketing**

*Main article:*[*Marketing ethics*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marketing_ethics)

Marketing Ethics came of age only as late as 1990s.[[103]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-102) Marketing ethics was approached from ethical perspectives of virtue or [virtue ethics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virtue_ethics), [deontology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deontology), [consequentialism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consequentialism),[pragmatism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pragmatic_ethics) and relativism.[[104]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-103)[[105]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-104)

Ethics in marketing deals with the principles, values and/or ideals by which marketers (and marketing institutions) ought to act.[[106]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-105) Marketing ethics is also contested terrain, beyond the previously described issue of potential conflicts between profitability and other concerns. Ethical marketing issues include marketing redundant or dangerous products/services[[107]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-106)[[108]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-107)[[109]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-108) transparency about environmental risks, transparency about [product ingredients](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mandatory_labelling) such as [genetically modified organisms](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genetically_modified_organism)[[110]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-109)[[111]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-110)[[112]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-111)[[113]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-112) possible health risks, financial risks, security risks, etc.,[[114]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-113) respect for consumer privacy and autonomy,[[115]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-114) [advertising](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Advertising) truthfulness and fairness in [pricing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pricing) & distribution.[[116]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-115)

According to Borgerson, and Schroeder (2008), marketing can influence individuals' perceptions of and interactions with other people, implying an ethical responsibility to avoid distorting those perceptions and interactions.[[117]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-116)

Marketing ethics involves pricing practices, including illegal actions such as [price fixing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Price_fixing) and legal actions including [price discrimination](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Price_discrimination) and [price skimming](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Price_skimming). Certain promotional activities have drawn fire, including [greenwashing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greenwash), [bait and switch](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bait_and_switch), [shilling](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shill), [viral marketing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Viral_marketing), [spam (electronic)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spam_%28electronic%29), [pyramid schemes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pyramid_scheme) and [multi-level marketing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multi-level_marketing). Advertising has raised objections about [attack ads](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attack_ad), [subliminal messages](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subliminal_message), [sex in advertising](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sex_in_advertising) and [marketing in schools](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marketing_in_schools).

**Production**

This area of business ethics usually deals with the duties of a company to ensure that products and production processes do not needlessly cause harm. Since few goods and services can be produced and consumed with zero risk, determining the ethical course can be problematic. In some case consumers demand products that harm them, such as[tobacco](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tobacco) products. Production may have environmental impacts, including [pollution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pollution), [habitat destruction](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Habitat_destruction) and [urban sprawl](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Urban_sprawl). The downstream effects of technologies [nuclear power](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuclear_power),[genetically modified food](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genetically_modified_food) and [mobile phones](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mobile_phone) may not be well understood. While the [precautionary principle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Precautionary_principle) may prohibit introducing new technology whose consequences are not fully understood, that principle would have prohibited most new technology introduced since the [industrial revolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Industrial_revolution). Product testing protocols have been attacked for violating the rights of both [humans](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clinical_trials) and [animals](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Animal_testing)[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)]

**Property**

*Main article:*[*Private property*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Private_property)*, and*[*Property rights*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Property_rights)

The etymological root of property is the [Latin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin) 'proprius'[[118]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-117) which refers to 'nature', 'quality', 'one's own', 'special characteristic', 'proper', 'intrinsic', 'inherent', 'regular', 'normal', 'genuine', 'thorough, complete, perfect' etc. The word property is value loaded and associated with the personal qualities of propriety and respectability, also implies questions relating to ownership. A 'proper' person owns and is true to herself or himself, and is thus genuine, perfect and pure.[[119]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-118)

**Modern history of property rights**

Modern discourse on property emerged by the turn of 17th century within theological discussions of that time. For instance, [John Locke](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Locke) justified [property rights](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Property_rights) saying that God had made "the earth, and all inferior creatures, [in] common to all men".[[120]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-119)[[121]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-120)[[122]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-121)[[123]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-122)

In 1802 [Utilitarian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Utilitarian) [Jeremy Bentham](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jeremy_Bentham) stated, "property and law are born together and die together".[[124]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-123)[[125]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-124)

One argument for property ownership is that it enhances individual liberty by extending the line of non-interference by the state or others around the person.[[126]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-125) Seen from this perspective, property right is absolute and property has a special and distinctive character that precedes its legal protection. Blackstone conceptualized property as the "sole and despotic dominion which one man claims and exercises over the external things of the world, in total exclusion of the right of any other individual in the universe".[[127]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-126)

**Slaves as property**

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, slavery spread to European colonies including America, where colonial legislatures defined the legal status of slaves as a form of property.[[128]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-127) During this time settlers began the centuries-long process of dispossessing the natives of America of millions of acres of land.[[129]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-128) Ironically, the natives lost about 200,000 square miles (520,000 km2) of land in the [Louisiana Territory](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louisiana_Territory) under the leadership of [Thomas Jefferson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Jefferson), who championed property rights.[[130]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-129)[[131]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-130)[[132]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-131)

Combined with theological justification, property was taken to be essentially natural ordained by God.[[133]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-132) Property, which later gained meaning as ownership and appeared natural to Locke, Jefferson and to many of the 18th and 19th century intellectuals[[134]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-133) as land, labour or idea[[135]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-134) and property right over slaves had the same [theological](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity_and_slavery) and [essentialized](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essentialism)justification[[136]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-135)[[137]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-136)[[138]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-137)[[139]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-138)[[140]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-139)[[141]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-140) It was even held that the property in slaves was a sacred right.[[142]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-141)[[143]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-142) Wiecek noted, "slavery was more clearly and explicitly established under the Constitution as it had been under the Articles".[[144]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-143) Accordingly, [US Supreme Court](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/US_Supreme_Court) Chief Justice [Roger B. Taney](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roger_B._Taney) in his 1857 judgment stated, "The right of property in a slave is distinctly and expressly affirmed in the Constitution".

**Natural right vs social construct**

Neoliberals hold that private property rights are a non-negotiable natural right.[[145]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-144)[[146]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-145) Davies counters with "property is no different from other legal categories in that it is simply a consequence of the significance attached by law to the relationships between legal persons."[[147]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-Davies_2007_20-146)[[148]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-147) Singer claims, "Property is a form of power, and the distribution of power is a political problem of the highest order".[[149]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-148)[[150]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-149) Rose finds, "'Property' is only an effect, a construction, of relationships between people, meaning that its objective character is contestable. Persons and things, are 'constituted' or 'fabricated' by legal and other normative techniques.".[[151]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-150)[[152]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-151) Singer observes, "A private property regime is not, after all, a Hobbesian state of nature; it requires a working legal system that can define, allocate, and enforce property rights."[[153]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-152) Davis claims that common law theory generally favors the view that "property is not essentially a 'right to a thing', but rather a separable bundle of rights subsisting between persons which may vary according to the context and the object which is at stake".[[147]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-Davies_2007_20-146)

In common parlance property rights involve a '[bundle of rights](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bundle_of_rights)'[[154]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-153) including occupancy, use and enjoyment, and the right to sell, devise, give, or lease all or part of these rights.[[155]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-154)[[156]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-155)[[157]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-156)[[158]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-157) Custodians of property have obligations as well as rights.[[159]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-158)[[160]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-159) Michelman writes, "A property regime thus depends on a great deal of cooperation, trustworthiness, and self-restraint among the people who enjoy it."[[161]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-160)[[162]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-161)

Menon claims that the autonomous individual, responsible for his/her own existence is a cultural construct moulded by [Western culture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_culture) rather than the truth about the [human condition](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_condition).[[163]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-162) Penner views property as an "illusion"—a "normative phantasm" without substance.[[164]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-163)[[165]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-164)

In the neoliberal literature, property is part of the private side of a public/private dichotomy and acts a counterweight to state power. Davies counters that "any space may be subject to plural meanings or appropriations which do not necessarily come into conflict".[[166]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-165)

Private property has never been a universal doctrine, although since the end of the Cold War is it has become nearly so. Some societies, e.g., Native American bands, held land, if not all property, in common. When groups came into conflict, the victor often [appropriated](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_Removal_Act) the loser's property.[[167]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-166)[[168]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-167) The rights paradigm tended to stabilize the distribution of property holdings on the presumption that title had been lawfully acquired.[[169]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-168)

Property does not exist in isolation and so property rights too.[[170]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-169) Bryan claimed that property rights describe relations among people and not just relations between people and things[[171]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-170)[[172]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-171)[[173]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-172)[[174]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-173)[[175]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-174)[[176]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-175) Singer holds that the idea that owners have no legal obligations to others wrongly supposes that property rights hardly ever conflict with other legally protected interests.[[177]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-176) Singer continues implying that [legal realists](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legal_realism) "did not take the character and structure of social relations as an important independent factor in choosing the rules that govern market life". Ethics of property rights begins with recognizing the vacuous nature of the notion of property.[[178]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-177)

**Intellectual property**

*Main articles:*[*Intellectual property*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intellectual_property)*and*[*Intellectual property rights*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intellectual_property_rights)

[Intellectual property](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intellectual_property) (IP) encompasses expressions of ideas, thoughts, codes and information. "[Intellectual property rights](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intellectual_property_rights)" (IPR) treat IP as a kind of [real property](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Real_property), subject to analogous protections, rather than as a reproducible good or service. Boldrin and Levine argue that "government does not ordinarily enforce monopolies for producers of other goods. This is because it is widely recognized that monopoly creates many social costs. Intellectual monopoly is no different in this respect. The question we address is whether it also creates social benefits commensurate with these social costs."[[179]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-178)

International standards relating to Intellectual Property Rights are enforced through [Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agreement_on_Trade_Related_Aspects_of_Intellectual_Property_Rights) (TRIPS).[[180]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-179) In the US, IP other than [copyrights](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Copyright) is regulated by the [United States Patent and Trademark Office](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Patent_and_Trademark_Office).

The [US Constitution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/US_Constitution) included the power to protect intellectual property, empowering the Federal government "*to promote the progress of science and useful arts, by securing for limited times to authors and inventors the exclusive right to their respective writings and discoveries*".[[181]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-steel-180) Boldrin and Levine see no value in such state-enforced monopolies stating, "we ordinarily think of innovative monopoly as an [oxymoron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oxymoron).[[182]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-181)[[183]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-182) Further they comment, 'intellectual property' "is not like ordinary property at all, but constitutes a government grant of a costly and dangerous private monopoly over ideas. We show through theory and example that intellectual monopoly is not necessary for innovation and as a practical matter is damaging to growth, prosperity, and liberty" .[[181]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-steel-180) Steelman defends patent monopolies, writing, "Consider prescription drugs, for instance. Such drugs have benefited millions of people, improving or extending their lives. Patent protection enables drug companies to recoup their development costs because for a specific period of time they have the sole right to manufacture and distribute the products they have invented."[[184]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-183) The court cases by 39 pharmaceutical companies against [South Africa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Africa)'s 1997 Medicines and Related Substances Control Amendment Act, which intended to provide affordable HIV medicines has been cited as a harmful effect of patents.[[185]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-184)[[186]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-185)[[187]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-186)

One attack on IPR is moral rather than utilitarian, claiming that inventions are mostly a collective, cumulative, path dependent, social creation and therefore, no one person or ﬁrm should be able to monopolize them even for a limited period.[[188]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-187) The opposing argument is that the benefits of innovation arrive sooner when patents encourage innovators and their investors to increase their commitments. Roderick Long, a [libertarian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Libertarianism) philosopher, observes, "Ethically, property rights of any kind have to be justified as extensions of the right of individuals to control their own lives. Thus any alleged property rights that conflict with this moral basis—like the "right" to own slaves—are invalidated. In my judgment, intellectual property rights also fail to pass this test. To enforce copyright laws and the like is to prevent people from making peaceful use of the information they possess. If you have acquired the information legitimately (say, by buying a book), then on what grounds can you be prevented from using it, reproducing it, trading it? Is this not a violation of the freedom of speech and press? It may be objected that the person who originated the information deserves ownership rights over it. But information is not a concrete thing an individual can control; it is a universal, existing in other people's minds and other people's property, and over these the originator has no legitimate sovereignty. You cannot own information without owning other people".[[189]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-188) Machlup concluded that patents do not have the intended effect of enhancing innovation.[[190]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-189) Self-declared [anarchist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anarchist) [Proudhon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pierre-Joseph_Proudhon), in his 1847 seminal work noted, "Monopoly is the natural opposite of competition," and continued, "Competition is the vital force which animates the collective being: to destroy it, if such a supposition were possible, would be to kill society"[[191]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-190)[[192]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-191)

Mindeli and Pipiya hold that the [knowledge economy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knowledge_economy) is an economy of abundance[[193]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-192) because it relies on the "infinite potential" of knowledge and ideas rather than on the limited resources of natural resources, labor and capital. Allison envisioned an egalitarian distribution of knowledge.[[194]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-193) Kinsella claims that IPR create artificial scarcity and reduce equality.[[195]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-194)[[196]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-195)[[197]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-196) Bouckaert wrote, "Natural scarcity is that which follows from the relationship between man and nature. Scarcity is natural when it is possible to conceive of it before any human, institutional, contractual arrangement. Artificial scarcity, on the other hand, is the outcome of such arrangements. Artificial scarcity can hardly serve as a justification for the legal framework that causes that scarcity. Such an argument would be completely circular. On the contrary, artificial scarcity itself needs a justification" [[198]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-197)[[199]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-198)Corporations fund much IP creation and can acquire IP they do not create,[[200]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-199) to which Menon and others object.[[201]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-200)[[202]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-201) Andersen claims that IPR has increasingly become an instrument in eroding public domain.[[203]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-202)

Ethical and legal issues include: [Patent infringement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patent_infringement), [copyright infringement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Copyright_infringement), [trademark infringement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trademark_infringement), [patent](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patent_misuse) and [copyright misuse](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Copyright_misuse), [submarine patents](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Submarine_patent), [gene patents](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gene_patent), [patent](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patent_troll),[copyright](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Copyright_troll) and [trademark trolling](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trademark_troll), [Employee raiding](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Employee_raiding) and monopolizing talent, [Bioprospecting](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bioprospecting), [biopiracy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biopiracy) and [industrial espionage](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Industrial_espionage), [digital rights management](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_rights_management).

Notable IP copyright cases include [Napster](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A%26M_Records%2C_Inc._v._Napster%2C_Inc.), [Eldred v. Ashcroft](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eldred_v._Ashcroft) and [Air Pirates](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Pirates).

International issues

While business ethics emerged as a field in the 1970s, international business ethics did not emerge until the late 1990s, looking back on the international developments of that decade.[[204]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-203) Many new practical issues arose out of the international context of business. Theoretical issues such as cultural relativity of ethical values receive more emphasis in this field. Other, older issues can be grouped here as well. Issues and subfields include:

* The search for universal values as a basis for international commercial behaviour.
* Comparison of business ethical traditions in different countries. Also on the basis of their respective GDP and [Corruption rankings].
* Comparison of business ethical traditions from various religious perspectives.
* Ethical issues arising out of international business transactions; e.g., [bioprospecting](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bioprospecting) and [biopiracy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biopiracy) in the pharmaceutical industry; the [fair trade](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fair_trade) movement; [transfer pricing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transfer_pricing).
* Issues such as [globalization](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Globalization) and [cultural imperialism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_imperialism).
* Varying global standards—e.g., the use of [child labor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Child_labor).
* The way in which multinationals take advantage of international differences, such as outsourcing production (e.g. clothes) and services (e.g. call centres) to low-wage countries.
* The permissibility of international commerce with pariah states.

The success of any business depends on its financial performance. Financial accounting helps the management to report and also control the business performance.

The information regarding the financial performance of the company plays an important role in enabling people to take right decision about the company. Therefore, it becomes necessary to understand how to record based on accounting conventions and concepts ensure unambling and accurate records.

Foreign countries often use dumping as a competitive threat, selling products at prices lower than their normal value. This can lead to problems in domestic markets. It becomes difficult for these markets to compete with the pricing set by foreign markets. In 2009, the International Trade Commission has been researching anti-dumping laws. Dumping is often seen as an ethical issue, as larger companies are taking advantage of other less economically advanced companies.

**Corporate policies**

As part of more comprehensive [compliance and ethics programs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Compliance_and_ethics_program), many companies have formulated internal policies pertaining to the ethical conduct of employees. These policies can be simple exhortations in broad, highly generalized language (typically called a corporate ethics statement), or they can be more detailed policies, containing specific behavioural requirements (typically called corporate ethics codes). They are generally meant to identify the company's expectations of workers and to offer guidance on handling some of the more common ethical problems that might arise in the course of doing business. It is hoped that having such a policy will lead to greater ethical awareness, consistency in application, and the avoidance of ethical disasters.

An increasing number of companies also require employees to attend seminars regarding business conduct, which often include discussion of the company's policies, specific case studies, and legal requirements. Some companies even require their employees to sign agreements stating that they will abide by the company's rules of conduct.

Many companies are assessing the environmental factors that can lead employees to engage in unethical conduct. A competitive business environment may call for unethical behaviour. Lying has become expected in fields such as trading. An example of this are the issues surrounding the unethical actions of the Saloman Brothers.

Not everyone supports corporate policies that govern ethical conduct. Some claim that ethical problems are better dealt with by depending upon employees to use their own judgment.

Others believe that corporate ethics policies are primarily rooted in utilitarian concerns, and that they are mainly to limit the company's legal liability, or to curry public favour by giving the appearance of being a good corporate citizen. Ideally, the company will avoid a lawsuit because its employees will follow the rules. Should a lawsuit occur, the company can claim that the problem would not have arisen if the employee had only followed the code properly.

Sometimes there is disconnection between the company's code of ethics and the company's actual practices. Thus, whether or not such conduct is explicitly sanctioned by management, at worst, this makes the policy duplicitous, and, at best, it is merely a marketing tool.

Jones and Parker write, "Most of what we read under the name business ethics is either sentimental common sense, or a set of excuses for being unpleasant."[[215]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-214) Many manuals are procedural form filling exercises unconcerned about the real ethical dilemmas. For instance, US Department of Commerce ethics program treats business ethics as a set of instructions and procedures to be followed by 'ethics officers'.,[[31]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-program-30) some others claim being ethical is just for the sake of being ethical.[[216]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-215) Business ethicists may trivialize the subject, offering standard answers that do not reflect the situation's complexity.[[208]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-ag43-207)

**Ethics officers**

Ethics officers (sometimes called "compliance" or "business conduct officers") have been appointed formally by organizations since the mid-1980s. One of the catalysts for the creation of this new role was a series of fraud, corruption, and abuse scandals that afflicted the U.S. defense industry at that time. This led to the creation of the Defense Industry Initiative (DII), a pan-industry initiative to promote and ensure ethical business practices. The DII set an early benchmark for ethics management in corporations. In 1991, the [Ethics & Compliance Officer Association](http://www.theecoa.org/) (ECOA)—originally the Ethics Officer Association (EOA)—was founded at the [Center for Business Ethics](http://www.bentley.edu/cbe) (at Bentley College, Waltham, MA) as a professional association for those responsible for managing organizations' efforts to achieve ethical best practices. The membership grew rapidly (the ECOA now has over 1,200 members) and was soon established as an independent organization.

Another critical factor in the decisions of companies to appoint ethics/compliance officers was the passing of the Federal Sentencing Guidelines for Organizations in 1991, which set standards that organizations (large or small, commercial and non-commercial) had to follow to obtain a reduction in sentence if they should be convicted of a federal offense. Although intended to assist judges with sentencing, the influence in helping to establish best practices has been far-reaching.

In the wake of numerous corporate scandals between 2001–04 (affecting large corporations like [Enron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enron), [WorldCom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/WorldCom) and [Tyco](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tyco_International)), even small and medium-sized companies have begun to appoint ethics officers. They often report to the Chief Executive Officer and are responsible for assessing the ethical implications of the company's activities, making recommendations regarding the company's ethical policies, and disseminating information to employees. They are particularly interested in uncovering or preventing unethical and illegal actions. This trend is partly due to the [Sarbanes–Oxley Act](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarbanes%E2%80%93Oxley_Act) in the United States, which was enacted in reaction to the above scandals. A related trend is the introduction of risk assessment officers that monitor how shareholders' investments might be affected by the company's decisions.

The effectiveness of ethics officers is not clear. If the appointment is made primarily as a reaction to legislative requirements, one might expect little impact, at least over the short term. In part, this is because ethical business practices result from a corporate culture that consistently places value on ethical behaviour, a culture and climate that usually emanates from the top of the organization. The mere establishment of a position to oversee ethics will most likely be insufficient to inculcate ethical behaviour: a more systemic programme with consistent support from general management will be necessary.

The foundation for ethical behaviour goes well beyond corporate culture and the policies of any given company, for it also depends greatly upon an individual's early moral training, the other institutions that affect an individual, the competitive business environment the company is in and, indeed, society as a whole.

Academic discipline

As an academic discipline, business ethics emerged in the 1970s. Since no academic business ethics journals or conferences existed, researchers published in general management journals, and attended general conferences. Over time, specialized peer-reviewed journals appeared, and more researchers entered the field. Corporate scandals in the earlier 2000s increased the field's popularity. As of 2009, sixteen academic journals devoted to various business ethics issues existed, with [Journal of Business Ethics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Journal_of_Business_Ethics) and[Business Ethics Quarterly](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_Ethics_Quarterly) considered the leaders.[[217]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-216)

[The International Business Development Institute](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=The_International_Business_Development_Institute&action=edit&redlink=1)[[218]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-217) is a global non-profit organization that represents 217 nations and all 50 United States. It offers a Charter in Business Development (CBD) that focuses on ethical business practices and standards. The Charter is directed by [Harvard](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harvard), [MIT](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MIT), and [Fulbright](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fulbright) Scholars, and it includes graduate-level coursework in economics, politics, marketing, management, technology, and legal aspects of business development as it pertains to business ethics. IBDI also oversees the International Business Development Institute of Asia[[219]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics#cite_note-218) which provides individuals living in 20 Asian nations the opportunity to earn the Charter.

Organizational ethics

**Organizational Ethics** is the [ethics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethics) of an [organization](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organization), and it is how an organization ethically responds to an internal or external stimulus. Organizational ethics is interdependent with the [organizational culture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_culture). Although, it is akin to both [organizational behavior](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_behavior) (OB) and [business ethics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics) on the micro and macro levels, organizational ethics is neither OB, nor is it solely **business ethics** (which includes corporate governance and [corporate ethics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_ethics)). Organizational ethics express the values of an organization to its employees and/or other entities irrespective of governmental and/or regulatory [laws](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laws).

Overview of the field

The [Foreign Corrupt Practices Act](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foreign_Corrupt_Practices_Act) (FCPA) restricts U.S. firms from engaging in bribery and other illegal practices internationally. There are [laws](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laws) that have the same type of prohibition for European companies. These laws create a disadvantage competitively for both European and U.S. firms.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_Ethics#cite_note-qje-0) Such laws are not a restricting element to organizations that have highly elevated ethical behavior as part of their values. Organizations that do not have an outlook for positive ethical practices as part of their cultures, usually lead to their own demise, such as, [Enron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enron) and [WorldCom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/WorldCom) by their questionable accounting practices. The converse is generally true, organizations that have integrity and encouraging ethical practices as part of their culture are viewed with respect by their [employees](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Employees), [community](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community), and corresponding industries. [[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_Ethics#cite_note-man-1) Thereby, the positive ethical outlook of an organization results in a solid financial bottom-line, because of greater sales along with their ability to retain and attract new and talented personnel. More importantly, an ethical organization will have the ability to retain employees that are experienced and knowledgeable (generally referred to as [human capital](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_capital)). This **human capital** results in less employee turnover and less time to train new employees, which in turn allows for greater output of [services](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Service_%28economics%29) (or production of [goods](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Good_%28economics%29)).

**Basic elements of an ethical organization**

There are at least four elements which exist in organizations that make ethical behavior conducive within an organization. The four elements necessary to quantify an organization's ethics are: 1) written code of ethics and standards; 2) ethics [training](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Training) to executives, managers, and employees; 3) availability for advice on ethical situations (i.e, advice lines or offices); and 4) systems for confidential reporting.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_Ethics#cite_note-hrm-2)

Good leaders strive to create a better and more ethical organization. Restoring an ethical climate in organization is critical, as it is a key component in solving the many other organizational development and ethical behavior issues facing the organization.

Intrinsic and extrinsic

The [intrinsic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intrinsic) and [extrinsic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Extrinsic) rewards of an ethical organization are tethered to the organizational culture and business ethics of an organization. Based upon the reliability and support structure of each of the four areas needed for ethical behavior, then the organizational ethics will be evident throughout the organization. The organization, the employees, and other entities will receive **intrinsic and extrinsic rewards**. Actions of employees can range from whistle blowing (intrinsic) to the extraordinary actions of an hourly employee buying all the peanut butter (as produced by his [employer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Employer)), because the labels were not centered, and he knew that his employer (extrinsic) would reimburse him in full.[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_Ethics#cite_note-pfe-3)

Above and beyond

Above and beyond is a standard part of the operational and strategic plans for organizations that have positive organizational ethics. Above and beyond the quarterly or yearly income statements, an entity will plan for its employees by offering “wellness programs” along with general health coverage, and/or a viable stable retirement plan. Further, an organization will allow for paid maternity leave, or even paid time off for new parents after an [adoption](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adoption). Other perks may include, “on-site” [childcare](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Childcare), [flextime](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flextime) for work hours, employee education reimbursement, and even [telecommuting](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Telecommuting) for various days during a week. All the above are just a few examples of [employee benefits](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Employee_benefits) that quality organizations offer to their employees. These benefits are not mandates by law, and they represent only a few of benefits that best known corporations and firms offer to their employees throughout the world.

Leadership and theory for ethics in an organization

There are many theories and [organizational studies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_studies) that are coarsely related to “organizational ethics”, but "organizations" and "ethics" are wide and varied in application and scope. These theories and studies can range from [individual](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Individual)(s), [team](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Team)(s), [stakeholder](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stakeholder_%28corporate%29), [management](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Management), [leadership](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leadership), [human resources](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_resources), [group](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Group_%28sociology%29)(s) interaction(s), as well as, the [psychological](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychological)framework behind each area to include the distribution of [job](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_%28role%29) tasks within various types of organizations. As among these areas, it is the influence of **leadership** in any organization that cannot go unexamined, because they must have a clear understanding of the direction of the organization’s vision, goals (to include immediate and long term strategic plans), and values. It is the leadership that sets the tone for organizational impression management (strategic actions taken by an organization to create a positive image to both internal and external publics). In turn, leadership directly influences the organizational symbolism (which reflects the culture, the language of the members, any meaningful objects, representations, and/or how someone may act or think within an organization). The values and ideals within an organization are generally center upon “values for business” as the theoretical approach that most leaders select to present to their "co-members" (which in truth maybe subordinates). In fact, an examination of business methodology reveals that most leaders approach the ethical theory from the perspective of values for business. [[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_Ethics#cite_note-DH1-4)[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_Ethics#cite_note-McD-5) Importantly, as transverse alongside of presenting the vision, values, and goals of the organization, the leadership should infuse a spirit of [empowerment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Empowerment) to its members. In particular, leadership using this management style of **empowerment** for their subordinates is based upon view of: “Achieving organizational ownership of company values is a continuous process of communication, discussion, and debate throughout all areas of the organization” [[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_Ethics#cite_note-DH2-6)as.

Stakeholder and other theories

Whether it is a team, small group, or a large international entity, the ability for any organization to reason, act rationally, and respond ethically is paramount. Leadership must have the ability to recognize the needs of its members (or called “**stakeholders**” in some theories or models), especially, the very basics of a person’s desire to belong and fit into the organization. It is the [stakeholder theory](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stakeholder_theory) that implies that all **stakeholders** (or individuals) must be treated equally regardless of the fact that some people will obviously contribute more than others to an organization. [[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_Ethics#cite_note-DAG-7) Leadership has to not only place aside each of their individual (or personal) ambitions (along with any prejudice) in order to present the goals of the organization, but they have to also have the stakeholders engaged for the benefit of the organization. Further, it is leadership that has to be able to influence the **stakeholders**by presenting the strong minority voice in order to move the organization’s members towards ethical behavior. Importantly, the leadership (or stakeholder management) has to have the desire, will, and the skills to ensure that the other stakeholders’ voices are respected within the organization, and leadership has to ensure that those other voices are not expressing views (or needs as in respects to [Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maslow%27s_Hierarchy_of_Needs)) that are not shared by the larger majority of the members (or stakeholders). Therefore, stakeholder management, as well as, any other leadership of organizations have to take upon themselves the arduous task of ensuring an “ethics system” for their own management styles, personalities, systems, performances, plans, policies, strategies, productivity, [openness](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Openness), and even risk(s) within their cultures or industries.

**Ethical system implementation and consideration**

The function of developing and the implantation of an “ethics system” is difficult, because there is no clear, nor any singular decisive way that is able to be presented as a standard across the board for any organization – as due to each organization’s own culture. Also, the implementation should be done accordingly to the entire areas of operations within the organization. If it is not implemented pragmatically and with empathic caution for the needs, desires, and personalities (consider the [Big Five personality traits](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Big_Five_personality_traits)) of the stakeholders, or the culture, then unethical views may be taken by the stakeholders, or even unethical behavior throughout the organization. Therefore, although, it may require a great deal of time, stakeholder management should consider the [Rational Decision-Making Model](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rational_Decision-Making_Model) for implementation of various aspects of an ethical system to the stakeholders. If implantation is done successfully, then all stakeholders (not just the leadership) have accepted the task of [benchmarking](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benchmarking) not only the implantation of an “ethics system”, but each stakeholder feels empowered for the moment to moment daily decisions that are ethically positive for the organization. When executed timely and with care, then all stakeholders (including leadership) will have at the very less a positive and functional success as the basis for [continuous improvement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Continuous_improvement) (or [kaizen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaizen)) to present as the norm for its organizational ethics.

**Theories and models**

* [Stakeholder theory](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stakeholder_theory)
* [Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maslow%27s_Hierarchy_of_Needs)
* [Rational Decision-Making Model](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rational_Decision-Making_Model)
* [Big Five personality traits](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Big_Five_personality_traits)

Corporate social responsibility

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

*"Corporate responsibility" redirects here. For other types of responsibility, see*[*Responsibility (disambiguation)*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Responsibility_%28disambiguation%29)*.*

**Corporate social responsibility** (**CSR**, also called **corporate conscience**, **corporate citizenship**, **social performance**, or **sustainable responsible business/ Responsible Business**)[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_social_responsibility#cite_note-0) is a form of [corporate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate) [self-regulation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Self-policing) integrated into a [business model](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_model). CSR policy functions as a built-in, self-regulating mechanism whereby a business monitors and ensures its active compliance with the spirit of the law, ethical standards, and international [norms](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norm_%28sociology%29). The goal of CSR is to embrace responsibility for the company's actions and encourage a positive impact through its activities on the environment, consumers, employees, communities, [stakeholders](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stakeholder_%28corporate%29) and all other members of the [public sphere](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_sphere) who may also be considered as stakeholders.

The term "corporate social responsibility" came into common use in the late 1960s and early 1970s after many multinational corporations formed the term [stakeholder](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stakeholder_%28corporate%29), meaning those on whom an organization's activities have an impact. It was used to describe corporate owners beyond [shareholders](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shareholders) as a result of an influential book by [R. Edward Freeman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/R._Edward_Freeman),*Strategic management: a stakeholder approach* in 1984.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_social_responsibility#cite_note-1) Proponents argue that corporations make more long term profits by operating with a perspective, while critics argue that CSR distracts from the economic role of businesses. Others argue CSR is merely [window-dressing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Display_window), or an attempt to pre-empt the role of governments as a watchdog over powerful[multinational corporations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multinational_corporations).

CSR is titled to aid an organization's mission as well as a guide to what the company stands for and will uphold to its consumers. Development [business ethics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_ethics) is one of the forms of [applied ethics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Applied_ethics) that examines ethical principles and moral or ethical problems that can arise in a business environment. [ISO 26000](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ISO_26000) is the recognized international standard for CSR. Public sector organizations (the United Nations for example) adhere to the [triple bottom line](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Triple_bottom_line) (TBL). It is widely accepted that CSR adheres to similar principles but with no formal act of legislation. The [UN](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UN) has developed the [Principles for Responsible Investment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Principles_for_Responsible_Investment) as guidelines for investing entities.

Approaches

Some commentators have identified a difference between the Canadian (Montreal school of CSR), the [Continental European](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Continental_Europe) and the [Anglo-Saxon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglosphere) approaches to CSR.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_social_responsibility#cite_note-2) And even within Europe the discussion about CSR is very heterogeneous.[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_social_responsibility#cite_note-3)

A more common approach of CSR is [philanthropy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philanthropy). This includes monetary donations and aid given to local organizations and impoverished communities in developing countries. Some organizations[[*who?*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3AAvoid_weasel_words)] do not like this approach as it does not help build on the skills of the local people, whereas community-based development generally leads to more sustainable development.[[*clarification needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3APlease_clarify)*Difference between local org& community-dev? Cite*]

Another approach to CSR is to incorporate the CSR strategy directly into the business strategy of an organization. For instance, procurement of [Fair Trade](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fair_Trade) tea and coffee has been adopted by various businesses including [KPMG](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/KPMG). Its CSR manager commented, "Fairtrade fits very strongly into our commitment to our communities."[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_social_responsibility#cite_note-4)

Another approach is garnering increasing corporate responsibility interest. This is called [Creating Shared Value](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Creating_Shared_Value), or CSV. The shared value model is based on the idea that corporate success and social welfare are interdependent. A business needs a healthy, educated workforce, sustainable resources and adept government to compete effectively. For society to thrive, profitable and competitive businesses must be developed and supported to create income, wealth, tax revenues, and opportunities for philanthropy. CSV received global attention in the Harvard Business Review article *Strategy & Society: The Link between Competitive Advantage and Corporate Social Responsibility* [1] by Michael E. Porter, a leading authority on competitive strategy and head of the Institute for Strategy and Competitiveness at Harvard Business School; and Mark R. Kramer, Senior Fellow at the Kennedy School at Harvard University and co-founder of FSG Social Impact Advisors. The article provides insights and relevant examples of companies that have developed deep linkages between their business strategies and corporate social responsibility. Many approaches to CSR pit businesses against society, emphasizing the costs and limitations of compliance with externally imposed social and environmental standards. CSV acknowledges trade-offs between short-term profitability and social or environmental goals, but focuses more on the opportunities for competitive advantage from building a social value proposition into corporate strategy.

Many companies use the strategy of benchmarking to compete within their respective industries in CSR policy, implementation, and effectiveness. Benchmarking involves reviewing competitor CSR initiatives, as well as measuring and evaluating the impact that those policies have on society and the environment, and how customers perceive competitor CSR strategy. After a comprehensive study of competitor strategy and an internal policy review performed, a comparison can be drawn and a strategy developed for competition with CSR initiatives.



Social accounting, auditing, and reporting

For a business to take responsibility for its actions, that business must be fully accountable. [Social accounting](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_accounting), a concept describing the communication of social and environmental effects of a company's economic actions to particular interest groups within society and to society at large, is thus an important element of CSR.[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_social_responsibility#cite_note-5)

Social accounting emphasizes the notion of corporate [accountability](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Accountability). D. Crowther defines social accounting in this sense as "an approach to reporting a firm’s activities which stresses the need for the identification of socially relevant behavior, the determination of those to whom the company is accountable for its social performance and the development of appropriate measures and reporting techniques."[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_social_responsibility#cite_note-6) An example of social accounting, to a limited extent, is found in an annual [Director's Report](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Director%27s_Report), under the requirements of [UK company law](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UK_company_law).[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_social_responsibility#cite_note-7)

A number of reporting guidelines or standards have been developed to serve as frameworks for social accounting, auditing and reporting including:

* [AccountAbility](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AccountAbility_%28Institute_of_Social_and_Ethical_AccountAbility%29)'s [AA1000](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AccountAbility_%28Institute_of_Social_and_Ethical_AccountAbility%29#AA1000_Series_of_Standards) standard, based on [John Elkington](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Elkington)'s [triple bottom line](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Triple_bottom_line) (3BL) reporting
* [The Prince's Accounting for Sustainability Project](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=The_Prince%27s_Accounting_for_Sustainability_Project&action=edit&redlink=1)'s [Connected Reporting Framework](http://www.accountingforsustainability.org/output/page171.asp)
* The [Fair Labor Association](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fair_Labor_Association) conducts audits based on its Workplace Code of Conduct and posts audit results on the FLA website.
* The [Fair Wear Foundation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fair_Wear_Foundation) takes a unique approach to verifying labour conditions in companies' supply chains, using interdisciplinary auditing teams.
* [Global Reporting Initiative](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Global_Reporting_Initiative)'s Sustainability Reporting Guidelines
* [GoodCorporation](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=GoodCorporation&action=edit&redlink=1)'s [Standard](http://www.goodcorporation.com/PDF/standard_2007.pdf) developed in association with the Institute of Business Ethics
* [Earthcheck](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Earthcheck) www.earthcheck.org Certification / Standard
* [Social Accountability International](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Social_Accountability_International&action=edit&redlink=1)'s [SA8000](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=SA8000&action=edit&redlink=1) standard
* [Standard Ethics Aei](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Standard_Ethics_Aei) guidelines
* The [ISO 14000](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ISO_14000) environmental management standard
* The [United Nations Global Compact](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Global_Compact) requires companies to [communicate on their progress](http://www.unglobalcompact.org/COP/) (or to produce a Communication on Progress, COP), and to describe the company's implementation of the Compact's ten universal principles. This information should be fully integrated in the participant’s main medium of stakeholder communications, for example a corporate responsibility or sustainability report and/or an integrated financial and sustainability report. If a company does not publish formal reports, a COP can be created as a stand-alone document.[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_social_responsibility#cite_note-8)
* The [United Nations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations) [Intergovernmental Working Group of Experts on International Standards of Accounting and Reporting (ISAR)](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Intergovernmental_Working_Group_of_Experts_on_International_Standards_of_Accounting_and_Reporting_(ISAR)&action=edit&redlink=1) provides voluntary technical guidance on [eco-efficiency indicators](http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/iteipc20037_en.pdf), [corporate responsibility reporting](http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/iteteb20076_en.pdf), and [corporate governance disclosure.](http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/iteteb20063_en.pdf)

The [FTSE Group](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/FTSE_Group) publishes the [FTSE4Good Index](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/FTSE4Good_Index), an evaluation of CSR performance of companies.

In some nations, legal requirements for social accounting, auditing and reporting exist (e.g. in the French [bilan social](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Bilan_social&action=edit&redlink=1)), though international or national agreement on meaningful measurements of social and environmental performance is difficult. Many companies now produce externally audited annual reports that cover [Sustainable Development](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sustainable_Development) and CSR issues ("Triple Bottom Line Reports"), but the reports vary widely in format, style, and [evaluation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evaluation) [methodology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Methodology) (even within the same industry). Critics dismiss these reports as [lip service](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lip_service), citing examples such as [Enron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enron)'s yearly "Corporate Responsibility Annual Report" and tobacco corporations' social reports.

In South Africa, as of June 2010, all companies listed on the [Johannesburg Stock Exchange](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johannesburg_Stock_Exchange) (JSE) were required to produce an [integrated report](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Integrated_reporting) in place of an annual financial report and sustainability report.[[10]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_social_responsibility#cite_note-9) An integrated report includes environmental, social and economic performance alongside financial performance information and is expected to provide users with a more holistic overview of a company. However, this requirement was implemented in the absence of any formal or legal standards for an integrated report. An Integrated Reporting Committee (IRC) was established to issue guidelines for good practice in this field.

Potential business benefits

The scale and nature of the benefits of CSR for an organization can vary depending on the nature of the enterprise, and are difficult to quantify, though there is a large body of literature exhorting business to adopt measures beyond financial ones (e.g., [Deming](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/W._Edwards_Deming)'s Fourteen Points, [balanced scorecards](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balanced_scorecard)). Orlitzky, Schmidt, and Rynes[[11]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_social_responsibility#cite_note-10) found a correlation between social/environmental performance and financial performance. However, businesses may not be looking at short-run financial returns when developing their CSR strategy.

The definition of CSR used within an organization can vary from the strict "stakeholder impacts" definition used by many CSR advocates and will often include [charitable efforts](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philanthropy) and[volunteering](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Volunteering). CSR may be based within the [human resources](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_resources), [business development](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_development) or [public relations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_relations) departments of an organisation,[[12]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_social_responsibility#cite_note-11) or may be given a separate unit reporting to the [CEO](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CEO) or in some cases directly to the [board](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Board_of_directors). Some companies may implement CSR-type values without a clearly defined team or programme.

The [business case](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_case) for CSR[[13]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_social_responsibility#cite_note-12) within a company will likely rest on one or more of these arguments:

**Human resources**

A CSR program can be an aid to [recruitment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Recruitment) and [retention](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Employee_retention),[[14]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_social_responsibility#cite_note-13) particularly within the competitive [graduate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Graduate_school) student market. Potential recruits often ask about a firm's CSR policy during an interview, and having a comprehensive policy can give an advantage. CSR can also help improve the perception of a company among its staff, particularly when staff can become involved through [payroll giving](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Payroll_giving), [fundraising](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fundraising) activities or community volunteering. CSR has been found to encourage customer orientation among frontline employees.[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_social_responsibility#cite_note-14)

**Risk management**

Managing [risk](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Risk) is a central part of many corporate strategies. Reputations that take decades to build up can be ruined in hours through incidents such as corruption scandals or environmental accidents.[[16]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_social_responsibility#cite_note-15) These can also draw unwanted attention from regulators, courts, governments and media. Building a genuine culture of 'doing the right thing' within a corporation can offset these risks.[[17]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_social_responsibility#cite_note-16)

**Brand differentiation**

In crowded marketplaces, companies strive for a [unique selling proposition](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unique_selling_proposition) that can separate them from the competition in the minds of consumers. CSR can play a role in building customer loyalty based on distinctive ethical values.[[18]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_social_responsibility#cite_note-17) Several major [brands](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brands), such as [The Co-operative Group](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Co-operative_Group), [The Body Shop](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Body_Shop) and [American Apparel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Apparel)[[19]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_social_responsibility#cite_note-18) are built on ethical values. Business service organizations can benefit too from building a reputation for integrity and best practice.

**License to operate**

Corporations are keen to avoid interference in their business through [taxation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taxation) or [regulations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regulations). By taking substantive voluntary steps, they can persuade governments and the wider public that they are taking issues such as [health and safety](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Health_and_safety), diversity, or the environment seriously as good corporate citizens with respect to labour standards and impacts on the environment.

Criticisms and concerns

Critics of CSR as well as proponents debate a number of concerns related to it. These include CSR's relationship to the fundamental purpose and nature of business and questionable motives for engaging in CSR, including concerns about insincerity and hypocrisy.

**Nature of business**

[Milton Friedman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milton_Friedman) and others have argued that a corporation's purpose is to maximize returns to its shareholders, and that since only people can have social responsibilities, corporations are only responsible to their shareholders and not to society as a whole. Although they accept that corporations should obey the laws of the countries within which they work, they assert that corporations have no other obligation to society. Some people perceive CSR as in-congruent with the very nature and purpose of business, and indeed a hindrance to free trade. Those who assert that CSR is contrasting with [capitalism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capitalism) and are in favor of the [free market](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_market) argue that improvements in health, [longevity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Longevity) and/or [infant mortality](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Infant_mortality) have been created by [economic growth](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic_growth) attributed to [free enterprise](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_enterprise).[[20]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_social_responsibility#cite_note-friedman-19)

Critics of this argument perceive the free market as opposed to the well-being of society and a hindrance to human freedom. They claim that the type of capitalism practiced in many developing countries is a form of economic and [cultural imperialism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_imperialism), noting that these countries usually have fewer labour protections, and thus their citizens are at a higher risk of exploitation by multinational corporations.[[21]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_social_responsibility#cite_note-20)

A wide variety of individuals and organizations operate in between these poles. For example, the REALeadership Alliance asserts that the business of leadership (be it corporate or otherwise) is to change the world for the better.[[22]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_social_responsibility#cite_note-21) Many religious and cultural traditions hold that the economy exists to serve human beings, so all economic entities have an obligation to society (see for example [Economic Justice for All](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic_Justice_for_All)). Moreover, as discussed above, many CSR proponents point out that CSR can significantly improve long-term corporate profitability because it reduces risks and inefficiencies while offering a host of potential benefits such as enhanced brand reputation and [employee engagement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Employee_engagement).

**Motives**

Some critics believe that CSR programs are undertaken by companies such as [British American Tobacco](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_American_Tobacco) (BAT),[[23]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_social_responsibility#cite_note-22) the petroleum giant [BP](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BP) (well known for its high-profile advertising campaigns on environmental aspects of its operations), and [McDonald's](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/McDonald%27s) (see below) to distract the public from ethical questions posed by their core operations. They argue that some corporations start CSR programs for the commercial benefit they enjoy through raising their reputation with the public or with government. They suggest that corporations which exist solely to maximize profits are unable to advance the interests of society as a whole.[[24]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_social_responsibility#cite_note-McKibben-23)

Another concern is that sometimes companies claim to promote CSR and be committed to [sustainable development](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sustainable_development) but simultaneously engage in harmful business practices. For example, since the 1970s, the [McDonald's Corporation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/McDonald%27s_Corporation)'s association with [Ronald McDonald House](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronald_McDonald_House) has been viewed as CSR and relationship marketing. More recently, as CSR has become mainstream, the company has beefed up its CSR programs related to its labor, environmental and other practices[[25]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_social_responsibility#cite_note-24) All the same, in [McDonald's Restaurants v Morris & Steel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/McDonald%27s_Restaurants_v_Morris_%26_Steel), Lord Justices Pill, May and Keane ruled that it was fair comment to say that McDonald's employees worldwide 'do badly in terms of pay and conditions'[[26]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_social_responsibility#cite_note-25) and true that 'if one eats enough McDonald's food, one's diet may well become high in fat etc., with the very real risk of [heart disease](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heart_disease).'[[27]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_social_responsibility#cite_note-26)

[Royal Dutch Shell](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Dutch_Shell) has a much-publicized CSR policy and was a pioneer in [triple bottom line](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Triple_bottom_line) reporting, but this did not prevent the 2004 scandal concerning its misreporting of [oil reserves](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oil_reserves), which seriously damaged its reputation and led to charges of hypocrisy. Since then, the Shell Foundation has become involved in many projects across the world, including a partnership with [Marks and Spencer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marks_and_Spencer) (UK) in three flower and fruit growing communities across Africa.

Critics concerned with corporate hypocrisy and insincerity generally suggest that better governmental and international regulation and enforcement, rather than voluntary measures, are necessary to ensure that companies behave in a socially responsible manner. A major area of necessary international regulation is the reduction of the capacity of corporations to sue states under [investor state dispute settlement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Investor_state_dispute_settlement) provisions in trade or investment treaties if otherwise necessary public health or environment protection legislation has impeded corporate investments.[[28]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_social_responsibility#cite_note-27) Others, such as Patricia Werhane, argue that CSR should be considered more as a corporate moral responsibility, and limit the reach of CSR by focusing more on direct impacts of the organization as viewed through a systems perspective to identify stakeholders. For a commonly overlooked motive for CSR, see also[Corporate Social Entrepreneurship](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_Social_Entrepreneurship), whereby CSR can also be driven by employees' personal values, in addition to the more obvious economic and governmental drivers.

**Ethical consumerism**

The rise in popularity of [ethical consumerism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethical_consumerism) over the last two decades can be linked to the rise of CSR. As global population increases, so does the pressure on limited natural resources required to meet rising consumer demand (Grace and Cohen 2005, 147). Industrialization, in many developing countries, is booming as a result of both technology and globalization. Consumers are becoming more aware of the environmental and social implications of their day-to-day consumer decisions and are therefore beginning to make purchasing decisions related to their environmental and ethical concerns.[[29]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_social_responsibility#cite_note-28) However, this practice is far from consistent or universal.

**Globalization and market forces**

As corporations pursue growth through [globalization](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Globalization), they have encountered new challenges that impose limits to their growth and potential profits. Government regulations, [tariffs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tariff), environmental restrictions and varying standards of what constitutes "labor exploitation" are problems that can cost organizations millions of dollars. Some view ethical issues as simply a costly hindrance, while some companies use CSR methodologies as a strategic tactic to gain public support for their presence in global markets, helping them sustain a competitive advantage by using their social contributions to provide a subconscious level of advertising. (Fry, Keim, Meiners 1986, 105) Global competition places a particular pressure on multinational corporations to examine not only their own labor practices, but those of their entire supply chain, from a CSR perspective.

**Social awareness and education**

The role among corporate stakeholders is to work collectively to pressure corporations that are changing. Shareholders and investors themselves, through [socially responsible investing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socially_responsible_investing) are exerting pressure on corporations to behave responsibly. [Non-governmental organizations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Non-governmental_organization) are also taking an increasing role, leveraging the power of the media and the Internet to increase their scrutiny and collective activism around corporate behavior. Through education and dialogue, the development of community awareness in holding businesses responsible for their actions is growing.[[30]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_social_responsibility#cite_note-29) In recent years, the traditional conception of CSR is being challenged by the more community-conscious [Creating Shared Value](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Creating_Shared_Value) concept (CSV), and several companies are refining their collaboration with stakeholders accordingly.

**Crises and their consequences**

Often it takes a crisis to precipitate attention to CSR. One of the most active stands against environmental management is the [CERES](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coalition_for_Environmentally_Responsible_Economies) Principles that resulted after the [Exxon Valdez](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exxon_Valdez) incident in Alaska in 1989 (Grace and Cohen 2006). Other examples include the [lead poisoning](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lead_poisoning) paint used by toy giant [Mattel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mattel), which required a recall of millions of toys globally and caused the company to initiate new risk management and quality control processes. In another example, [Magellan Metals](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magellan_Metals) in the West Australian town of Esperance was responsible for lead contamination killing thousands of birds in the area. The company had to cease business immediately and work with independent regulatory bodies to execute a cleanup. Odwalla also experienced a crisis with sales dropping 90%, and the company's stock price dropping 34% due to several cases of [E. coli](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Escherichia_coli) spread through Odwalla[apple](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apple) juice. The company ordered a recall of all apple or [carrot](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carrot) juice products and introduced a new process called "flash pasteurization" as well as maintaining lines of communication constantly open with customers.

**Stakeholder priorities**

Increasingly, corporations are motivated to become more socially responsible because their most important stakeholders expect them to understand and address the social and community issues that are relevant to them. Understanding what causes are important to employees is usually the first priority because of the many interrelated business benefits that can be derived from increased employee engagement (i.e. more loyalty, improved recruitment, increased retention, higher productivity, and so on). Key external stakeholders include customers, consumers, investors (particularly institutional investors), communities in the areas where the corporation operates its facilities, regulators, academics, and the media.

Branco and Rodrigues (2007) describe the stakeholder perspective of CSR as the inclusion of all groups or constituents (rather than just shareholders) in managerial decision making related to the organization’s portfolio of socially responsible activities.[[34]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_social_responsibility#cite_note-33) This normative model implies that the CSR collaborations are positively accepted when they are in the interests of stakeholders and may have no effect or be detrimental to the organization if they are not directly related to stakeholder interests. The stakeholder perspective suffers from a wheel and spoke network metaphor that does not acknowledge the complexity of network interactions that can occur in cross sector partnerships. It also relegates communication to a maintenance function, similar to the exchange perspective.[[35]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_social_responsibility#cite_note-34)

Arguments for Including Disability in CSR

In recent years CSR is increasingly becoming a part of a large number of companies. It is becoming an important activity for businesses throughout the globe.

Basically, CSR means that a company's business model should be socially responsible and environmentally sustainable. By socially responsible, it means that the company's activities should benefit the society and by environmentally sustainable it means that the activities of the company should not harm the environment.

But nowadays what we can see is that there is an outburst of enthusiasm for environmental causes only. For example, controlling pollution, global warming, deforestation, mitigate carbon emissions, etc. Whereas it can be said that the same enthusiasm is not seen for social welfare. This is because most of the social welfare activities of the companies contribute to the welfare of us able bodied people but do not take into account the disabled people who are also a part of the society in which the company exists and who amount to at least 10% of the population. Therefore, disability must be made a part of CSR policies of the companies and people with disabilities must be allowed to become stakeholders.

There should be non-discrimination or diversity management awareness-raising and training for employees in the companies, that include disability treatment. They should include the disability factor in employment/HR indicators (age distribution, gender, contract type, professional categories and/or activity areas, rotation) so that the situation of people with disabilities can be compared with that of other employees. The companies should take into account the characteristics of people with disabilities when managing human resources (recruitment, selection, contracting and induction, promotion, training, prevention of risks at work). Customer care staff training should be carried out by the companies aimed at guaranteeing appropriate treatment of people with disabilities. They should have a policy or directive aimed at considering or favouring suppliers and subcontractors that employ people with disabilities, including Sheltered Workshops.

Thus, carrying out business practice which includes disabled people will help improve the company's reputation and image in an increasingly competitive environment.

Finally, disability is one of the factors that can contribute to "Diversity" and Diversity is a rising value within companies’ management. However, disability is often pushed behind in favour of other diversity criteria, thus disability needs to be specifically included within the CSR. [[36]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_social_responsibility#cite_note-35)

Etiquette

Rules of etiquette

Rules of etiquette encompass most aspects of social interaction in any society, though the term itself is not commonly used. A rule of etiquette may reflect an underlying [ethical code](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethical_code), or it may reflect a person's [fashion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fashion) or [status](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_status). Rules of etiquette are usually unwritten, but aspects of etiquette have been codified from time to time.

**Manners**

**Manners** involve a wide range of social interactions within cultural norms as in the "[comedy of manners](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comedy_of_manners)", or a painter's characteristic "manner". Etiquette and manners, like mythology, have buried histories especially when they seem to have little obvious purpose, and their justifications as logical ("respect shown to others" etc.) may be equally revealing to the [social historian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_historian).

**Western office and business etiquette**

The etiquette of business is the set of written and unwritten rules of conduct that make social interactions run more smoothly. Office etiquette in particular applies to coworker interaction, excluding interactions with external contacts such as customers and suppliers. When conducting group meetings in the United States, the assembly might follow[*Robert's Rules of Order*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert%27s_Rules_of_Order), if there are no other company policies to control a meeting.

These rules are often echoed throughout an industry or economy. For instance, 49% of employers surveyed in 2005 by the American National Association of Colleges and Employers found that non-traditional attire would be a "strong influence" on their opinion of a potential job candidate.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette#cite_note-2)

Both office and business etiquette overlap considerably with basic tenets of [netiquette](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Netiquette), the social conventions for using computer networks.

Business etiquette can vary significantly in different countries, which is invariably related to their culture. For example: A notable difference between Chinese and Western business etiquette is conflict handling. Chinese businesses prefer to look upon relationship management to avoid conflicts[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette#cite_note-3) - stemmed from a culture that heavily relies on [Guanxi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guanxi). While the west leaves resolution of conflict to the interpretations of law through contracts and lawyers.

Adjusting to foreign etiquettes is a major complement of [culture shock](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture_shock), providing a market for manuals.[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette#cite_note-4) Other resources include business and diplomacy institutions, available only in certain countries such as the UK.[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette#cite_note-5)

International

**Japan**

The Japanese are very formal. Moments of silence are far from awkward. Smiling doesn’t always mean that the individual is expressing pleasure. Business cards are to be handed out formally following this procedure: Hand card with writing facing upwards; bow when giving and receiving the card; grasp it with both hands; read it carefully; and put it in a prominent place. The Japanese feel a “Giri” an obligation to reciprocate a gesture of kindness. They also rely on an innate sense of right and wrong.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Conversation** | **Business** | **Dining** | **Leisure** |
| • Bow when greeting someone.• Do not display emotion..• Do not blow your nose in public.• Do not stand with your hands in your pocket.• Displaying an open mouth is rude. | • Bow in greeting.• Females should avoid heels.• Do not stash away a business card in a pocket or in a place where it is likely to be misplaced or damaged.• Look at the business card when given, and try to say something genuinely nice about it (colors, font, raised lettering, etc.).• Exchange business cards.• Moments of silence are normal.• Do not slouch.• Cross legs at the ankles.• Do not interrupt but listen carefully.• Do not chew gum. | • It is acceptable to make noise while eating.• Food is judged by not only the taste but also the consistency.• Do not mix sake with any other alcohol.• Try any food that is given to you.• Rice left in your bowl indicates the desire for second helpings.• If someone offers you sake, drink. | • Remove shoes before entering homes and restaurants.• To beckon a person extend hand palm down and make a scratching motion.• The Japanese wear surgical masks when they have a cold.• Men sit cross-legged and women sit on their legs or with their legs to the side. |

Cultural differences

Etiquette is dependent on [culture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture); what is excellent etiquette in one society may shock another. Etiquette evolves within culture. The Dutch painter [Andries Both](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andries_Both) shows that the hunt for [head lice](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Head_lice) (*illustration, right*), which had been a civilized grooming occupation in the early Middle Ages, a bonding experience that reinforced the comparative rank of two people, one groomed the other, one was the subject of the groomer, had become a peasant occupation by 1630. The painter portrays the familiar operation matter-of-factly, without the disdain this subject would have received in a 19th-century representation.

Etiquette can vary widely between different cultures and nations. For example, in [Hausa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hausa_people) culture, eating while standing may be seen as offensively casual and ill-omened behavior, insulting the host and showing a lack of respect for the scarcity of food—the offense is known as "eating with the devil" or "committing *santi*." In China, a person who takes the last item of food from a common plate or bowl without first offering it to others at the table may be seen as a glutton who is insulting the host's generosity. Traditionally, if guests do not have leftover food in front of them at the end of a meal, it is to the dishonour of the host. In America a guest is expected to eat all of the food given to them, as a compliment to the quality of the cooking. However, it is still considered polite to offer food from a common plate or bowl to others at the table.

In such rigid hierarchal cultures as Korea and Japan, alcohol helps to break down the strict social barrier between classes. It allows for a hint of informality to creep in. It is traditional for host and guest to take turns filling each other's cups and encouraging each other to gulp it down. For someone who does not consume alcohol (except for religious reasons), it can be difficult escaping the ritual of the social drink.[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette#cite_note-IBC-6)

Etiquette is a topic that has occupied writers and thinkers in all sophisticated societies for millennia, beginning with a behavior code by[Ptahhotep](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ptahhotep), a vizier in ancient Egypt's [Old Kingdom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_Kingdom) during the reign of the Fifth Dynasty king [DjedkareIsesi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Djedkare_Isesi) (ca. 2414–2375 BC). All known literate civilizations, including ancient Greece and Rome, developed rules for proper social conduct. [Confucius](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confucius) included rules for eating and speaking along with his more philosophical sayings.

[Early modern](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Early_modern) conceptions of what behavior identifies a "[gentleman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gentleman)" were codified in the 16th century, in a book by [Baldassare Castiglione](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baldassare_Castiglione), *Il Cortegiano* ("The Courtier"); its codification of expectations at the [Este](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Este) court remained in force in its essentials until [World War I](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_I). [Louis XIV](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis_XIV) established an elaborate and rigid court ceremony, but distinguished himself from the high bourgeoisie by continuing to eat, stylishly and fastidiously, with his fingers. An important book about etiquette is [*Galateo, overo de' costumi*](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Galateo,_overo_de%27_costumi&action=edit&redlink=1) by Monsignor[Giovannidella Casa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giovanni_della_Casa); in fact, in [Italian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian_language), etiquette is generally called *galateo* (or *etichetta* or *protocollo*).

As noted above, across the world, [Debrett's](http://www.debretts.com/) is considered by many to be the arbiter of etiquette; its guides to manners and form have long been and continue to be the last word among polite society[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)]

In the American colonies [Benjamin Franklin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benjamin_Franklin) and [George Washington](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Washington) wrote codes of conduct for young gentlemen. The immense popularity of advice columns and books by [Letitia Baldrige](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Letitia_Baldrige) and [Miss Manners](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judith_Martin) shows the currency of this topic. Even more recently, the rise of the Internet has necessitated the adaptation of existing rules of conduct to create[Netiquette](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Netiquette), which governs the drafting of e-mail, rules for participating in an online forum, and so on.

In Germany, many books dealing with etiquette, especially dining, dressing etc., are called *the*[*Knigge*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knigge), named after [Adolph FreiherrKnigge](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adolph_Freiherr_Knigge) who wrote the book *Über den Umgangmit Menschen* (*On Human Relations*) in the late 18th century. However, this book is about good manner and also about the social states of its time, but not about etiquette.

Etiquette may be wielded as a social weapon. The outward adoption of the superficial mannerisms of an in-group, in the interests of social advancement rather than a concern for others, is considered by many a form of [snobbery](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Snob), lacking in [virtue](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virtue).

Work etiquette

**Work**[**etiquette**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette) is a code that governs the expectations of social [behavior](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Behavior) in a [workplace](http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/workplace), in a group or a [society](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Society). Work etiquette tells the individual how to behave when dealing with situations in a working environment however trivial the situation is. Office etiquette in particular applies to co-worker interaction and communication with colleagues. There is no universal agreement about a standard work etiquette which may vary from one environment to another.

Netiquette

**Netiquette** (short for "[network](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Computer_network) [etiquette](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette)" or "[Internet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet) etiquette") is a set of social conventions that facilitate interaction over networks, ranging from [Usenet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Usenet) and [mailing lists](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mailing_list) to [blogs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blog)and [forums](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_forum). These rules were described in [IETF](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IETF) [RFC 1855](http://tools.ietf.org/html/rfc1855).[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Netiquette#cite_note-0) However, like many [Internet phenomena](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_phenomena), the concept and its application remain in a state of flux, and vary from community to community. The points most strongly emphasized about USENET netiquette often include using simple [electronic signatures](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Electronic_signatures), and avoiding multiposting, [cross-posting](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cross-posting), [off-topic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Off-topic) posting, hijacking a discussion thread, and other techniques used to minimize the effort required to read a post or a thread. Netiquette guidelines posted by [IBM](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IBM) for employees utilizing [Second Life](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Life) in an official capacity, however, focus on basic professionalism, amiable work environment, and protecting IBM's [intellectual property](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intellectual_property).[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Netiquette#cite_note-1) Similarly, some Usenet guidelines call for use of unabbreviated English[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Netiquette#cite_note-2)[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Netiquette#cite_note-3) while users of [instant messaging](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Instant_messaging) protocols like [SMS](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Short_message_service) occasionally encourage just the opposite, bolstering use of[SMS language](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SMS_language). However, many other online communities frown upon this practice.

Common characteristics

Common rules for e-mail[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Netiquette#cite_note-4) and USENET such as avoiding [flamewars](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flaming_%28Internet%29) and [spam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spam_%28electronic%29) are constant across most mediums and communities. Another rule is to avoid typing in [ALL CAPS](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ALL_CAPS)or grossly enlarging script for emphasis, which is considered to be the equivalent of shouting or yelling. Other commonly shared points, such as remembering that one's posts are (or can easily be made) public, are generally intuitively understood by publishers of Web pages and posters to USENET, although this rule is somewhat flexible depending on the environment. On more private protocols, however, such as e-mail and SMS, some users take the privacy of their posts for granted. One-on-one communications, such as private messages on chat forums and direct SMSs, may be considered more private than other such protocols, but infamous breaches surround even these relatively private media. For example, [Paris Hilton](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paris_Hilton)'s [Sidekick](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Danger_Hiptop) [PDA](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Personal_digital_assistant) was [cracked](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hacker_%28computer_security%29#Black_hat) in 2005, resulting in the publication of her private photos, SMS history, address book, etc.[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Netiquette#cite_note-5)

More substantially, a group e-mail sent by [Cerner](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cerner) CEO [Neal Patterson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neal_Patterson) to managers of a facility in [Kansas City](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kansas_City%2C_Missouri) concerning "Cerner's declining work ethic" read, in part, "The parking lot is sparsely used at 8 A.M.; likewise at 5 P.M. As managers - you either do not know what your EMPLOYEES are doing; or YOU do not CARE ... In either case, you have a problem and you will fix it or I will replace you."[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Netiquette#cite_note-6) After the e-mail was forwarded to hundreds of other employees, it quickly leaked to the public. On the day that the e-mail was posted to [Yahoo!](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yahoo%21), Cerner's stock price fell by over 22%[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Netiquette#cite_note-7) from a high of US$1.5 billion.[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Netiquette#cite_note-E-Mail_Rules-8)

Beyond matters of basic courtesy and privacy, e-mail syntax (defined by [RFC 2822](http://tools.ietf.org/html/rfc2822)) allows for different types of recipients. The primary recipient, defined by the To: line, can reasonably be expected to respond, but recipients of [carbon copies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carbon_copies) cannot be, although they still might.[[10]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Netiquette#cite_note-9) Likewise, misuse of the CC: functions in lieu of traditional [mailing lists](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mailing_list)can result in serious technical issues. In late 2007, employees of the United States [Department of Homeland Security](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Department_of_Homeland_Security) used large CC: lists in place of a mailing list to broadcast messages to several hundred users. Misuse of the "reply to all" caused the number of responses to that message to quickly expand to some two million messages, bringing down their mail server.[[11]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Netiquette#cite_note-10) In cases like this, rules of netiquette have to do with efficient sharing of resources and ensuring that the associated technology continues to function rather than more basic etiquette.

"When someone makes a mistake – whether it's a spelling error or a spelling flame, a stupid question or an unnecessarily long answer – be kind about it. If it's a minor error, you may not need to say anything. Even if you feel strongly about it, think twice before reacting. Having good manners yourself doesn't give you license to correct everyone else. If you do decide to inform someone of a mistake, point it out politely, and preferably by private email rather than in public. Give people the benefit of the doubt; assume they just don't know any better. And never be arrogant or self-righteous about it. Just as it's a law of nature that spelling flames always contain spelling errors, notes pointing out Netiquette violations are often examples of poor Netiquette."[[12]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Netiquette#cite_note-11)

Due to the large variation between what is considered acceptable behavior in various professional environments and between professional and social networks, codified internal[manuals of style](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Style_guide) can help clarify acceptable limits and boundaries for user behavior. For instance, failure to publish such a guide for e-mail style was cited among the reasons for a NZ$17,000 [wrongful dismissal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wrongful_dismissal) finding against a firm that fired a woman for misuse of [all caps](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/All_caps) in company-wide e-mail traffic.[[13]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Netiquette#cite_note-NZ_Herald_10594014-12)[[14]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Netiquette#cite_note-13)

Business communication

**Business Communication**: communication used to promote a product, service, or organization; relay information within the business; or deal with legal and similar issues. It is also a means of relaying between a supply chain, for example the consumer and manufacturer.

Business Communication is known simply as "communications". It encompasses a variety of topics, including [marketing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marketing), [branding](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brand_management), [customer relations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Customer_relations), [consumer behaviour](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consumer_behaviour),[advertising](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Advertising), [public relations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_relations), corporate [communication](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communication), [community](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community) engagement, [research](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Research) & [measurement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Measurement), [reputation management](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reputation_management), [interpersonal communication](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interpersonal_communication), [employee engagement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Employee_engagement), [online](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Online) communication, and [event management](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Event_management). It is closely related to the fields of [professional communication](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Professional_communication) and [technical communication](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Technical_communication).

In business, the term communications encompasses various channels of communication, including the [Internet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet), Print ([Publications](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Publication)), [Radio](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Radio), [Television](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Television), [Ambient media](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ambient_media), Outdoor, and [Word of mouth](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Word_of_mouth).

Business Communication can also refer to internal communication. A [communications director](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communications_director) will typically manage internal communication and craft messages sent to employees. It is vital that internal communications are managed properly because a poorly crafted or managed message could foster distrust or hostility from employees.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_communication#cite_note-0)

Business Communication is a common topic included in the curricula of Masters of Business Administration ([MBA](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MBA)) programs of many universities. AS well, many community colleges and universities offer degrees in Communications.

There are several methods of business communication, including:

* [Web-based](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web-based) communication - for better and improved communication, anytime anywhere ...
* [video conferencing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Video_conferencing) which allow people in different locations to hold interactive meetings;
* [e-mails](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/E-mail), which provide an instantaneous medium of written communication worldwide;
* [Reports](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Report) - important in documenting the activities of any department;
* [Presentations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Presentation) - very popular method of communication in all types of organizations, usually involving audiovisual material, like copies of reports, or material prepared in [Microsoft PowerPoint](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Microsoft_PowerPoint) or [Adobe Flash](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adobe_Flash);
* [telephoned](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Telephone) meetings, which allow for long distance [speech](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Speech);
* forum boards, which allow people to instantly post information at a centralized location; and
* face-to-face meetings, which are personal and should be succeeded by a written followup.

Business communication is somewhat different and unique from other types of communication since the purpose of business is to make money. Thus, to develop profitability, the communicator should develop good [communication skills](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communication_skills). Knowing the importance of communication, many organisations train their employees in [communication techniques](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Communication_techniques&action=edit&redlink=1).

Types of business communication

Knowing the different types of business [communication](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communication) is important for using the right type at the right moment. The following are the different types of business communication.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_communication#cite_note-1)

* **Verbal communication:**

Verbal communication is a type of communication that involves use of words for communicating.

* **Non-verbal communication:**

[Non-verbal communication](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Non-verbal_communication) is a mode of communication which only majorly uses body language and various other physical gestures as a means for communicating.

* **Written communication:**

Written communication is a type that only includes written forms for communicating.

* **Employment communication:**

Employment communication is a mode of communication that is particularly used for accepting the applicants for a job.

* **Electronic communication:**

Electronic communication is the modern way of communication that includes electronics and latest technology for communicating such as teleconferencing e-mail, etc.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_communication#cite_note-2)

* **Team B Communication:**

Team B Communication is a form of communication that exists in the cyber classroom where solid teamwork and collaboration results in excellent grades in academia.[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_communication#cite_note-3)}}

Top 6 Reasons for Business Communication Barriers

* 1.**Complex Messages:** The use of complex technical terms can result in a lack of communication. The remedy is to stick to the point, use clear and concise messages that are easy to understand.
* 2. **Withholding Information:** In an organization, much of the information is kept confidential due to company policies. Make sure the information that is needed is readily available and easily accessible.
* 3. **Different Status:** Management must keep employees well informed and encourage feedback.
* 4. **Ineffective Communication Processes:** The maintenance of the hierarchy in the organization is essential, but tits very presence can reduce the flow of the communication. It is therefore essential to reduce hierarchical levels and increase departmental interaction and communication.
* 5. **Lack of Trust:** The most important factor behind a lack of communication in an organization is competition, which leads to a lack of trust among the various employees. Share information, communicate openly and honestly, involve others in decisions.
* 6. **Language barrier** Language barrier is another important factor in business communication, if communication happens without a common language, it is not worthwhile.

Organizations

* Founded in 1936 by Shankar with the Association for Business Communication (ABC),[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_communication#cite_note-4) originally called the Association of College Teachers of Business Writing, is “an international organization committed to fostering excellence in business communication scholarship,research ,education, and practice.”
* The IEEE Professional Communication Society (PCS) [[2]](http://ewh.ieee.org/soc/pcs/) is dedicated to understanding and promoting effective communication in engineering, scientific, and other environments, including business environments. PCS's academic journal,[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_communication#cite_note-5) is one of the premier journals in Europe communication. The journal’s readers are engineers,writers, information designers, managers, and others working as scholars, educators, and practitioners who share an interest in the effective communication of technical and business information.

Business letter

A **commercial business letter** is a [letter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Letter_%28message%29) written in formal language, usually used when writing from one business organization to another, or for correspondence between such organizations and their customers, clients and other external parties. The overall style of letter will depend on the relationship between the parties concerned. There are many reasons to write a business letter. It could be to request direct information or action from another party, to order supplies from a supplier, to identify a mistake that was committed, to reply directly to a request, to apologize for a wrong or simply to convey goodwill. Even today, the business letter is still very useful because it produces a permanent record, is confidential, formal and delivers persuasive, well-considered messages.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_letter#cite_note-0)

General Format

There are two main styles of business letters:

1. **Full block style**: Align all elements on the left margin.
2. **Modified block style with other elements on the left page margin.**

**Margins**

In general, left and right margins are one inch (approx. 2.5 cm).

For letters that are a full page or longer, top and bottom margins are likewise one inch (approx. 2.5 cm).

For letters shorter than a full page, the text is centered vertically so that the top and bottom margins match.

**Font Formatting**

No special character or font formatting is used, except for the subject line, which is usually underlined.

**Punctuation**

The [salutation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salutation)/greeting is generally followed by a [comma](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comma), although in the United States a [colon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colon_%28punctuation%29) is often preferred. The [valediction](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Valediction)/closing is followed by a [comma](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comma).

Indentation Formats

Business letters conform to generally one of four indentation formats: Block, Semi-Block, Modified Block, and Modified Semi-Block. Put simply, "Semi-" means that the first lines of paragraphs are indented; "Modified" means that the sender's address, date, and closing are significantly indented.

**Block**

In a Block format letter, (1) all text is aligned to the left margin, (2) paragraphs are not indented. 3) paragraphs are separated by double or triple spacing.

**Semi-Block**

In a Semi-Block format letter (1) all text is aligned to the left margin, (2) paragraphs are indented.

**Modified Block**

In a Modified Block format letter, (1) all text is aligned to the left margin, except for the author's address, date, and closing; and (2) paragraphs are not indented. The author's address, date, and closing are usually indented three inches from the left margin, but can be set anywhere to the right of the middle of the page, as long as all three elements are indented to the same position.

**Modified Semi-Block**

In a Modified Semi-Block format letter, (1) all text is aligned to the left margin, except for the author's address, date, and closing; and (2) paragraphs are indented. The author's address, date, and closing are usually indented in same position

# Presentation

**Presentation** is the practice of showing and explaining the content of a topic to an audience or [learner](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Learner). Presentations come in nearly as many forms as there are life situations. In the business world, there are sales presentations, informational and motivational presentations, first encounters, interviews, briefings, status reports, image-building, and of course, the inevitable training sessions.

Although individuals most often think of presentations in a business meeting context, there are countless occasions when that is not the case. For example, a Non Profit Organization presents the need for a capital fund-raising campaign to benefit the victims of a recent tragedy; a school district superintendent presents a program to parents about the introduction of foreign-language instruction in the elementary schools; an artist demonstrates decorative painting techniques to a group of interior designers; a horticulturist shows garden club members or homeowners how they might use native plants in the suburban landscape; a police officer addresses a neighborhood association about initiating a safety program.

Presentations can also be categorized as vocational and avocational. In addition, they are expository or persuasive. And they can be impromptu, extemporaneous, written, or memorized. When looking at presentations in the broadest terms, it's more important to focus on their purpose. There are three basic purposes for giving oral presentations:

1. To inform
2. To persuade
3. To build good will

## Definitions

* The process of offering for consideration or display
* A social introduction, as of a person at court
* A demonstration, lecture, or welcoming speech
* A manner or style of speaking, instructing, or putting oneself forward
* The manner of presenting, esp the organization of visual details to create an overall impression
* The formal introduction of a person, as into society or at court; debut

There are three types of presentations:- 1.Informative 2.Analyzing 3.Persuading

## Audience

There are far more types of audiences than there are types of presentations because audiences are made up of people and people come in innumerable flavors. Individuals could be invited to speak to groups all across the country. What the individual says and how they may say it depends on the makeup of those groups. They may ask you the individual to address a room full of factory operations managers who have no choice but to attend their talk, you they may go before a congressional committee looking into various environmental issues. When an individual stands up to deliver a presentation before an audience, its essential that the audience know who the presenter is, why they are there, what specifically they expect to get from your presentation, and how they will react to your message. You won’t always be able to determine these factors, but you should try to gather as much background information as possible before your presentation. There will be times, especially with presentations that are open to the public, when you will only be able to guess.

Audiences can be classified into *four* basic categories:

1. Captives
2. Pragmatists
3. Socially motivated
4. Committed

## Visuals

A study done by Wharton School Of Business showed that the use of visuals reduced meeting times by 28 percent. Another study found that audiences believe presenters who use visuals are more professional and credible than presenters who merely speak. And still other research indicates that meetings and presentations reinforced with visuals help participants reach decisions and consensus in less time.

A [presentation program](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Presentation_program), such as [Microsoft PowerPoint](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Microsoft_PowerPoint), [Apple Keynote](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keynote_%28presentation_software%29), [OpenOffice.org Impress](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/OpenOffice.org_Impress) or [Prezi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prezi), is often used to generate the presentation content. Modern internet based presentation software, such as the presentation application in [Google Docs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Google_Docs) and [SlideRocket](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SlideRocket) also allow presentations to be developed collaboratively by geographically disparate collaborators.

## External links

* [Ten Simple Rules for Good Presentations](http://scivee.tv/node/2903)
* [A Periodic Table of Visualization Methods](http://www.visual-literacy.org/periodic_table/periodic_table.html)
* [Portable Electronic Presentations (Pacific Northwest Research Station)](http://www.fs.fed.us/pnw/pep/)

# Nonverbal communication

**Nonverbal communication** is usually understood as the process of [communication](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communication) through sending and receiving wordless (mostly [visual](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Visual)) messages between people. Messages can be communicated through [gestures](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gesture) and touch, by [body language](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Body_language) or posture, by [facial expression](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Facial_expression) and [eye contact](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eye_contact). Nonverbal messages could also be communicated through material exponential; meaning, objects or artifacts (such as clothing, hairstyles or [architecture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Architecture)). Speech contains nonverbal elements known as [paralanguage](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paralanguage), including [voice quality](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Voice_quality), rate, pitch, [volume](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Volume), and speaking style, as well [prosodic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prosodic) features such as [rhythm](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhythm), [intonation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intonation_%28linguistics%29), and [stress](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stress_%28linguistics%29). Likewise, written texts have nonverbal elements such as handwriting style, spatial arrangement of words, or the physical layout of a page. However, much of the study of nonverbal communication has focused on face-to-face interaction, where it can be classified into three principal areas: [environmental](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_environment) conditions where communication takes place, physical characteristics of the communicators, and behaviors of communicators during interaction.

## Importance

 “Most social psychologists will tell you that nonverbal communication makes up about two-thirds of all communication between two people or between one speaker and a group of listeners.”[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonverbal_communication#cite_note-Hogan.2C_K._2003-0) Nonverbal communication can portray a message both verbally and with the correct body signals. “There are numerous elements of what we call body language. They include [physical features](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Physical_features), both changeable and unchangeable, your [gestures](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gestures)and signals you send to others at a conscious and [unconscious](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unconscious_communication) level, and the space that you use when communicating with others.”[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonverbal_communication#cite_note-Hogan.2C_K._2003-0) The wrong message can be established if the body language conveyed does not match a verbal message. Nonverbal communication strengthens a first impression in common situations like attracting a partner or in a business interview. “You have less than ten seconds and realistically close to four seconds to make a good [impression](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Impression_management) on those with whom you come in contact.”[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonverbal_communication#cite_note-Hogan.2C_K._2003-0) First encounters or interactions with another person strongly affect a person’s [lifestyle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lifestyle_%28sociology%29). “People are more likely to believe that the first things they learn are the truth.”[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonverbal_communication#cite_note-1) When the other person or group is absorbing the message they are focused on the entire [environment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_environment) around them, meaning, the other person uses all five senses in the [interaction](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interaction). “Sight makes up 83% of the impact on the brain of information from the senses during a visual presentation. Taste makes up 1%, Hearing makes up 11%, smell 3% and touch 2%.”[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonverbal_communication#cite_note-Pease_B._2004-2)

## Posture

Posture or a person's bodily stance communicates a variety of messages. Posture can be used to determine a participant’s degree of attention or involvement, the difference in status between communicators, and the level of fondness a person has for the other communicator, depending on body “openness”.[5] Studies investigating the impact of posture on interpersonal relationships suggest that mirror-image congruent postures, where one person’s left side is parallel to the other person’s right side, leads to favorable perception of communicators and positive [speech](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Speech); a person who displays a forward lean or decreases a backward lean also signifies positive sentiment during communication.[6]

There are many different types of posture. Some of these postures include: slouching, towering, legs spread, jaw thrust, shoulders forward, and arm crossing. These nonverbal behaviors can indicate feelings and [attitudes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attitude_%28psychology%29) toward another person. An example of good posture includes standing erect, and leaning forward communicates to a person that you are approachable, receptive, and friendly. A person talking to someone that is constantly looking at the floor or ceiling makes it seem as though disinterest with the [conversation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conversation). Always try to avoid negative posture. “Lean forward when listening, stand straight when speaking.”[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonverbal_communication#cite_note-Pease_B._2004-2)

Posture can be situation-relative. “A nineteen-year-old college student from New York will use different postures than a Mid-western housewife, and a construction worker in the state of Washington will use different postures than a salesman in Chicago[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonverbal_communication#cite_note-3) Another example of posture being situational on more of a daily basis can be described in Driver’s book: “Four situational norms of posture would be, Flirting, where the norm is 60% eye contact, Job Interview with a relaxed and open body language, Business Negotiation where the norm is leaning back while steeping and Buying a Car where most have hands on hips with feet more than ten inches apart.”[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonverbal_communication#cite_note-4)

## Clothing

Clothing is the most common form of non-verbal communication. The types of clothing that an individual wears convey nonverbal clues about his or her personality, background and financial status, and how others will respond to them, for instance, “[Miniskirts](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miniskirts) can give a woman the appearance that she is not approachable.”[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonverbal_communication#cite_note-Pease_B._2004-2) This demonstrates a certain response, in this case, a negative and unapproachable response, simply via [appearance](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_physical_appearance). It is important to understand that their exterior and demeanor influence how others will react to them. An individual’s clothing style can demonstrate their [culture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture), [mood](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mood_%28psychology%29), level of confidence, interests, age, authority, value/beliefs, and their sexual identity. Some examples of a person’s clothing type in which a negative message is being conveyed could include the following: A person with a sloppy appearance, messy hair, and wrinkled clothes sends the message, "I don't care". Also, a woman who wears a tight dress with a low-cut neckline may convey the message "I'm attractive and sexy" or “Want to come back to my place tonight"? By showing the positive aspects of his or her self through dress attire and grooming, one can inspire confidence in his or her abilities.

A study,[2] carried out in [Vienna, Austria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vienna%2C_Austria), of the clothing worn by women attending discothèques showed that in certain groups of women (especially women who were without their partners), motivation for [sex](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sex) and levels of sexual [hormones](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hormones) were correlated with aspects of their clothing, especially the amount of skin displayed and the presence of sheer clothing. Thus, to some degree, clothing sends signals about interest in [courtship](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Courtship).

## Gestures

Gestures may be made with the [hands](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hands), arms or [body](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Body), and also include movements of the head, [face](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Face) and [eyes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eyes), such as [winking](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Winking), nodding, or rolling one's eyes. Although the study of gesture is still in its [infancy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Infancy), some broad categories of gestures have been identified by researchers. The most familiar are the so-called emblems or quotable gestures. These are conventional, culture-specific gestures that can be used as replacement for words, such as the hand wave used in western cultures for "hello" and "goodbye." A single emblematic gesture can have a very different significance in different cultural contexts, ranging from complimentary to highly offensive.[9] For a list of emblematic gestures, see [List of gestures](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_gestures). There are some universal gestures like the shoulder shrug. “The shoulder shrug is a good example of a universal gesture that is used to show that a person doesn’t know or doesn’t understand what you are saying. It’s a multiple gesture that has three main parts: exposed palms to show nothing is being concealed in the hands, hunched shoulders to protect the throat from attack, and raised brow, which is a universal, submissive greeting”[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonverbal_communication#cite_note-Pease_B._2004-2)

Gestures can also be categorized as either speech independent or speech related. Speech-independent gestures are dependent upon culturally accepted interpretation and have a direct verbal[translation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Translation).[7] A wave or a [V-sign| peace sign] are examples of speech-independent gestures. Speech-related gestures are used in parallel with verbal speech; this form of nonverbal communication is used to emphasize the message that is being communicated. Speech-related gestures are intended to provide supplemental information to a verbal message such as pointing to an object of discussion.

Facial expressions, more than anything, serve as a practical means of communication. With all the various muscles that precisely control mouth, lips, eyes, nose, forehead,and jaw, human faces are estimated to be capable of more than ten thousand different expressions. This versatility makes non-verbals of the face extremely efficient and honest, unless deliberately manipulated. In addition, many of these emotions, including happiness, sadness, anger, fear, surprise, disgust, shame, anguish and interest are universally recognized.[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonverbal_communication#cite_note-5)

Displays of emotions can generally be categorized into two groups: negative and positive. Negative emotions usually manifest as increased tension in various muscle groups: tightening of jaw muscles, furrowing of forehead, squinting eyes, or lip occlusion (when the lips seemingly disappear). In contrast, positive emotions are revealed by the loosening of the furrowed lines on the forehead, relaxation of the muscles around the mouth, and widening of the eye area. When individuals are truly relaxed and at ease, the head will also tilt to the side, exposing our most vulnerable area, the neck. This is a high-comfort display, often seen during courtship that is nearly impossible to mimic when we are tense or suspicious.[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonverbal_communication#cite_note-6)

## Engagement

Eye-contact is the primary notion to where a message of attention is being conveyed in engagement with Nonverbal communication. Eye contact is when two people look at each other's eyes at the same time; it can indicate interest, attention, and involvement. Studies have found that people use their eyes to indicate their interest and not just with the frequently recognized actions of [winking](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Winking) and movements of the eyebrows, but it can indicate social [behavior](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Behavior). Men and [women](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women) have different ways of eye contact. Men stare at the women they are interested in for at least a half an hour, whereas women tend to always keep their eyes roaming around the room to see who is there. Disinterest is highly noticeable when showing little eye-contact in a social setting. [Pupils](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pupils) dilate when they are interested in the other person. People, sometimes, even, without consciously doing so, probe each other's eyes and faces for positive or negative mood signs. Generally speaking, the longer the eye contact between two people the greater the [intimacy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intimacy) is felt inside[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonverbal_communication#cite_note-Hogan.2C_K._2003-0) According to Eckman,“Eye contact (also called mutual gaze) is another major channel of nonverbal communication. The duration of eye contact is its most meaningful aspect.)[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonverbal_communication#cite_note-7) Gaze comprises the actions of looking while talking and listening. The length of a gaze, the frequency of glances, patterns of fixation, pupil [dilation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pupillary_dilation), and blink rate are all important cues in nonverbal communication.[10] “Liking generally increases as mutual gazing increases.” [8][[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonverbal_communication#cite_note-Hogan.2C_K._2003-0) Along with the detection of disinterest, [deceit](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deceit) can also be observed in a person. Hogan states “when someone is being deceptive their eyes tend to blink a lot more. Eyes act as leading indicator of truth or deception,”[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonverbal_communication#cite_note-Hogan.2C_K._2003-0) Eye aversion is the avoidance of eye contact. Eye contact and facial expressions provide important social and emotional information. Overall, as Pease states, “Give the amount of eye contact that makes everyone feel comfortable. Unless looking at others is a cultural no-no, lookers gain more credibility than non-lookers”[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonverbal_communication#cite_note-Pease_B._2004-2)

In concealing [deception](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deception), nonverbal communication makes it easier to lie without being revealed. This is the conclusion of a study where people watched made-up interviews of persons accused of having stolen a wallet. The interviewees lied in about 50% of the cases. People had access to either written transcript of the interviews, or audio tape recordings, or video recordings. The more clues that were available to those watching, the larger was the trend that interviewees who actually lied were judged to be truthful. That is, people that are clever at lying can use voice tone and face expression to give the impression that they are truthful.[15] However, there are many cited examples of cues to deceit,[16]delivered via nonverbal (Para verbal and visual) communication channels, through which deceivers supposedly unwittingly provide clues to their concealed knowledge or actual opinions. Most studies examining the nonverbal cues to deceit rely upon human coding of video footage (c.f. Vrij, 2008[17]), although a recent study also demonstrated bodily movement differences between truth-tellers and liars using an automated body motion capture system[18]

Deceit also involves distress. One recent study set out to find how well people could communicate distress signals non-verbally. The research shows that you can identify certain social cues that can help you to predict that person's behavior. This is not always true though. The cues depend on the mindset of the person and cannot be predicted. The study was able to find 55 identifiable distress cues.[42]

## Genetics

“In the study of nonverbal communications, the limbic [brain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brain) is where the action is…because it is the part of the brain that reacts to the world around us reflexively and instantaneously, in real time, and without thought.”[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonverbal_communication#cite_note-8) Genetics is a harder field to study in dealing with Nonverbal Communication, but there is evidence that the nonverbal cues made from person-to-person do not entirely have something to do with [environment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_environment). “When you cross your arms on your chest, do you cross left over right or right over left? – Seven out of ten people cross their left arm over their right…Evidence suggests that this may well be a genetic gesture that cannot be changed.”[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonverbal_communication#cite_note-Pease_B._2004-2) So how is it studied in an entirely environmentally free environment? “Evidence has been collected from observation of[blind](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blindness) people (who could not have learned nonverbal signals through a visual channel).”[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonverbal_communication#cite_note-Pease_B._2004-2)

Other than gestures, phenotypic traits can also convey certain messages in nonverbal communication, for instance, eye color, hair color and height. Research into height has generally found that taller people are perceived as being more impressive. Melamed and Bozionelos (1992) studied a sample of managers in the [United Kingdom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom) and found that height was a key factor in who was promoted. Height can have benefits and depressors too. “Being tall, however, is not always a bonus. While tall people often command more respect than short people, height can also be detrimental to some aspects of one-to-one communication, for instance, where you need to ‘talk on the same level’ or have an ‘eye-to-eye’ discussion with another person and do not want to be perceived as too big for your boots.”[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonverbal_communication#cite_note-Pease_B._2004-2)

## Proxemics: Physical Space in Communication

When you are talking to someone stay out of their “intimate space” they want to talk to you but just do not want to have you all over them. “ Most animals have a certain air space around their bodies that they claim as their personal space…1-18 in being the intimate zone, 18-48 in being the personal zone, 4-12 ft. being the social zone and the public zone at over 12 ft.”[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonverbal_communication#cite_note-Pease_B._2004-2)

[Proxemics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Proxemics) is the study of how people use and perceive the physical space around them. The space between the sender and the receiver of a message influences the way the message is interpreted. In addition, the perception and use of space varies significantly across cultures[[10]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonverbal_communication#cite_note-9) and different settings within cultures. Space in nonverbal communication may be divided into four main categories: intimate, social, personal, and public space.

The term territoriality is used in the study of proxemics to explain human behavior regarding personal space.[[11]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonverbal_communication#cite_note-10) Hargie& Dickson (2004, p. 69) identify 4 such territories:

1. Primary territory: This refers to an area that is associated with someone who has exclusive use of it. An example is a house that others cannot enter without the owner’s permission.
2. Secondary territory: Unlike primary territory, there is no “right” to occupancy of secondary territory, but people may still feel some degree of ownership of such space as they develop the custom of occupying it. For example, someone may sit in the same seat in church every week and feel irritated if someone else sits there.
3. Public territory: this refers to an area that is available to all, but only for a set period, such as a parking space or a seat in a library. Although people have only a limited claim over that space, they often extend that claim. For example, it was found that people take longer to leave a parking space when someone is waiting to take that space.
4. Interaction territory: this is space held by others when they are interacting. For example, when a group is talking to each other on a footpath, others will walk around the group rather than disturb their interaction territory.

## Movement and body position

### Kinesics

The term "[kinesics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kinesics)" was first used (in 1952) by [Ray Birdwhistell](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ray_Birdwhistell), an anthropologist who wished to study how people communicate through posture, gesture, stance, and movement. Part of Birdwhistell's work involved making films of people in social situations and analyzing them to show different levels of communication not clearly seen otherwise. Several other anthropologists, including [Margaret Mead](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Margaret_Mead) and [Gregory Bateson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gregory_Bateson), also studied kinesics.

### Haptics: touching in communication

[Haptics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haptic_communication) is the study of touching as nonverbal communication, and haptic communication refers to how people and other animals communicate via touching.

Touches among humans that can be defined as communication include [handshakes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Handshake), holding hands, kissing (cheek, lips, hand), back slapping, [high fives](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/High_five), a pat on the shoulder, and brushing an arm. Touching of oneself may include licking, picking, holding, and scratching.[[12]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonverbal_communication#cite_note-Knapp_.26_Hall.2C_2007.2C_p._9-11) These behaviors are referred to as "adapters" or "tells" and may send messages that reveal the intentions or feelings of a communicator. The meaning conveyed from touch is highly dependent upon the culture, the context of the situation, the relationship between communicators, and the manner of touch.[[13]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonverbal_communication#cite_note-Knapp_.26_Hall.2C_2007.2C_p.10-12)

Touch is an extremely important sense for humans; as well as providing information about surfaces and textures it is a component of nonverbal communication in interpersonal relationships, and vital in conveying physical intimacy. It can be both sexual (such as kissing) and platonic (such as hugging or tickling).

Touch is the earliest sense to develop in the fetus. The development of an infant's haptic senses and how it relates to the development of the other senses such as vision have been the target of much research. Human babies have been observed to have enormous difficulty surviving if they do not possess a sense of touch, even if they retain sight and hearing. Babies who can perceive through touch, even without sight and hearing, tend to fare much better. Touch can be thought of as a basic sense in that most life forms have a response to being touched, while only a subset have sight and hearing.

In chimpanzees the sense of touch is highly developed. As newborns they see and hear poorly but cling strongly to their mothers. Harry Harlow conducted a controversial study involving rhesus monkeys and observed that monkeys reared with a "terry cloth mother," a wire feeding apparatus wrapped in soft terry cloth that provided a level of tactile stimulation and comfort, were considerably more emotionally stable as adults than those with a mere wire mother.(Harlow,1958)

Touching is treated differently from one country to another and socially acceptable levels of touching vary from one culture to another (Remland, 2009). In Thai culture, for example, touching someone's head may be thought rude. Remland and Jones (1995) studied groups of people communicating and found that touching was rare among the English (8%), the French (5%) and the Dutch (4%) compared to Italians (14%) and Greeks (12.5%).[[14]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonverbal_communication#cite_note-13)

Striking, pushing, pulling, pinching, kicking, strangling and hand-to-hand fighting are forms of touch in the context of physical abuse. In a sentence like "I never touched him/her" or "Don't you dare touch him/her," the term touch may be meant as a euphemism for either physical abuse or sexual touching. To "touch oneself" is a euphemism for masturbation.

Stoeltje (2003) wrote about how Americans are "losing touch" with this important communication skill. During a study conducted by University of Miami School of Medicine, Touch Research Institutes, American children were said to be more aggressive than their French counterparts while playing at a playground. It was noted that French women touched their children more.

## Functions of nonverbal communication

Argyle (1970)[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonverbal_communication#cite_note-Argyle.2C_Michael_1970-14) put forward the hypothesis that whereas spoken language is normally used for communicating information about events external to the speakers, non-verbal codes are used to establish and maintain interpersonal relationships. It is considered more polite or nicer to communicate attitudes towards others non-verbally rather than verbally, for instance in order to avoid embarrassing situations.[[16]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonverbal_communication#cite_note-15)

Argyle (1988) concluded there are five primary functions of nonverbal bodily behavior in human communication:[[17]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonverbal_communication#cite_note-16)

* Express emotions
* Express interpersonal attitudes
* To accompany speech in managing the cues of interaction between speakers and listeners
* Self-presentation of one’s personality
* Rituals (greetings)

In regards to expressing interpersonal attitudes, humans communicate interpersonal closeness through a series of nonverbal actions known as immediacy behaviors. Examples of immediacy behaviors are smiling, touching, open body positions, and eye contact. Cultures that display these immediacy behaviors are considered high-contact cultures.

### Interaction of verbal and nonverbal communication

When communicating, nonverbal messages can interact with verbal messages in six ways: repeating, conflicting, complementing, substituting, regulating and accenting/moderating. Conflicting Verbal and nonverbal messages within the same interaction can sometimes send opposing or conflicting messages. A person verbally expressing a statement of truth while simultaneously fidgeting or avoiding eye contact may convey a mixed message to the receiver in the interaction. Conflicting messages may occur for a variety of reasons often stemming from feelings of uncertainty, ambivalence, or frustration.[23]When mixed messages occur, nonverbal communication becomes the primary tool people use to attain additional information to clarify the situation; great attention is placed on bodily movements and positioning when people perceive mixed messages during interactions

#### Complementing

Accurate interpretation of messages is made easier when nonverbal and verbal communication complements each other. Nonverbal cues can be used to elaborate on verbal messages to reinforce the information sent when trying to achieve communicative goals; messages have been shown to be remembered well when nonverbal signals affirm the verbal exchange.[[21]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonverbal_communication#cite_note-20)

#### Substituting

Nonverbal behavior is sometimes used as the sole channel for communication of a message. People learn to identify facial expressions, body movements, and body positioning as corresponding with specific feelings and intentions. Nonverbal signals can be used without [verbal communication](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Verbal_communication) to convey messages; when nonverbal behavior does not effectively communicate a message, verbal methods are used to enhance understanding.[[22]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonverbal_communication#cite_note-Knapp_.26_Hall.2C_2007.2C_p.16-21)

## Conclusion

Nonverbal communication is the process of sending and receiving messages from another person. These messages can be conveyed through [gestures](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gestures), [engagement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Engagement), [posture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Posture_%28psychology%29), and even [clothing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clothing)and [hygiene](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hygiene). Nonverbal communication can convey a very different message than a verbal [conversation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conversation). This can tell someone whether they are liked, interesting or hated. Nonverbal communication can have meanings in objects as well. Certain articles in a person’s life can say a lot about them and can sometimes even talk for them. A person’s [handwriting](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Handwriting) can also tell a lot about the way they can communicate with others. Nonverbal communication can be easiest practiced when the two communicators are face to face. The nonverbal aspect of communication is easiest when the environment is right for all communicators involved, such as, when the [environment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_environment) is right or the moment is right. Nonverbal communication is an important aspect in any conversation skill people are practicing. Nonverbal communication will inhibit someone to be able to tell other person how they are really feeling without having to voice any opinions. People can interpret body signals better than they can talk most of the time.

# Body language

**Body language** is a form of mental and physical ability of human [non-verbal communication](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Non-verbal_communication), which consists of [body posture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_position), [gestures](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gesture), [facial expressions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Facial_expression), and [eye movements](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eye_movement_%28sensory%29). Humans send and interpret such signals almost entirely subconsciously.

James Borg states that human [communication](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communication) consists of 93 percent body language and [paralinguistic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paralinguistic) cues, while only 7% of communication consists of words themselves;[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Body_language#cite_note-0) however, [Albert Mehrabian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albert_Mehrabian), the researcher whose 1960s work is the source of these statistics, has stated that this is a misunderstanding of the findings[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Body_language#cite_note-1) (see [Misinterpretation of Mehrabian's rule](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albert_Mehrabian#Misinterpretation)). Others assert that "Research has suggested that between 60 and 70 percent of all meaning is derived from nonverbal behavior."[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Body_language#cite_note-2)

Body language may provide clues as to the attitude or state of mind of a person. For example, it may indicate [aggression](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aggression),[attentiveness](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attention), [boredom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boredom), relaxed state, [pleasure](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pleasure), [amusement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amusement), and [intoxication](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Substance_intoxication), among many other cues.

## Understanding body language

The technique of "reading" people is used frequently. For example, the idea of [mirroring](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mirroring_%28psychology%29) body language to put people at ease is commonly used in interviews. Body language can show feelings to other people, which works in return for other people. People who show their body language to you can reveal their feelings and meanings. Mirroring the body language of someone else indicates that they are understood.[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)] It is important to note that some indicators of emotion (e.g. smiling/laughing when happy, frowning/crying when sad) are largely universal;[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)],[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Body_language#cite_note-3)however in the 1990s [Paul Ekman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Ekman) expanded his list of basic emotions, including a range of positive and negative emotions, not all of which are encoded in facial muscles.[11] The newly included emotions are:

1. Amusement
2. Contempt
3. Contentment
4. Embarrassment
5. Excitement
6. Guilt
7. Pride in achievement
8. Relief
9. Satisfaction
10. Sensory pleasure
11. Shame

Body language signals may have a goal other than communication. People would keep both these two in mind. Observers limit the weight they place on non-verbal cues. Signalers clarify their signals to indicate the biological origin of their actions. Verbal communication also requires body language to show that the person you are talking with that you are listening. These signals can consist of; eye contact and nodding your head to show you understand. More examples would include yawning (sleepiness), showing lack of interest (sexual interest/survival interest), attempts to change the topic (fight or flight drivers). [Rudolf Laban](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rudolf_Laban) and [Warren Lamb](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warren_Lamb) add much to this about dancers. [Mime artists](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mime_artist) such as [Booff Show](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Booff_Show) utilize these techniques to communicate entire shows without a single word.

### Physical expression

Physical expressions like waving, pointing, touching and slouching are all forms of [nonverbal communication](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonverbal_communication). The study of body movement and expression is known as [kinesics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kinesics). Humans move their bodies when communicating because, as research has shown[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)], it helps "ease the mental effort when communication is difficult." Physical expressions reveal many things about the person using them. For example, gestures can emphasize a point or relay a message, posture can reveal boredom or great interest, and touch can convey encouragement or caution.[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Body_language#cite_note-4)

* One of the most basic and powerful body-language signals is when a person **crosses his or her arms across the chest**.[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Body_language#cite_note-5) This can indicate that a person is putting up an unconscious barrier between themselves and others. However, it can also indicate that the person's arms are cold, which would be clarified by rubbing the arms or huddling. When the overall situation is amicable, it can mean that a person is thinking deeply about what is being discussed, but in a serious or confrontational situation, it can mean that a person is expressing opposition. This is especially so if the person is leaning away from the speaker. A harsh or blank facial expression often indicates outright hostility.
* Consistent [eye contact](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eye_contact) can indicate that a person is thinking positively of what the speaker is saying. It can also mean that the other person doesn't trust the speaker enough to "take their eyes off" the speaker. Lack of eye contact can indicate negativity. On the other hand, individuals with [anxiety disorders](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anxiety_disorder) are often unable to make eye contact without discomfort. Eye contact can also be a secondary and misleading gesture because cultural norms about it are very widely. If a person is looking at you, but is making the arms-across-chest signal, the eye contact could be indicative that something is bothering the person, and that he wants to talk about it. Or if while making direct eye contact, a person is [fiddling](http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/restlessness) with something, even while directly looking at you, it could indicate that the attention is elsewhere. Also, there are three standard areas that a person will look which represent different states of being. If the person looks from one eye to the other, then to the forehead, it is a sign that they are taking an authoritative position. If they move from one eye to the other, then to the nose, that signals that they are engaging in what they consider to be a "level conversation" with neither party holding superiority. The last case is from one eye to the other and then down to the lips. This is a strong indication of romantic feelings.[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)]
* Disbelief is often indicated by averted gaze, or by touching the [ear](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ear) or [scratching](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Itch) the [chin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chin). When a person is not being convinced by what someone is saying, the [attention](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attention) invariably wanders, and the eyes will stare away for an extended period.[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)]
* [Boredom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boredom) is indicated by the head tilting to one side, or by the eyes looking straight at the speaker but becoming slightly unfocused. A head tilt may also indicate a sore neck, trust or a feeling of safety (part of the neck becomes uncovered, hence vulnerable; It's virtually impossible to tilt our head in front of someone we don't trust or are scared of) or [Amblyopia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amblyopia), and unfocused eyes may indicate ocular problems in the listener.[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)]
* Interest can be indicated through posture or extended eye contact, such as standing and listening properly.[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)]
* Deceit or the act of withholding information can sometimes be indicated by touching the face during conversation. Excessive blinking is a well-known indicator of someone who is lying. Recently[[*when?*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3AManual_of_Style_%28dates_and_numbers%29#Chronological_items)], evidence has surfaced that the absence of blinking can also represent lying as a more reliable factor than excessive blinking.[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Body_language#cite_note-6)

Some people use and understand body language differently, or not at all.[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)] Interpreting their gestures and facial expressions (or lack thereof) in the context of [normal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neurotypical) body language usually leads to misunderstandings and misinterpretations (especially if body language is given priority over spoken language). It should also be stated that people from different [cultures](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultures) can interpretate body language in different ways.

## How prevalent is non-verbal communication in humans?

Some researchers[[*who?*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3AAvoid_weasel_words)] put the level of nonverbal communication as high as 80 percent of all communication when it could be at around 50-65 percent. Different studies have found differing amounts, with some studies showing that facial communication is believed 4.3 times more often than verbal meaning, and another finding that verbal communication in a flat tone is 4 times more likely to be understood than a pure facial expression.[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)] Albert Mehrabian is noted for finding a 7%-38%-55% rule, supposedly denoting how much communication was conferred by words, tone, and body language. However he was only referring to cases of expressing feelings or attitudes.

## Unintentional gestures

*See also:*[*Proteans (body language)*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Proteans_%28body_language%29)

Recently[[*when?*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3AManual_of_Style_%28dates_and_numbers%29#Chronological_items)], there has been huge interest in studying human behavioral clues that could be useful for developing an interactive and adaptive human-machine system. Unintentional human gestures such as making an eye rub, a chin rest, a lip touch, a nose itch, a head scratch, an ear scratch, crossing arms, and a finger lock have been found conveying some useful information in specific context. Some researchers[[*who?*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3AAvoid_weasel_words)] have tried to extract such gestures in a specific context of educational applications.[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)] In [poker](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poker) games, such gestures are referred to as "[tells](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tell_%28poker%29)" and are useful to players for detecting deception or behavioral patterns in an opponent(s).

There is also a huge interest in learning to avoid any unintentional gesture that might leave a negative impression on the onlookers. A large number of people are starting to attend special sessions on controlled body behaviour and take advice from expert sociologists. Learning good body language, such as living styles of foreign people, is important during interaction in any sort of global community.

# Group communication, team work and leadership

# Team

A **team** comprises a [group of people](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Groups_of_people) or [animals](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Animal) linked in a common purpose. Teams are especially appropriate for conducting tasks that are high in [complexity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Complexity) and have many interdependent subtasks.

A group in itself does not necessarily constitute a team. Teams normally have members with complementary skills and generate synergy through a coordinated effort which allows each member to maximize his/her strengths and minimize his/her weaknesses. Team members need to learn how to help one another, help other team members realize their true potential, and create an environment that allows everyone to go beyond their limitations.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Team#cite_note-0)

[Theorists](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theorist) in [business](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business) in the late 20th century popularised the concept of [constructing teams](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Team_building). Differing opinions exist on the efficacy of this new [management](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Management) [fad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fad). Some see "team" as a [four-letter word](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Four-letter_word): overused and under-useful. Others see it as a panacea that finally realizes the [human relations movement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_Relations_Movement)'s desire to integrate what that movement perceives as best for workers and as best for [managers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Management). Still others believe in the effectiveness of teams, but also see them as dangerous because of the potential for exploiting workers — in that team effectiveness can rely on [peer pressure](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peer_pressure) and peer [surveillance](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Surveillance).

# Team size, composition, and formation

**Team size and composition** affect the team processes and outcomes. The optimal size (and composition) of teams is debated and will vary depending on the task at hand. At least one study of problem-solving in groups showed an optimal size of groups at four members. Other works estimate the optimal size between 5-12 members.[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)] [Belbin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meredith_Belbin) did extensive research on teams prior to 1990 in the UK that clearly demonstrated that the optimum team size is 8 roles plus a specialist as needed.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Team#cite_note-1) Fewer than 5 members results in decreased perspectives and diminished creativity. Membership in excess of 12 results in increased conflict and greater potential of sub-groups forming.

[David Cooperrider](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Cooperrider) suggests that the larger the group, the better. This is because a larger group is able to address concerns of the whole [system](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/System). So while a large team may be ineffective at performing a given task, Cooperider says that the relevance of that task should be considered, because determining whether the team is effective first requires identifying what needs to be accomplished.

Regarding composition, all teams will have an element of homogeneity and heterogeneity. The more homogeneous the group, the more cohesive it will be. The more heterogeneous the group, the greater the differences in perspective and increased potential for creativity, but also the greater potential for conflict.

Team members normally have different roles, like team leader and agents. Large teams can divide into sub-teams according to need.

Many teams go through a life-cycle of stages, identified by [Bruce Tuckman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bruce_Tuckman) as: [forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forming-storming-norming-performing).

## Types of teams

### *Independent and interdependent teams*

Of particular importance is the [concept](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Concept) of different types of teams. A distinction is usually drawn between "independent" and "interdependent" teams. To continue the [sports](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sports) team example, a [rugby](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rugby_football) team is clearly an **interdependent team**:

* no significant task can be accomplished without the help and cooperation of any of the [members](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Groups_of_people);
* within that team members typically specialize in different tasks ([running the ball](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rugby_League_positions), [goal kicking](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Field_goal_%28rugby%29) & [scrum feeding](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scrum_%28rugby%29)), and
* the success of every individual is inextricably bound to the [success](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Success) of the whole team. No [rugby](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rugby_football) player, no matter how talented, has ever won a[game](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rugby_football) by playing alone.
* On the other hand, a [chess](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chess) or [bowling](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bowling) team is a classic example of an **independent team**:
* matches are played and won, or points are scored, by individuals or partners;
* every person performs basically the same actions;
* how one player performs has no direct effect on the performance of the next player. If all team members each perform the same basic tasks, such as[students](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Students) working problems in a math class, or outside sales [employees](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Employees) making phone calls, then it is likely that this team is an independent team. They may be able to help each other — perhaps by offering advice or practice time, by providing moral support, or by helping in the background during a busy time — but each individual's success is primarily due to each individual's own efforts. Chess players do not win their own matches merely because the rest of their teammates did, and math students do not pass tests merely because their neighbours know how to solve the [equations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Equations).

Coaching an "interdependent" team like a [football](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Football) team necessarily requires a different approach from coaching an "independent" team because the costs and benefits to individual team members — and therefore the intrinsic incentives for positive team behaviors — are very different. An interdependent team benefits from getting to know the other team members socially, from developing trust in each other, and from conquering artificial challenges (such as offered in outdoors ropes courses).

### Project teams

A team used only for a [defined](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Define) period of time and for a separate, concretely definable purpose, often becomes known as a [**project team**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Project_team). Managers commonly label groups of people as a "team" based on having a common function. Members of these teams might belong to different groups, but receive assignment to activities for the same [project](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Project), thereby allowing outsiders to view them as a single unit. In this way, setting up a team allegedly facilitates the creation, tracking and assignment of a group of people based on the project in hand. The use of the "team" label in this instance often has no relationship to whether the employees are working as a team.

### Virtual teams

Developments in communications technologies have seen the emergence of the virtual work team. A [virtual team](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virtual_team) is a group of people who work interdependently and with shared purpose across space, time, and organisation boundaries using technology to communicate and collaborate. Virtual team members can be located across a country or across the world, rarely meet face-to-face, and include members from different cultures.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Team#cite_note-2) Ale Ebrahim, N., Ahmed, S. &Taha, Z. in their recent (2009) literature review paper, added two key issues to definition of a [virtual team](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virtual_team) “as **small temporary groups** of geographically, organizationally and/ or time dispersed **knowledge workers** who coordinate their work predominantly with electronic information and communication technologies in order to accomplish one or more organization tasks”.[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Team#cite_note-3) Many virtual teams are cross-functional and emphasis solving customer problems or generating new work processes. The United States Labour Department reported that in 2001, 19 million people worked from home online or from another location, and that by the end of 2002, over 100 million people world-wide would be working outside traditional offices.[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Team#cite_note-4)

### Interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary teams

Teams, such as in medical fields, may be *interdisciplinary* or *multidisciplinary*.[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Team#cite_note-Ferrell-5) Multidisciplinary teams involve several professionals who independently treat various issues a patient may have, focusing on the issues in which they specialise. The problems that are being treated may or may not relate to other issues being addressed by individual team members. Interdisciplinary team approach involves all members of the team working together towards the same goal. In an interdisciplinary team approach, there can often be role blending by members of the core team, who may take on tasks usually filled by other team members.[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Team#cite_note-Ferrell-5)

### Not all groups are teams

Some people also use the word "team" when they mean "employees." A "[sales](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sales) team" is a common example of this loose or perhaps [euphemistic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Euphemistic) usage, though inter dependencies exist in[organisations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organisations), and a sales team can be let down by poor performance on other parts of the organisation upon which sales depend, like delivery, after-sales service, etc.. However "sales staff" is a more precise description of the typical arrangement.

### From groups to teams

Groups develop into teams in four stages. The four stages are: dependency and inclusion, counter dependency and fighting, trust and structure, and work. In the first stage, group development is characterized by members' dependency on the designated leader. In the second stage, the group seeks to free itself from its dependence on the leader and groups have conflicts about goals and procedures. In the third stage, the group manages to work through the conflicts. And in the last stage, groups focus on team productivity.[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Team#cite_note-6)

# Teamwork

**Teamwork** has been defined in the [Merriam-Webster](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Merriam-Webster) dictionary as "work done by several associates with each doing a part but all subordinating personal prominence to the efficiency of the whole."[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teamwork#cite_note-0) However, there is no universally-accepted definition of "teamwork" in the academic literature.

In a business setting [accounting](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Accounting) techniques may be used to provide [financial measures](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Financial_measures) of the benefits of teamwork which are useful for justifying the concept.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teamwork#cite_note-Ezzamel1998-1) Teamwork is increasingly advocated by health care policy makers as a means of assuring quality and safety in the delivery of services; a committee of the [Institute of Medicine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Institute_of_Medicine) recommended in 2000 that [patient safety](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patient_safety)programs "establish interdisciplinary team training programs for providers that incorporate proven methods of team training, such as simulation."[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teamwork#cite_note-2)

## Definitions in academic literature

In [health care](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Health_care), one definition of teamwork is "those behaviours that facilitate effective team member interaction," with "[team](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Team)" defined as "a group of two or more individuals who perform some work related task, interact with one another dynamically, have a shared past, have a foreseeable shared future, and share a common fate."[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teamwork#cite_note-Beaubien2004-3) One definition for teamwork proposed in 2008 is "the interdependent components of performance required to effectively coordinate the performance of multiple individuals"; as such, teamwork is "nested within" the broader concept of team performance which also includes individual-level taskwork.[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teamwork#cite_note-SalasCookeRosen2008-4) Another definition proposed in 2008 is "a dynamic process involving two or more healthcare professionals with complementary backgrounds and skills, sharing common health goals and exercising concerted physical and mental effort in assessing, planning, or evaluating patient care."[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teamwork#cite_note-Xyrichis2008-5) On the other hand, a 2012 review of the academic literature found that "there is no one unifying theory of exact dimensions of teamwork" and that the word "teamwork" has been used "as a catchall to refer to a number of behavioral processes and emergent states."[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teamwork#cite_note-Valentine2012-6)

## Teamwork processes

Researchers have identified 10 teamwork processes that fall into three categories:[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teamwork#cite_note-Marks2001-7)[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teamwork#cite_note-LePine2008-8)

* Transition processes (between periods of action)
* Mission analysis
* Goal specification
* Strategy formulation
* Action processes (when the team attempts to accomplish its goals and objectives)
* Monitoring progress toward goals
* Systems monitoring
* Team monitoring and backup behavior
* Coordination
* Interpersonal processes (present in both action periods and transition periods)
* Conflict management
* Motivation and confidence building
* Affect management

## Training to improve teamwork

As summarized in a 2008 review, "team training promotes teamwork and enhances team performance."[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teamwork#cite_note-SalasCookeRosen2008-4) In specific, a 2008 [meta-analysis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meta-analysis) of 45 published and unpublished studies concluded that team training is "useful for improving cognitive outcomes, affective outcomes, teamwork processes, and performance outcomes."[[10]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teamwork#cite_note-SalasDiazGranadosEtAl2008-9)

## Advantages and disadvantages of teamwork

### Advantages

* Teamwork can lead to better decisions, products, or services. The quality of teamwork may be measured by analyzing the following six components of [collaboration](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collaboration) among team members: communication, coordination, balance of member contributions, mutual support, effort, and cohesion.[[11]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teamwork#cite_note-Hoegl2001-10) In one study, teamwork quality as measured in this manner correlated with team performance in the areas of effectiveness (i.e., producing high quality work) and efficiency (i.e., meeting schedules and budgets).[[11]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teamwork#cite_note-Hoegl2001-10) A 2008 [meta-analysis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meta-analysis) also found a relationship between teamwork and team effectiveness.[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teamwork#cite_note-LePine2008-8)
* Team members’ ratings of their satisfaction with a team are correlated with the level of teamwork processes present.[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teamwork#cite_note-LePine2008-8)
* In healthcare, teamwork is associated with increased [patient safety](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patient_safety).[[12]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teamwork#cite_note-11)

### Disadvantages

* Teamwork may have an "unintended effect of fermenting hostility toward the managerial goal of making the teams fully self-managing."[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teamwork#cite_note-Ezzamel1998-1) In one case study of a [clothing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clothing) manufacturer, a switch from [production line](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Production_line) work (with bonuses given for individual performance) to teamwork (in which an individual's earnings depended on team performance) caused workers to resent having to monitor each other.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teamwork#cite_note-Ezzamel1998-1)
* There is a potential of "social loafing" (i.e., an individual's doing less work in a team than what he/she would normally do working individually).[[13]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teamwork#cite_note-McShane2010-12) In order to minimize social loafing, management can make individual performance more visible while in a team setting. This can be done by forming smaller teams, specializing specific tasks to certain individuals, and measuring individual performance. Social loafing can also be reduced by increasing employee motivation, by selecting employees who have previously shown themselves to be motivated, and increasing job enrichment.[[13]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teamwork#cite_note-McShane2010-12) In experiments conducted in the 1990s, an increase in [group cohesiveness](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Group_cohesiveness) appeared to decrease social loafing.[[14]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teamwork#cite_note-KarauWilliams1997-13)[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teamwork#cite_note-KarauHart1998-14)

# Team building

**Team building** is a philosophy of job design in which employees are viewed as members of interdependent teams instead of as individual workers.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Team_building#cite_note-0) Team building refers to a wide range of activities, presented to businesses, schools, sports teams, religious or nonprofit organizations designed for improving team [performance](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Performance). Team building is pursued via a variety of practices, and can range from simple [bonding](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_bonding) exercises to complex simulations and multi-day team building retreats designed to develop a team (including group assessment and [group-dynamic games](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Group-dynamic_games)), usually falling somewhere in between. It generally sits within the theory and practice of [organizational development](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_development), but can also be applied to [sports teams](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sports_team), school groups, and other contexts. Team building is not to be confused with "team recreation" that consists of activities for teams that are strictly recreational. Team building can also be seen in day-to-day operations of an organization and team dynamic can be improved through successful leadership. Team building is an important factor in any environment, its focus is to specialize in bringing out the best in a team to ensure self development, positive communication, leadership skills and the ability to work closely together as a team to problem solve.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Team_building#cite_note-1)

Work environments tend to focus on individuals and personal goals, with reward & recognition singling out the achievements of individual employees.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Team_building#cite_note-2) Team building can also refer to the process of selecting or creating a team from scratch.

Team dynamic

When assembling a team it is important to consider the overall dynamic of the team. According to Frank LaFasto, when building a team, five dynamics are fundamental to team success:[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Team_building#cite_note-3)

1. **The team member**: Successful teams are made up of a collection of effective individuals. These are people who are experienced, have problem solving ability, openness to addressing the problem, action oriented.
2. **Team relationships**: For a team to be successful the members of the team must be able to give and receive feedback.
3. **Team problem solving**: An effective team depends on how focused and clear the goal of the team is. A relaxed, comfortable and accepting environment and finally, open and honest communication.
4. **Team leadership**: Effective team leadership depends on leadership competencies. A competent leader is: focused on the goal, ensures a collaborative climate, builds confidence of team members, sets priorities, demonstrates sufficient “know-how” and manage performance through feedback.
5. **Organizational environment**: The climate and culture of the organization must be conductive to team behavior.

Goals

The overall goals of team building are to increase the teams understanding of team dynamics and improve how the team works together. Unlike working as a group, working as a team incorporates group accountability rather than individual accountability and results in a collective work product.[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Team_building#cite_note-4) Team building encourages the team approach to working on a project. There are many advantages to this approach. These advantages include the following:

* Increased flexibility in skills and abilities
* More productive than work groups with individual mindset
* More beneficial in times of organizational change
* Encourage both individual and team development and improvement
* Focuses on group goals to accomplish more beneficial tasks

Leadership roles

Successful team leaders frequently contain six of the same leadership abilities:[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Team_building#cite_note-5)

1. A team leader is usually goal-oriented to keep the team on track.
2. They must promote a safe environment where members can openly discuss issues.
3. A leader must build confidence amongst members by building and maintaining trust and offering the members responsibilities.
4. A leader should be technically competent in matters relating to team tasks and goals.
5. It is important for a team leader to set a manageable list of priorities for the team to keep members focused.
6. Finally, leaders should offer clear performance expectations by recognizing and rewarding excellent performance, and provide feedback to others.

Carl Larson and Frank LaFasto conducted a three year study of over 75 diverse teams. By interviewing key members of each team, Larson &LaFasto identified eight effective strategies a leader should employ to enhance team building:

1. Establish clear and inspiring team goals
2. Maintain a results-oriented team structure
3. Assemble competent team members
4. Strive for unified commitment
5. Provide a collaborative climate
6. Encourage standards of excellence
7. Furnish external support and recognition
8. Apply principled leadership

Types of exercises

Team building exercises consist of a variety of tasks designed to develop group members and their ability to work together effectively. There are many types of team building activities that range from games for kids to games and challenges that involve novel and complex tasks that are designed for improving group performance by addressing specific needs.

Team building can range from simple social activities - to encourage team members to spend time together- to team development activities -designed to help individuals discover how they approach a problem, how the team works together, and discover better methods of communication.

Team interaction involves "soft" [interpersonal skills](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interpersonal_skills) including communication, negotiation, leadership, and motivation - in contrast to technical skills directly involved with the job at hand. Depending on the type of team building, the novel tasks can encourage or specifically teach interpersonal team skills to increase team performance.

Whether indoor or outdoor, the purpose of team building exercises is to assist teams in becoming cohesive units of individuals that can effectively work together to complete tasks.

*Communication exercise:* This type of team building exercise is exactly what it sounds like. Communications exercises are problem solving activities that are geared towards improving communication skills. The issues teams encounter in these exercises are solved by communicating effectively with each other.

* Goal: Create an activity which highlights the importance of good communication in team performance and/or potential problems with communication.

*Problem-solving/decision-making exercise:* Problem-solving/decision-making exercises focus specifically on groups working together to solve difficult problems or make complex decisions. These exercises are some of the most common as they appear to have the most direct link to what employers want their teams to be able to do.

* Goal: Give team a problem in which the solution is not easily apparent or requires the team to come up with a creative solution

*Planning/adaptability exercise:* These exercises focus on aspects of planning and being adaptable to change. These are important things for teams to be able to do when they are assigned complex tasks or decisions.

* Goal: Show the importance of planning before implementing a solution

*Trust exercise:* A trust exercise involves engaging team members in a way that will induce trust between them. They are sometimes difficult exercises to implement as there are varying degrees of trust between individuals and varying degrees of individual comfort trusting others in general.

* Goal: Create trust between team members

Assessment and feedback

In the [organizational development](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_development) context, a team may embark on a process of [self-assessment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Self-assessment) to gauge its effectiveness and improve its performance. To assess itself, a team seeks [feedback](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feedback)from group members to find out both its current strengths and weakness.

To improve its current performance, feedback from the team assessment can be used to identify gaps between the desired state and the current state, and to design a gap-closure strategy. Team development can be the greater term containing this assessment and improvement actions, or as a component of organizational development.

Another way is to allow for personality assessment amongst the team members, so that they will have a better understanding of their working style, as well as their fellow team mates.

A structured team building plan is a good tool to implement team bonding and thus, team awareness. These may be introduced by companies that specialize in executing team building sessions, or done internally by the human resource department.

Risks

The major risk of team building is the team member may become cynical of the organization. This could happen as a result of the organization holding team building events outside of the normal context in which the organization usually functions under. For example, if an organization hosts team building events when individual goals and efforts are the norm with the organizational culture, the team building event will have no lasting impact.

It is crucial to follow up a team building event with meaningful workplace practice. If the team members do not see an improvement within an organization as a result of team building events, members may view such events as a waste of time. This may lead to loss of trust in the organization, harm motivation, as well as decrease employee morale and production.[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Team_building#cite_note-Team-building_risks-6)

## Team composition

Team composition can be defined as the aspect of a team created by the configuration of team member attributes (Bell, 2007). It also has been identified as a causal factor that affects other aspects of a team (Moreland & Levine, 1992). The composition of a team is considered to have a strong influence on team processes and outcomes (Bell, 2007).

Team composition can either be homogeneous, all the same, or heterogeneous, containing differences. There are conflicting opinions on which is best. Homogeneous teams may perform better due to similarities in experience and thought, while heterogeneous teams may perform better due to diversity and greater ability to take on multiple roles (Mello &Ruckes, 2006). These terms, however, must be given a framework, as a team could be homogeneous for some characteristics and heterogeneous for others. The importance placed on team design derives from the need to align a team’s composition with organizational goals and resources. (Koslowski&Ilgen, 2006).

Team composition is a complex issue with an endless number and combination of elements contributing to each team configuration. The possible outcomes resulting from a team’s composition are as numerous.

## Antecedents of team composition

### Size

The preferred team size influences team composition (Moreland & Levine, 1992). Team size is determined by organizational task types, goals, and processes.

While the size of a team is clearly dependent on many factors, the concept of “ideal” team size also varies. Traditionally, it was perceived that increasing the size of a team had more powerful effects on team structure, dynamics, and performance (Thomas & Fink, 1963) because increased size generally translates into a wide range of member abilities and skills (Mathieu, Maynard, Rapp, & Gilson, 2008; Moreland & Levine, 1992).

Recently, however, some researchers have identified a general preference for a small team, containing less than 10 members (Katzenbach& Smith, 1993; Moreland, Levine, &Wingert, 1996). Smaller teams experience better work-life quality (Campion et al., 1993; Hausknecht et al., 2009) and work outcomes (Aube et al., 2011). Smaller teams also may experience less conflict, stronger communication, and more cohesion (Moreland & Levine, 1992; Mathieu et al., 2008). Regardless of the chosen ”ideal” size, organizational preference of team size determines team composition and its effects (Mathieu et al., 2008).

### Team structure

Team structure can be seen as a “bridge between organization-level strategy and staffing decisions” (Hollenbeck et al., 2002, p. 600). Team structure is an essential element in establishing guidance for team composition. It is helpful to consider the desired composition of the team when deciding which type of structure will be used to unite team members.

**Functional structure**

Functional structure is present when members within a team are organized around performing similar tasks (Mathieu et al., 2008).

**Divisional structure**

Divisional structure is present when members within a team are organized based on the similar organizational area (i.e. working on the same, specific product) in which they have responsibility (Mathieu et al., 2008).

### Leadership structure

Teams generally have a leader (Mello &Ruckes, 2006). [Leadership](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leadership) within a team has been shown to impact the outcome of team processes (Koslowski&Ilgen, 2006) such as team member selection. A standard leadership structure for teams involves a hierarchical leadership structure where there are leaders and subordinates.

**Top Management Teams**

An alternative leadership structure is when the team itself is composed of individuals who hold top management positions. Top Management Teams (TMTs) consists of an organization’s administrative members, in the upper echelons of the organization. New venture groups (i.e. technology start-ups), are commonly known for embracing the TMT model. TMT members are often selected by founders of organizations and have origins from sources with which the founders share network ties; thus, the level of homogeneity in these groups is often high (Ensley &Hmieleski, 2005). The similarity among TMT members could influence decisions regarding the composition of teams they create within the organization, as characteristics of TMT’s have been shown to strongly align with organizational outcomes because of their administrative powers (Mathieu et al., 2008).

## Outcomes of team composition

### Demographic traits

Diversity of age, gender, and race are considered to be the most important demographic factors resulting from team composition (Moreland & Levine, 1992).

Age is more than just number to team composition: as tenure with an organization and age increase, so can performances (Avolio, 1986; Ng & Feldman, 2008). Older individuals may contribute more professional expertise, years of experience, and gathered knowledge (Hess &Auman, 2001; Ng & Feldman, 2008).

Gender is another important factor of demographic team composition (Moreland & Levine, 1992). Men and women differ in their levels of conformity, preference of power distribution, and behavioral norms. These differences influence team behavior, climate, leadership, and norms (Wood & Rhodes, 1992; Moreland & Levine, 1992).

Race is a third demographic factor of team composition and has gained additional salience due to the globalization and increasing diversity of the workforce (Riordan & Shore, 1997). Traditionally, researchers have focused primarily on Whites and African Americans for race studies. That scope has more recently been extended to other races, such as Asians, Native Americans, Middle Easterners, and Hispanics.

Differences in ability, culture, and personalities among races have been shown to impact job-related outcomes (Harrison & Klein, 2007). The level of individual similarity and dissimilarity in racial attributes affect work-related processes (Riordan & Shore, 1997; Tsui& O’Reilly, 1989).

### Knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs)

The team composition determines the array of knowledge, skills, and abilities within a team.

Knowledge includes the facts and principles that apply to the domain of the team (The O\*Net Content Model, n.d.).

Skills can be either basic or cross-functional. Basic skills include developed capabilities that assist in the learning or faster acquisition of knowledge. Cross-functional skills assist in the ability to carry out tasks that occur across jobs. Skills can also be categorized into technical skills (adequate ability to do a variety of jobs), human skills (the ability to interact with others), and conceptual skills (the ability to learn and use newly acquired knowledge). (The O\*Net Content Model, n.d.)

Abilities are long-lasting individual traits that impact performance (The O\*Net Content Model, n.d.). Abilities can include multiple dimensions ranging from scope (general vs. specific) to origin (innate vs. learned) to focus (task vs. social) (Moreland et al., 1996).

Researchers have focused on different abilities, varying on dimensions such as scope (general vs. specific), origin (innate vs. learned), and focus (task vs. social). They found that individual abilities combine additively to determine team performance (Moreland & Levine, 1992), and "if members collectively lack necessary knowledge, skills, abilities, or resources to resolve the team task, the team cannot be effective,” (Koslowski&Ilgen, 2006, p. 80).

### Experience – tenure

A member’s expertise and industry experience also contribute to the composition of the team (Ensley &Hmieleski, 2005). Job experience can be characterized by job knowledge, backgrounds, and patterns of behavior. (Schmidt, Hunter, &Outerbridge, 1986) Experience, overall, has been shown to have direct and indirect effects on performance (Schmidt & Hunter, 1998).

### Personality

Since the early 1990’s, researchers have considered the effects of individual personality traits on team dynamics and performance to be an important team factor (Moreland & Levine, 1992). The[Big Five](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Five_factor_model) personality traits include [extraversion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Extraversion), [conscientiousness](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conscientiousness), [agreeableness](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agreeableness), [openness to experience](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Openness_to_experience), and [neuroticism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuroticism) (also referred to as emotional stability).

It is evident that individual personality traits affect the team’s processes and outcomes (Barrick, Stewart, Neubert, & Mount, 1998; Bell, 2007; Bradley & Herbert, 1997). Empirical support has shown the following: the presence of extraversion in team members leads to increased team viability and communication; the presence of conscientiousness leads to an increase in overall performance; the presence of agreeableness in team members leads to an increase in cohesion, communication, productivity, and overall performance; the presence of openness to experience in team members leads to an increase in communication; the presence of neuroticism in team members leads to an increase in cohesion and overall performance (Mathieu et al., 2008).

### Faultlines

A faultline is an imaginary line that divides a heterogeneous team into homogenous sub-teams. For example, a mixed team of men and women would have an imaginary split between the two genders. When a team is in its initial stages of forming, members may use demographic traits, such as gender, to place themselves into a sub-team (Lau &Murnighan, 1998).

Similar to faults, or breaks, in the earth’s crust, faultlines often need to be activated by external forces (i.e. task demands) in order to shake things up, or, cause an “earthquake.” When this happens, team members split along faultlines to form sub-teams. Individuals begin to create more interpersonal connections within the sub-team than with the team as a whole (Lau &Murnighan, 2005). In severe cases, the members of a sub-team may feel like the split is irreconcilable and break away completely from the team or organization (Dyck& Starke, 1999).

### Context

The composition of a team creates a context--conditions that surround and influence the team--for individual team members’ actions as well as teamwork and performance (Moreland & Levine, 1992).

For example, high levels of diversity in the team roles (such as coordinator and implementer) held by members have been shown to better help teams successfully complete complex tasks (Higgs, Plewnia, &Ploch, 2005). This does not mean, however, that high levels of diversity always enhances actions, teamwork, or performance. For example, the chosen attribute could be disagreeableness, where high levels could lead to decreased sharing of ideas by team members, lower amounts of teamwork (such as less communication), and poorer performance.

In addition to highs and lows in diversity, the ideal composition of a team may also exist at a moderate level. For example, using extraversion as the chosen attribute, a team with a high or low number of extraverts does not perform as well as a team with a moderate (around a third of the members) number of extraverts (Barry & Stewart, 1997). In all of these scenarios, the team composition, in terms of a chosen attribute, affect the team differently at different levels.

### Climate

Climate is most commonly thought of as the typical way that members in the organization describe their team or organization (Chan, 1998). Team composition creates climate, and team climate moderates the relationship between individual perception of an organization and organizational outcomes such as performance and satisfaction (Schneider, Salvaggio, and Subirats, 2002).

Although climate is influenced by individuals’ attributes, it is manifested at the organizational or team level (Schneider et al., 2002). Generally, climate encompasses the work environment, acting as a continuous factor that influences team composition and team performance. When individuals in the workplace create a positive climate, job satisfaction and job performance increase (Wiley and Brooks, 2000; Schneider et al., 2002). As a moderator, team climate influences the relationship between team composition and team performance.

## Ways to measure team composition

There are a variety of ways in which team composition can be operationalized, or turned into a measurable team characteristic. The common element of the methodologies involves first measuring characteristics of individual team members.

### Maximum and minimum scores

Maximum and minimum characteristic scores are considered most important when one team member having or lacking a characteristic will significantly impact the team’s performance. For example, a very disagreeable team member may obstruct a team’s ability to agree and cause poorer performance (Bell, 2007).

### Mean score

A team score for a particular characteristic can also be measured by taking the average, or mean, of all team member scores. Using this method, the amount of each trait for individual members is combined to form a group-level measurement of that trait. For example, cohesion, a characteristic sensibly measured using a team score due to its synergistic nature, could be measured this way. This would be accomplished by providing team members with a survey for them to assess cohesive traits (i.e. cooperation, harmony) and then calculating the average of the survey scores (Barrick, et al., 1998).

### Variability

It is possible to look at how much diversity there is on a team by calculating the standard deviation, or how much team member differs on a characteristic. For example, team experience, quantified as the continuous number of years a team member has been on a specific team, could be measured this way. A standard deviation of experience would show the variability in team members’ amount of experience in comparison to each other, (Humphrey et al, 2009).

## Future research and implications

As organizations continues to change in part due to globalization of business and advancements in technology, the way in which team composition strategies are implemented must keep up. There is a strong need for further research on how to measure team composition as well as which methods of measurement are most appropriate for which characteristics. Are teams better off with a balance of a trait? Should minimums or maximums of particular traits be avoided? How can it be determined when a team has enough cohesion or social awareness? Should decision-making be facilitated by someone external to the group?

To answer these questions, there is also a need to more concretely define the characteristics in order to allow for the generalizability of research findings from one organization to another. To strengthen research results, studies also need to be conducted longitudinally in order to capture changing team characteristics such as emergent states.

There are innumerable decisions to be made upon constructing a team of individuals who will be able to successfully perform. It is crucial to consider all of the discussed variables that determine team composition as well as monitor those that are determined by team composition.

The overarching perspective looks at the homogeneity and heterogeneity of a team's composition. There is a continuous debate of which type of composition is most desirable. For this, and all factors of team composition, it is truly on a case-by-case basis. This leaves the door wide open for continued research on different teams in different settings with different compositions.

***The Five Dysfunctions of a Team***

According to the book, ***The Five Dysfunctions of a Team***by consultant and speaker [Patrick Lencioni](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patrick_Lencioni),

the five dysfunctions are[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Five_Dysfunctions_of_a_Team#cite_note-2):

* Absence of trust—unwilling to be *vulnerable* within the group
* Fear of conflict—seeking *artificial harmony* over constructive passionate debate
* Lack of commitment—feigning buy-in for group decisions creates *ambiguity* throughout the organization
* Avoidance of accountability—ducking the responsibility to call peers on counterproductive behaviour which sets *low standards*
* Inattention to results—focusing on personal success, *status and ego* before team success

**Leadership**

**Leadership** has been described as “a process of [social influence](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_influence) in which one person can enlist the aid and [support](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peer_support) of others in the accomplishment of a common [task](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Task_%28project_management%29)".[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leadership#cite_note-0) Other in-depth definitions of leadership have also emerged.

Leadership is "organizing a group of people to achieve a common goal". The leader may or may not have any formal authority. Students of leadership have produced theories involving traits,[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leadership#cite_note-refLocke1991-1)situational interaction, function, behavior, power, vision and values,[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leadership#cite_note-2) [charisma](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charisma), and intelligence, among others. Somebody whom people follow: somebody who guides or directs others.

## Styles

[Leadership style](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leadership_style) refers to a leader's behavior. It is the result of the philosophy, personality, and experience of the leader. Rhetoric specialists have also developed models for understanding leadership ([Robert Hariman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Hariman), *Political Style*,[[46]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leadership#cite_note-45) [Philippe-Joseph Salazar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philippe-Joseph_Salazar), *L'Hyperpolitique. Technologies politiques De La Domination*[[47]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leadership#cite_note-46)).

Different situations call for different leadership styles. In an emergency when there is little time to converge on an agreement and where a designated authority has significantly more experience or expertise than the rest of the team, an autocratic leadership style may be most effective; however, in a highly motivated and aligned team with a homogeneous level of expertise, a more democratic or laissez-faire style may be more effective. The style adopted should be the one that most effectively achieves the objectives of the group while balancing the interests of its individual members.[[48]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leadership#cite_note-Lewin-47)

### Autocratic or authoritarian style

Under the [autocratic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Autocratic) leadership style, all decision-making powers are centralized in the leader, as with [dictators](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dictator).

Leaders do not entertain any suggestions or initiatives from subordinates. The autocratic management has been successful as it provides strong motivation to the manager. It permits quick decision-making, as only one person decides for the whole group and keeps each decision to him/herself until he/she feels it needs to be shared with the rest of the group.[[48]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leadership#cite_note-Lewin-47)

### Participative or democratic style

The democratic leadership style consists of the leader sharing the decision-making abilities with group members by promoting the interests of the group members and by practicing social equality.

### Laisez-faire or free rein style

A person may be in a leadership position without providing leadership, leaving the group to fend for itself. Subordinates are given a free hand in deciding their own policies and methods.

### Narcissistic leadership

Various academics such as [Kets de Vries](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manfred_F.R._Kets_de_Vries), [Maccoby](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Maccoby), and Thomas have identified [narcissistic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narcissistic) leadership as an important and common leadership style.

### Toxic leadership

A [toxic leader](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toxic_leader) is someone who has responsibility over a group of people or an organization, and who abuses the leader-follower relationship by leaving the group or organization in a worse-off condition than when he/she first found them.

## Contexts

### Organizations

An organization that is established as an [instrument](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legal_instrument) or means for achieving defined [objectives](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Objective_%28goal%29) has been referred to as a *formal organization*. Its design specifies how goals are subdivided and reflected in subdivisions of the organization. Divisions, departments, sections, positions, [jobs](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Occupation_(economic)&action=edit&redlink=1), and tasks make up this work [structure](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Structure). Thus, the formal organization is expected to behave impersonally in regard to relationships with clients or with its members. According to Weber's definition, entry and subsequent advancement is by merit or seniority. Employees receive a salary and enjoy a degree of tenure that safeguards them from the arbitrary influence of superiors or of powerful clients. The higher one's position in the hierarchy, the greater one's presumed expertise in adjudicating problems that may arise in the course of the work carried out at lower levels of the organization. It is this bureaucratic structure that forms the basis for the appointment of heads or chiefs of administrative subdivisions in the organization and endows them with the authority attached to their position.[[50]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leadership#cite_note-Cecil-49)

In contrast to the appointed head or chief of an administrative unit, a leader emerges within the context of the *informal organization* that underlies the formal structure. The informal organization expresses the personal [objectives](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Objective_%28goal%29) and [goals](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Goal) of the individual [membership](http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Membership). Their objectives and goals may or may not coincide with those of the formal organization. The informal organization represents an extension of the social structures that generally characterize human life — the spontaneous emergence of groups and organizations as ends in themselves.

In prehistoric times, humanity was preoccupied with personal security, maintenance, protection, and survival. Now humanity spends a major portion of waking hours working for organizations. The need to identify with a community that provides security, protection, maintenance, and a feeling of belonging has continued unchanged from prehistoric times. This need is met by the informal organization and its emergent, or unofficial, leaders.[[51]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leadership#cite_note-Henry-50)[[52]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leadership#cite_note-51)

Leaders emerge from within the structure of the informal organization. Their personal qualities, the demands of the situation, or a combination of these and other factors attract followers who accept their leadership within one or several overlay structures. Instead of the authority of position held by an appointed head or chief, the emergent leader wields influence or power. Influence is the ability of a person to gain co-operation from others by means of persuasion or control over rewards. Power is a stronger form of influence because it reflects a person's ability to enforce action through the control of a means of punishment.[[51]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leadership#cite_note-Henry-50)

A leader is a person who influences a group of people towards a specific result. It is not dependent on title or formal authority. (Elevos, paraphrased from Leaders, Bennis, and Leadership Presence, Halpern &Lubar.) Ogbonnia (2007) defines an effective leader "as an individual with the capacity to consistently succeed in a given condition and be viewed as meeting the expectations of an organization or society." Leaders are recognized by their capacity for caring for others, clear communication, and a commitment to persist.[[53]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leadership#cite_note-52) An individual who is appointed to a managerial position has the right to command and enforce obedience by virtue of the authority of his position. However, she or he must possess adequate personal attributes to match this authority, because authority is only potentially available to him/her. In the absence of sufficient personal competence, a manager may be confronted by an emergent leader who can challenge her/his role in the organization and reduce it to that of a figurehead. However, only authority of position has the backing of formal sanctions. It follows that whoever wields personal influence and power can legitimize this only by gaining a formal position in the hierarchy, with commensurate authority.[[51]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leadership#cite_note-Henry-50) Leadership can be defined as one's ability to get others to willingly follow. Every organization needs leaders at every level.[[54]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leadership#cite_note-The_Top_10_Leadership_Qualities-53)

### Management

Over the years the philosophical terminology of "management" and "leadership" have, in the organizational context, been used both as synonyms and with clearly differentiated meanings. Debate is fairly common about whether the use of these terms should be restricted, and generally reflects an awareness of the distinction made by Burns (1978) between "transactional" leadership (characterized by e.g. emphasis on procedures, contingent reward, management by exception) and "transformational" leadership (characterized by e.g. charisma, personal relationships, creativity).[[40]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leadership#cite_note-Burns-39)

### Group leadership

In contrast to individual leadership, some organizations have adopted group leadership. In this situation, more than one person provides direction to the group as a whole. Some organizations have taken this approach in hopes of increasing creativity, reducing costs, or downsizing. Others may see the traditional leadership of a [boss](http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/boss) as costing too much in team performance. In some situations, the team members best able to handle any given phase of the project become the temporary leaders. Additionally, as each team member has the opportunity to experience the elevated level of empowerment, it energizes staff and feeds the cycle of success.[[55]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leadership#cite_note-Bens-54)

Leaders who demonstrate persistence, tenacity, determination, and synergistic communication skills will bring out the same qualities in their groups. Good leaders use their own inner mentors to energize their team and organizations and lead a team to achieve success.[[56]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leadership#cite_note-breakthrough-leader-55)

***According to the National School Boards Association (USA):***[[57]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leadership#cite_note-56)

These Group Leaderships or Leadership Teams have specific characteristics:

**Characteristics of a Team**

* There must be an awareness of unity on the part of all its members.
* There must be interpersonal relationship. Members must have a chance to contribute, and learn from and work with others.
* The members must have the ability to act together toward a common goal.

**Ten characteristics of well-functioning teams:**

* Purpose: Members proudly share a sense of why the team exists and are invested in accomplishing its mission and goals.
* Priorities: Members know what needs to be done next, by whom, and by when to achieve team goals.
* Roles: Members know their roles in getting tasks done and when to allow a more skillful member to do a certain task.
* Decisions: Authority and decision-making lines are clearly understood.
* Conflict: Conflict is dealt with openly and is considered important to decision-making and personal growth.
* Personal traits: members feel their unique personalities are appreciated and well utilized.
* Norms: Group norms for working together are set and seen as standards for every one in the groups.
* Effectiveness: Members find team meetings efficient and productive and look forward to this time together.
* Success: Members know clearly when the team has met with success and share in this equally and proudly.
* Training: Opportunities for feedback and updating skills are provided and taken advantage of by team members.

### Self-Leadership

[Self-Leadership](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communication_and_Leadership_During_Change) is a process that occurs within an individual, rather than an external act. It is an expression of who we are as people.[[58]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leadership#cite_note-57)

### Primates

[Mark van Vugt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mark_van_Vugt) and [AnjanaAhuja](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anjana_Ahuja) in *Naturally Selected: The Evolutionary Science of Leadership* present evidence of leadership in nonhuman animals, from ants and bees to baboons and chimpanzees. They suggest that leadership has a long evolutionary history and that the same mechanisms underpinning leadership in humans can be found in other social species, too.[[59]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leadership#cite_note-58)[Richard Wrangham](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Wrangham) and [Dale Peterson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dale_Peterson), in [*Demonic Males: Apes and the Origins of Human Violence*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demonic_Males%3A_Apes_and_the_Origins_of_Human_Violence), present evidence that only [humans](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homo_sapiens) and [chimpanzees](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chimpanzee), among all the [animals](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Animal) living on [Earth](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Earth), share a similar tendency for a cluster of behaviors: [violence](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Violence), [territoriality](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Territory_%28animal%29), and [competition](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Competition) for uniting behind the one chief male of the land.[[60]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leadership#cite_note-59) This position is contentious. Many animals beyond apes are territorial, compete, exhibit violence, and have a social structure controlled by a dominant male (lions, wolves, etc.), suggesting Wrangham and Peterson's evidence is not empirical. However, we must examine other species as well, including elephants (which are matriarchal and follow an alpha female), meerkats (who are likewise matriarchal), and many others.

By comparison, [bonobos](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bonobo), the second-closest species-relatives of humans, do *not* unite behind the chief male of the land. The bonobos show deference to an alpha or top-ranking female that, with the support of her coalition of other females, can prove as strong as the strongest male. Thus, if leadership amounts to getting the greatest number of followers, then among the bonobos, a female almost always exerts the strongest and most effective leadership. However, not all scientists agree on the allegedly peaceful nature of the bonobo or its reputation as a "[hippie](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hippie) chimp".[[2]](http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2007/07/30/070730fa_fact_parker)

## Leadership Myths

Leadership, although largely talked about, has been described as one of the least understood concepts across all cultures and civilizations. Over the years, many researchers have stressed the prevalence of this misunderstanding, stating that the existence of several flawed assumptions, or myths, concerning leadership often interferes with individuals’ conception of what leadership is all about (Gardner, 1965; Bennis, 1975).[[63]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leadership#cite_note-Gardner-62)[[64]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leadership#cite_note-Bennis-63)

### Leadership is innate

According to some, leadership is determined by distinctive [dispositional characteristics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dispositional_affect) present at birth (e.g., [extraversion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Extraversion_and_introversion); [intelligence](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intelligence); [ingenuity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ingenuity)). However, it is important to note that leadership also develops through hard work and careful observation.[[65]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leadership#cite_note-Forsyth-64) Thus, effective leadership can result from [nature](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nature_versus_nurture) (i.e., innate talents) as well as [nurture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nature_versus_nurture) (i.e., acquired skills).

### Leadership is possessing power over others

Although leadership is certainly a form of [power](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Power_%28philosophy%29), it is not demarcated by power *over* people – rather, it is a power *with* people that exists as a reciprocal relationship between a leader and his/her followers (Forsyth, 2009).[[65]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leadership#cite_note-Forsyth-64) Despite popular belief, the use of manipulation, [coercion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coercion), and domination to influence others is not a requirement for leadership. In actuality, individuals who seek group consent and strive to act in the best interests of others can also become effective leaders (e.g., class president; court judge).

### Leaders are positively influential

The [validity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Validity) of the assertion that groups flourish when guided by effective leaders can be illustrated using several examples. For instance, according to Baumeister et al. (1988), the [bystander effect](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bystander_effect) (failure to respond or offer assistance) that tends to develop within groups faced with an emergency is significantly reduced in groups guided by a leader.[[66]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leadership#cite_note-baumeister-65) Moreover, it has been documented that group performance,[[67]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leadership#cite_note-jung-66) [creativity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Creativity),[[68]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leadership#cite_note-zaccaro-67) and [efficiency](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Efficiency) [[69]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leadership#cite_note-Larson-68) all tend to climb in businesses with designated managers or CEOs. However, the difference leaders make is **not** always positive in nature. Leaders sometimes focus on fulfilling their own agendas at the expense of others, including his/her own followers (e.g., [Pol Pot](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pol_Pot); [Josef Stalin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Stalin)). Leaders who focus on personal gain by employing stringent and manipulative leadership styles often make a difference, but usually do so through negative means.[[70]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leadership#cite_note-blumen-69)

### Leaders entirely control group outcomes

In [Western cultures](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_culture) it is generally assumed that group leaders make *all* the difference when it comes to group influence and overall goal-attainment. Although common, this romanticized view of leadership (i.e., the tendency to overestimate the degree of control leaders have over their groups and their groups’ outcomes) ignores the existence of many other factors that influence group dynamics.[[71]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leadership#cite_note-meindl-70) For example, [group cohesion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Group_cohesiveness), [communication patterns](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_communication) among members, individual personality traits, group context, the nature or orientation of the work, as well as [behavioral norms](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norm_%28social%29)and established standards influence group functionality in varying capacities. For this reason, it is unwarranted to assume that all leaders are in complete control of their groups' achievements.

### All groups have a designated leader

Despite preconceived notions, not all groups need have a designated leader. Groups that are primarily composed of women,[[72]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leadership#cite_note-schmid-71)[[73]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leadership#cite_note-berdahl-72) are limited in size, are free from stressful decision-making,[[74]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leadership#cite_note-guastello-73) or only exist for a short period of time (e.g., student work groups; pub quiz/trivia teams) often undergo a [diffusion of responsibility](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diffusion_of_responsibility), where leadership tasks and roles are shared amongst members (Schmid Mast, 2002; Berdahl& Anderson, 2007; Guastello, 2007).

### Group members resist leaders

Although research has indicated that group members’ dependence on group leaders can lead to reduced self-reliance and overall group strength,[[65]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leadership#cite_note-Forsyth-64) most people actually prefer to be led than to be without a leader (Berkowitz, 1953).[[75]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leadership#cite_note-berk-74) This "need for a leader" becomes especially strong in troubled groups that are experiencing some sort of conflict. Group members tend to be more contented and productive when they have a leader to guide them. Although individuals filling leadership roles can be a direct source of resentment for followers, most people appreciate the contributions that leaders make to their groups and consequently welcome the guidance of a leader (Stewart &Manz, 1995).[[76]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leadership#cite_note-manz-75)

# Cross-cultural leadership

[Cross-cultural psychology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cross-cultural_psychology) attempts to understand how individuals of different [cultures](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture) interact with each other (Abbe, Gulick, & Herman, 2007). Along these lines, **cross-cultural leadership** has developed as a way to understand leaders who work in the newly [globalized](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Globalization) market. Today’s international organizations require leaders who can adjust to different environments quickly and work with partners and employees of other cultures (House, Javidan, &Dorfman, 2001). It cannot be assumed that a manager who is successful in one country will be successful in another (Javidan, Dorfman, de Luque, & House, 2006; Brodbeck, Frese, Akerblom, Audia, Bakacsi, &Bendova, 2000).

The following sections discuss the various aspects of cross-cultural leadership including: related theories and research, definitions of the construct itself and characteristics that are exhibited from such leaders, and antecedents to and implications of being a cross-cultural leader.

# Leadership Styles across Cultures

Leadership is a universal phenomenon (Bass, 1997). That is, wherever there are people, there are leaders. The question here is not whether leadership exists across cultures, but do various leadership styles (paternalistic leadership, transformational leadership, transactional leadership) translate across cultures?

#### Paternalistic Leadership

[Paternalistic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paternalistic) leadership “combines strong discipline and authority with fatherly benevolence and moral integrity couched in a ‘personalistic’ atmosphere” (Farh& Cheng, 2000, p. 94). Paternalistic leadership is composed of three main elements: authoritarianism, benevolence, and moral leadership (Farh& Cheng). At its roots, paternalistic leadership refers to a hierarchical relationship in which the leader takes personal interest in the workers’ professional and personal lives in a manner resembling a parent, and expects loyalty and respect in return (Gelfand, Erez, &Aycan, 2007).

A great deal of research has been conducted on the prevalence of this leadership style in non-Western business organizations, indicating the prevalence of paternalistic leadership in countries like China and Taiwan (Pellegrini&Scandura, 2008). However, considerably less research has been done on whether paternalistic leadership exists in Western cultures. Recently, there has been an increase in the amount of attention placed on paternalistic leadership in non-Western cultures. Although it is a relatively new area of focus in leadership research, evidence has been found supporting the relationship between paternalism and positive work attitudes in numerous cultures, including the Middle East, Latin America, and Pacific Asia (Pellegrini&Scandura, 2008). In a recent study, Pellegrini, Scandura, and Jayaraman (2010) examined paternalism in the Western business context and found that paternalistic leadership was positively associated with job satisfaction in India, but not in the United States. In both Indian and United States cultures, paternalistic leadership was positively related to leader-member exchange and organizational commitment (Pellegrini, Scandura&Jayaraman, 2010). Based on recent cross-cultural studies, paternalistic leadership seems to be more apparent across cultures than previously believed. Further research is needed to explore how prevalent it is, and how individual characteristics may play a role in where paternalistic leadership is found.

#### Transformational & Transactional Leadership

In addition to paternalistic leadership, other well-known leadership styles include [transformational leadership](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transformational_leadership) and [transactional leadership](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transactional_leadership). Transformational leadership is loosely defined as a charismatic leadership style that rallies subordinates around a common goal with enthusiasm and support. Transactional leadership is characterized by a give and take relationship using rewards as an incentive. These concepts were introduced by Bass (1985) and have been updated and studied throughout the years, claiming the transferability of these types of leadership styles across cultures. In fact, Bass and Avolio (1994) went as far as to give an optimal leadership profile for leaders around the world.

Shahin and Wright (2004) decided to test this theory in Egypt, an emerging market that had yet to be studied. In a questionnaire study of employees at 10 different banks, responses indicated that only 3 of the 7 factors that were found in the ideal leadership style in Egypt corresponded with the US factors. The other 4 were unique to Egypt or perhaps the Middle East in general. These results indicate an inability to assume that transactional and transformational leadership will succeed in non-western cultures. Casimir, Waldman, Bartram, and Yang (2006) similarly found that these leadership styles may not be as universal as some assume. In a study of transactional and transformational leadership in China and Australia, results indicated that transformational leadership significantly predicted performance and trust in the Australian population, while only predicting trust, and not performance in the Chinese population. Transactional leadership did not predict trust or performance in either population. This is another indication that these theories may not be as universal as proposed.

In opposition to the above findings, Walumbwa, Lawler, and Avolio (2007) compared data from China, India, Kenya, and the U.S. and found a strong presence of transformational and/or transactional leadership in these countries. Allocentrists, similar to [collectivists](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collectivists), respond more positively to transformational leadership because they unite individuals around a common goal. Idiocentrists, essentially individuals found in [individualistic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Individualistic) cultures, are more amenable to transactional leaders who reward individuals for hard work and success and less amenable to leaders who encourage group work and reduce individual identity. Although these leadership styles are not appropriate in every country, this study shows that as long as the appropriate style of leadership (either transactional or transformational) is used in the correct country, followers will respond positively. Further studies should be conducted for consensus.

Meeting

In a **meeting**, two or more people come together to discuss one or more topics, often in a formal setting.

Definitions

An act or process of coming together as an assembly for a common purpose.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meeting#cite_note-pu-0)

A meeting is a gathering of two or more people that has been convened for the purpose of achieving a common goal through verbal interaction, such as sharing information or reaching agreement.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meeting#cite_note-pi-1) Meetings may occur face to face or virtually, as mediated by communications technology, such as a[telephone conference call](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conference_call), a [skyped conference call](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skype) or a [videoconference](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Videoconferencing).

Thus, a meeting may be distinguished from other gatherings, such as a chance encounter (not convened), a sports game or a concert (verbal interaction is incidental), a party or the company of friends (no common goal is to be achieved) and a demonstration (whose common goal is achieved mainly through the number of demonstrators present, not verbal interaction and the consumption of doughnuts).

Commercially, the term is used by meeting planners and other meeting professionals to denote an event booked at a hotel, convention center or any other venue dedicated to such gatherings.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meeting#cite_note-pi-1) In this sense, the term meeting covers a lecture (one presentation), seminar (typically several presentations, small audience, one day), conference (mid-size, one or more days), congress (large, several days), exhibition or trade show (with manned stands being visited by passers-by), workshop (smaller, with active participants), training course, team-building session and kick-off event.

Types of meetings

Common types of meeting include:

* [Ad-hoc](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ad-hoc) meeting, a meeting called for a special purpose
* [Board](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Board_of_directors) meeting, a meeting of the [Board of directors](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Board_of_directors) of an organization
* Investigative Meeting, generally when conducting a pre-interview, exit interview or a meeting among the investigator and representative
* [Kickoff meeting](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kickoff_meeting), the first meeting with the project team and the client of the project to discuss the role of each team member
* Management meeting, a meeting among managers
* [Off-site](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Off-site) meeting, also called "offsite retreat" and known as an [Awayday](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Awayday) meeting in the UK
* One-on-one meeting, between two individuals
* Pre-Bid Meeting, a meeting of various competitors and or contractors to visually inspect a jobsite for a future project. The meeting is normally hosted by the future customer or engineer who wrote the project specification to ensure all bidders are aware of the details and services expected of them. Attendance at the Pre-Bid Meeting may be mandatory. Failure to attend usually results in a rejected bid
* Staff meeting, typically a meeting between a manager and those that report to the manager
* Team meeting, a meeting among colleagues working on various aspects of a team project
* Work Meeting, which produces a product or intangible result such as a decision

Meeting frequency options

Since a meeting can be held once or often, the meeting organizer has to determine the repetition and frequency of occurrence of the meeting. Options generally include the following:

* A *one-time meeting* is the most common meeting type and covers events that are self-contained. While they may repeat often, the individual meeting is the entirety of the event. This can include a 2006 conference. The 2007 version of the conference is a stand-alone meeting event.
* A *recurring meeting* is a meeting that recurs periodically, such as an every Monday staff meeting from 9:00AM to 9:30 AM. The meeting organizer wants the participants to be at the meeting on a constant and repetitive basis. A recurring meeting can be ongoing, such as a weekly team meeting, or have an end date, such as a 5 week training meeting, held every Friday afternoon.
* A *series meeting* is like a recurring meeting, but the details differ from meeting to meeting. One example of a series meeting is a monthly "lunch and learn" event at a company, church, club or organization. The placeholder is the same, but the agenda and topics to be covered vary. This is more of a recurring meeting with the details to be determined.

Agenda (meeting)

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

An **agenda** is a list of [meeting](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meeting) activities in the order in which they are to be taken up, by beginning with the call to order and ending with adjournment. It usually includes one or more specific items of business to be discussed. It may, but is not required to, include specific times for one or more activities. An agenda may also be called a [docket](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Docket).

Explanation

In business meetings of [deliberative bodies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deliberative_body), the agenda may also be known as the **orders of the day**. The agenda is usually distributed to a meeting's participants prior to the meeting, so that they will be aware of the subjects to be discussed, and are able to prepare for the meeting accordingly.

In [parliamentary procedure](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parliamentary_procedure), an agenda is not binding upon an assembly unless its own rules make it so, or unless it has been adopted as the agenda for the meeting by majority vote at the start of the meeting. Otherwise, it is merely for the guidance of the [chair](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chair_%28official%29).

If an agenda is binding upon an assembly, and a specific time is listed for an item, that item cannot be taken up before that time, and must be taken up when that time arrives even if other business is pending. If it is desired to do otherwise, the rules can be suspended for that purpose.

Typical layout of an agenda

The agenda is usually headed with the [date](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calendar_date), [time](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Time) and location of the meeting, followed by a series of points outlining the order of the agenda and the entire complete thing made up by the secretary and members of the executive: Points on a typical agenda may include:

* Welcome/open meeting
* Apologies for absence
* Approve [minutes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minutes) of the previous meeting
* Matters arising from the previous meeting
* A list of specific points to be discussed — this section is where the bulk of the discussion as well as *decisions* in the meeting usually takes place
* Any other business (AOB) — allowing a participant to raise another point for discussion.
* Arrange/announce details of next meeting
* Close meeting

Facilitation (business)

**Facilitation** in [business](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business), [organizational development](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_development) (OD) and in [consensus decision-making](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consensus_decision-making) refers to the process of designing and running a successful [meeting](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meeting).

Facilitation concerns itself with all the tasks needed to run a [productive](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Productivity_%28economics%29) and impartial meeting. Facilitation serves the needs of any group who are meeting with a common purpose, whether it be making a decision, solving a problem, or simply exchanging ideas and information. It does not [lead](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leadership) the group, nor does it try to distract or to entertain. A slightly different interpretation focuses more specifically on a group that is engaged in [experiential learning](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Experiential_learning).[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Facilitation_%28business%29#cite_note-Heron-0) In particular this is associated with [active learning](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Active_learning) and concepts of [tutelary](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tutor) authority. This is covered in-depth in the research work of [John Heron](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Heron) at the [University of Surrey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Surrey) and the International Centre for [Co-operative Inquiry](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cooperative_inquiry).

Aspects of facilitation

* **The role of the**[**facilitator**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Facilitator)**.** (see below) The role of facilitator only emerged as a separate set of skills in the 1980s. It has similarities to the traditional [Chair](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chair_%28official%29) or [secretary](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secretary) roles in a meeting but goes beyond them to actively participate and guide the group towards consensus.
* **Setting ground rules.** Often disregarded by those untrained in facilitation, setting ground rules is a key component of the facilitation process especially in meetings convened to discuss difficult problems or for training. These rules are usually reiterated in some form at the outset of a facilitated meeting or workshop to ensure participants understand the various roles being employed and the responsibilities accorded to each. Certain aspects feature highly such as:
* being open to suggestions
* building on what is there, not knocking down ideas
* allowing others space (to speak or express themselves)
* mutual respect
* that the facilitator does not own the topic under discussion and the identity of that owner is clear
* rules of engagement such as time-outs and procedures that will be adopted
* how unresolved issues will be captured and dealt with
* Finally it is key that, during the meeting, it is clear that the owner of the topic is not expected to intervene to impose ideas beyond setting out parameters for consideration or to give insight. The facilitator in this respect owns the process of the meeting.

These are all closely associated with the idea of facilitation as a tool of (workplace) [empowerment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Empowerment).[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Facilitation_%28business%29#cite_note-Heron-0)

* **Consulting with the client**. A facilitator will work with a client who is someone in an organisation, or diverse group, who is calling them and has invited the facilitator to assist. They will try to understand the purpose and outcome of the meeting by discussing it with the client.
* **Making arrangements for the**[**meeting**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meeting)**.** The practical arrangements will be arranged or managed by the facilitator. They will also consider in detail the location and layout of the room. They will research the meeting beforehand to understand why it is being held and that all [stakeholders](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Project_stakeholder) are invited and able to attend.
* **Setting the**[**agenda**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agenda_%28meeting%29)**.** They will understand in detail how each item on the agenda is to be tackled and how long it should take. Using specialist techniques they will allow participants to understand all the issues at stake and all alternative courses of action.
* **Understanding group**[**norms**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norm_%28sociology%29)**.** They will not make assumptions about the way people interact and will try to adapt to the ways of different cultures and organisations.
* **Understanding**[**group dynamics**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Group_dynamics)**.** Whilst tackling the practical aspects of a meeting they remain aware of undercurrents, both verbal and non-verbal, which may indicate problems the group is having. The facilitator may try to assist the group in becoming aware of these.

The role of the facilitator

*See the*[*facilitator*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Facilitator)*article for details of exactly how a facilitator might run a meeting.*

It is important to note that the tasks and responsibilities listed below do not need to be covered by a single facilitator. The role of the facilitator is often shared by multiple people, for instance one person may arrange the logistics before the meeting, another person may keep time and monitor the agenda during the meeting, and a third person may be responsible for recording agreements.

* Prior to a meeting, facilitators:
* research the meeting before it happens
* find out the purpose and goal (if any) of the meeting
* establish who needs to attend
* draw up a draft agenda and design the group processes to attain the necessary results
* share the agenda with potential attendees, changing it as necessary
* ensure everyone gets fully briefed for the meeting and that everyone knows the purpose and potential consequences of the meeting
* During the meeting, facilitators:
* monitor the agenda
* keep time
* manage the group process
* encourage participation from all attendees
* help participants understand different points of view
* foster solutions that incorporate diverse points of view
* manage participant behaviour
* create a safe environment
* teach new thinking skills and facilitate structured thinking activities
* record (with an agreed phraseology) agreements. They may also note unresolved issues for later debate.
* The facilitator may write up and publish the results of the meeting to everyone concerned including those who could not attend.

The form of meeting

A meeting usually means everyone is together in the same room at the same time and this is the major situation in which facilitation is practiced. With the introduction of modern telecommunications the field has grown to embrace other forms of meetings:-

* **Same time same place** - the traditional meeting in a room with all parties present at the same time.
* **Same time different place** - the teleconference with either all parties at separate locations or with some in geographically dispersed sub meetings, all with audio / video connection.
* **Different time same place** - a meeting focusing on a notice board and poster display which allows individuals to add comments as they pass. Also, a survey using computers in a kiosk would be a "different time same place" meeting.
* **Different time different place** - meeting via a web link such as discussion groups, forums, blogs, and [usenet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Usenet). Specialist web-enabled group decision support software exists. Wikipedia discussion pages fall into this category.

# *Codes and practices, conflicts*

# Organizational conflict

**Organizational conflict** is a state of discord caused by the actual or perceived opposition of [needs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Needs), [values](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Values) and interests between people working together. [Conflict](http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/conflict) takes many forms in[organizations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organization). There is the inevitable clash between formal authority and power and those individuals and groups affected. There are disputes over how revenues should be divided, how the work should be done, and how long and hard people should work. There are jurisdictional disagreements among [individuals](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Individual), [departments](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Departmentalization), and between [unions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trade_union) and [management](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Management). There are subtler forms of conflict involving rivalries, jealousies, personality clashes, role definitions, and struggles for power and favor. There is also conflict within individuals — between competing needs and demands — to which individuals respond in different ways.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_conflict#cite_note-Johnson-0)

## Personal conflict

Conflict sometimes has a destructive effect on the [individuals](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Individual) and [groups](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Group_%28sociology%29) involved. At other times, however, conflict can increase the capacity of those affected to deal with problems, and therefore it can be used as a motivating force toward innovation and change. Conflict is encountered in two general forms. Personal conflict refers to an individual's inner workings and personality problems.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_conflict#cite_note-conf2-1)

Many difficulties in this area are beyond the scope of [management](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Management) and more in the province of a [professional counselor](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Professional_counselor&action=edit&redlink=1), but there are some aspects of personal conflict that managers should understand and some they can possibly help remedy. Social conflict refers to interpersonal, intragroup, and intergroup differences.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_conflict#cite_note-Johnson-0)

It was pointed out that there is a basic incompatibility between the authority and structure of formal organizations and the human personality. [Human behavior](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_behavior) cannot be separated from the culture that surrounds it.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_conflict#cite_note-conf2-1)

### Role Conflict

Another facet of personal conflict has to do with the multiple roles people play in organizations. [Behavioral](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Behavioral) scientists sometimes describe an [organization](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organization) as a system of position roles. Each member of the organization belongs to a role set, which is an association of individuals who share interdependent tasks and thus perform formally defined roles, which are further influenced both by the expectations of others in the role set and by one's own personality and expectations. For example, in a common form of classroom organization, students are expected to learn from the instructor by listening to them, following their directions for study, taking exams, and maintaining appropriate standards of conduct. The [instructor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teacher) is expected to bring students high-quality learning materials, give lectures, write and conduct tests, and set a scholarly example. Another in this role set would be the dean of the school, who sets standards, hires and supervises faculty, maintains a service [staff](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Employment), readers and graders, and so on. The system of roles to which an individual belongs extends outside the organization as well, and influences their functioning within it. As an example, a person's roles as partner, parent, descendant, and church member are all intertwined with each other and with their set of organizational roles.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_conflict#cite_note-conf5-2)

As a consequence, there exist opportunities for role conflict as the various roles interact with one another. Other types of role conflict occur when an individual receives inconsistent demands from another person; for example, they are asked' to serve on several time-consuming committees at the same time that they are urged to get out more production in their work unit. Another kind of role strain takes place when the individual finds that they are expected to meet the opposing demands of two or more separate members of the [organization](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organization). Such a case would be that of a worker who finds himself pressured by their boss to improve the quality of their work while their work group wants more production in order to receive a higher bonus share.

These and other varieties of role conflict tend to increase an individual's anxiety and [frustration](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frustration). Sometimes they motivate him to do more and better work. Other times they can lead to frustration and reduced efficiency.[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_conflict#cite_note-Knowles-3)

## Organizational conflict theories

### Maturity-immaturity theory

According to Maslow, Argyris, McGregor, Rogers, and other writers of the so-called growth schools, there is a basic tendency in the development of the human personality toward self-fulfillment, or self-actualization. This implies that as an individual matures, they want to be given more responsibility, broader horizons, and the opportunity to develop their personal potential. This process is interrupted whenever a person's environment fails to encourage and nurture these desires.

Formal organizations are rational structures that, based on their assumption of emotions, feelings, and irrationality as human weaknesses, try to replace individual control with institutional control. Thus the principle of task specialization is seen as a device that simplifies tasks for the sake of efficiency. As a consequence, however, it uses only a fraction of a person's capacity and ability. The principle of chain of command centralizes authority but makes the individual more dependent on their superiors. The principle of normal span of control, which assigns a maximum of six or seven subordinates to report to the chief executive, reduces the number of individuals reporting to the head of the organization or to the manager of any subunit. Although this simplifies the job of control for the manager, it also creates more intensive surveillance of the subordinate, and therefore permits him less freedom to control himself.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_conflict#cite_note-Johnson-0)

Under such conditions, subordinates are bound to find themselves in conflict with the formal organization, and sometimes with each other. They advance up the narrowing hierarchy where jobs get fewer, and "fewer" implies competing with others for the decreasing number of openings. Task specialization tends to focus the subordinate's attention on their own narrow function and divert him from thinking about the organization as a whole. This effect increases the need for coordination and leads to a circular process of increasing the dependence on the leader.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_conflict#cite_note-Johnson-0)

They may respond to organizational pressures and threats by defensive reactions such as aggression against their supervisors and co-workers, fixated behavior or apathy, compromise and gamesmanship, or psychological withdrawal and daydreaming. All of these defense mechanisms reduce a person's potential for creative, constructive activity on the job. Finally, employees may organize unions or unsanctioned informal groups whose norms of behavior are opposed to many of the organization's goals. As a sort of self-fulfilling prophecy, all of these reactions to the constraints of the formal organization merely serve to reinforce and strengthen them.

The conflict between the formal organization and the individual will continue to exist wherever managers remain ignorant of its causes or wherever the organizational structure and the leadership style are allowed to become inconsistent with the legitimate needs of the psychologically healthy individual. Everyone recognizes the necessity for order and control in organizations. Those of us who enter management, however, must learn to recognize in addition that order and control can be achieved only at the expense of individual freedom.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_conflict#cite_note-Johnson-0)

Subordinates adapt to these conditions in the organization in several ways. In the extreme, they may find the situation intolerable and leave the organization. Or they may strive to advance to positions of higher authority, there to adopt the controlling style they are trying to escape.

## Conflict within groups

Conflicts between people in work groups, committees, task forces, and other organizational forms of face-to-face groups are inevitable. As we have mentioned, these conflicts may be destructive as well as constructive.

Conflict arises in groups because of the scarcity of freedom, position, and resources. People who value independence tend to resist the need for interdependence and, to some extent, conformity within a group. People who seek power therefore struggle with others for position or status within the group. Rewards and recognition are often perceived as insufficient and improperly distributed, and members are inclined to compete with each other for these prizes.[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_conflict#cite_note-conf3-4)

In western culture, winning is more acceptable than losing, and competition is more prevalent than cooperation, all of which tends to intensify intragroup conflict. Group meetings are often conducted in a win-lose climate — that is, individual or subgroup interaction is conducted for the purpose of determining a winner and a loser rather than for achieving mutual problem solving.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_conflict#cite_note-Johnson-0)

### Negative effects of group conflicts

The win-lose conflict in groups may have some of the following negative effects [[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_conflict#cite_note-conf4-5):

1. Divert time and energy from the main issues
2. Delay decisions
3. Create [deadlocks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deadlocks)
4. Drive unaggressive committee members to the sidelines
5. Interfere with listening
6. Obstruct exploration of more alternatives
7. Decrease or destroy [sensitivity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sensitivity_%28human%29)
8. Cause members to drop out or resign from committees
9. Arouse anger that disrupts a meeting
10. Interfere with [empathy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Empathy)
11. Leave losers resentful
12. Incline underdogs to [sabotage](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sabotage)
13. Provoke [personal abuse](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Personal_abuse)
14. Cause defensiveness

### Results of group conflicts

Conflict in the group need not lead to negative results, however. The presence of a dissenting member or subgroup often results in more penetration of the group's problem and more creative solutions. This is because disagreement forces the members to think harder in an attempt to cope with what may be valid objections to general group opinion. But the group must know how to deal with differences that may arise.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_conflict#cite_note-conf2-1)

True interdependence among members leads automatically to conflict resolution in the group. Interdependence recognizes that differences will exist and that they can be helpful. Hence, members learn to accept ideas from dissenters (which does not imply agreeing with them), they learn to listen and to value openness, and they learn to share a mutual problem-solving attitude to ensure the exploration of all facets of a problem facing the group.[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_conflict#cite_note-conf4-5)

Intergroup conflict between groups is a sometimes necessary, sometimes destructive, event that occurs at all levels and across all functions in [organizations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organization). Intergroup conflict may help generate creative tensions leading to more effective [contributions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Contribution) to the organization's [goals](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Goal), such as competition between sales districts for the highest [sales](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sales).[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_conflict#cite_note-conf5-2) Intergroup conflict is destructive when it alienates groups that should be working together, when it results in win-lose [competition](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Competition), and when it leads to compromises that represent less-than-optimum outcomes.

Intergroup conflict occurs in two general forms. **Horizontal strain** involves competition between functions: for example, sales versus production, research and development versus engineering, purchasing versus legal, line versus staff, and so on. **Vertical strain** involves competition between hierarchical levels: for example, union versus management, foremen versus middle management, shop workers versus foremen.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_conflict#cite_note-conf5-2) A struggle between a group of employees and management is an example of vertical strain or conflict. A clash between a sales department and production over inventory policy would be an example of horizontal strain.

Certain activities and attitudes are typical in groups involved in a win-lose conflict. Each side closes ranks and prepares itself for battle. Members show increased loyalty and support for their own groups. Minor differences between group members tend to be smoothed over, and deviants are dealt with harshly. The level of morale in the groups increases and infuses everyone with competitive spirit. The power structure becomes better defined, as the "real" [leaders](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leader) come to the surface and members rally around the "best" thinkers and talkers.[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_conflict#cite_note-conf3-4)

In addition, each group tends to distort both its own views and those of the competing group. What is perceived as "good" in one's own position is emphasized, what is "bad" is ignored; the position of the other group is assessed as uniformly "bad," with little "good" to be acknowledged or accepted. Thus, the judgment and objectivity of both groups are impaired. When such groups meet to "discuss" their differences, constructive, rational behavior is severely inhibited.[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_conflict#cite_note-conf4-5) Each side phrases its questions and answers in a way that strengthens its own position and disparages the other's. Hostility between the two groups increases; mutual understandings are buried in negative [stereotypes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stereotype).

It is easy to see that under the conditions described above, mutual [solutions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solution) to problems cannot be achieved. As a result, the side having the greater power wins; the other side loses. Or the conflict may go unresolved, and undesirable conditions or circumstances continue. Or the conflict may be settled by a higher authority.[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_conflict#cite_note-conf4-5)

None of these outcomes is a happy one. Disputes settled on the basis of power, such as through a strike or a lockout in a labor-management dispute, are often deeply resented by the loser. Such settlements may be resisted and the winner defeated in underground ways that are difficult to detect and to counter. When this happens, neither side wins; both are losers. If the conflict is left unresolved, as when both sides withdraw from the scene, intergroup cooperation and effectiveness may be seriously impaired to the detriment of the entire [organization](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organization). Disputes that are settled by higher authority also may cause resentment and what is called "lose-lose" consequences. Such settlements are invariably made on the basis of incomplete [information](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information) —without data that the conflict itself obscures — and therefore are poor substitutes for mutually reasoned solutions. Again, both sides have lost. A specific approach to resolving intergroup conflict is outlined in the next chapter on organization development.[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_conflict#cite_note-conf3-4)

Thus, [conflict](http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Conflict) affecting organizations can occur in [individuals](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Individual), between individuals, and between groups. Conflicts within work groups are often caused by struggles over control, status, and scarce resources. Conflicts between groups in organizations have similar origins. The constructive [resolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conflict_resolution) of such conflicts can most often be achieved through a rational process of problem solving, coupled with a willingness to explore issues and alternatives and to listen to each other.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_conflict#cite_note-Johnson-0)

Conflict is not always destructive, it may be a motivator. When it is destructive, however, managers need to understand and do something about it. A rational process for dealing with the conflict should be programmed. Such a process should include a planned action response on the part of the manager or the organization, rather than relying on a simple reaction or a change that occurs without specific action by management.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_conflict#cite_note-Johnson-0)

## Conflict resolution

### Counseling

When personal conflict leads to frustration and loss of [efficiency](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic_efficiency), [counseling](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Counseling) may prove to be a helpful antidote. Although few [organizations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organization) can afford the luxury of having professional counselors on the staff, given some training, managers may be able to perform this function. Nondirective counseling, or "listening with understanding", is little more than being a good listener — something every manager should be.[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_conflict#cite_note-Knowles-3)

Sometimes the simple process of being able to vent one's feelings — that is, to express them to a concerned and understanding listener, is enough to relieve frustration and make it possible for the frustrated individual to advance to a problem-solving frame of mind, better able to cope with a personal difficulty that is affecting their work adversely. The nondirective approach is one effective way for managers to deal with frustrated subordinates and co-workers.

There are other more direct and more diagnostic ways that might be used in appropriate circumstances. The great strength of the nondirective approach (nondirective counseling is based on the client-centered therapy of Carl Rogers), however, lies in its simplicity, its effectiveness, and the fact that it deliberately avoids the manager-counselor's diagnosing and interpreting emotional problems, which would call for special psychological training. No one has ever been harmed by being listened to sympathetically and understandingly. On the contrary, this approach has helped many people to cope with problems that were interfering with their effectiveness on the job.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_conflict#cite_note-Johnson-0)

## Strategies for Managing Group Conflicts

* [Avoidance](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Avoidance) - a management strategy which includes nonattention or creating a total separation of the combatants or a partial separation that allows limited interaction[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_conflict#cite_note-Montana-6)
* [Smoothing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Smoothing) - technique which stresses the achievement of harmony between disputants[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_conflict#cite_note-Montana-6)
* [Dominance or Power Intervention](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Dominance_or_Power_Intervention&action=edit&redlink=1) - the imposition of a solution by higher management, other than the level at which the conflict exists[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_conflict#cite_note-Montana-6)
* [Compromise](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Compromise) - strategy that seeks a resolution which satisfies at least part of the each party's position[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_conflict#cite_note-Montana-6)
* [Confrontation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confrontation) - strategy featuring a thorough and frank discussion of the sources and types of conflict and achieving a resolution that is in the best interest of the group, but that may be at the expense of one or all of the conflicting parties [[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_conflict#cite_note-Montana-6)

A trained conflict resolver can begin with an economical intervention, such as getting group members to clarify and reaffirm shared goals. If necessary, they move through a systematic series of interventions, such as testing the members' ability and willingness to compromise; resorting to confrontation, enforced counseling, and/or termination as last resorts.[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_conflict#cite_note-7)

## Change

Management is presumed to be guided by a vision of the future. The manager reflects in their decision-making activities the values of the organization as they have developed through time, from the original founder-owner to the present top-management personnel. In navigating a path between the values of the organization and its objectives and goals, management has expectations concerning the organization's effectiveness and efficiency and frequently initiates changes within the organization. On other occasions, changes in the external environment — [market demand](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Market_demand),[technology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Technology), or the political, social, or economic environment — require making appropriate changes in the activities of the [organization](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organization). The organization faces these demands for change through the men and women who make up its membership, since organizational change ultimately depends on the willingness of employees and others to change their attitudes, behavior, their degree of knowledge and skill, or a combination of these.[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_conflict#cite_note-Clark-8)

### Personality change

In many contexts, the manager appears to be asking an employee to change their personality to conform to new requirements. This was the challenge that faced Freud as he used psychoanalysis in treating his patients, who had varying degrees of neurosis. The relationship between the psychoanalyst and their patient is one in which the individual seeking help is asked over a period of time to reach into their memory, and through free associations to communicate with the psychoanalyst about past incidents and events. The patient is peeling off layer after layer of experience stretching over a lifetime, with the support, understanding, and guidance of the psychoanalyst.[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_conflict#cite_note-Clark-8)

As the patient unfolds their life story, they may reach a particular incident or event that may be a root cause of their problem in living a "normal" life. If such an event in their past took place in preverbal infancy or before, they may never be able to recall it. Nevertheless, the psychoanalytic relationship itself, because it involves a high degree of trust and confidence and an opportunity to admit to a sympathetic and understanding listener hidden anxieties and fears, may provide the therapeutic experience that is needed for the patient to decide that they have solved their problem. Though there are various theories of psychotherapy in addition to traditional Freudian psychoanalysis, the processes of therapy are often quite similar. In any case, changing an individual's personality is rarely possible in the short run. After all, it presumes changing the meaning that an individual has assigned to their life experiences. The Neo-Freudian point of view, however, assumes that an individual is amenable to personality change until they die, though any change must become increasingly difficult as the individual adds layer upon layer of experience as they move along life's path. Changing the core of an individual's personality within a "reasonable" time may offer little hope of success.[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_conflict#cite_note-Clark-8)

Conflict management

**Conflict management** involves implementing strategies to limit the negative aspects of conflict and to increase the positive aspects of conflict at a level equal to or higher than where the conflict is taking place. Furthermore, the aim of conflict management is to enhance [learning](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Learning) and group outcomes (effectiveness or performance in organizational setting) (Rahim, 2002, p. 208). It is not concerned with eliminating all conflict or avoiding conflict. Conflict can be valuable to groups and organizations. It has been shown to increase group outcomes when managed properly (e.g. Alper, Tjosvold, & Law, 2000; Bodtker& Jameson, 2001; Rahim &Bonoma, 1979; Khun& Poole, 2000; DeChurch& Marks, 2001).

Background

Supervisors spend more than 25% of their time on conflict management, and managers spend more than 18% of their time on relational employee conflicts. These figures have doubled since the mid 1980’s. Companies have distinguished some key factors as “the growing complexity of organizations, use of teams and group decision making, and globalization.” (Lang, 2009, p. 240) The United Kingdom’s Defense Department realized that the new concepts of threats are not the concern any more. It is the capability to deal with them that matters. (Fisher, 2010, p.429)

It is now becoming more evident that this is something that companies and managers need to recognize, and deal with. Conflict significantly affects employee morale, turnover, and litigation, which affects the prosperity of a company, either constructively or destructively. (Lang, 2009, p. 240) Turnover can cost a company 200% of the employee’s annual salary. (Maccoby& Scudder, p.48)

Definitions

**Conflict**

While no single definition of conflict exists, most definitions seem to involve the following factors: that there are at least two independent groups, the groups perceive some incompatibility between themselves, and the groups interact with each other in some way (Putnam and Poole, 1987). Two example definitions are, “process in which one party perceives that its interests are being opposed or negatively affected by another party" (Wall &Callister, 1995, p. 517), and “the interactive process manifested in incompatibility, disagreement, or dissonance within or between social entities” (Rahim, 1992, p. 16).

There are several causes of conflict. Conflict may occur when:

* A party is required to engage in an activity that is incongruent with his or her needs or interests.
* A party holds behavioral preferences, the satisfaction of which is incompatible with another person's implementation of his or her preferences.
* A party wants some mutually desirable resource that is in short supply, such that the wants of all parties involved may not be satisfied fully.
* A party possesses attitudes, values, skills, and goals that are salient in directing his or her behavior but are perceived to be exclusive of the attitudes, values, skills, and goals held by the other(s).
* Two parties have partially exclusive behavioral preferences regarding their joint actions.
* Two parties are interdependent in the performance of functions or activities.

(Rahim, 2002, p. 207)

**Substantive Vs. Affective**

The overarching hierarchy of conflict starts with a distinction between substantive (also called performance, task, issue, or active) conflict and [affective](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Affective) (also called relationship or [the opposite of] agreeable) conflict. If one could make a distinction between good and bad conflict, substantive would be good and affective conflict would be bad. However, in a meta-analysis of the current research, De Drue and Weingart (2003) showed that these two concepts are related to each other (corrected correlation, ρ = .54).

Substantive conflict deals with disagreements among group members about the content of the tasks being performed or the performance itself (DeChurch& Marks, 2001; Jehn, 1995). This type of conflict occurs when two or more social entities disagree on the recognition and solution to a task problem, including differences in viewpoints, ideas, and opinions (Jehn, 1995; Rahim, 2002).

Affective conflict deals with interpersonal relationships or incompatibilities (Behfar, Peterson, Mannix, &Trochim, 2008). It is generated from emotions and frustration (Bodtker& Jameson, 2001), and has a detrimental impact on group or organizational outcomes (i.e. information processing ability, cognitive functioning of group members, attributions of group members' behavior, group loyalty, work group commitment, intent to stay in the present organization, and job satisfaction) (Amason, 1996; Baron, 1997; Jehn, 1995; Jehn et al., 1999; Wall & Nolan, 1986). Summarily stated, "relationship conflict interferes with task-related effort because members focus on reducing threats, increasing power, and attempting to build cohesion rather than working on tasks...The conflict causes members to be negative, irritable, suspicious, and resentful" (Jehn, 1997, pp. 531-532; c.f. Rahim, 2002, p. 210).

Thus, “[substantive] conflicts occur when group members argue over alternatives related to the group's task, whereas [affective] conflicts result over interpersonal clashes not directly related to achieving the group's function (Amason, 1996; Guetzhow&Gyr, 1954; Jehn, 1992; Pinkley, 1990; Priem& Price, 1991)” (c.f. DeChurch& Marks, 2001, p. 5).

In De Dreu and Weingart's 2003 meta-analysis, both substantive and affective conflict are negatively related to team member satisfaction (ρ = -.32; -.56, respectively). Additionally, substantive and affective conflict are negatively related to team performance (ρ = -.20; -.25, respectively). It is important to note that 20% (5 of 25) of the studies used showed a positive correlation between substantive conflict and task performance. These relationships show the severe negative impact that conflict can have on groups, and illustrate the importance of conflict management.

**Organizational and Interpersonal Conflict**

[Organizational conflict](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_conflict), whether it be substantive or affective, can be divided into intraorganizational and interorganizational. Interorganizational conflict occurs between two or more organizations (Rahim, 2002). When different businesses are competing against one another, this is an example of interorganizational conflict Intraorganizational conflict is conflict within an organization, and can be examined based upon level (e.g. department, work team, individual), and can be classified as interpersonal, intragroup and intergroup. Interpersonal conflict--once again--whether it is substantive or affective, refers to conflict between two or more individuals (not representing the group they are a part of) of the same or different group at the same or different level, if in an organization. Interpersonal conflict can be divided into intragroup and intergroup conflict. While the former--intragroup--occurs between members of a group (or between subgroups within a group), the latter--intergroup--occurs between groups or units in an organization (Rahim, 2002).

Conflict Resolution Vs. Conflict Management

As the name would suggest, [conflict resolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conflict_resolution) involves the reduction, elimination, or termination of all forms and types of conflict. In practice, when people talk about [conflict resolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conflict_resolution) they tend to use terms like [negotiation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation), [bargaining](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bargaining), [mediation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mediation), or [arbitration](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arbitration).

In line with the recommendations in the "how to" section, businesses can benefit from appropriate types and levels of conflict. That is the aim of conflict management, and not the aim of [conflict resolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conflict_resolution). Conflict management does not necessarily imply [conflict resolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conflict_resolution). “Conflict management involves designing effective macro-level strategies to minimize the dysfunctions of conflict and enhancing the constructive functions of conflict in order to enhance learning and effectiveness in an organization”(Rahim, 2002, p. 208). Learning is essential for the longevity of any group. This is especially true for organizations; [Organizational learning](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_learning) is essential for any company to remain in the market. Properly managed conflict increases learning through increasing the degree to which groups ask questions and challenge the status quo (Luthans, Rubach, &Marsnik, 1995).

Models of Conflict Management

There have been many styles of conflict management behavior that have been researched in the past century. One of the earliest, [Mary Parker Follett](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_Parker_Follett) (1926/1940) found that conflict was managed by individuals in three main ways: domination, [compromise](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Compromise), and integration. She also found other ways of handling conflict that were employed by organizations, such as [avoidance](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conflict_avoidance) and suppression.

**Early Conflict Management Models**

Blake and Mouton (1964) were among the first to present a conceptual scheme for classifying the modes (styles) for handling interpersonal conflicts into five types: forcing, withdrawing, smoothing, compromising, and problem solving.

In the 1970’s and 1980’s, researchers began using the intentions of the parties involved to classify the styles of conflict management that they would include in their models. Both Thomas (1976) and Pruitt (1983) put forth a model based on the concerns of the parties involved in the conflict. The combination of the parties concern for their own interests (i.e. [assertiveness](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assertiveness)) and their concern for the interests of those across the table (i.e. [cooperativeness](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cooperation)) would yield a particular conflict management style. Pruitt called these styles yielding (low assertiveness/high cooperativeness), problem solving (high assertiveness/high cooperativeness), inaction (low assertiveness/low cooperativeness), and contending (high assertiveness/low cooperativeness). Pruitt argues that problem-solving is the preferred method when seeking mutually beneficial options.

**Khun and Poole’s Model**

Khun and Poole (2000) established a similar system of group conflict management. In their system, they split Kozan’s confrontational model into two sub models: distributive and integrative.

* Distributive - Here conflict is approached as a distribution of a fixed amount of positive outcomes or resources, where one side will end up winning and the other losing, even if they do win some concessions.
* Integrative - Groups utilizing the integrative model see conflict as a chance to integrate the needs and concerns of both groups and make the best outcome possible. This model has a heavier emphasis on compromise than the distributive model. Khun and Poole found that the integrative model resulted in consistently better task related outcomes than those using the distributive model.

**DeChurch and Marks’s Meta-Taxonomy**

DeChurch and Marks (2001) examined the literature available on conflict management at the time and established what they claimed was a "meta-taxonomy" that encompasses all other models. They argued that all other styles have inherent in them into two dimensions - activeness ("the extent to which conflict behaviors make a responsive and direct rather than inert and indirect impression") and agreeableness ("the extent to which conflict behaviors make a pleasant and relaxed rather than unpleasant and strainful impression"). High activeness is characterized by openly discussing differences of opinion while fully going after their own interest. High agreeableness is characterized by attempting to satisfy all parties involved

In the study they conducted to validate this division, activeness did not have a significant effect on the effectiveness of [conflict resolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conflict_resolution), but the [agreeableness](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agreeableness) of the conflict management style, whatever it was, did in fact have a positive impact on how groups felt about the way the conflict was managed, regardless of the outcome.

**Rahim's meta model**

Rahim (2002) noted that there is agreement among management scholars that there is no one best approach to how to make decisions, lead or manage conflict. In a similar vein, rather than creating a very specific model of conflict management, Rahim created a meta-model (in much the same way that DeChurch and Marks, 2001, created a meta-taxonomy) for conflict styles based on two dimensions, concern for self and concern for others (as shown in Figure 2).

Within this framework are five management approaches: integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding, and compromising. Integration involves openness, exchanging information, looking for alternatives, and examining differences so solve the problem in a manner that is acceptable to both parties. Obliging is associated with attempting to minimize the differences and highlight the commonalities to satisfy the concern of the other party. When using the dominating style one party goes all out to win his or her objective and, as a result, often ignores the needs and expectations of the other party. When avoiding a party fails to satisfy his or her own concern as well as the concern of the other party. Lastly, compromising involves give-and-take whereby both parties give up something to make a mutually acceptable decision. (Rahim, 2002).

How to manage conflict

Overall conflict management should aim to minimize [affective](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Affective) conflicts at all levels, attain and maintain a moderate amount of substantive conflict, and use the appropriate conflict management strategy--to effectively bring about the first two goals, and also to match the status and concerns of the two parties in conflict (Rahim, 2002).

In order for conflict management strategies to be effective, they should satisfy certain criteria. The below criteria are particularly useful for not only conflict management, but also [decision making](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Decision_making)in [management](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Management).

* Organization Learning and Effectiveness- In order to attain this objective, conflict management strategies should be designed to enhance critical and innovative thinking to learn the process of diagnosis and intervention in the right problems.
* Needs of Stakeholders- Sometimes multiple parties are involved in a conflict in an organization and the challenge of conflict management would be to involve these parties in a problem solving process that will lead to collective learning and organizational effectiveness. organizations should institutionalize the positions of employee advocate, customer and supplier advocate, as well as environmental and stockholder advocates.
* Ethics - A wise leader must behave ethically, and to do so the leader should be open to new information and be willing to change his or her mind. By the same token subordinates and other stakeholders have an ethical duty to speak out against the decisions of supervisors when consequences of these decisions are likely to be serious. “Without an understanding of ethics, conflict cannot be handled” (Batcheldor, 2000).

**Steps to Manage**

The first step is reactionary by assessing and reacting to the conflict. The second step is proactive by determining how the employee reacted to the decision. The manager tries to take (create) a new approach, and once again tries to discern how the employee reacts. Once the manager feels that the best decision for the organization has been chosen, and the employee feels justified, then the manager decides if this is a single case conflict, or one that should be written as policy. The entire process starts as a reactive situation but then moves towards a proactive decision. It is based on obtaining an outcome that best fits the organization, but emphasizes the perception of justice for the employee. The chart below shows the interaction of the procedures.

Maccoby and Studder identify five steps to managing conflict.

1. Anticipate – Take time to obtain information that can lead to conflict.
2. Prevent – Develop strategies before the conflict occurs.
3. Identify – If it is interpersonal or procedural, move to quickly manage it.
4. Manage – Remember that conflict is emotional
5. Resolve – React, without blame, and you will learn through dialogue.

(Maccoby&Studder, p.50)

Melissa Taylor’s research on Locus of Control is directly related to individual abilities of communication, especially as it pertains to interpersonal conflict. She also states that conflicts should be solution driven which are creative and integrative. They should be non-confrontational, and they should still maintain control, utilizing non-verbal messages to achieve the outcome.(Taylor, p. 449)

Rahim, Antonioni, and Psenicka’s 2001 article deals with two types of leaders. Those that have concern for themselves, and those that have concern for others. (Rahim, Antonioni &Psenicka, 2001, p.195)

They also have degrees of conflict management style.

1. Integrating involves opening up, creating dialogue, and exploring differences to choose an effective solution for both groups. “This style is positively associated with individual and organizational outcomes.” (Rahim et al., p. 197)
2. Obliging tries to find the same interests of the parties, while trying to minimize the true feeling of the conflict, to satisfy the other party.
3. Dominating is a coercive manager who forces their own way.
4. Avoiding is ignoring the problem in hopes that it will go away.
5. Compromising is a manger that is willing to make concessions and the employee makes concessions for a mutual agreement. (Rahim et al., p.196)

The avoiding and dominating styles are considered ineffective in management. The following chart shows the interaction between the styles. (Rahim et al., p. 196)

International Conflict Management

Special consideration should be paid to conflict management between two parties from distinct cultures. In addition to the everyday sources of conflict, "misunderstandings, and from this counterproductive, pseudo conflicts, arise when members of one culture are unable to understand culturally determined differences in communication practices, traditions, and thought processing" (Borisoff& Victor, 1989).

Indeed, this has already been observed in the business research literature. Renner (2007) recounted several episodes where managers from developed countries moved to less developed countries to resolve conflicts within the company and met with little success due to their failure to adapt to the conflict management styles of the local culture.

As an example, in Kozan’s study noted above, he noted that Asian cultures are far more likely to use a harmony model of conflict management. If a party operating from a harmony model comes in conflict with a party using a more confrontational model, misunderstandings above and beyond those generated by the conflict itself will arise.

International conflict management, and the cultural issues associated with it, is one of the primary areas of research in the field at the time, as existing research is insufficient to deal with the ever increasing contact occurring between international entities.

# Negotiation

**Negotiation** is a [dialogue](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dialogue) between two or more people or parties, intended to reach an understanding, resolve point of difference, or gain advantage in outcome of dialogue, to produce an agreement upon courses of action, to bargain for individual or [collective advantage](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collective_bargaining), to craft outcomes to satisfy various interests of two people/parties involved in negotiation process. Negotiation is a process where each party involved in negotiating tries to gain an advantage for themselves by the end of the process. Negotiation is intended to aim at [compromise](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Compromise).

Negotiation occurs in business, non-profit organizations, government branches, legal proceedings, among nations and in personal situations such as marriage, divorce, parenting, and everyday life. The study of the subject is called [*negotiation theory*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation_theory). Professional negotiators are often specialized, such as *union negotiators*, *leverage buyout negotiators*, *peace negotiators*, *hostage negotiators*, or may work under other titles, such as [diplomats](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diplomats), [legislators](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legislators) or [brokers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brokers).

## Approaches to negotiation

Negotiation typically manifests itself with a trained negotiator acting on behalf of a particular organization or position. It can be compared to [mediation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mediation) where a neutral third party listens to each side's arguments and attempts to help craft an agreement between the parties. It is also related to [arbitration](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arbitration) which, as with a legal proceeding, both sides make an argument as to the merits of their "case" and then the arbitrator decides the outcome for both parties. There are two opposite types of negotiation: Integrative and Distributive.

### Distributive Negotiation

The term distributive means; there is a giving out; or the scattering of things. By its mere nature, there is a limit or finite amount in the thing being distributed or divided amongst the people involved. Hence, this type of negotiation is often referred to as 'The Fixed Pie'. There is only so much to go around, but the proportion to be distributed is limited but also variable. A distributive negotiation usually involves people who have never had a previous interactive relationship, nor are they likely to do so again in the near future. Simple everyday examples would be buying a car or a house.

### Integrative negotiation

The word integrative means to join several parts into a whole. Conceptually, this implies some cooperation, or a joining of forces to achieve something together. Usually involves a higher degree of trust and a forming of a relationship. Both parties want to walk away feeling they've achieved something which has value by getting what each wants. Ideally, it is a twofold process. Integrative negotiation process generally involves some form or combination of making value for value concessions, in conjunction with creative problem solving. Generally, this form of negotiation is looking down the road, to them forming a long term relationship to create mutual gain. It is often described as the win-win scenario.

There are many different ways to segment negotiation to gain a greater understanding of the essential parts. One view of negotiation involves three basic elements: *process*, *behavior* and*substance*. The process refers to how the parties negotiate: the context of the negotiations, the parties to the negotiations, the tactics used by the parties, and the sequence and stages in which all of these play out. Behavior refers to the relationships among these parties, the communication between them and the styles they adopt. The substance refers to what the parties negotiate over: the agenda, the issues (positions and - more helpfully - interests), the options, and the agreement(s) reached at the end.

Another view of negotiation comprises 4 elements: *strategy*, *process* and *tools*, and *tactics*. Strategy comprises the top level goals - typically including relationship and the final outcome. Processes and tools include the steps that will be followed and the roles taken in both preparing for and negotiating with the other parties. Tactics include more detailed statements and actions and responses to others' statements and actions. Some add to this *persuasion and influence*, asserting that these have become integral to modern day negotiation success, and so should not be omitted.

Skilled negotiators may use a variety of tactics ranging from negotiation hypnosis, to a straight forward presentation of demands or setting of preconditions to more deceptive approaches such as[cherry picking](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cherry_picking_%28fallacy%29). Intimidation and [salami tactics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salami_tactics) may also play a part in swaying the outcome of negotiations.

Another negotiation tactic is bad guy/good guy. Bad guy/good guy tactic is when one negotiator acts as a bad guy by using anger and threats. The other negotiator acts as a good guy by being considerate and understanding. The good guy blames the bad guy for all the difficulties while trying to get concessions and agreement from the opponent.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation#cite_note-Churchman_1993-0)

When a party pretends to negotiate, but secretly has no intention of compromising, the negotiator is considered to be negotiating in [bad faith](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bad_faith).

### The advocate's approach

In the advocacy approach, a skilled negotiator usually serves as advocate for one party to the negotiation and attempts to obtain the most favorable outcomes possible for that party. In this process the negotiator attempts to determine the minimum outcome(s) the other party is (or parties are) willing to accept, then adjusts their demands accordingly. A "successful" negotiation in the advocacy approach is when the negotiator is able to obtain all or most of the outcomes their party desires, but without driving the other party to permanently break off negotiations, unless the[best alternative to a negotiated agreement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Best_alternative_to_a_negotiated_agreement) (BATNA) is acceptable.

Traditional negotiating is sometimes called *win-lose* because of the assumption of a fixed "pie", that one person's gain results in another person's loss. This is not true, however, unless only one issue needs to be resolved, such as a price in a simple sales negotiation.

[*Getting to YES*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Getting_to_YES) was published by [Roger Fisher](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roger_Fisher_%28academic%29) and [William Ury](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=William_Ury&action=edit&redlink=1) as part of the [Harvard](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harvard) negotiation project. The book's approach, referred to as Principled Negotiation, is also sometimes called[mutual gains bargaining](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mutual_gains_bargaining). The [Mutual Gains Approach](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mutual_Gains_Approach) has been effectively applied in environmental situations (see [Lawrence Susskind](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lawrence_Susskind) and [AdilNajam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adil_Najam)) as well as [labor relations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Labor_relations) where the parties (such as [management](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Management) and a [labor union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trade_union)) frame the negotiation as "problem solving". If multiple issues are discussed, differences in the parties' preferences make win-win negotiation possible. For example, in a labor negotiation, the union might prefer job security over wage gains.

If the employers have opposite preferences, a trade is possible that is beneficial to both parties. Such a negotiation is therefore not an adversarial [zero-sum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zero-sum) game. Principled Negotiation method consists of four main steps: separating the people from the problem, focus on interests, not positions, generating a variety of possibilities before deciding what to do and insisting that the result be based on some objective standard.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation#cite_note-Roger_Fisher_1991-1)

There are a tremendous number of other scholars who have contributed to the field of negotiation, including [Holly Schroth](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Holly_Schroth&action=edit&redlink=1) and [Timothy Dayonot](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Timothy_Dayonot&action=edit&redlink=1) at UC Berkeley, [Gerard E. Watzke](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Gerard_E._Watzke&action=edit&redlink=1) at Tulane University, [Sara Cobb](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Sara_Cobb&action=edit&redlink=1) at George Mason University, [Len Riskin](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Len_Riskin&action=edit&redlink=1) at the University of Missouri, [Howard Raiffa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Howard_Raiffa) at Harvard, [Robert McKersie](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Robert_McKersie&action=edit&redlink=1) and [Lawrence Susskind](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lawrence_Susskind) at MIT, and [AdilNajam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adil_Najam) and[JeswaldSalacuse](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Jeswald_Salacuse&action=edit&redlink=1) at The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy.[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)]and John D. Males.

### Other negotiation styles

Shell identified five styles/responses to negotiation.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation#cite_note-2) Individuals can often have strong dispositions towards numerous styles; the style used during a negotiation depends on the context and the interests of the other party, among other factors. In addition, styles can change over time.

1. **Accommodating**: Individuals who enjoy solving the other party’s problems and preserving personal relationships. Accommodators are sensitive to the emotional states, body language, and verbal signals of the other parties. They can, however, feel taken advantage of in situations when the other party places little emphasis on the relationship.
2. **Avoiding**: Individuals who do not like to negotiate and don’t do it unless warranted. When negotiating, avoiders tend to defer and dodge the confrontational aspects of negotiating; however, they may be perceived as tactful and diplomatic.
3. **Collaborating**: Individuals who enjoy negotiations that involve solving tough problems in creative ways. Collaborators are good at using negotiations to understand the concerns and interests of the other parties. They can, however, create problems by transforming simple situations into more complex ones.
4. **Competing**: Individuals who enjoy negotiations because they present an opportunity to win something. Competitive negotiators have strong instincts for all aspects of negotiating and are often strategic. Because their style can dominate the bargaining process, competitive negotiators often neglect the importance of relationships.
5. **Compromising**: Individuals who are eager to close the deal by doing what is fair and equal for all parties involved in the negotiation. Compromisers can be useful when there is limited time to complete the deal; however, compromisers often unnecessarily rush the negotiation process and make concessions too quickly.

### Adversary or Partner?

Clearly, these two basically different ways of negotiating will require different approaches. To ignore this can be devastating for the result, but it all too often happens. Because in the distributive approach each negotiator is battling for the largest possible piece of the pie, it may be quite appropriate - within certain limits - to regard the other side more as an adversary than a partner and to take a somewhat harder line. This would however be less appropriate if the idea were to hammer out an arrangement that is in the best interest of both sides. If both win, it's only of secondary importance which one has the greater advantage. A good agreement is not one with maximum gain, but optimum gain. This does not by any means suggest that we should give up our own advantage for nothing. But a cooperative attitude will regularly pay dividends. What is gained is not at the expense of the other, but with him.[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation#cite_note-3)

### Bad faith negotiation

[Bad faith](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bad_faith) is a concept in negotiation theory whereby parties pretend to reason to reach settlement, but have no intention to do so, for example, one political party may pretend to negotiate, with no intention to compromise, for political effect.[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation#cite_note-4)[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation#cite_note-5)

Bad faith in [political science](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_science) and [political psychology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_psychology) refers to negotiating strategies in which there is no real intention to reach compromise, or a model of[information processing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information_processing).[[11]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bad_faith#cite_note-oxforddictionaries.com-10) The "[inherent bad faith model](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inherent_bad_faith_model)" of information processing is a theory in political psychology that was first put forth by [Ole Holsti](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ole_Holsti) to explain the relationship between U.S. Secretary of State [John Foster Dulles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Foster_Dulles)’ beliefs and his model of information processing.[[78]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bad_faith#cite_note-77) It is the most widely studied model of one's opponent.[[79]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bad_faith#cite_note-HSP-78) A state is presumed to be implacably hostile, and contra-indicators of this are ignored. They are dismissed as propaganda ploys or signs of weakness. Examples are John Foster Dulles’ position regarding the Soviet Union, or Israel’s initial position on the [Palestinian Liberation Organization](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palestinian_Liberation_Organization).[[79]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bad_faith#cite_note-HSP-78)

#### Inherent bad faith model in international relations and political psychology

Bad faith in [political science](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_science) and [political psychology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_psychology) refers to negotiating strategies in which there is no real intention to reach compromise, or a model of [information processing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information_processing).[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation#cite_note-6) The "[inherent bad faith model](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inherent_bad_faith_model)" of information processing is a theory in political psychology that was first put forth by [Ole Holsti](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ole_Holsti) to explain the relationship between [John Foster Dulles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Foster_Dulles)’ beliefs and his model of information processing.[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation#cite_note-7) It is the most widely studied model of one's opponent.[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation#cite_note-8) A state is presumed to be implacably hostile, and contra-indicators of this are ignored. They are dismissed as propaganda ploys or signs of weakness. Examples are [John Foster Dulles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Foster_Dulles)’ position regarding the Soviet Union, or [Hamas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamas)'s position on the state of [Israel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel).[[10]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation#cite_note-9)[[*neutrality*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ANeutral_point_of_view)*is*[*disputed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talk%3ANegotiation)]

## Emotion in negotiation

[Emotions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emotion) play an important part in the negotiation process, although it is only in recent years that their effect is being studied. Emotions have the potential to play either a positive or negative role in negotiation. During negotiations, the decision as to whether or not to settle, rests in part on emotional factors. Negative emotions can cause intense and even irrational behavior, and can cause conflicts to escalate and negotiations to break down, but may be instrumental in attaining concessions. On the other hand, positive emotions often facilitate reaching an agreement and help to maximize joint gains, but can also be instrumental in attaining concessions. Positive and negative discrete emotions can be strategically displayed to influence task and relational outcomes [[11]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation#cite_note-Kopelman.2C_Rosette.2C_.26_Thompson.2C_2006-10)and may play out differently across cultural boundaries.[[12]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation#cite_note-Kopelman_.26_Rosette_2008-11)

### Affect effect

[Dispositional affects](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dispositional_Affect) affect the various stages of the negotiation process: which strategies are planned to be used, which strategies are actually chosen,[[13]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation#cite_note-Forgas_1998-12) the way the other party and his or her intentions are perceived,[[14]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation#cite_note-Van_Kleef_2006-13) their willingness to reach an agreement and the final negotiated outcomes.[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation#cite_note-Butt_2005-14) Positive affectivity (PA) and negative affectivity (NA) of one or more of the negotiating sides can lead to very different outcomes.

### Positive affect in negotiation

Even before the negotiation process starts, people in a positive mood have more confidence,[[16]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation#cite_note-Kramer_1993-15) and higher tendencies to plan to use a cooperative strategy.[[13]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation#cite_note-Forgas_1998-12) During the negotiation, negotiators who are in a positive mood tend to enjoy the interaction more, show less contentious behavior, use less aggressive tactics[[17]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation#cite_note-Maiese-16) and more cooperative strategies.[[13]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation#cite_note-Forgas_1998-12) This in turn increases the likelihood that parties will reach their instrumental goals, and enhance the ability to find integrative gains.[[18]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation#cite_note-Carnevale_1986-17) Indeed, compared with negotiators with negative or natural affectivity, negotiators with positive affectivity reached more agreements and tended to honor those agreements more.[[13]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation#cite_note-Forgas_1998-12) Those favorable outcomes are due to better [decision making](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Decision_making) processes, such as flexible thinking, creative [problem solving](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Problem_solving), respect for others' perspectives, willingness to take risks and higher confidence.[[19]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation#cite_note-Barry_2004-18) Post negotiation positive affect has beneficial consequences as well. It increases satisfaction with achieved outcome and influences one's desire for future interactions.[[19]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation#cite_note-Barry_2004-18) The PA aroused by reaching an agreement facilitates the dyadic relationship, which result in affective commitment that sets the stage for subsequent interactions.[[19]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation#cite_note-Barry_2004-18)
PA also has its drawbacks: it distorts perception of self-performance, such that performance is judged to be relatively better than it actually is.[[16]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation#cite_note-Kramer_1993-15) Thus, studies involving self-reports on achieved outcomes might be biased.

### Negative affect in negotiation

Negative affect has detrimental effects on various stages in the negotiation process. Although various negative emotions affect negotiation outcomes, by far the most researched is [anger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anger). Angry negotiators plan to use more competitive strategies and to cooperate less, even before the negotiation starts.[[13]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation#cite_note-Forgas_1998-12) These competitive strategies are related to reduced joint outcomes. During negotiations, anger disrupts the process by reducing the level of trust, clouding parties' judgment, narrowing parties' focus of attention and changing their central goal from reaching agreement to retaliating against the other side.[[17]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation#cite_note-Maiese-16) Angry negotiators pay less attention to opponent’s interests and are less accurate in judging their interests, thus achieve lower joint gains.[[20]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation#cite_note-Allred_1997-19) Moreover, because anger makes negotiators more self-centered in their preferences, it increases the likelihood that they will reject profitable offers.[[17]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation#cite_note-Maiese-16) Opponents who really get angry (or cry, or otherwise lose control) are more likely to make errors: make sure they are in your favor.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation#cite_note-Churchman_1993-0) Anger does not help in achieving negotiation goals either: it reduces joint gains[[13]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation#cite_note-Forgas_1998-12) and does not help to boost personal gains, as angry negotiators do not succeed in claiming more for themselves.[[20]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation#cite_note-Allred_1997-19) Moreover, negative emotions lead to acceptance of settlements that are not in the positive [utility function](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Utility#Utility_functions)but rather have a negative [utility](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Utility).[[21]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation#cite_note-Davidson_1999-20) However, expression of negative emotions during negotiation can sometimes be beneficial: legitimately expressed anger can be an effective way to show one's commitment, sincerity, and needs.[[17]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation#cite_note-Maiese-16) Moreover, although NA reduces gains in integrative tasks, it is a better strategy than PA in distributive tasks (such as [zero-sum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zero-sum)).[[19]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation#cite_note-Barry_2004-18) In his work on negative affect arousal and white noise, Seidner found support for the existence of a negative affect arousal mechanism through observations regarding the devaluation of speakers from other ethnic origins." Negotiation may be negatively affected, in turn, by submerged hostility toward an ethnic or gender group.[[22]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation#cite_note-Seid1991-21)

### Conditions for emotion affect in negotiation

Research indicates that negotiator’s emotions do not necessarily affect the negotiation process. Albarracın et al. (2003) suggested that there are two conditions for emotional affect, both related to the ability (presence of environmental or cognitive disturbances) and the motivation:

1. Identification of the affect: requires high motivation, high ability or both.
2. Determination that the affect is relevant and important for the judgment: requires that either the motivation, the ability or both are low.

According to this model, emotions are expected to affect negotiations only when one is high and the other is low. When both ability and motivation are low the affect will not be identified, and when both are high the affect will be identify but discounted as irrelevant for judgment.[[23]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation#cite_note-Albarrac.C4.B1n_2003-22) A possible implication of this model is, for example, that the positive effects PA has on negotiations (as described above) will be seen only when either motivation or ability are low.

### The effect of the partner’s emotions

Most studies on emotion in negotiations focus on the effect of the negotiator’s own emotions on the process. However, what the other party feels might be just as important, as [group emotions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Group_Emotion) are known to affect processes both at the group and the personal levels. When it comes to negotiations, trust in the other party is a necessary condition for its emotion to affect,[[14]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation#cite_note-Van_Kleef_2006-13) and visibility enhances the effect.[[18]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation#cite_note-Carnevale_1986-17) Emotions contribute to negotiation processes by signaling what one feels and thinks and can thus prevent the other party from engaging in destructive behaviors and to indicate what steps should be taken next: PA signals to keep in the same way, while NA points that mental or behavioral adjustments are needed.[[19]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation#cite_note-Barry_2004-18)
Partner’s emotions can have two basic effects on negotiator’s emotions and behavior: mimetic/ reciprocal or complementary.[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation#cite_note-Butt_2005-14) For example, [disappointment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Disappointment) or [sadness](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sadness) might lead to[compassion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Compassion) and more cooperation.[[19]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation#cite_note-Barry_2004-18) In a study by Butt et al. (2005) which simulated real multi-phase negotiation, most people reacted to the partner’s emotions in reciprocal, rather than complementary, manner. Specific emotions were found to have different effects on the opponent’s feelings and strategies chosen:

* **Anger** caused the opponents to place lower demands and to concede more in a [zero-sum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zero-sum) negotiation, but also to evaluate the negotiation less favorably.[[24]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation#cite_note-Van_Kleef_2004-23) It provoked both dominating and yielding behaviors of the opponent.[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation#cite_note-Butt_2005-14)
* [**Pride**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pride) led to more integrative and compromise strategies by the partner.[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation#cite_note-Butt_2005-14)
* [**Guilt**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guilt) or [**regret**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regret_%28emotion%29) expressed by the negotiator led to better impression of him by the opponent, however it also led the opponent to place higher demands.[[14]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation#cite_note-Van_Kleef_2006-13) On the other hand, personal guilt was related to more satisfaction with what one achieved.[[19]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation#cite_note-Barry_2004-18)
* [**Worry**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Worry) or **disappointment** left bad impression on the opponent, but led to relatively lower demands by the opponent.[[14]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation#cite_note-Van_Kleef_2006-13)

## Team negotiations

Due to globalization and growing business trends, negotiation in the form of teams is becoming widely adopted. Teams can effectively collaborate to break down a complex negotiation. There is more knowledge and wisdom dispersed in a team than in a single mind. Writing, listening, and talking, are specific roles team members must satisfy. The capacity base of a team reduces the amount of blunder, and increases familiarity in a negotiation.[[26]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation#cite_note-25)

## Barriers to negotiations

* Die hard bargainers.
* Lack of trust.
* Informational vacuums and negotiator's dilemma.
* Structural impediments.
* Spoilers.
* Cultural and gender differences.
* Communication problems.
* The power of dialogue.

[[27]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation#cite_note-26)

## Negotiation tactics

## Download free Tactics Manual - 30 High Power Negotiation Tactics[here](http://www.negotiationeurope.com/products/free-negotiation-tactics-manual.html).

# Best alternative to a negotiated agreement

In [negotiation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negotiation) theory, the **best alternative to a negotiated**[**agreement**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Contract) or **BATNA** is the course of action that will be taken by a party if the current negotiations fail and an agreement cannot be reached. BATNA is the key focus and the driving force behind a successful negotiator. BATNA should not be confused with the reservation point or walkaway point. A party should generally not accept a worse resolution than its BATNA. Care should be taken, however, to ensure that deals are accurately valued, taking into account all considerations, such as relationship value, [time value of money](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Time_value_of_money) and the likelihood that the other party will live up to their side of the bargain. These other considerations are often difficult to value, since they are frequently based on uncertain or qualitative considerations, rather than easily measurable and quantifiable factors.

The BATNA is often seen by negotiators not as a safety net, but rather as a point of leverage in negotiations. Although a negotiator's alternative options should, in theory, be straightforward to evaluate, the effort to understand which alternative represents a party's BATNA is often not invested. Options need to be real and actionable to be of value,[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Best_alternative_to_a_negotiated_agreement#cite_note-0) however without the investment of time, options will frequently be included that fail on one of these criteria.[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)] Most managers overestimate their BATNA whilst simultaneously investing too little time into researching their real options.[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)] This can result in poor or faulty decision making and negotiating outcomes. Negotiatiors also need to be aware of the other negotiator's BATNA and to identify how it compares to what they are offering[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Best_alternative_to_a_negotiated_agreement#cite_note-1).

BATNA was developed by negotiation researchers [Roger Fisher](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roger_Fisher_%28academic%29) and William Ury of the Harvard Program on Negotiation (PON), in their series of books on [Principled negotiation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Principled_negotiation) that started with[*Getting to YES*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Getting_to_YES), unwittingly duplicating a game theoretic concept pioneered by [Nobel Laureate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nobel_Laureate) [John Forbes Nash](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Forbes_Nash) decades earlier in his early undergraduate research.[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)]

## Examples

The following examples illustrate the basic principles of identifying the BATNA and how to use it in further negotiations to help value other offers.

### Selling a car

If the seller of a car has a written offer from a dealership to buy the seller's car for $1,000, then the seller's BATNA when dealing with other potential purchasers would be $1,000 since the seller can get $1,000 for the car even without reaching an agreement with such alternative purchaser.

In this example, other offers that illustrate the difficulty of valuing qualitative factors might include:

* An offer of $900 by a close relative
* An offer of $1,100 in 45 days (what are the chances of this future commitment falling through, and would the seller's prior BATNA (the $1000 offer from the dealership) still be available if it did?)
* An offer from another dealer to offset $1,500 against the price of a new car (does the seller want to buy a new car right now, and the offered car in particular?)

### Purchasing

Buyers are often able to leverage their BATNA with regards to prices. This is done through buying from the lowest cost or best value seller.

## Getting and keeping job

# Job hunting

**Job hunting**, **job seeking**, or **job searching** is the act of looking for [employment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Employment), due to [unemployment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unemployment) or discontent with a current position. The immediate goal of job seeking is usually to obtain a [job interview](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview) with an [employer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Employer) which may lead to getting [hired](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Recruitment). The job hunter or seeker typically first looks for job vacancies or employment opportunities.

## Steps

### Locating jobs

Common methods of job hunting are:

* Finding a job through a friend or an extended [business network](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_networking), [personal network](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Personal_Network), or online [social network service](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_network_service)
* Using an [employment website](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Employment_website)
* Looking through the [classifieds](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Classified_advertising) in [newspapers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Newspaper)
* Using a private or public [employment agency](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Employment_agency) or [recruiter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Recruiter)
* Looking on a company's web site for open jobs, typically in its [applicant tracking system](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Applicant_tracking_system)
* Going to a [job fair](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_fair)
* Using professional guidance such as [outplacement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Outplacement) services that give training in writing a résumé, applying for jobs and how to be successful at interview.

As of 2010, less than 10% of U.S. jobs are filled through online ads.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_hunting#cite_note-0)

### Researching the employers

Many job seekers research the employers to which they are applying, and some employers see evidence of this as a positive sign of enthusiasm for the position or the company, or as a mark of thoroughness. Information collected might include open positions, full name, locations, web site, business description, year established, revenues, number of employees, stock price if public, name of chief executive officer, major products or services, major competitors, and strengths and weaknesses.

### Networking

Contacting as many people as possible is a highly effective way to find a job. It is estimated that 50% or higher of all jobs are found through networking.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_hunting#cite_note-1)

Job recruiters and decision makers are increasingly using online social networking sites to gather information about job applicants, according to a mid-2011 Jobvite survey of 800 employers in the USA.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_hunting#cite_note-2)

Job seekers need to begin to pay more attention to what employers and recruiters find when they do their pre-interview information gathering about applicants, according to this 2010 study by[Microsoft](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Microsoft), "Online Reputation in a Connected World".[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_hunting#cite_note-3)

### Applying

One can also go and hand out [résumés](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/R%C3%A9sum%C3%A9) or [Curriculum Vitae](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/R%C3%A9sum%C3%A9) to prospective employers. Another recommended method of job hunting is [cold calling](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cold_calling) or [emailing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Email) companies that one desires to work for and inquire to whether there are any job vacancies.

After finding a desirable job, they would then apply for the job by responding to the advertisement. This may mean applying through a website, emailing or mailing in a hard copy of your résumé to a prospective employer. It is generally recommended that résumés be brief, organized, concise, and targeted to the position being sought. With certain occupations, such as [graphic design](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Graphic_design) or[writing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Writer), portfolios of a job seeker's previous work are essential and are evaluated as much, if not more than the person's résumé. In most other occupations, the résumé should focus on past accomplishments, expressed in terms as concretely as possible (e.g. number of people managed, amount of increased sales or improved customer satisfaction).

### Interviewing

Once an employer has received your résumé, they will make a list of potential employees to be interviewed based on the résumé and any other information contributed. During the interview process, interviewers generally look for persons who they believe will be best for the job and work environment. The interview may occur in several rounds until the interviewer is satisfied and offers the job to the applicant.

### Onboarding

New employees begin their onboarding into new organizations even before their first contact with potential employers. While the best employers will invest in accommodating, assimilating and accelerating new employees,[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_hunting#cite_note-4) those joining firms that don't should take charge of their own onboarding, doing their best to get a head start before their start, manage their messages, and help others deliver results after they start.[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_hunting#cite_note-5)

# Application for employment

An **application for employment**, **job application**, or **application form** (often simply called an **application**) is a [form](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Form_%28document%29) or collection of forms that an individual seeking [employment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Employment), called an applicant, must fill out as part of the process of informing an employer of the applicant's availability and desire to be employed, and persuading the employer to offer the applicant employment.

## Purpose of the application

From the employer's perspective, the application serves a number of purposes. These vary depending on the nature of the job and the preferences of the person responsible for hiring, as "each organization should have an application form that reflects its own environment".[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Application_for_employment#cite_note-DA111-0) At a minimum, an application usually requires the applicant to provide information sufficient to demonstrate that he or she is legally permitted to be employed. The typical application also requires the applicant to provide information regarding relevant [skills](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skill), [education](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education), and previous employment. The application itself is a minor test of the applicant's [literacy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Literacy), [penmanship](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Penmanship), and [communication skills](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communication_skills) - a careless job applicant might disqualify themselves with a poorly-filled out application.

The application may also require the applicant to disclose any [criminal record](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Criminal_record), and to provide information sufficient to enable the employer to conduct an appropriate [background check](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Background_check). For a business that employs workers on a [part-time](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Part-time) basis, the application may inquire as to the applicant's specific times and days of availability, and preferences in this regard. It is important to note, however, that an employer may be prohibited from asking applicants about characteristics that are not relevant to the job, such as their political view or sexual orientation.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Application_for_employment#cite_note-DA111-0)[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Application_for_employment#cite_note-1)

For [white collar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White-collar_worker) jobs, particularly those requiring communication skills, the employer will typically require applicants to accompany the form with a [cover letter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cover_letter) and a [résumé](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/R%C3%A9sum%C3%A9).[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Application_for_employment#cite_note-2) However, even employers who accept a cover letter and résumé will frequently also require the applicant to complete a form application, as the other documents may neglect to mention details of importance to the employers.[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Application_for_employment#cite_note-3)[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Application_for_employment#cite_note-4) In some instances, an application is effectively used to dissuade "walk-in" applicants, serving as a barrier between the applicant and a [job interview](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview) with the person with the authority to hire.[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Application_for_employment#cite_note-5)

For many businesses, applications for employment can be filled out online, and do not have to be submitted in person. However, it is still recommended that applicants bring a printed copy of their application to an interview.[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Application_for_employment#cite_note-6)

Application blanks are the second most common hiring instrument next to personal interviews.[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)] Companies will occasionally use two types of application blanks, short and long.[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)] They both help companies with initial screening and the longer form can be used for other purposes as well. The answers that applicants choose to submit are helpful to the company because they can become an interview question for that applicant at a future date.

Application blanks can either be done by hand or electronically, depending on the company.[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)] When submitting an application blank typically companies will ask you attach a one-page [cover letter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cover_letter) as well as a [resume](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Resume). Applicants tend to make the mistake of sharing too much information with the company and their application will be immediately over looked.[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)]Offering too much information gives the company a bigger opportunity to find something they do not like. Companies are not allowed to ask certain questions in person or on an application such as: age, health status, religion, marital status, about children, race, height, weight, whom you live with and etc.

## Application Sections

Applications usually ask the applicant at the minimum for your name, phone number, and address. In addition to this applications also ask for previous employment information, educational background, emergency contacts, references, as well as any special skills the applicant might have.

The three categories application blanks are very useful for discovering are; physical characteristics, experience, and socio-environmental factors.

Physical Characteristics

If the company has a bona fide occupational qualification (BFOQ) to ask regarding a physical condition, they may ask questions about it such as: The job requires a lot of physical labor. Do you have any physical problems that may interfere with this job?

Experience

Experience requirements can be separated into two groups on an application, work experience and educational background. Educational background is important to companies because by evaluating applicants’ performance in school tells them what their personality is like as well as their intelligence. Work experience is important to companies because it will inform the company if the applicant meets their requirements. Companies are usually interested when applicants were unemployed and when/why the applicant left their previous job.

Socio-environmental qualifications

Companies are interested in the applicant’s socio-environment because it can inform them of their personality, interest, and qualities. If they are extremely active within an organization, that may demonstrate their ability to communicate well with others. Being in management may demonstrate their leadership ability as well as their determination and so on.[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Application_for_employment#cite_note-7)

# Curriculum vitae

A **curriculum vitae** (**CV**), (also spelled curriculum vitæ), provides an overview of a person's experience and other qualifications. In some countries, a CV is typically the first item that a potential[employer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Employer) encounters regarding the job seeker and is typically used to screen applicants, often followed by an [interview](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview), when seeking [employment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Employment).

## Etymology and spellings

*Curriculum vitae* is a [Latin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin) expression which can be loosely translated as *[the] course of [my] life*. In current usage, *curriculum* is less [marked](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Markedness) as a foreign [loanword](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Loanword).

The plural of *curriculum vitæ*, in Latin, is formed following Latin rules of grammar as *curricula vitæ* (meaning "courses of life") — not *curriculum vita* (which is grammatically incorrect) and not*curriculavitarum*[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Curriculum_vitae#cite_note-aueFAQ-0). The form *vitæ* is the singular [genitive](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genitive) of *vita* and is translated as "of life".

Nevertheless, in English, the plural of the full expression curriculum vitae is seldom used; the plural of *curriculum* on its own is usually written as "curriculums",[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Curriculum_vitae#cite_note-AHD-1) rather than the traditional*curricula*.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Curriculum_vitae#cite_note-OED-2)

## Use

In the [United Kingdom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom), a CV is short (usually a maximum of 2 sides of [A4](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ISO_216) paper), and therefore contains only a summary of the job seeker's employment history, qualifications and some personal information. It is often updated to change the emphasis of the information according to the particular position for which the job seeker is applying.[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Curriculum_vitae#cite_note-UoE01-3) Many CVs contain [keywords](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keywords) that potential employers might pick up on and display the content in the most flattering manner, brushing over information like poor grades.[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Curriculum_vitae#cite_note-UoE01-3) A CV can also be extended to include an extra page for the job-seeker's publications if these are important for the job.

In the [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) and [Canada](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canada), a CV is used in academic circles and medical careers as a "replacement" for a résumé and is far more comprehensive; the term [*résumé*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/R%C3%A9sum%C3%A9) is used for most recruitment campaigns. A CV elaborates on education to a greater degree than a résumé and is expected to include a comprehensive listing of professional history including every term of employment, academic credential, publication, contribution or significant achievement. In certain professions, it may even include samples of the person's work and may run to many pages. Many executives and professionals choose to use short CVs that highlight the focus of their lives and not necessarily their employment or education.

In the [European Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Union), there has been an attempt to develop a standardized [CV format](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CV_format) known as [Europass](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Europass) (in 2004 by the [European Parliament](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Parliament) and [European Commission](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Commission)) and promoted by the EU to ease skilled migration between member countries, although this is not widely used in most contexts. The Europass CV system is meant to be just as helpful to employers and education providers as it is to students and job seekers. It was designed to help them understand what people changing between the countries have to offer, whilst overcoming linguistic barriers. The Europass documents also provide recognition for non-accredited learning and work experience.

Some companies produce their own application form which must be completed in applying for any position. Of those, some prefer not to receive a CV at all, but some also allow applicants to attach a CV in support of the application. These companies prefer to process applications this way so they can standardize the information they receive, since CVs are written in many different styles. A CV on its own, therefore, may not give a company all the information it needs at the application stage.

# Cover letter

A **cover letter**, **covering letter**, **motivation letter**, **motivational letter** or a **letter of motivation** is a [letter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Letter_%28message%29) of introduction attached to, or accompanying another [document](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Document) such as a [résumé](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/R%C3%A9sum%C3%A9) or[curriculum vitae](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Curriculum_vitae).[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Motivation_letter#cite_note-Yate2004-0)

## For employment

[Job seekers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_hunting) frequently send a cover letter along with their [CV](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Curriculum_vitae) or [employment application](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Application_for_employment) as a way of introducing themselves to potential employers and explaining their suitability for the desired position. Employers may look for individualized and thoughtfully written cover letters as one method of screening out applicants who are not sufficiently interested in their position or who lack necessary basic skills. Cover letters are typically divided into three categories:

* The application letter or invited cover letter which responds to a known job opening
* The prospecting letter or uninvited cover letter which inquires about possible positions
* The networking letter which requests information and assistance in the sender's job search

### Format

Cover letters are generally one page at most in length, divided into a header, introduction, body, and closing.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Motivation_letter#cite_note-WallaceMass..292006-1)

* *Header*. Cover letters use standard [business letter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_letter) style, with the sender's address and other information, the recipient's contact information, and the date sent after either the sender's or the recipient's address. Following that is an optional reference section (e.g. "RE: Internship Opportunity at Global Corporation") and an optional transmission note (e.g. "Via Email to jobs@example.net"). The final part of the header is a salutation (e.g., "Dear Hiring Managers").
* *Introduction*. The [introduction](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Introduction_%28essay%29) briefly states the specific position desired, and should be designed to catch the employer's immediate interest.
* *Body*. The body highlights or amplifies on material in the resume or job application, and explains why the job seeker is interested in the job and would be of value to the employer. Also, matters discussed typically include [skills](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skill), [qualifications](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Professional_certification), and past [experience](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Experience). If there are any special things to note such as availability date, they may be included as well.
* *Closing*. A closing sums up the letter and indicates the next step the applicant expects to take. It may indicate that the applicant intends to contact the employer, although many favor the more indirect approach of simply saying that the applicant will look forward to hearing from or speaking with the employer. After the closing is a valediction ("Sincerely"), and then a signature line. Optionally, the abbreviation "ENCL" may be used to indicate that there are enclosures.

# Job interview

A **job interview** is a process in which a potential employee is evaluated by an employer for prospective employment in their company, organization, or firm. During this process, the employer hopes to determine whether or not the applicant is suitable for the role.

## Role

A job interview typically precedes the hiring decision, and is used to evaluate the candidate. The interview is usually preceded by the evaluation of submitted [résumés](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/R%C3%A9sum%C3%A9) from interested candidates, then selecting a small number of candidates for interviews. Potential job interview opportunities also include networking events and career fairs. The job interview is considered one of the most useful tools for evaluating potential employees.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-state.ne.us-0) It also demands significant resources from the employer, yet has been demonstrated to be notoriously unreliable in identifying the optimal person for the job.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-state.ne.us-0) An interview also allows the candidate to assess the [corporate culture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_culture) and demands of the job.

Multiple rounds of job interviews may be used where there are many candidates or the job is particularly challenging or desirable. Earlier rounds may involve fewer staff from the employers and will typically be much shorter and less in-depth. A common initial interview form is the phone interview, a job interview conducted over the telephone. This is especially common when the candidates do not live near the employer and has the advantage of keeping costs low for both sides.

Once all candidates have been interviewed, the employer typically selects the most desirable candidate and begins the negotiation of a job offer.

## Interview constructs

In light of its popularity, a stream of research has attempted to identify the constructs (ideas or concepts) that are measured during the interview to understand why interviews might help us pick the right people for the job. Several reviews of the research on interview constructs revealed that the interview captures a wide variety of applicant attributes.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Huffcutt.2C_A._I._2011-1)[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Huffcutt.2C_A._I._2001-2)[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Salgado.2C_J._F._2002-3) These constructs can be classified into three categories: job-relevant interview content (constructs interview questions are designed to assess), interviewee performance (applicant behaviors unrelated to the applicant characteristics the interview questions are designed to assess but nevertheless influence interviewer evaluations of interviewee responses), and potentially job-irrelevant interviewer biases (personal and demographic characteristics of applicants that may influence interviewer evaluations of interviewee responses in an illegal, discriminatory way).

**Job-relevant interview content**

Interview questions are generally designed to tap applicant attributes that are specifically relevant to the job for which the person is applying. The job-relevant applicant attributes that the questions purportedly assess are thought to be necessary for one to successfully perform on the job. The job-relevant constructs that have been assessed in the interview can be classified into three categories: general traits, experiential factors, and core job elements. The first category refers to relatively stable applicant traits. The second category refers to job knowledge that the applicant has acquired over time. The third category refers to the knowledge, skills, and abilities associated with the job.

**General traits:**

* Mental ability: Applicants’ capacity to learn and process information[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Huffcutt.2C_A._I._2001-2)
* Personality: Conscientiousness, agreeableness, emotional stability, extroversion, openness to new experiences[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Huffcutt.2C_A._I._2011-1)[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Huffcutt.2C_A._I._2001-2)[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Salgado.2C_J._F._2002-3)
* Interest, goals, and values: Applicant motives, goals, and person-organization fit[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Huffcutt.2C_A._I._2001-2)

**Experiential factors:**

* Experience: Job-relevant knowledge derived from prior experience[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Huffcutt.2C_A._I._2001-2)[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Salgado.2C_J._F._2002-3)
* Education: Job-relevant knowledge derived from prior education
* Training: Job-relevant knowledge derived from prior training

**Core job elements:**

* Declarative knowledge: Applicants’ learned knowledge[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Salgado.2C_J._F._2002-3)
* Procedural skills and abilities: Applicants’ ability to complete the tasks required to do the job[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-4)
* Motivation: Applicants’ willingness to exert the effort required to do the job[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-5)

**Interviewee performance**

Interviewer evaluations of applicant responses also tend to be colored by how an applicant behaves in the interview. These behaviors may not be directly related to the constructs the interview questions were designed to assess, but can be related to aspects of the job for which they are applying. Applicants without realizing it may engage in a number of behaviors that influence ratings of their performance. The applicant may have acquired these behaviors during training or from previous interview experience. These interviewee performance constructs can also be classified into three categories: social effectiveness skills, interpersonal presentation, and personal/contextual factors.

**Social effectiveness skills:**

* Impression management: Applicants’ attempt to make sure the interviewer forms a positive impression of them[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-6)[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-7)
* Social skills: Applicants’ ability to adapt his/her behavior according to the demands of the situation to positively influence the interviewer[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-8)
* Self-monitoring: Applicants’ regulation of behaviors to control the image presented to the interviewer[[10]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-9)
* Relational control: Applicants’ attempt to control the flow of the conversation[[11]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-10)

**Interpersonal Presentation:**

* Verbal expression: Pitch, rate, pauses[[12]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-11)
* Nonverbal behavior: Gaze, smile, hand movement, body orientation[[13]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Burnett.2C_J._R._1998-12)

**Personal/contextual factors:**

* Interview training: Coaching, mock interviews with feedback[[14]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-13)
* Interview experience: Number of prior interviews[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-14)
* Interview self-efficacy: Applicants’ perceived ability to do well in the interview[[16]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-15)
* Interview motivation: Applicants’ motivation to succeed in an interview[[17]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-16)

**Job-irrelevant interviewer biases**

The following are personal and demographic characteristics that can potentially influence interviewer evaluations of interviewee responses. These factors are typically not relevant to whether the individual can do the job (that is, not related to job performance), thus, their influence on interview ratings should be minimized or excluded. In fact, there are laws in many countries that prohibit consideration of many of these protected classes of people when making selection decisions. Using structured interviews with multiple interviewers coupled with training may help reduce the effect of the following characteristics on interview ratings.[[18]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-McCarthy.2C_J._M._2010-17) The list of job-irrelevant interviewer biases is presented below.

* Attractiveness: Applicant physical attractiveness can influence interviewer’s evaluation of one’s interview performance[[13]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Burnett.2C_J._R._1998-12)
* Race: Whites tend to score higher than Blacks and Hispanics;[[19]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-18) racial similarity between interviewer and applicant, on the other hand, has not been found to influence interview ratings[[18]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-McCarthy.2C_J._M._2010-17)[[20]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-19)
* Gender: Females tend to receive slightly higher interview scores than their male counterparts;[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Huffcutt.2C_A._I._2011-1) gender similarity does not seem to influence interview ratings[[18]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-McCarthy.2C_J._M._2010-17)
* Similarities in background and attitudes: Interviewers perceived interpersonal attraction was found to influence interview ratings[[21]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-20)
* Culture: Applicants with an ethnic name and a foreign accent were viewed less favorably than applicants with just an ethnic name and no accent or an applicant with a traditional name with or without an accent[[22]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-21)

The extent to which ratings of interviewee performance reflect certain constructs varies widely depending on the level of structure of the interview, the kind of questions asked, interviewer or applicant biases, applicant professional dress or nonverbal behavior, and a host of other factors. For example, some research suggests that applicant’s cognitive ability, education, training, and work experiences may be better captured in unstructured interviews, whereas applicant’s job knowledge, organizational fit, interpersonal skills, and applied knowledge may be better captured in a structured interview.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Huffcutt.2C_A._I._2001-2)

Further, interviews are typically designed to assess a number of constructs. Given the social nature of the interview, applicant responses to interview questions and interviewer evaluations of those responses are sometimes influenced by constructs beyond those the questions were intended to assess, making it extremely difficult to tease out the specific constructs measured during the interview.[[23]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-22) Reducing the number of constructs the interview is intended to assess may help mitigate this issue. Moreover, of practical importance is whether the interview is a better measure of some constructs in comparison to paper and pencil tests of the same constructs. Indeed, certain constructs (mental ability and skills, experience) may be better measured with paper and pencil tests than during the interview, whereas personality-related constructs seem to be better measured during the interview in comparison to paper and pencil tests of the same personality constructs.[[24]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-23) In sum, the following is recommended: Interviews should be developed to assess the job relevant constructs identified in the job analysis.[[25]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-24)[[26]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-25)

## Process

A typical job interview has a single candidate [meeting](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meeting) with between one and three persons representing the employer; the potential [supervisor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Supervisor) of the employee is usually involved in the interview process. A larger *interview panel* will often have a specialized [human resources](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_resources) worker. While the meeting can be over in as little as 15 minutes, job interviews usually last less than two hours.

The bulk of the job interview will entail the interviewers asking the candidate questions about his or her job history, personality, work style and other factors relevant to the job. For instance, a common interview question is "What are your [strengths and weaknesses](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strengths_and_weaknesses_%28personality%29)?" The candidate will usually be given a chance to ask any questions at the end of the interview. These questions are strongly encouraged since they allow the interviewee to acquire more information about the job and the company, but they can also demonstrate the candidate's strong interest in them. When an interviewer asks about the weaknesses of a candidate, they are acknowledging the fact that they are not perfect. However, the interviewer is not really interested in their weaknesses but how they may make up for them. It also displays the skill of self-reflection and the pursuit for self-improvement.[[27]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-26)

Candidates for lower paid and lower skilled positions tend to have much simpler job interviews than do candidates for more senior positions. For instance, a lawyer's job interview will be much more demanding than that of a retail [cashier](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cashier). Most job interviews are formal; the larger the firm, the more formal and structured the interview will tend to be. Candidates generally dress slightly better than they would for work, with a [suit](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suit_%28clothing%29) (called an [interview suit](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interview_suit)) being appropriate for a [white-collar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White-collar_worker) job interview.

Additionally, some professions have specific types of job interviews; for performing artists, this is an [audition](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Audition) in which the emphasis is placed on the performance ability of the candidate.

In many companies, *assessment days* are increasingly being used, particularly for graduate positions, which may include analysis tasks, group activities, presentation exercises, and[psychometric](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychometric) testing.

In recent years it has become increasingly common for employers to request job applicants who are successfully shortlisted to deliver one or more presentations at their interview. The purpose of the [presentation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Presentation) in this setting may be to *either* demonstrate candidates' skills and abilities in presenting, or to highlight their knowledge of a given subject likely to relate closely to the job role for which they have applied. It is common for the applicant to be notified of the request for them to deliver a presentation along with their invitation to attend the interview. Usually applicants are only provided with a title for the presentation and a time limit which the presentation should not exceed.

A bad hiring decision nowadays can be immensely expensive for an organization—cost of the hire, training costs, severance pay, loss of productivity, impact on morale, cost of re-hiring, etc. (Gallup international places the cost of a bad hire as being 3.2 times the individual's salary). Studies indicate that 40% of new executives fail in their first 18 months in a new job.[[28]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-27) This has led to organizations investing in [onboarding](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding) for their new employees to reduce these failure rates.

## Process model

One way to think about the interview process is as three separate, albeit related, phases: (1) the preinterview phase which occurs before the interviewer and candidate meet, (2) the interview phase where the interview is conducted, and (3) the postinterview phase where the interviewer forms judgments of candidate qualifications and makes final decisions.[[29]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-MD88-28) Although separate, these three phases are related. That is, impressions interviewers form early on may affect how they view the person in a later phase.

**Preinterview phase**: The preinterview phase encompasses the information available to the interviewer beforehand (e.g., resumes, test scores, social networking site information) and the perceptions interviewers form about applicants from this information prior to the actual face-to-face interaction between the two individuals. In this phase, interviewers are likely to already have ideas about the characteristics that would make a person ideal or qualified for the position.[[30]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-DMS-29) Interviewers also have information about the applicant usually in the form of a resume, test scores, or prior contacts with the applicant.[[29]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-MD88-28) Interviewers then often integrate information that they have on an applicant with their ideas about the ideal employee to form a preinterview evaluation of the candidate. In this way, interviewers typically have an impression of you even before the actual face-to-face interview interaction. Nowadays with recent technological advancements, we must be aware that interviewers have an even larger amount of information available on some candidates. For example, interviewers can obtain information from search engines (e.g. Google, Bing, Yahoo), blogs, and even social networks (e.g. Linkedin, Facebook, Twitter). While some of this information may be job-related, some of it may not be. Despite the relevance of the information, any information interviewers obtain about the applicant before the interview is likely to influence their preinterview impression of the candidate. And, why is all this important? It is important because what interviewers think about you before they meet you, can have an effect on how they might treat you in the interview and what they remember about you.[[29]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-MD88-28)[[31]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-MD88Effect-30) Furthermore, researchers have found that what interviewers think about the applicant before the interview (preinterview phase) is related to how they evaluate the candidate after the interview, despite how the candidate may have performed during the interview.[[32]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-MD90-31)

**Interview phase**: The interview phase entails the actual conduct of the interview, the interaction between the interviewer and the applicant. Initial interviewer impressions about the applicant before the interview may influence the amount of time an interviewer spends in the interview with the applicant, the interviewer’s behavior and questioning of the applicant,[[33]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Dipboye82-32) and the interviewer’s postinterview evaluations.[[32]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-MD90-31) Preinterview impressions also can affect what the interviewer notices about the interviewee, recalls from the interview, and how an interviewer interprets what the applicant says and does in the interview.[[31]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-MD88Effect-30)

As interviews are typically conducted face-to-face, over the phone, or through video conferencing[[34]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-33) (e.g. Skype), they are a social interaction between at least two individuals. Thus, the behavior of the interviewer during the interview likely “leaks” information to the interviewee. That is, you can sometimes tell during the interview whether the interviewer thinks positively or negatively about you.[[29]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-MD88-28) Knowing this information can actually affect how the applicant behaves, resulting in a self-fulfilling prophecy effect.[[33]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Dipboye82-32)[[35]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-34) For example, interviewees who feel the interviewer does not think they are qualified may be more anxious and feel they need to prove they are qualified. Such anxiety may hamper how well they actually perform and present themselves during the interview, fulfilling the original thoughts of the interviewer. Alternatively, interviewees who perceive an interviewer believes they are qualified for the job may feel more at ease and comfortable during the exchange, and consequently actually perform better in the interview. It should be noted again, that because of the dynamic nature of the interview, the interaction between the behaviors and thoughts of both parties is a continuous process whereby information is processed and informs subsequent behavior, thoughts, and evaluations.

**Postinterview phase**: After the interview is conducted, the interviewer must form an evaluation of the interviewee’s qualifications for the position. The interviewer most likely takes into consideration all the information, even from the preinterview phase, and integrates it to form a postinterview evaluation of the applicant. In the final stage of the interview process, the interviewer uses his/her evaluation of the candidate (i.e., in the form of interview ratings or judgment) to make a final decision. Sometimes other selection tools (e.g., work samples, cognitive ability tests, personality tests) are used in combination with the interview to make final hiring decisions; however, interviews remain the most commonly used selection device in North America.[[36]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-35)

**For interviewees**: Although the description of the interview process above focuses on the perspective of the interviewer, job applicants also gather information on the job and/or organization and form impressions prior to the interview.[[30]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-DMS-29) The interview is a two-way exchange and applicants are also making decisions about whether the company is a good fit for them. Essentially, the process model illustrates that the interview is not an isolated interaction, but rather a complex process that begins with two parties forming judgments and gathering information, and ends with a final interviewer decision.

## Types of questions

### History of interview questions

In interviews that are considered “structured interviews,” there are typically two types of questions interviewers ask applicants: situational questions [[37]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Latham.2C_G._P._1980-36) and behavioral questions (also known as patterned behavioral description interviews).[[38]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-37) Both types of questions are based on “critical incidents” that are required to perform the job [[39]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Flanagan.2C_J._C._1954-38) but they differ in their focus (see below for descriptions). Critical incidents are relevant tasks that are required for the job and can be collected through interviews or surveys with current employees, managers, or subject matter experts[[40]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-39)[[41]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Campion.2C_M._A._1997-40) One of the first critical incidents techniques ever used in the United States Army asked combat veterans to report specific incidents of effective or ineffective behavior of a leader. The question posed to veterans was “Describe the officer’s actions. What did he do?” Their responses were compiled to create a factual definition or “critical requirements” of what an effective combat leader is.[[39]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Flanagan.2C_J._C._1954-38)

Previous meta-analyses have found mixed results for which type of question will best predict future job performance of an applicant. For example, some studies have shown that situational type questions have better predictability for job performance in interviews,[[42]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-41)[[43]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-42)[[44]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-43) while, other researchers have found that behavioral type questions are better at predicting future job performance of applicants.[[45]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-44) In actual interview settings it is not likely that the sole use of just one type of interview question (situational or behavioral) is asked. A range of questions can add variety for both the interviewer and applicant.[[41]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Campion.2C_M._A._1997-40) In addition, the use of high-quality questions, whether behavioral or situational based, is essential to make sure that candidates provide meaningful responses that lead to insight into their capability to perform on the job.[[46]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Huffcutt.2C_A._I._2010-45)

### Behavioral questions

Behavioral (experience-based or patterned behavioral) interviews are past-oriented in that they ask respondents to relate what they did in past jobs or life situations that are relevant to the particular job relevant knowledge, skills, and abilities required for success[[47]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-46)[[48]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-47) The idea is that past behavior is the best predictor of future performance in similar situations. By asking questions about how job applicants have handled situations in the past that are similar to those they will face on the job, employers can gauge how they might perform in future situations.[[49]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Pulakos.2C_E._D._1995-48)

Behavioral interview question examples:.

* Describe a situation in which you were able to use persuasion to successfully convince someone to see things your way.
* Give me an example of a time when you set a goal and were able to meet or achieve it.
* Tell me about a time when you had to use your presentation skills to influence someone's opinion.
* Give me an example of a time when you had to conform to a policy with which you did not agree.

One way individuals can prepare for behavioral type questions is to practice the STAR method. The STAR method is a structured manner of responding to a behavioral-based interview question by discussing the specific situation, task, action, and result of the situation you are describing.

**Situation:** Describe the situation that you were in or the task that you needed to accomplish. This should describe specifics rather than general descriptions of past behavior.

**Task:** What goal were you working toward?

**Action:** Describe the actions you took to address the situation with detail and focus on yourself. What specific steps did you take and what was your contribution?

**Result:** Describe the outcome of your actions. What happened? How did the event end? What did you accomplish? What did you learn? Make sure your answer contains multiple positive results.

### Situational interview questions

Situational interview questions[[37]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Latham.2C_G._P._1980-36) ask job applicants to imagine a set of circumstances and then indicate how they would respond in that situation; hence, the questions are future oriented. One advantage of situational questions is that all interviewees respond to the same hypothetical situation rather than describe experiences unique to them from their past. Another advantage is that situational questions allow respondents who have had no direct job experience relevant to a particular question to provide a hypothetical response.[[49]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Pulakos.2C_E._D._1995-48) Two core aspects of the SI are the development of situational dilemmas that employees encounter on the job, and a scoring guide to evaluate responses to each dilemma.[[50]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Latham.2C_G._P._1999-49)

Situational examples

* You are managing a work group and notice that one of your employees has become angry and hostile in recent weeks, to the point of disrupting the entire group. What would you do? [[46]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Huffcutt.2C_A._I._2010-45)
* You are in a meeting. Your manager blames you for not doing well on a task, in front of all your peers and managers from other divisions. You believe that your manager is wrong in his critique, and that he might have come to this conclusion hastily without knowing all the information. You feel you are being treated unfairly in front of your peers. You feel that your reputation may be affected by this critique. What would you do in this situation?.[[51]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-50)
* A general request has been issued by the Dean for someone to serve on a new joint government/industry/university committee on business education. The objective of the committee is to design the budgeting allocation for the Faculty for the next fiscal year. It is well known that you have the necessary skill and expertise to improve the chances that the Faculty will receive budget increases for future operations. You have been told that it will require 2–3 days per month of your time for the next 9 months. Your tenure review is one year away. Although you think you have a good publication record, you have no guarantee of tenure at this point. You are concerned because you have already fallen behind on an important research project that you are pursuing with a colleague at another university. What, if anything, would you do?[[50]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Latham.2C_G._P._1999-49)
* You are in charge of truck drivers in Toronto. Your colleague is in charge of truck drivers in Montreal. Both of you report to the same person. Your salary and bonus are affected 100% by your costs. Your colleague is in desperate need of one of your trucks. If you say no, your costs will remain low and your group will probably win the Golden Flyer award for the quarter. If you say yes, the Montreal group will probably win this prestigious award because they will make a significant profit for the company. Your boss is preaching costs, costs, costs, as well as co-operation with one's peers. Your boss has no control over accounting who are the score keepers. Your boss is highly competitive; he or she rewards winners. You are just as competitive; you are a real winner! What would you do in this situation?[[50]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Latham.2C_G._P._1999-49)

### Other types of questions

Other possible types of questions that may be asked in an interview include: background questions, job experience questions, and puzzle type questions. A brief explanation of each follows.

* Background questions include a focus on work experience, education, and other qualifications.[[52]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-51) For instance, an interviewer may ask “What experience have you had with direct sales phone calls?”
* Job experience questions may ask candidates to describe or demonstrate job knowledge. These are typically highly specific questions.[[53]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-52) For example, one question may be “What steps would you take to conduct a manager training session on safety?”
* The puzzle interview was popularized by Microsoft in the 1990s, and is now used in other organizations. The most common types of questions either ask the applicant to solve puzzles or brainteasers (e.g., “Why are manhole covers round?”) or to solve unusual problems (e.g., “How would you weigh an airplane without a scale?”).[[54]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-53)

### Case

*Further information:*[*Case interview*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Case_interview)

A case interview is an interview form used mostly by management consulting firms and investment banks in which the job applicant is given a question, situation, problem or challenge and asked to resolve the situation. The case problem is often a business situation or a business case that the interviewer has worked on in real life.

### Panel

Another type of job interview found throughout the professional and academic ranks is the *panel interview*. In this type of interview the candidate is interviewed by a group of panelists representing the various stakeholders in the hiring process. Within this format there are several approaches to conducting the interview. Example formats include;

* Presentation format – The candidate is given a generic topic and asked to make a presentation to the panel. Often used in academic or sales-related interviews.
* Role format – Each panelist is tasked with asking questions related to a specific role of the position. For example one panelist may ask technical questions, another may ask management questions, another may ask customer service related questions etc.
* Skeet shoot format – The candidate is given questions from a series of panelists in rapid succession to test his or her ability to handle stress filled situations.

The benefits of the panel approach to interviewing include: time savings over serial interviewing, more focused interviews as there is often less time spend building rapport with small talk, and "[apples to apples](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apples_and_oranges)" comparison because each stake holder/interviewer/panelist gets to hear the answers to the same questions.[[55]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-54)

### Stress

Stress interviews are still in common use. One type of stress interview is where the employer uses a succession of interviewers (one at a time or *en masse*) whose mission is to intimidate the candidate and keep him/her off-balance. The ostensible purpose of this interview: to find out how the candidate handles stress. Stress interviews might involve testing an applicant's behavior in a busy environment. Questions about handling work overload, dealing with multiple projects, and handling conflict are typical.[[56]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-55)

Another type of stress interview may involve only a single interviewer who behaves in an uninterested or hostile manner. For example, the interviewer may not make eye contact, may roll his eyes or sigh at the candidate's answers, interrupt, turn his back, take phone calls during the interview, or ask questions in a demeaning or challenging style. The goal is to assess how the interviewee handles pressure or to purposely evoke emotional responses. This technique was also used in research protocols studying [stress](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Workplace_stress) and type A (coronary-prone) behavior because it would evoke hostility and even changes in [blood pressure](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blood_pressure) and heart rate in study subjects. The key to success for the candidate is to de-personalize the process. The interviewer is acting a role, deliberately and calculatedly trying to "rattle the cage". Once the candidate realizes that there is nothing personal behind the interviewer's approach, it is easier to handle the questions with aplomb.

Example stress interview questions:

* Sticky situation: "If you caught a colleague cheating on his expenses, what would you do?"
* Putting you on the spot: "How do you feel this interview is going?"
* Popping the balloon: (deep sigh) "Well, if that's the best answer you can give ... " (shakes head) "Okay, what about this one ...?"
* Oddball question: "What would you change about the design of the hockey stick?"
* Doubting your veracity: "I don't feel like we're getting to the heart of the matter here. Start again – tell me what *really* makes you tick."

Candidates may also be asked to deliver a [presentation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Presentation) as part of the selection process. The "Platform Test" method involves having the candidate make a presentation to both the selection panel and other candidates for the same job. This is obviously highly stressful and is therefore useful as a predictor of how the candidate will perform under similar circumstances on the job. Selection processes in academic, training, airline, legal and teaching circles frequently involve presentations of this sort.

### Technical

This kind of interview focuses on problem solving and creativity. The questions aim at the interviewee's problem-solving skills and likely show their ability and creativity. Sometimes these interviews will be on a computer module with multiple-choice questions.

### Telephone

Telephone interviews take place if a recruiter wishes to reduce the number of prospective candidates before deciding on a [shortlist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shortlist) for face-to-face interviews. They also take place if a job applicant is a significant distance away from the premises of the hiring company, such as abroad or in another state or province.

## Interviewee strategies and behaviors

### Nonverbal behaviors

It may not only be what you say in an interview that matters, but also how you say it (e.g., how fast you speak) and how you behave during the interview (e.g., hand gestures, eye contact). In other words, although applicants’ responses to interview questions influence interview ratings,[[57]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Hollandsworth_1979-56) their nonverbal behaviors may also affect interviewer judgments.[[58]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-ReferenceA-57) Nonverbal behaviors can be divided into two main categories: vocal cues (e.g., articulation, pitch, fluency, frequency of pauses, speed, etc.) and visual cues (e.g., smiling, eye contact, body orientation and lean, hand movement, posture, etc.).[[59]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-DeGroot.2C_T._1999-58) Oftentimes physical attractiveness is included as part of nonverbal behavior as well.[[59]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-DeGroot.2C_T._1999-58) There is some debate about how large a role nonverbal behaviors may play in the interview. Some researchers maintain that nonverbal behaviors affect interview ratings a great deal,[[57]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Hollandsworth_1979-56) while others have found that they have a relatively small impact on interview outcomes, especially when considered with applicant qualifications presented in résumés.[[60]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Rasmussen_1984-59) The relationship between nonverbal behavior and interview outcomes is also stronger in structured interviews than unstructured,[[61]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-60) and stronger when interviewees’ answers are of high quality.[[60]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Rasmussen_1984-59)

Applicants’ nonverbal behaviors may influence interview ratings through the inferences interviewers make about the applicant based on their behavior. For instance, applicants who engage in positive nonverbal behaviors such as smiling and leaning forward are perceived as more likable, trustworthy, credible,[[59]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-DeGroot.2C_T._1999-58) warmer, successful, qualified, motivated, competent,[[62]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Imada.2C_A._S._1977-61) and socially skilled.[[63]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-62) These applicants are also predicted to be better accepted and more satisfied with the organization if hired.[[62]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Imada.2C_A._S._1977-61)

Applicants’ verbal responses and their nonverbal behavior may convey some of the same information about the applicant.[[58]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-ReferenceA-57) However, despite any shared information between content and nonverbal behavior, it is clear that nonverbal behaviors do predict interview ratings to an extent beyond the content of what was said, and thus it is essential that applicants and interviewers alike are aware of their impact. You may want to be careful of what you may be communicating through the nonverbal behaviors you display.

### Physical attractiveness

To hire the best applicants for the job, interviewers form judgments, sometimes using applicants’ physical attractiveness. That is, physical attractiveness is usually not necessarily related to how well one can do the job, yet has been found to influence interviewer evaluations and judgments about how suitable an applicant is for the job. Once individuals are categorized as attractive or unattractive, interviewers may have expectations about physically attractive and physically unattractive individuals and then judge applicants based on how well they fit those expectations.[[64]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Hosoda.2C_M._2003-63) As a result, it typically turns out that interviewers will judge attractive individuals more favorably on job-related factors than they judge unattractive individuals. People generally agree on who is and who is not attractive and attractive individuals are judged and treated more positively than unattractive individuals.[[65]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-64) For example, people who think another is physically attractive tend to have positive initial impressions of that person (even before formally meeting them), perceive the person to be smart, socially competent, and have good social skills and general mental health.[[64]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Hosoda.2C_M._2003-63)

Within the business domain, physically attractive individuals have been shown to have an advantage over unattractive individuals in numerous ways, that include, but are not limited to, perceived job qualifications, hiring recommendations, predicted job success, and compensation levels.[[64]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Hosoda.2C_M._2003-63) As noted by several researchers, attractiveness may not be the most influential determinant of personnel decisions, but may be a deciding factor when applicants possess similar levels of qualifications.[[64]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Hosoda.2C_M._2003-63) In addition, attractiveness does not provide an advantage if the applicants in the pool are of high quality, but it does provide an advantage in increased hiring rates and more positive job-related outcomes for attractive individuals when applicant quality is low and average.[[66]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-65)

Just as physical attractiveness is a visual cue, vocal attractiveness is an auditory cue and can lead to differing interviewer evaluations in the interview as well. Vocal attractiveness, defined as an appealing mix of speech rate, loudness, pitch, and variability, has been found to be favorably related to interview ratings and job performance.[[67]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-DeGroot.2C_T._2007-66)[[68]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-67) In addition, the personality traits of agreeableness and conscientiousness predict performance more strongly for people with more attractive voices compared to those with less attractive voices.[[67]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-DeGroot.2C_T._2007-66)

As important as it is to understand how physical attractiveness can influence the judgments, behaviors, and final decisions of interviewers, it is equally important to find ways to decrease potential bias in the job interview. Conducting an interview with elements of structure is a one possible way to decrease bias.[[69]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-68)

### Coaching

An abundance of information is available to instruct interviewees on strategies for improving their performance in a job interview. Information used by interviewees comes from a variety of sources ranging from popular how-to books to formal coaching programs, sometimes even provided by the hiring organization. Within the more formal coaching programs, there are two general types of coaching. One type of coaching is designed to teach interviewees how to perform better in the interview by focusing on how to behave and present oneself. This type of coaching is focused on improving aspects of the interview that are not necessarily related to the specific elements of performing the job tasks. This type of coaching could include how to dress, how to display nonverbal behaviors (head nods, smiling, eye contact), verbal cues (how fast to speak, speech volume, articulation, pitch), and impression management tactics. Another type of coaching is designed to focus interviewees on the content specifically relevant to describing one’s qualifications for the job, in order to help improve their answers to interview questions. This coaching, therefore, focuses on improving the interviewee’s understanding of the skills, abilities, and traits the interviewer is attempting to assess, and responding with relevant experience that demonstrates these skills.[[70]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Maurer.2C_T._2008-69)For example, this type of coaching might teach an interviewee to use the STAR approach for answering behavioral interview questions. An example coaching program might include several sections focusing on various aspects of the interview. It could include a section designed to introduce interviewees to the interview process, and explain how this process works (e.g., administration of interview, interview day logistics, different types of interviews, advantages of structured interviews). It could also include a section designed to provide feedback to help the interviewee to improve their performance in the interview, as well as a section involving practice answering example interview questions. An additional section providing general interview tips about how to behave and present oneself could also be included.[[71]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Maurer.2C_T._2006-70)

It is useful to consider coaching in the context of the competing goals of the interviewer and interviewee. The interviewee’s goal is typically to perform well (i.e. obtain high interview ratings), in order to get hired. On the other hand, the interviewer’s goal is to obtain job-relevant information, in order to determine whether the applicant has the skills, abilities, and traits believed by the organization to be indicators of successful job performance.[[70]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Maurer.2C_T._2008-69) Research has shown that how well an applicant does in the interview can be enhanced with coaching.[[70]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Maurer.2C_T._2008-69)[[72]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-71)[[73]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-72)[[74]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-73) The effectiveness of coaching is due, in part, to increasing the interviewee’s knowledge, which in turn results in better interview performance. Interviewee knowledge refers to knowledge about the interview, such as the types of questions that will be asked, and the content that the interviewer is attempting to assess.[[75]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-74) Research has also shown that coaching can increase the likelihood that interviewers using a structured interview will accurately choose those individuals who will ultimately be most successful on the job (i.e., increase reliability and validity of the structured interview).[[70]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Maurer.2C_T._2008-69) Additionally, research has shown that interviewees tend to have positive reactions to coaching, which is often an underlying goal of an interview.[[71]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Maurer.2C_T._2006-70) Based on research thus far, the effects of coaching tend to be positive for both interviewees and interviewers.

### Faking

Interviewers should be aware that applicants can intentionally distort their responses or fake during the interview and such applicant faking has the potential to influence interview outcomes if present. Two concepts that relate to faking include social desirability (the tendency for people to present themselves in a favorable light [[76]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-75)), and impression management (conscious or unconscious attempts to influence one’s image during interactions [[77]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-76)). Faking in the employment interview, then, can be defined as “deceptive impression management or the conscious distortion of answers to the interview questions in order to obtain a better score on the interview and/or otherwise create favorable perceptions”.[[78]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Levashina.2C_J._2007-77) Thus, faking in the employment interview is intentional, deceptive, and aimed at improving perceptions of performance.

Faking in the employment interview can be broken down into four elements.[[78]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Levashina.2C_J._2007-77) The first involves the interviewee portraying him or herself as an ideal job candidate by exaggerating true skills, tailoring answers to better fit the job, and/or creating the impression that personal beliefs, values, and attitudes are similar to those of the organization.

The second aspect of faking is inventing or completely fabricating one’s image by piecing distinct work experiences together to create better answers, inventing untrue experiences or skills, and portraying others’ experiences or accomplishments as ones’ own.

Thirdly, faking might also be aimed at protecting the applicant’s image. This can be accomplished through omitting certain negative experiences, concealing negatively perceived aspects of the applicant’s background, and by separating oneself from negative experiences.

The fourth and final component of faking involves ingratiating oneself to the interviewer by conforming personal opinions to align with those of the organization, as well as insincerely praising or complimenting the interviewer or organization.

Of all of the various faking behaviors listed, ingratiation tactics were found to be the most prevalent in the employment interview, while flat out making up answers or claiming others’ experiences as one’s own is the least common.[[78]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Levashina.2C_J._2007-77) However, fabricating true skills appears to be at least somewhat prevalent in employment interviews. One study found that over 80% of participants lied about job-related skills in the interview,[[79]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-78) presumably to compensate for a lack of job-required skills/traits and further their chances for employment.

Most importantly, faking behaviors have been shown to affect outcomes of employment interviews. For example, the probability of getting another interview or job offer increases when interviewees make up answers.[[78]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Levashina.2C_J._2007-77)

Different interview characteristics also seem to impact the likelihood of faking. Faking behavior is less prevalent, for instance, in past behavioral interviews than in situational interviews, although follow-up questions increased faking behaviors in both types of interviews. Therefore, if practitioners are interested in decreasing faking behaviors among job candidates in employment interview settings, they should utilize structured, past behavioral interviews and avoid the use of probes or follow-up questions.[[78]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Levashina.2C_J._2007-77)

## Validity and predictive power

There is extant data[[80]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-79) which puts into question the value of job interviews as a tool for selecting employees. Where the aim of a job interview is ostensibly to choose a candidate who will perform well in the job role, other methods of selection provide greater predictive power and often lower costs.[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)] Furthermore, given the unstructured approach of most interviews they often have almost no useful predictive power of employee success.

While unstructured interviews are commonly used, structured interviews have yielded much better results and are considered a best practice.[[81]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-80) Interview structure is defined as “the reduction in procedural variance across applicants, which can translate into the degree of discretion that an interviewer is allowed in conducting the interview”.[[82]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Huffcutt.2C_A._I._1994-81) Structure in an interview can be compared to a typical paper and pencil test: we would not think it was fair if every test taker was given different questions and a different number of questions on an exam, or if their answers were each graded differently. Yet this is exactly what occurs in an unstructured interview; thus, a structured interview attempts to standardize this popular selection tool. While there is debate surrounding what is meant specifically by a structured interview,[[83]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Macan.2C_T._2009-82) there are typically two broad categories of standardization: 1) content structure, and 2) evaluation structure.[[84]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-83) Content structure includes elements that refer to the actual content of the interview:

* Base questions on attributes that are representative of the job, as indicated by a [job analysis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_analysis)
* Ask the same questions of all interviewees
* Limit prompting, or follow up questions, that interviewers may ask
* Ask better questions, such as behavioral description questions
* Have a longer interview
* Control ancillary information available to the interviewees, such as resumes
* Don’t allow questions from applicants during interview

Evaluation structure includes aspects that refer to the actual rating of the interviewee:

* Rate each answer rather than making an overall evaluation at the end of the interview
* Use anchored rating scales (for an example, see BARS )
* Have the interviewer take detailed notes
* Have more than one interviewer view each applicant (i.e. have panel interviews)
* Have the same interviewers rate each applicant
* Don’t allow any discussion about the applicants between interviewers
* Train the interviewers
* Use statistical procedures to create an overall interview score

It is important to note that structure should be thought of as a continuum; that is, the degree of structure present in an interview can vary along these various elements listed above.[[83]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Macan.2C_T._2009-82)

In terms of reliability, meta-analytic results provided evidence that interviews can have acceptable levels of interrater reliability, or consistent ratings across interviewers [interrater reliability](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interrater_reliability) (i.e. .75 or above), when a structured panel interview is used.[[85]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-84) In terms of criterion-related validity, or how well the interview predicts later job performance [criterion validity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Criterion_validity), meta-analytic results have shown that when compared to unstructured interviews, structured interviews have higher validities, with values ranging from .20-.57 (on a scale from 0 to 1), with validity coefficients increasing with higher degrees of structure.[[82]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Huffcutt.2C_A._I._1994-81)[[86]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-85)[[87]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-86) That is, as the degree of structure in an interview increases, the more likely interviewers can successfully predict how well the person will do on the job, especially when compared to unstructured interviews. In fact, one structured interview that included a) a predetermined set of questions that interviewers were able to choose from, and b) interviewer scoring of applicant answers after each individual question using previously created benchmark answers, showed validity levels comparable to cognitive ability tests (traditionally one of the best predictors of job performance) for entry level jobs.[[82]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Huffcutt.2C_A._I._1994-81)

Honesty and integrity are attributes that can be very hard to determine using a formal job interview process: the competitive environment of the job interview may in fact promote dishonesty. Some experts on job interviews express a degree of cynicism towards the process.[[*who?*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3AAvoid_weasel_words)]

## Legal issues

In many countries laws are put into place to prevent organizations from engaging in discriminatory practices against protected classes when selecting individuals for jobs.[[88]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-87) In the United States, it is unlawful for private employers with 15 or more employees along with state and local government employers to discriminate against applicants based on the following: race, color, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or over), disability, or genetic information (note: additional classes may be protected depending on state or local law). More specifically, an employer cannot legally “fail or refuse to hire or to discharge any individual, or otherwise discriminate against any individual with respect to his compensation, terms, conditions, or privilege of employment” or “to limit, segregate, or classify his employees or applicants for employment in any way which would deprive or tend to deprive any individual of employment opportunities or otherwise adversely affect his status as an employee.”[[89]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-88)[[90]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-89)

The [Civil Rights Act of 1964](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civil_Rights_Act_of_1964) and [1991](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civil_Rights_Act_of_1991) (Title VII) were passed into law to prevent the discrimination of individuals due to race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. The Pregnancy Discrimination Act was added as an amendment and protects women if they are pregnant or have a pregnancy-related condition.[[91]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-EEOC-90)

The [Age Discrimination in Employment Act](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Age_Discrimination_in_Employment_Act) of 1967 prohibits discriminatory practice directed against individuals who are 40 years of age and older. Although some states (e.g. New York) do have laws preventing the discrimination of individuals younger than 40, no federal law exists.[[92]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-91)

The [Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Americans_with_Disabilities_Act_of_1990) protects qualified individuals who currently have or in the past have had a physical or mental disability (current users of illegal drugs are not covered under this Act). A person may be disabled if he or she has a disability that substantially limits a major life activity, has a history of a disability, is regarded by others as being disabled, or has a physical or mental impairment that is not transitory (lasting or expected to last six months or less) and minor. In order to be covered under this Act, the individual must be qualified for the job. A qualified individual is “an individual with a disability who, with or without reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of the employment position that such individual holds or desires.”[[93]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-disability-92) Unless the disability poses an “undue hardship,” reasonable accommodations must be made by the organization. “In general, an accommodation is any change in the work environment or in the way things are customarily done that enables an individual with a disability to enjoy equal employment opportunities.”[[93]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-disability-92) Examples of reasonable accommodations are changing the workspace of an individual in a wheelchair to make it more wheelchair accessible, modifying work schedules, and/or modifying equipment.[[94]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-93) Employees are responsible for asking for accommodations to be made by their employer.[[91]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-EEOC-90)

The most recent law to be passed is Title II of the [Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genetic_Information_Nondiscrimination_Act) of 2008. In essence, this law prohibits the discrimination of employees or applicants due to an individual’s genetic information and family medical history information.

In rare circumstances, it is lawful for employers to base hiring decisions on protected class information if it is considered a [Bona Fide Occupational Qualification](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bona_Fide_Occupational_Qualification), that is, if it is a “qualification reasonably necessary to the normal operation of the particular business.” For example, a movie studio may base a hiring decision on age if the actor they are hiring will play a youthful character in a film.[[95]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-94)

Given these laws, organizations are limited in the types of questions they legally are allowed to ask applicants in a job interview. Asking these questions may cause discrimination against protected classes, unless the information is considered a Bona Fide Occupational Qualification. For example, in the majority of situations it is illegal to ask the following questions in an interview as a condition of employment:

* What is your date of birth?[[96]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-legal1-95)
* Have you ever been arrested for a crime?[[96]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-legal1-95)
* Do you have any future plans for marriage and children?[[96]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-legal1-95)
* What are your spiritual beliefs?[[97]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-legal2-96)
* How many days were you sick last year? Have you ever been treated for mental health problems?[[97]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-legal2-96)
* What prescription drugs are you currently taking?[[97]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-legal2-96)

### Applicants with disabilities

Applicants with disabilities may be concerned with the effect that their disability has on both interview and employment outcomes. Research has concentrated on four key issues: how interviewers rate applicants with disabilities, the reactions of applicants with disabilities to the interview, the effects of disclosing a disability during the interview, and the perceptions different kinds of applicant disabilities may have on interviewer ratings.

The job interview is a tool used to measure constructs or overall characteristics that are relevant for the job. Oftentimes, applicants will receive a score based on their performance during the interview. Research has found different findings based on interviewers’ perceptions of the disability. For example, some research has found a leniency effect (i.e., applicants with disabilities receive higher ratings than equally qualified non-disabled applicants) in ratings of applicants with disabilities [[98]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-97)[[99]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Nordstrom-98) Other research, however, has found there is a disconnect between the interview score and the hiring recommendation for applicants with disabilities. That is, even though applicants with disabilities may have received a high interview score, they are still not recommended for employment.[[100]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-99)[[101]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Miceli.2C_N._S._2002-100) The difference between ratings and hiring could be detrimental to a company because they may be missing an opportunity to hire a qualified applicant.

A second issue in interview research deals with the applicants’ with disabilities reactions to the interview and applicant perceptions of the interviewers. Applicants with disabilities and able-bodied applicants report similar feelings of anxiety towards an interview.[[102]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Duckett-101) Applicants with disabilities often report that interviewers react nervously and insecurely, which leads such applicants to experience anxiety and tension themselves. The interview is felt to be the part of the selection process where covert discrimination against applicants with disabilities can occur.[[102]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Duckett-101) Many applicants with disabilities feel they cannot disclose (i.e., inform potential employer of disability) or discuss their disability because they want to demonstrate their abilities. If the disability is visible, then disclosure will inevitably occur when the applicant meets the interviewer, so the applicant can decide if they want to discuss their disability. If an applicant has a non-visible disability, however, then that applicant has more of a choice in disclosing and discussing. In addition, applicants who were aware that the recruiting employer already had employed people with disabilities felt they had a more positive interview experience.[[102]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Duckett-101) Applicants should consider if they are comfortable with talking about and answering questions about their disability before deciding how to approach the interview.

Research has also demonstrated that different types of disabilities have different effects on interview outcomes. Disabilities with a negative stigma and that are perceived as resulting from the actions of the person (e.g., HIV-Positive, substance abuse) result in lower interview scores than disabilities for which the causes are perceived to be out of the individual’s control (e.g., physical birth defect).[[101]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Miceli.2C_N._S._2002-100) A physical disability often results in higher interviewer ratings than psychological (e.g., mental illness) or sensory conditions (e.g., Tourette Syndrome).[[99]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Nordstrom-98)[[103]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Dalgin-102) In addition, there are differences between the effects of disclosing disabilities that are visible (e.g., wheelchair bound) and non-visible (e.g., Epilepsy) during the interview. When applicants had a non-visible disability and disclosed their disability early in the interview they were not rated more negatively than applicants who did not disclose. In fact, they were liked more than the applicants who did not disclose their disability and were presumed not disabled.[[104]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-103) Interviewers tend to be impressed by the honesty of the disclosure.[[103]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Dalgin-102) Strong caution needs to be taken with applying results from studies about specific disabilities, as these results may not apply to other types of disabilities. Not all disabilities are the same and more research is needed to find whether these results are relevant for other types of disabilities.

Some practical implications for job interviews for applicants with disabilities include research findings that show there are no differences in interviewer responses to a brief, shorter discussion or a detailed, longer discussion about the disability during the interview.[[103]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Dalgin-102) Applicants, however, should note that when a non-visible disability is disclosed near the end of the interview, applicants were rated more negatively than early disclosing and non-disclosing applicants. Therefore it is possible that interviewers feel individuals who delay disclosure may do so out of shame or embarrassment. In addition, if the disability is disclosed after being hired, employers may feel deceived by the new hire and reactions could be less positive than would have been in the interview.[[105]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-104) If applicants want to disclose their disability during the interview, research shows that a disclosure and/or discussion earlier in the interview approach may afford them some positive interview effects.[[106]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-105) The positive effects, however, are preceded by the interviewers perception of the applicants’ psychological well-being. That is, when the interviewer perceives the applicant is psychologically well and/or comfortable with his or her disability, there can be positive interviewer effects. In contrast, if the interviewer perceives the applicant as uncomfortable or anxious discussing the disability, this may either fail to garner positive effect or result in more negative interview ratings for the candidate. Caution must again be taken when applying these research findings to other types of disabilities not investigated in the studies discussed above. There are many factors that can influence the interview of an applicant with a disability, such as whether the disability is physical or psychological, visible or non-visible, or whether the applicant is perceived as responsible for the disability or not. Therefore applicants should make their own conclusions about how to proceed in the interview after comparing their situations with those examined in the research discussed here.

### Other applicant discrimination: Weight and pregnancy

Employers are using social networking sites like Facebook and LinkedIn to obtain additional information about job applicants.[[107]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Cross-106)[[108]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-JobVite-107)[[109]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-SHRM-108) While these sites may be useful to verify resume information, profiles with pictures also may reveal much more information about the applicant, including issues pertaining to applicant weight and pregnancy.[[110]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Grasz-109)

Job applicants who are underweight (to the point of emaciation), overweight or obese may face discrimination in the interview.[[111]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Roehling-110)[[112]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Swami-111) The negative treatment of overweight and obese individuals may stem from the beliefs that weight is controllable and those who fail to control their weight are lazy, unmotivated, and lack self-discipline.[[113]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Greenleaf-112) Alternatively, underweight individuals may be negatively treated partly due to their lack of physical attractiveness.[[112]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Swami-111) These characteristics, lazy, unmotivated, lacks self-discipline, physically unattractive are not ideal for a future employee.[[114]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Bellizzi-113) Underweight, overweight and obese applicants are not protected from discrimination by any current United States laws.[[111]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Roehling-110) However, some individuals who are morbidly obese and whose obesity is due to a physiological disorder may be protected against discrimination under the Americans with Disabilities Act.[[115]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-King-114) In short, men and women should be aware that their weight, whether underweight, overweight or obese, could hinder their chances of getting hired.

Pregnant job applicants are a group that may face discrimination because of their “disability”. Discrimination against pregnant applicants is illegal under the Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978, which views pregnancy as a temporary disability and requires employers to treat pregnant applicants the same as all other applicants.[[116]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-US-115) Yet, discrimination against pregnant applicants continues both in the United States and internationally.[[116]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-US-115)[[117]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Gatrell-116) Research shows that pregnant applicants compared to non-pregnant applicants are less likely to be recommended for hire.[[118]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Bragger-117)[[119]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Cunningham-118)Interviewers appear concerned that pregnant applicants are more likely than non-pregnant applicants to miss work and even quit.[[119]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Cunningham-118) Organizations who wish to reduce potential discrimination against pregnant applicants should consider implementing structured interviews, although some theoretical work suggests interviewers may still show biases even in these types of interviews.[[118]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-Bragger-117)[[120]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_interview#cite_note-119)

# Onboarding

**Onboarding**, also known as **organizational socialization**, refers to the mechanism through which new employees acquire the necessary knowledge, skills, and behaviors to become effective organizational members and insiders.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-orgsocial-0) Tactics used in this process include formal meetings, lectures, videos, printed materials, or computer-based orientations to introduce newcomers to their new jobs and organizations. Research has demonstrated that these socialization techniques lead to positive outcomes for new employees such as higher [job satisfaction](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_satisfaction), better [job performance](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_performance), greater [organizational commitment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_commitment), and reduction in [stress](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Workplace_stress) and intent to quit.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-Ashford.2C_S._J._1996-1)[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-KammeyerMueller2003-2)[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-Fisher.2C_C._D._1985-3) These outcomes are particularly important to an organization looking to retain a competitive advantage in an increasingly mobile and globalized workforce. In the United States, for example, up to 25% of workers are organizational newcomers engaged in an onboarding process.[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-4)

## Antecedents of success

Onboarding is a multifaceted operation influenced by a number of factors pertaining to both the individual newcomer and the organization. Researchers have separated these factors into three broad categories: new employee characteristics, new employee behaviors, and organizational efforts.[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-bauer2007-5) New employee characteristics are individual differences across incoming workers, ranging from personality traits to previous work experiences. New employee behaviors refer to the specific actions carried out by newcomers as they take an active role in the socialization process. Finally, organizational efforts help facilitate the process of acclimating a new worker to an establishment through activities such as orientation or mentoring programs.

### New employee characteristics

Research has shown evidence that employees with certain [personality](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Personality_psychology) traits and experiences adjust to an organization more quickly.[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-6) These are a proactive personality, the ["Big Five"](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Big_Five_personality_traits), curiosity, and greater experience levels.

"Proactive personality" refers to the tendency to take charge of situations and achieve control over one's environment. This type of personality predisposes some workers to engage in behaviors such as information seeking that accelerate the socialization process, thus helping them to adapt more efficiently and become high-functioning organizational members.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-orgsocial-0) Empirical evidence also demonstrates that a proactive personality is related to increased levels of job satisfaction and performance.[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-7)[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-8)

The [Big Five personality traits](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Big_Five_personality_traits)—openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism—have been linked to onboarding success, as well. Specifically, new employees who are extraverted or particularly open to experience are more likely to seek out information, feedback, acceptance, and relationships with co-workers. They also exhibit higher levels of adjustment and tend to frame events more positively.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-KammeyerMueller2003-2)

Curiosity also plays a substantial role in the newcomer adaptation process and is defined as the "desire to acquire knowledge" that energizes individual exploration of an organization's culture and norms.[[10]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-9) Individuals with a curious disposition tend to frame challenges in a positive light and eagerly seek out information to help them make sense of their new organizational surroundings and responsibilities, leading to a smoother onboarding experience.[[11]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-10)

Employee experience levels also affect the onboarding process such that more experienced members of the workforce tend to adapt to a new organization differently from, for example, a new college graduate starting his or her first job. This is because seasoned employees can draw from past experiences to help them adjust to their new work settings and therefore may be less affected by specific socialization efforts because they have (a) a better understanding of their own needs and requirements at work[[12]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-11) and (b) are more familiar with what is acceptable in the work context.[[13]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-12)[[14]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-13) Additionally, veteran workers may have used their past experiences to seek out organizations in which they will be a better fit, giving them an immediate advantage in adapting to their new jobs.[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-14)

### New employee behaviors

Certain behaviors enacted by incoming employees, such as building relationships and seeking information and feedback, can help facilitate the onboarding process. Newcomers can also quicken the speed of their adjustment by demonstrating behaviors that assist them in clarifying expectations, learning organizational values and norms, and gaining social acceptance.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-orgsocial-0)

[Information seeking](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information_seeking) occurs when new employees ask questions of their co-workers and superiors in an effort to learn about their new job and the company's norms, expectations, procedures, and policies. Miller and Jablin (1991) developed a typology of information sought after by new hires. These include referent information, understanding what is required to function on the job (role clarity); appraisal information, understanding how effectively the newcomer is able to function in relation to job role requirements (self-efficacy); and finally, relational information, information about the quality of relationships with current organizational employees (social acceptance). By actively seeking information, employees can effectively reduce uncertainties about their new jobs and organizations and make sense of their new working environments.[[16]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-15) Newcomers can also passively seek information via monitoring their surroundings or by simply viewing the company website or handbook.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-orgsocial-0) Research has shown that information seeking by incoming employees is associated with social integration, higher levels of organizational commitment, job performance, and job satisfaction in both individualistic and collectivist cultures.[[17]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-16)

Feedback seeking is similar to information seeking, but it is focused on a new employee's particular behaviors rather than on general information about the job or company. Specifically, feedback seeking refers to new employee efforts to gauge how to behave in their new organization. A new employee may ask co-workers or superiors for feedback on how well he or she is performing certain job tasks or whether certain behaviors are appropriate in the social and political context of the organization. In seeking constructive criticism about their actions, new employees learn what kinds of behaviors are expected, accepted, or frowned upon within the company or work group, and when they incorporate this feedback and adjust their behavior accordingly, they begin to blend seamlessly into the organization.[[18]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-17) Instances of feedback inquiry vary across cultural contexts such that individuals high in self-assertiveness and cultures low in [power distance](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Power_distance) report more feedback seeking than newcomers in cultures where self-assertiveness is low and power distance is high.[[19]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-18)

Also called [networking](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_networking), relationship building involves an employee's efforts to develop camaraderie with co-workers and even supervisors. This can be achieved informally through simply talking to their new peers during a coffee break or through more formal means such as taking part in pre-arranged company events. Research has shown relationship building to be a key part of the onboarding process, leading to outcomes such as greater [job satisfaction](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_satisfaction) and better [job performance](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_performance),[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-Ashford.2C_S._J._1996-1) as well as decreased [stress](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Workplace_stress).[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-Fisher.2C_C._D._1985-3)

### Organization socialization efforts

Organizations also invest a great amount of time and resources into the training and orientation of new company hires. [[20]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-19) Organizations differ in the variety of socialization activities they offer in order to integrate productive new workers. Possible activities include their socialization tactics, formal orientation programs, recruitment strategies, and mentorship opportunities.

#### Socialization tactics

Socialization tactics, or orientation tactics, are designed based on an organization's needs, values, and structural policies. Some organizations favor a more systematic approach to socialization, while others follow a more "sink or swim" approach in which new employees are challenged to figure out existing norms and company expectations without guidance.

**Van Maanen and Schein model (1979)**

John Van Maanen and Edgar H. Schein have identified at least six major tactical dimensions that characterize and represent all of the ways in which organizations may differ in their approaches to socialization.

**Collective versus Individual socialization**

Collective socialization refers to the process of taking a group of recruits who are facing a given boundary passage and putting them through the same set of experiences together. Examples of this include: basic training/boot camp for a military organization, pledging for fraternities/sororities, education in graduate schools, and so forth. Socialization in the Individual mode allows newcomers to accumulate unique experiences separate from other newcomers. Examples of this process include: Apprenticeship programs, specific internships, “on-the-job” training, etc.[[21]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-vanmaanenschein-20)

**Formal vs. Informal socialization**

Formal socialization refers to those tactics in which newcomers are more or less segregated from others and trained of the job. These processes can be witnessed with such socialization programs as police academies, internships, and apprenticeships. Informal socialization processes, on the other hand, involve little separation between newcomers and the existing employees, nor is there any effort made to distinguish the newcomer’s role specifically. Informal tactics provides a non-interventional environment for recruits to learn their new roles via trial and error. Examples of informal socialization include on-the-job training assignments, apprenticeship programs with no clearly defined role, and more generally, any situation in which a newcomer is placed into a work group with no recruit role.[[21]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-vanmaanenschein-20)

**Sequential vs. Random socialization**

Sequential socialization refers to the degree to which an organization or occupation specifies discrete and identifiable steps for the newcomers to know what phases they need to go through. Random socialization occurs when the sequences of steps leading to the targeted role are unknown, and the entire progression is quite ambiguous. In other words, while there are numerous steps or stages leading to specific organizational roles, there is necessarily no specific order in which the steps should be taken.[[21]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-vanmaanenschein-20)

**Fixed vs. Variable socialization**

This dimension refers to the extent to which the steps have a timetable developed by the organization and communicated to the recruit in order to convey when the socialization process is complete. Fixed socialization provides a recruit with the exact knowledge of the time it will take complete a given passage. For instance, some management trainees can be put on “ fast tracks” where they are required to accept new rotational assignment on an annual basis despite their own preferences. Variable socialization processes gives a newcomer no specific timetable, but a few clues as to when to expect a given boundary passage. This type of socialization is commonly associated upwardly mobile careers within business organizations because of several uncontrolled factors such as the state of the economy or turnover rates which determine whether any given newcomer will be promoted to a higher level or not.[[21]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-vanmaanenschein-20)

**Serial vs. Disjunctive socialization**

A serial socialization process refers to experienced members of the organization grooming the newcomers who are about to occupy similar positions within the organization. These experience members essentially serve as role models for the inexperienced newcomers. A prime example of serial socialization would be a rookie police officer getting assigned patrol duties with an experienced veteran who has been in law enforcement for a lengthy period of time. Disjunctive socialization, in contrast, refers to when newcomers are not following the guidelines of their predecessors, and there are no role models to inform new recruits on how to fulfill their duties.[[21]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-vanmaanenschein-20)

**Investiture vs. Divestiture socialization**

This tactic refers to the degree to which a socialization process either affirms or disaffirms the identity of the newly entering recruit. Investiture socialization processes sanction and document for newcomers the viability and efficacy of the personal characteristics that they bring to the organization. When organizations use this socialization process it prefers that the recruit remains the exact way that he or she naturally behaves and the organization merely makes use of the skills, values, and attitudes that the recruit is believed to have in their possession. Divestiture socialization, on the other hand, is a process that organizations use to reject and remove the certain personal characteristics of a recruit. Many occupations and organizations require newcomers to sever previous ties, and forget old habits in order to create a new self-image based upon new assumptions.[[21]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-vanmaanenschein-20)

Thus, tactics influence the socialization process by defining the type of information newcomers receive, the source of this information, and the ease of obtaining it.[[21]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-vanmaanenschein-20)

#### Jones's model (1986)

Building upon the work of Van Maanen and Schein, Jones (1986) proposed that the previous six dimensions could be reduced to two categories: institutionalized and individualized socialization. Companies that use institutionalized socialization tactics implement structured step-by-step programs, enter into an orchestrated orientation as a group, and receive help from an assigned role model or mentor. Examples of organizations using institutionalized tactics include the military, in which new recruits undergo extensive training and socialization activities through a participative cohort, as well as incoming freshmen at universities, who may attend orientation weekends before beginning classes.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, other organizations use individualized socialization tactics in which the new employee immediately starts working on his or her new position and figures out company norms, values, and expectations along the way. In this orientation system, individuals must play a more proactive role in seeking out information and initiating work relationships.[[22]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-jones1986-21)

#### Formal orientations

Regardless of the socialization tactics utilized, formal orientation programs can facilitate understanding of [company culture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Company_culture), and introduces new employees to their work roles and the organizational social environment. Formal orientation programs may consist of lectures, videotapes, and written material, while other organizations may rely on more usual approaches. More recent approaches such as computer-based orientations and Intranets have been used by organizations to standardize training programs across branch locations. A review of the literature indicates that orientation programs are successful in communicating the company's goals, history, and power structure.[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)]

#### Recruitment events

[Recruitment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Recruitment) events play a key role in identifying which prospective employees are a good fit with an organization. Recruiting events allow employees to gather initial information about an organization's expectations and company culture. By providing a realistic job preview of what life inside the organization is like, companies can weed out potential employees who are clearly a misfit to an organization and individuals can identify which employment agencies are the most suitable match for their own personal values, goals, and expectations. Research has shown that new employees who receive a great amount of accurate information about the job and the company tend to adjust better.[[23]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-22) Organizations can also provide realistic job previews by offering internship opportunities.

#### Mentorship

[Mentorship](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mentorship) has demonstrated importance in the socialization of new employees.[[24]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-chatman1991-23)[[25]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-24) Ostroff and Kozlowski (1993) discovered that newcomers with mentors become more knowledgeable about the organization than did newcomers without mentors. Mentors can help newcomers better manage their expectations and feel comfortable with their new environment through advice-giving and social support.[[26]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-25) Chatman (1991) found that newcomers are more likely to have internalized the key values of their organization's culture if they had spent time with an assigned mentor and attended company social events. Literature has also suggested the importance of demographic matching between organizational mentors and protégés.[[24]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-chatman1991-23) Enscher& Murphy (1997) examined the effects of similarity (race and gender) on the amount of contact and quality of mentor relationships. Results indicate that liking, satisfaction, and contact were higher in conditions of perceived mentor-protégé similarity.[[27]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-26)

## Employee adjustment

In order to increase the success of an onboarding program, it is important for an organization to monitor how well their new hires are adjusting to their new roles, responsibilities, peers, supervisors, and the organization at large. Researchers have noted that role clarity, self-efficacy, social acceptance, and knowledge of organizational culture are particularly good indicators of well-adjusted new employees who have benefitted from an effective onboarding system.

### Role clarity

Role clarity describes a new employee's understanding of his or her job responsibilities and organizational role. One of the goals of an onboarding process is to aid newcomers in reducing ambiguity and uncertainty so that it is easier for them to get their jobs done correctly and efficiently. A poor onboarding program, for example, may produce employees who exhibit sub-par productivity because they are unsure of their exact roles and responsibilities. On the other hand, a strong onboarding program would produce employees who are especially productive because they know exactly what is expected of them in their job tasks and their organizational role. Given this information, it is easy to see why an organization would benefit substantially from increasing role clarity for a new employee. Not only does role clarity imply greater productivity, but it has also been linked to both job satisfaction and organizational commitment.[[28]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-27)

### Self-efficacy

[Self-efficacy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Self-efficacy) is the degree to which new employees feel capable of successfully completing their assigned job tasks and fulfilling their responsibilities. It makes logical sense that employees who feel as though they can get the job done would fare better than those who feel overwhelmed in their new positions, and unsurprisingly, researchers have found that job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover are all correlated with feelings of self-efficacy.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-KammeyerMueller2003-2)

### Social acceptance

[Social acceptance](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acceptance#Social_acceptance) gives new employees the support needed to be successful. While role clarity and self-efficacy are important to a newcomer's ability to meet the requirements of a job, the feeling of "fitting in" can do a lot for one's perception of the work environment and has been demonstrated to increase commitment to an organization and decrease turnover.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-KammeyerMueller2003-2) If an employee feels well-received by his or her peers, a personal investment in the organization develops, and leaving becomes less likely.

### Knowledge of organizational culture

Knowledge of organizational culture refers to how well a new employee understands a company's values, goals, roles, norms, and overall organizational environment. For example, some organizations may have very strict, yet unspoken, rules of how interactions with superiors should be conducted or whether overtime hours are the norm and an expectation. Knowledge of one's organizational culture is important for the newcomer looking to adapt to a new company, as it allows for social acceptance and aids in completing work tasks in a way that meets company standards. Overall, knowledge of organizational culture has been linked to increased satisfaction and commitment, as well as decreased turnover.[[29]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-28)

## Outcomes

Historically, organizations have overlooked the influence of business practices in shaping enduring work attitudes and thus have continually underestimated their impact on financial success.[[30]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-SaariJudge2004-29)Employees' job attitudes are particularly important from an organization's perspective because of their link to [employee engagement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Employee_engagement) and performance on the job. Employee engagement attitudes, such as satisfaction with one's job and organizational commitment or loyalty, have important implications for an employee's work performance and intentions to stay with or quit an organization. This translates into strong monetary gains for organizations as research has demonstrated that individuals who are highly satisfied with their jobs and who exhibit high organizational commitment are likely to perform better and remain in an organization, whereas individuals who have developed negative attitudes (are highly dissatisfied and unattached to their jobs) are characterized by low performance and high turnover rates.[[30]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-SaariJudge2004-29)[[31]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-30) Unengaged employees are very costly to organizations in terms of slowed performance and rehiring expenses. Since, attitudinal formations begin from the initial point of contact with an organization, practitioners would be wise to take advantage of positive attitudinal development during socialization periods in order to ensure a strong, productive, and dedicated workforce.

## Limits and criticisms of onboarding theory

Although the outcomes of socialization organization have been positively associated with the process of uncertainty reduction, they may not necessarily be desirable to all organizations. Jones (1986) as well as Allen and Meyer (1990) found that socialization tactics were related to commitment, but they were negatively correlated to role clarity.[[22]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-jones1986-21)[[32]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-31) Because formal socialization tactics insulate the newcomer from their full responsibilities while “learning the ropes”, there is a potential for role confusion once expected to fully enter the organization. In some cases though, organizations may even desire a certain level of person-organizational misfit in order to achieve outcomes via innovative behaviors.[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-bauer2007-5) Depending on the culture of the organization, it may be more desirable to increase ambiguity despite the potentially negative connection with organizational commitment.

Additionally, socialization researchers have had major concern over the length of time that it takes newcomers to adjust. There has been great difficulty determining the role that time plays, but once the length of the adjustment is determined, organizations can make appropriate recommendations regarding what matters most in various stages of the adjustment process.[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-bauer2007-5)

Further criticisms include the use of special orientation sessions to educate newcomers about the organization and strengthen their organizational commitment. While these sessions have been found to be often formal and ritualistic, several studies have found them unpleasant or traumatic.[[33]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-32) Orientation sessions are a frequently used socialization tactic, however, employees have not found them to be helpful, nor has any research provided any evidence for their benefits.[[34]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-33)[[35]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-34)[[36]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-35)[[37]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-36)[[38]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-37)

## Executive onboarding

Executive onboarding is the application of general onboarding principles to helping new executives become productive members of an organization. Practically, executive onboarding involves acquiring, accommodating, assimilating and accelerating new executives.[[39]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-38) Proponents emphasize the importance of making the most of the "honeymoon" stage of a hire, a period which has been described by various sources as either the first 90 to 100 days or the first full year.[[40]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-39)[[41]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-40)[[42]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-41)

Effective onboarding of new executives can be one of the most important contributions any hiring manager, direct [supervisor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Supervisor) or [human resources](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_resources) professional can make to long-term organizational success, because executive onboarding done right can improve [productivity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Productivity) and [executive retention](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Employee_retention), and build shared [corporate culture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_culture). A study of 20,000 searches revealed that 40 percent of executives hired at the senior level are pushed out, fail, or quit within 18 months.[[43]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-42)

Onboarding may be especially valuable for externally recruited [executives](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Senior_management) transitioning into complex roles, because it may be difficult for those individuals to uncover personal, organizational, and role risks in complicated situations when they don't have formal onboarding assistance.[[44]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-43) Onboarding is also an essential tool for executives promoted into new roles and/or transferred from one business unit to another.[[45]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-44)

It is often valuable to have new executives start some onboarding activities in the "Fuzzy Front End" even before their first day.[[46]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-45) This is one of ten steps executives can follow to accelerate their onboarding.[[47]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-46)

1. Position yourself for success
2. Choose how to engage the context and culture
3. Embrace and leverage the Fuzzy Front End before day one
4. Take control of day one: Make a powerful first impression
5. Drive action by activating and directing ongoing communication
6. Embed a strong burning imperative
7. Exploit key milestones to drive team performance
8. Over-invest in early wins to build team confidence
9. Secure adept people in the right roles and deal with the inevitable resistance
10. Evolve people, plans, and practices to capitalize on changing circumstances.

## Recommendations for practitioners

Ultimately, practitioners should seek to design an onboarding strategy that takes individual newcomer characteristics into consideration and encourages proactive behaviors, such as information seeking, that help facilitate the development of role clarity, self-efficacy, social acceptance, and knowledge of organizational culture. Research has consistently shown that doing so produces valuable outcomes such as high job satisfaction (the extent to which one enjoys the nature of his or her work), organizational commitment (the connection one feels to an organization), and job performance in employees, as well as lower turnover rates and decreased intent to quit.

In terms of structure, empirical evidence indicates that formal institutionalized socialization is the most effective onboarding method. New employees who complete these kinds of programs tend to experience more positive job attitudes and lower levels of turnover in comparison to those who undergo individualized tactics.[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-bauer2007-5)[[48]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-47) Finally, it is also important to note that in-person onboarding techniques are more effective than virtual ones. Though it may initially appear to be less expensive for a company to use a standard computer-based orientation program to introduce their new employees to the organization, research has demonstrated that employees learn more about their roles and company culture through face-to-face orientation.[[49]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onboarding#cite_note-48)

# International business

# Intercultural competence

**Intercultural competence** is the ability to [communicate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communication) successfully with people of other [cultures](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture).

In [interactions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interaction) with people from foreign cultures, a person who is interculturally competent understands culture-specific concepts in [perception](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perception), thinking, feeling and acting. The interculturally competent person considers earlier experiences free from [prejudices](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prejudice), and has an interest in, and [motivation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Motivation) towards, continued [learning](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Learning).

## Cross-cultural competence





Cross-cultural competence (3C), another term for inter-cultural competence, has generated its own share of contradictory and confusing definitions, as it has been studied and sought by a wide variety of academic approaches and professional fields. One author identified no fewer than eleven different terms with some equivalence to 3C: cultural savvy, astuteness, appreciation, literacy or fluency, adaptability, terrain, expertise, competency, awareness, intelligence, and understanding.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intercultural_competence#cite_note-Selmeski-0) Organizations from fields as diverse as business, health care, government security and developmental aid agencies, academia, and non-governmental organizations have all sought to leverage 3C in one way or another. Poor results have often been achieved due to a lack of rigorous study of the phenomenon and reliance on "[common sense](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Common_sense)" approaches based on the culture developing the 3C models in the first place.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intercultural_competence#cite_note-Selmeski-0) The U.S. Army Research Institute, which is currently engaged in a study of the phenomenon, defines 3C as: "A set of cognitive, behavioral, and affective/motivational components that enable individuals to adapt effectively in intercultural environments".[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intercultural_competence#cite_note-Abbe_et_al.-1) Cross-cultural competence does not operate in a vacuum, however. One theoretical construct posits that 3C, [language proficiency](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Language_proficiency), and regional knowledge are distinct skills that are inextricably linked, but to varying degrees depending on the context in which they are employed. In educational settings, [Bloom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benjamin_Bloom)'s affective and cognitive taxonomies[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intercultural_competence#cite_note-2)[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intercultural_competence#cite_note-3) serve as an effective framework to describe the overlap area between the three disciplines: at the receiving and knowledge levels 3C can operate with near independence from language proficiency or regional knowledge, but as one approaches the internalizing and evaluation levels the required overlap area approaches totality.

The development of intercultural competence is mostly based on the individual's experiences while communicating with different cultures. While interacting with people from other cultures, the individual generally faces certain obstacles, which are caused by differences in cultural understanding between the two people in question. Such experiences motivate the individual to work on skills that can help him communicate his point of view to an audience belonging to a completely different cultural ethnicity and background.

One salient issue, especially for people living in countries other than their country of origin, is the question of which culture they should follow. Should they try to fit in and adapt to the culture surrounding them, or should they hold on to their culture and try to avoid interacting with the culture surrounding them? This issue is increasingly common today. Globalization has caused immigration rates to skyrocket for most developed and developing countries. In a new country, immigrants are constantly surrounded by a culture which does not belong to them. International students face a similar dilemma: they have to make a choice about whether they are willing to modify their cultural boundaries in order to adapt to the culture around them, or whether they hold on to their culture and surround themselves by people from their own country. Those who decide to live by the latter rule are the students who experience the most problems in their university life and face constant [culture shocks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture_shocks), while the students who live by the former rule face less problems and interact more with the domestic students. They end up increasing their knowledge about the culture which is followed by the domestic students, and they modify their own culture to inculcate certain aspects from the culture surrounding them in order to help them blend successfully into the society.

## Basics

Cultures can be different not only between [continents](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Continent) or [nations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nation), but also within the same [company](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Company) or even [family](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Family). These differences can be [geographical](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geographical), [ethnic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethnic), [moral](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moral), [ethical](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethical), [religious](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion),[political](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political), and/or [historical](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historical).

## Typical examples of cultural differences

Perception is different and often selective:[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intercultural_competence#cite_note-4)

* [Behavior](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Behavior) and [gestures](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gesture) are interpreted differently. For instance:
	+ Showing the thumb held upwards in certain parts of the world means "everything's ok", while it is understood in some Islamic countries as a rude sexual sign. Additionally, the thumb is held up to signify "one" in France and certain other European countries, where the index finger is used to signify "one" in other cultures. In India and Indonesia, it is often regarded as wishing "all the best".[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intercultural_competence#cite_note-5)[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intercultural_competence#cite_note-6)
	+ In India, showing somebody the palm of your hand is regarded as a gesture of blessing that person, mostly done by elders. Most Hindu and Buddhist deities are depicted showing the palm of their right hand. However, in some eastern European countries, the same gesture is considered rude. The use of the hand as a sign for someone to come also varies between cultures. Bending the index finger with the palm facing up should be avoided in some cultures, and is replaced by a grasping hand motion with a downward or outward facing palm.
	+ It is very common for heterosexual men in the Indian subcontinent and most parts of the Arab world to hug each other, sit with arms over the shoulder or walk while holding hands. However, this is regarded as homosexual behavior in the West and some Asian cultures, such as China, Indonesia and Japan.
	+ In Indonesia, and many Asian nations, girls and adult females will often hold hands and be quite "touchy-feely" with one another, even slapping one another on the bottom. This is considered locally as harmless sister-like platonic affection, but some outsiders may inaccurately perceive it as widespread lesbianism.
* In the Americas as well as in Arabic countries, the pauses between words are usually not too long, while in India and Japan pauses can give a contradictory sense to the spoken words. Enduring silence is perceived as perfectly comfortable in India, Indonesia and Japan, to the point where being unnecessarily talkative is considered rude and a sign of poor self-control. To some in Europe, North America and Australia, however, long silences may feel as if a [faux pas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Faux_pas) has been committed, causing insecurity and embarrassment. Scandinavians, by the standards of other Western cultures, are more tolerant of silent breaks during conversations.
* In many cultures all over the world, avoiding eye contact or looking at the ground when talking to one's parents, an elder, or one of higher social status is a sign of respect. In contrast, such body language can be construed as deception, boredom, disinterest or shame (on the part of the doer) in others. For example, an Anglo-European teacher may expect direct eye contact as a sign of paying attention, while an Asian or Navajo student will deliberately avoid it so as not to appear rude or confrontational. Unbroken eye contact is a common sign of aggression or dominance posturing among the animal kingdom (for example, in guard dogs).
* In Persian and Pakistani cultures, if a person offers an item (i.e. a drink), it is customary not to accept it instantly. A sort of roleplay forms with the person offering being refused several times out of politeness before their offering is accepted. This tradition is known as *tarof* (or [*taarof*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taarof)) or *takaluf*, which in Persian literally means "offer". A similar exchange happens in many countries, such as India and Indonesia, where especially if visiting poorer people, it shows a form of empathy not to impose deliberately upon the hosts.[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intercultural_competence#cite_note-7) In many other cultures, it would be considered polite for the person offering to ask only once, so as to respect the other person's wish if the offer is declined.
* In African, South American, and Mediterranean cultures, talking and laughing loudly in the streets and public places is widely accepted, whereas in some Asian cultures it is considered rude and may be seen as a mark of self-centeredness or [attention-seeking](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attention-seeking).
* People from the West may be shocked by the [squat toilet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Squat_toilet) found in parts of Continental Europe (France, Italy, Turkey, etc.). The squat toilet is also prevalent in Asia (most especially China, Japan, Thailand, Indonesia and the Indian subcontinent, though it is even found in Singapore's spotlessly clean, ultra-modern Changi Airport toilets). However, it is common for Asian public toilets have both type of toilet designs - though these may not be connected directly to main water supplies and may not have toilet tissue. Instead, in these cultures, cleansing after defecating is done with a thorough water (and preferably soap) douche, and the user is expected to flush their resultant mess on the toilet or floor manually via the ladle or bucket provided. As such, many Asians are revolted by Western toilets not providing the post-defecation toilet hose. Even among themselves, many resourceful Asians will bring bottled water into toilets or fill them from the sinks as a makeshift post-defecation rinser.
* Additionally, a wet toilet seat and surrounding floor is considered clean, or newly rinsed, in many parts of Asia, while a dry toilet and bathroom are considered possibly dirty. A Westerner would find a dry toilet cleaner.
* [Arranged marriage](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arranged_marriage) is very common in the Middle East, India, and Africa, while in some Asian and most Western cultures, the romantic marriage is idealized and the right to choose marital partners is valued. An arranged marriage is perceived correctly (if a [forced marriage](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forced_marriage)) or incorrectly as an infringement on this right, and therefore is viewed unfavorably.
* In some nations, heterosexual unmarried couples holding hands in public are uncommon or frowned upon, and hugging is considered unacceptable. In many Western and Westernized nations, especially urban centers, this is common and considered harmless.
* It is common to see couples kissing, even quite passionately, in public in Western countries, but such an action may cause consternation, alarm or even legal action in African and a few Asian countries.
* In Christian and most Muslim weddings, the bride wears white to symbolize her virginal purity, while in Hindu and Korean cultures white clothes are a symbol of sorrow and should be worn to mourn the dead.
* In Korea and most other Asian countries, in universities it is considered rude to interrupt the professor during the lecture. In Western countries students are expected and even encouraged to ask questions during a lecture if necessary.
* In Asian cultures, a modest attitude is highly valued, while Western culture values self-expression

## Requirements

Basic needs are sensitivity and [self-consciousness](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Self-consciousness): the understanding of other [behaviors](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Behavior) and ways of thinking as well as the ability to express one's own point of view in a transparent way with the aim to be understood and respected by staying flexible where this is possible, and being clear where this is necessary.

It is a balance, situatively adapted, between four parts:

1. [Knowledge](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knowledge) (about other cultures, people, nations, behaviors ...)
2. [Empathy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Empathy) (understanding feelings and needs of other people)
3. [Self-confidence](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confidence) (knowledge about one's desires, strengths and weaknesses, and emotional stability)
4. [Cultural identity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_identity) (knowledge about one's own culture)

## Cultural differences

*See also:*[*Geert Hofstede*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geert_Hofstede)

Cultural characteristics can be differentiated between several dimensions and aspects; the ability to perceive them and to cope with them is one of the bases of intercultural competence.

* [Collectivism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collectivism) and [individualism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Individualism)[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intercultural_competence#cite_note-Geert_Hofstede_says-8)
* [Masculine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Masculine) and [feminine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminine) cultures[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intercultural_competence#cite_note-Geert_Hofstede_says-8)
* Uncertainty avoidance[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intercultural_competence#cite_note-Geert_Hofstede_says-8)
* [Power](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Power_%28philosophy%29) distance[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intercultural_competence#cite_note-Geert_Hofstede_says-8)
* [Chronemics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chronemics): Monochrone (time-fixed, "one after the other") and polychrone (many things at the same time, "[multi-tasking](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multi-tasking)"); Also called long-term orientation[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intercultural_competence#cite_note-Geert_Hofstede_says-8)
* Structural characteristics: e.g. basic personality, [value](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Value_%28personal_and_cultural%29) orientation, experience of [time](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Time) and [space](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Space), selective [perception](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perception), [nonverbal communication](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonverbal_communication), patterns of [behavior](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Behavior)
* [Confucianism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confucianism) and [Christianity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity)

## Assessment

For [assessment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychological_assessment) of intercultural competence as an existing ability and/or the potential to develop it (with conditions and timeframe), the following characteristics are tested and observed: [ambiguity tolerance](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ambiguity_tolerance), openness to contacts, flexibility in behavior, emotional stability, motivation to perform, [empathy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Empathy), [metacommunicative competence](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metacommunicative_competence), [polycentrism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polycentrism).

### Assessment instruments

Assessment of cross-cultural competence (3C) is another field rife with controversy. One survey identified eighty-six assessment instruments for 3C.[[10]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intercultural_competence#cite_note-9) The Army Research Institute study narrowed the list down to ten quantitative instruments for further exploration into their reliability and validity.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intercultural_competence#cite_note-Abbe_et_al.-1) Three examples of quantitative instruments include the [Inter-cultural Development Inventory](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Inter-cultural_Development_Inventory&action=edit&redlink=1), the Cultural Intelligence Scale, and the Multi-cultural Personality Questionnaire.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intercultural_competence#cite_note-Abbe_et_al.-1) Qualitative assessment instruments such as scenario-based assessments are also useful tools to gain insight into inter-cultural competence. These have proven valuable in poorly defined areas such as 3C.[[11]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intercultural_competence#cite_note-10)[[12]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intercultural_competence#cite_note-11)[[13]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intercultural_competence#cite_note-12)[[14]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intercultural_competence#cite_note-13) Intercultural coaching frameworks, such as the ICCA™ (Intercultural Communication and Collaboration Appraisal), do not attempt an assessment, but provide a guidance for personal improvement based on an identification of personal traits, relative strengths and weaknesses. [[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intercultural_competence#cite_note-14)[[16]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intercultural_competence#cite_note-15) Research in the area of 3C assessment, while thin, also underscores the value of qualitative instruments in concert with quantitative ones.[[17]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intercultural_competence#cite_note-16)[[18]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intercultural_competence#cite_note-17)[[19]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intercultural_competence#cite_note-18)

## Criticisms

It is important that cross-cultural competence training and skills not break down into application of stereotypes of a group of individuals. Although the goal is to promote understanding between groups of individuals that, as a whole, think somewhat differently, it may fail to recognize the specific differences between individuals of any given group. These differences can often be larger than the differences between groups, especially with heterogeneous populations and value systems.[[20]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intercultural_competence#cite_note-19) In addition the tendency of 3C training to simplify migration and cross-cultural processes into stages and phases has been criticized by Madison (2006),[[21]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intercultural_competence#cite_note-20) whose research emphasizes an existential and more subjective view of such experiences.

# Etiquette in Asia

As expectations regarding good [manners](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manners) differ from person to person and vary according to each situation, no treatise on the rules of[etiquette](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette) nor any list of [faux pas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Faux_pas) can ever be complete. As the [perception](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perception) of [behaviors](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Behaviors) and [actions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_actions) vary, [intercultural competence](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intercultural_competence) is essential. However, a lack of [knowledge](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knowledge) about the [customs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norm_%28sociology%29) and expectations of [Asian people](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asian_people) can make even the best intentioned person seem [rude](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rude), [foolish](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stupidity), or worse.

## Appointments

In many situations, an emphasis is placed on promptness and appropriate attire. Breaking social commitments, such as appointments or even casual plans to meet with friends, can be a serious faux pas. Preventing another person from keeping a commitment, especially with family, is rude as well.

## Elders

Special respect is paid to older people in many circumstances. This can include standing when older people enter a room, always greeting older people before others present (even if they are better known to the speaker), standing when speaking to one’s elders and serving older people first at a meal table. Touching the head, shoulders or back of an older person can be considered disrespectful, even if the intent is to comfort or indicate affection. Older people are rarely referred to by first names; they are addressed with such [honorifics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Honorific) as Mr. and Mrs. or the appropriate non-[English](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_language) equivalents. Sometimes terms such as "Uncle" or "Auntie" are appropriate for older non-relatives.

For example, the young people (in China) will call an older person as "Ye Ye" (grandfather), and "NaiNai" (grandmother), "Ah Yi" (aunt), and "ShuShu" (uncle) as a sign of respect even if that person is not family by blood.

In India, elders are given priority over younger people in a range of social settings. For example, it is impolite for a young person to be sitting while an elder is standing, in this case, even if there is a free seat, the young person will offer their seat to the elder in concern. Another example would be if an elder is carrying something of considerable weight, and a young person has their hands free, it is expected of the young person to offer assistance to the elder in concern. As with all other Asian cultures, young people in India address any older unrelated person by the closest plausible relation i.e. a slightly older person of the same generation may be referred to as elder brother, or elder sister in the respective language while an elderly person may be referred to as auntie, uncle, grandpa or grandma as appropriate, again in each respective language. As with many other Asian lingual spheres, Indian languages follow strict honorifics that must be abided by.[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)]

## Humility

Behaviours associated with [humility](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Humility), [status](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_status) and [pride](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pride) are very important in some Asian societies. Etiquette might demand that a great cook or artist deprecate their own achievement in a way that might be viewed negatively as "fishing for compliments" or false modesty in the West. Situations in some Asian societies allow for displays of wealth or ability that would be uncomfortably ostentatious or in bad taste in Western societies.[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)]

## Luck

Certain customs regarding good and bad [luck](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luck) are important to many [Asian people](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asian_people). These customs may be regarded as [superstitions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Superstition) by many, but they are often tied to [religious traditions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion) and are an important part of certain [belief systems](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_view), even among the well-educated and affluent sectors of society.[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)]

## Shoes

Traditionally, shoes are not worn in households in nations such as [India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India), [Indonesia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indonesia), [Japan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japan), [Korea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korea), [Philippines](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philippines), [Thailand](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thailand), [Malaysia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malaysia), and [Vietnam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vietnam), nor in certain holy places elsewhere, such as[mosque](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mosque) and many [Buddhist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhism) or [Hindu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hinduism) temples. The typical expectation is that shoes will be removed in the foyer and left neatly with toes pointing outside. Socks or stockings should be very clean and in good condition. In regions where shoes are not worn in houses, these rules also apply to restaurants, except those with Western-style tables and chairs.

Furthermore, in Japan, when one buys a new pair of shoes, one wears them for the first time in the morning. It is unlucky to wear them for the first time in the evening or afternoo

## Etiquette by Region

Specific details which may contradict the aforementioned generalisations are listed in the list here below.

### Bangladesh

* Women do not shake hands but instead greet others with a polite nod.[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)]
* The "[thumbs up](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thumbs_Up)" gesture is considered obscene.[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)]
* When crossing legs, feet or shoes should not be pointed towards anyone. The soles of shoes, sandals or feet are considered unclean.[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)]
* When receiving anything the right hand is always used.[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)]
* Bangladesh is a [Muslim](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim)-majority nation. Some points of [etiquette in the Middle East](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_the_Middle_East) are also applicable here. As Bangladesh has cultural ties to India, some points of etiquette listed here under that heading are applicable at times as well—such as the prohibition against using the left hand for certain activities.[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)]
* If giving gifts, avoid frangipanis and white flowers as they are for funerals. Never give money. It is considered bad form to open gifts in front of the giver.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Asia#cite_note-bangkwint-0)

### Central Asia

Many countries in this region have traditions based on [Islam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam) and share values with other parts of the [Muslim world](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim_world). Guidelines regarding [etiquette in the Middle East](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_the_Middle_East) are often applicable to Central Asia as well. This holds especially true in [Muslim majority](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Majority_Muslim_countries) countries such as:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| * Afghanistan
* Azerbaijan
 | * Kyrgyzstan
* Pakistan
 | * Tajikistan
* Turkmenistan
 | * Uzbekistan
 |

### Greater China

*Further information:*[*Customs and etiquette in Chinese dining*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Customs_and_etiquette_in_Chinese_dining)

* The Chinese are not keen on physical contact, especially when doing business. The only circumstance in which it may take place is when a host is guiding a guest. Even then contact will only be made by holding a cuff or sleeve. It is considered rude to slap, pat, or put one's arm around the shoulders of another.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Asia#cite_note-1)
* On the eve of [Chinese New Year](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_New_Year), it is a faux pas to completely eat a fish at a [reunion dinner](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_New_Year#Reunion_dinner) as there are specific customs surrounding this.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Asia#cite_note-2)
* It is a faux pas to attend a wedding while in mourning as it is believed to bring bad luck to the marrying couple.
* It may be considered shocking for a pregnant woman to attend a funeral due to the belief that this endangers her baby.
* While splitting bills at restaurants as is common among younger people, older adults might consider it a matter of prestige to pay for the bill and will often compete for the honour. Allowing another to pay the bill without some protest may be a faux pas.
* Many standards of Western etiquette, on the other hand, apply in the former [crown colony](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_overseas_territories) of [Hong Kong](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hong_Kong).
* In mainland China, especially when showing respect, when giving cash to someone, it is given to one with both hands and the head slightly bowed. Cash bills are usually held in both hands, and the receiver picks them up. To drop money from the top down into somebody's hands is seen as giving charity and may be considered rude.

### Greater India

* Guests are generally offered a refreshment depending on the season and the time of visit. Arriving at meal times might result in an invitation to the meal. However, at times this is just a polite offer and sometimes can be a faux pas. While dining, additional food may be offered multiple times. These are generally second and third "rounds" and it is not considered rude to decline them.
* The word "drink" as a noun almost always refers to [alcohol](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alcoholic_beverage) in [Indian English](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_English).
* It is polite to offer refreshments and this custom has been carried by Indians outside of India as well.
* Indian hospitality requires the host to insist their guests eat well and gently protest that they haven't had enough. It would be rude to decline by stating one is watching one's diet.
* Some Hindu households follow a vegetarian diet and many vegetarian/non-vegetarian households do not consume alcohol.
* Many Indian households expect visitors to leave their footwear at the main door of their house.
* It is considered immature and boorish to open a gift in front of the person who has given it. Gifts are opened in private.
* As India has a long [colonial history](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colonial_India), many rules of Western (specifically British) etiquette are widely observed.
* Eating, accepting goods or making payments with the left hand can be a faux pas (as it is associated with hygiene and cleanliness - left hand is unclean). In some situations, using both hands together is a sign of respect, such as a handshake, offering a gift or giving something in the temple.[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)]
* Some points of [etiquette in the Middle East](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_the_Middle_East) apply here, especially in regions where the Muslim presence is strongest.
* Many people in India and surrounding regions avoid shaking hands with individuals of the opposite gender. When meeting a person of the opposite gender, it is prudent to verbally greet them and then wait to see if the other person extends the hand first. Most often, especially with more elderly individuals, Hindus greet with palms together and say [Namaste](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Namaste) or its variants based on what region the individual is from such as Namaskaram and Vanakam down south and 'Nomoshkar' in Bengal.
* For a man to make any comment about a woman’s appearance can be considered inappropriate.
* Asking a person to a social event (e.g. a bar or restaurant) typically implies that the person offering the invitation will be paying for everything.
* In the Hindu community, it is common for young people to seek the blessings of elders by bending and touching their feet. However, this practice is not followed in the Muslim community.
* Among many communities, beliefs regarding holiness and cleanliness forbid the touching of one's feet to a person or an important object such as a book or food which are considered to be divine blessings by most Hindus. Custom also discourages displaying the soles of one's feet. Feet should not be extended toward another person (especially an elder), or towards any religious artifact or symbol. Shoes are typically removed when entering a dwelling or place of worship.
* It is generally expected that men and women dress modestly when visiting the Hindu Temple. This can also be true of other places of worship in India.
* It is impolite and can be considered an insult to refuse the offering of [prasad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prasad)."Hindus believe that the prasad has the God's blessing residing within it". Offering of the prasad is by no means an attempt to evangelize nor should it be seen as forcing of someone else's belief onto oneself.
* The [prasad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prasad) must be accepted with the right hand or both hands when the prasad includes heavier items such as coconuts.
* It is considered impolite to address a person who is older or holds a higher status by their first name. In [Hindi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindi), the first name is usually followed by "ji" to show respect. Older non-relatives such as family friends or parents of close friends are usually referred to as Uncle and Aunty. It is rude for one to address elders by their names.
* It is considered impolite to kiss a significant other in front of parents or other elders.
* Asking questions about the caste system or worshipping cows is frowned upon and will usually mark one as ignorant or rude.
* Interacting with children is appreciated.
* "What are you doing/What do you do?" as in what does one do for work or as an occupation is a common phrase as a conversation starter after greetings, and is a normal way of trying to initiate conversation with one.
* [Caste](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caste) is a very ancient and complex aspect of Hindu culture, and talking about the moral aspects of caste is fraught with too many possible faux pas for the unfamiliar. Most Hindus belong to a caste.
* The general principle of dining in South and parts of South-east Asia is to always use ones right hand to consume, even if one is left-handed.

Also: [Etiquette of Indian dining](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_of_Indian_dining)

### Indonesia

It is important to understand that Indonesia is a vast tropical country of sprawling [archipelago](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indonesian_archipelago) with extremely diverse [culture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture_of_Indonesia). Each of these[Indonesian ethnic groups](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethnic_groups_in_Indonesia) have their own culture, tradition and may speak their own language. Each of them may adhere different religions that have their own rules. These combinations made Indonesia a complex mixture of traditions that may differ from one place to another. Indonesia have a Muslim majority population, and some points of [etiquette in the Middle East](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_the_Middle_East) apply. Following are some key points of Indonesian etiquette:[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Asia#cite_note-Kwintessential-3)

* It is impolite to express resentment, arrogance or hostility when speaking to people outside your immediate family or closest friends.
* Smiling is considered polite. Avoid staring too much, as it can be considered intrusive.
* Interacting with somebody you have barely met, especially older people, requires strict etiquette. However interacting with close friends, among peers with similar age, or significant others, might be more relaxed, affectionate and less subject to strict etiquette.
* Public displays of affection with sposes or partners are regarded as sexual and thus are frowned upon. However public displays of affection towards one's children, parents or family members are approved of.
* Hierarchical relationships are respected, emphasised and maintained.
* Respect is usually shown to those with status, power, position, and age
* People older than you must be respected. Parents, grand parents and teachers are must be obeyed.
* When shaking the hand of elders (such as parents, grandparents or teachers) the younger person is expected to touch the top of the elder's palm with the tip of their nose or forehead to express respect. It is similar to kissing a hand, but only using the tip of the nose or forehead, not lips.
* Most Indonesians value harmony, so direct confrontation is best avoided.
* Ii is important to be considerate of other people's dignity. Shaming or humiliating people in public is considered extremely rude.[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Asia#cite_note-Travel_Etiquette-4)
* Saying *terimakasih* (thank you) after receiving services or favours is polite
* Greet Muslims with the Islamic greeting *assalamu 'alaikum*, and reply with *walaikumsalam*.
* When greeting or introducing oneself it is polite to smile, shake hands and nod slightly. Gently touch your counterpart’s extended hands, before finally bringing your hands back to your chest to demonstrate that you welcome them from your heart.[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Asia#cite_note-Travel_Etiquette-4) The greeted party should then reciprocate this gesture.
* If it is not practical to shake hands, you can greet people them by putting your hands together in front of your chest while slightly bowing. It is similar to [AñjaliMudrā](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A%C3%B1jali_Mudr%C4%81).
* Some conservative Indonesian muslims might avoid direct touch with the opposite sex including handshake, so performing non-touching salam (anjali) is recommended when greeting opposite sex that are conservative muslims.
* Always use your right hand, when shaking hands, offering a gift, handing or receiving something, eating, pointing or generally touching another person.[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Asia#cite_note-Travel_Etiquette-4)
* Do not touch the head of an adult, as it is commonly believed that the soul inhabits the head, and the head is therefore sacred.
* Avoid tilting your head back, putting your hands on your hips or pointing when talking to other people.
* Pointing toward someone with an index finger is considered rude, pointing with a thumb is considered more polite.
* Speaking softly but clearly is recommended, as speaking too loudly is considered rude.
* Conservative and modest dress sense should be worn — especially by women.[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Asia#cite_note-Kwintessential-3)
* When visiting a place of worship, the proper dress etiquette for such places is of utmost importance.
* When entering a mosque, always remove your shoes.
* Bathing suits and [swimwear](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swimwear) should only be worn in and around beaches and swimming pools.
* When not swimming, women should cover their legs, for example with a [sarong](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarong).
* To announce your presence, ring a bell or knock at the door while saying *assalamu 'alaikum* if the host is Muslim, or more commonly *permisi*.
* Wait to be allowed to enter the house, and wait to be shown to a seat in a guest room.
* Wait to be allowed to drink, finishing the whole cup indicates that you wish for more.
* Do not overstay your welcome. The host will not indicate when the visit has been long enough, since it is considered extremely rude. It is up to the guest to estimate the length of their visit and initiate the farewell.
* Food is often taken from a shared dish in the middle. In a seated dinner party, you will first be served and it would not be considered rude if you helped yourself after that. Wait to be invited to eat before you start.
* It is better to sit down while eating, yet in some circumstances eating while standing is acceptable.
* Depending on the situation some people may use their hands. Many Indonesians traditionally eat with their hands. Higher status people may also as well, to indicate solidarity. It is customary to follow host's lead. In restaurants however, if one does not wish to eat with bare hands, it is acceptable to ask for [spoon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spoon) and [fork](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fork) instead.
* Eat or pass food with your right hand only.
* Making sounds while eating is considered impolite. This includes slurping or the sound of cutlery touching the dish.
* Playing with food it is considered impolite and childish.
* Offer gifts with the right hand only, or with both hands.
* Gifts should not be opened when received.
* Don't point with your index finger- use an upward facing palm, to gesture the direction.
* It is impolite to indicate a direction with your head. This is considered aggressive and implies the object or person in question has a very low status.
* Avoid using first names. If in doubt use Mas, Pak, Ibu or Mbak.
* It is considered very impolite to snap your fingers to get a waiters' attention. Wave and raise your hand instead.
* A Javanese custom is not to drink until all food is consumed, signifying self-control and the ability to endure a task to the end.
* Tipping is customary in Indonesia, yet it is optional. Consult the locals as to the usual rate. Tips apply to anyone who offer a service: toilet attendants, drivers, grocery-store clerks, parking guard. Be generous, but do not exceed too far the usual local accepted rate. A tip of 10% of total bill at small eateries, where the bill does not specify a service charge is adequate. Most all restaurants will include a 10% service charge in the bill, if so you may not give any tip. Hotels and fine restaurants will usually include a service charge, and it is the discretion of the buyer to tip. Tipping at street hawker food stalls is not usual. The general rule among the Javanese is that the truly wealthy are inconspicuous; the wealthier one is or wishes to appear, the more generously one gives discreetly.

### Brunei and Malaysia

* Brunei and Malaysia have a Muslim majority and some points of [etiquette in the Middle East](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_the_Middle_East) apply. These countries also have a significant Chinese population to whom the points mentioned in regard to etiquette in China may apply.
* In three nations mentioned above, one should not enter a [mosque](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mosque) or [Hindu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hinduism) temple without removing one’s shoes. Other places of worship such as [Taoist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taoism) or [Chinese Buddhist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhism_in_China) temples and [Christian churches](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_%28building%29) allow footwear while others forbid it.
* Nudity (and toplessness with regard to women) is absolutely prohibited on beaches. Besides offending others, violators risk arrest.
* Placing or slapping an open palm on the top of a sideways-held fist of the other hand is a rude gesture. Inserting the thumb between the index and middle fingers of a closed fist is another.
* Regarding the head and feet, the taboos listed below in regard to Thailand are widely observed in these countries as well.
* Pointing with one’s index finger is considered impolite, especially when pointing at people. Instead, a closed fist held sideways (thumb at the top) with the thumb pointing the direction is used.
* Many Malaysians traditionally eat with their hands. Higher status people may also as well, to indicate solidarity. It is customary to follow their lead, using only the right hand to eat. In restaurants however, if one does not wish to eat with bare hands, it is acceptable to ask for [spoon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spoon) and [fork](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fork) instead.
* Addressing strangers in formal situations by their names (even if they have name tags) is rude. Instead, "Mister" and "Ms." are acceptable.
* It is considered rude to expose your tooth picking to others. Instead, cover your mouth or go to the bathroom.
* Leaving your mouth open when yawning is discourteous. You must practice the habit of covering your mouth whenever you yawn.
* When beckoning someone with a hand gesture, the hand is held flat with palm down, and fingers flexed toward the ground. Like the Japanese, to crook one or more fingers in the air is an obscene gesture.
* Don't point with your feet- this is highly offensive- the sole of the foot is considered the dirtiest part of the body.
* Women must wear brassiere at all times, otherwise it implies she is very low class or a prostitute.
* Don't express anger in public. It is the height of self-control to remain calm at all times.
* Don't point with your index finger- use an upward facing palm, to gesture the direction.
* It's also impolite to indicate direction with the head - this is considered aggressive and implies the object or person in question has a very low status.
* Avoid using the left hand for handling goods, exchanging money, eating. For Muslims, and many Asians, the left is the toilet wiping hand— and is thus considered unclean.
* Traditionally, children should not eat until the older guests have eaten.
* Avoid using first names. If in doubt use Encik or Puan (in Malaysia).
* Never snap to get a waiters' attention. This is near the height of boorishness. Wave instead.
* It is very polite to play the game of initially refusing a gift, then receiving it with extreme gratitude, and indulging the gifter on the thought the giver put in it and how unworthy you, the receiver, are of such gifts. Furthermore emphasizing how you may have inconvenienced the giver is appropriate- in a very similar style to other Asian cultures.
* It is generally acceptable to open gifts immediately as they are received. However, it is considered slightly more polite to unwrap them when the giver has left.

Among higher status groups, western table manners are observed meaning:

* no eating until all guests are served
* no eating sounds such as slurping, gobbling or belching.
* no playing with food
* no slouching
* no elbows on table
* no cutlery to crockery sounds
* no spitting bones out. Discretely pass them into napkin.
* no hawking, coughing, clearing throats or blowing noses at the table
* no incorrect cutlery use or improper handling
* no cutting or manipulating food between chews. Cutlery is placed at rest on plate between chews
* no continuous shoveling of food into mouth
* no chewing with mouth open
* no speaking with food in mouth
* no bending down to meet the cutlery- cutlery brings food to the mouth not vice-versa
* soup bowls tilted away when finishing the last broth
* soup is spooned into the soup-spoon away from the diner
* some will apply a rule of all diners remain seated until all have finished
* some will apply a rule of silence at the dinner table

Tipping is customary in Brunei and Malaysia. Consult the locals as to the usual rate. Tips apply to anyone who offer a service: toilet attendants, drivers, grocery-store clerks. Be generous, but do not exceed too far the usual local accepted rate. A tip of 5-15% of total bill at small eateries, where the bill does not specify a service charge is adequate. Most all restaurants will include a 10% service charge in the bill. Hotels and fine restaurants will usually include a service charge, and it is the discretion of the buyer to tip. Tipping at Mammak (Indian Muslim coffee shops) shops or hawker(food stalls) is not done.

### Japan

*For more details on this topic, see*[*Etiquette in Japan*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Japan)*.*

Japanese customs and etiquette can be especially complex and demanding. The knowledge that non-Japanese who commit faux pas act from inexperience can fail to offset the negative emotional response some [Japanese people](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japanese_people) feel when their expectations in matters of etiquette are not met.

* Business cards should be given and accepted with both hands. It is expected that the cards will immediately be inspected and admired, then placed on the table in front of the receiver for the duration of the meeting. After the meeting, cards should be stored respectfully and should never be placed in a back pocket. You should not write on a business card. If you want to be taken seriously at a business meeting, you must have business cards. When you get them out, they should be in a card holder - not just taken out of your pocket.[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Asia#cite_note-5)
* It is a faux pas to accept a gift when it is first offered and the giver is expected to offer it multiple times (usually 3 times). Gifts are generally not opened in the giver's presence.[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Asia#cite_note-new006.html-6)
* In greeting or thanking another person, it may be insulting if the person of lower status does not [bow](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bowing_%28social%29) appropriately lower than the other person. However, foreigners are rarely expected to bow. The level and duration of the bow depends on status, age and other factors.[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Asia#cite_note-Fodor-7)
* Pouring soy sauce onto rice is considered unusual.[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Asia#cite_note-Fodor-7)
* It is less common to pour one's own drink in a social setting. Generally an individual will offer to pour a companion's drink and the companion, in return, will pour the individual's drink. Although if one of you is drinking from a bottle to glass and the other one is drinking just from a glass, it is fine to pour yourself because otherwise you will be in for a long wait.[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Asia#cite_note-Fodor-7)
* Blowing one's nose in public is a faux pas. Also, the Japanese do not use their handkerchief for *hanakuso*, which literally translates as "nose shit".[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Asia#cite_note-Fodor-7)
* For women, not wearing [cosmetics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cosmetics) or a brassiere may be seen as unprofessional or expressive of disregard for the situation.[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Asia#cite_note-Fodor-7)
* Though many Japanese are lenient with foreigners in this regard, it is a faux pas not to use polite language and honorifics when speaking in Japanese with someone having a higher social status. The Japanese honorific "san" can be used when speaking English but is never used when referring to one’s self. Japanese place surnames before given names but often reverse the order for the benefit of Westerners.[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Asia#cite_note-Fodor-7)
* Although people around the world strive not to lose their tempers, expressing outward anger, annoyance or losing one's temper is an especially embarrassing [loss of face](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Face_%28social_concept%29) in Japan.[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Asia#cite_note-Fodor-7)
* A smile or laughter from a Japanese person may mean that they are feeling nervous or uncomfortable, and not necessarily happy.
* "Hai" means "yes" in Japanese, but in a meeting or discussion it is often used to mean "Yes, I have heard you". Don't mistake this for agreement with your point of view.
* It is very bad manners to be late in Japan. If you have an appointment then aim to be early.
* It is rude to not send a [postcard](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Postcard) for [Japanese New Year](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japanese_New_Year) to someone who sent you one. Sending such a postcard to someone who suffered a death in the family during the past year is a faux pas.
* [Tipping](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tipping) is considered rude and is rarely done in Japan except in certain cases, such as tipping your surgeon for an operation, when visiting a high class [ryokan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ryokan_%28Japanese_inn%29), or when dealing with house movers. Consult the locals to be sure what is appropriate. If you can’t be bothered to wait for change, it is okay to tell a taxi driver to keep it.[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Asia#cite_note-Fodor-7)
* Cash is a standard gift for weddings and for children at New Year. It is always given in a special envelope or packet (which you can buy at any convenience store). There will be a standard amount to give at a wedding - ask someone else how much to give.
* When beckoning someone with a hand gesture, the hand is held flat with palm down, and fingers flexed toward the ground. To crook one or more fingers in the air is an obscene gesture.
* It is a faux pas to point directly at someone. Instead, extend fingers outward with your palm up (as if carrying a tray) and gesture toward the person.
* If using a toothpick, one should cover the mouth with the other hand. This comes from a Buddhist belief that showing any bone, including teeth, is dirty.

### Korea

* The number 4 is considered unlucky, so gifts should not be given in multiples of 4. Giving 7 of an item is considered lucky.[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Asia#cite_note-koreakwint-8)
* Blowing one's nose at the table, even if the food is spicy, is mildly offensive. If necessary, take a trip to the toilet or at least be very discreet.[[10]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Asia#cite_note-airman.2F0406-9)
* In restaurants and bars, pouring one's own drink is a faux pas. Keep an eye on your neighbors' glasses and fill them if they are empty; they will do the same. To avoid over drinking, simply leave the glass near full. When pouring drinks, hold bottle in right hand, lightly place left hand on forearm near elbow.[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Asia#cite_note-Fodor-7)
* When someone of a significantly higher social position pours you a drink, it is considered proper to turn away from that person when you drink it.
* Leaving a gratuity is usually not accepted nor expected.
* When handing an item to someone, it is considered rude to only use a single hand. Under most circumstances, especially when interacting with a stranger or a superior, one uses the right hand supported by the left hand.
* Even though mentality evolved, women smoking in public is sometimes not accepted, despite being legally allowed.
* A couple kissing each other in public is a faux pas, since it is not seen as modest.
* [[1]](http://sanchonhunjang.blogspot.com/2005/11/sanchon-hunjangs-guide-to-korean.html) A guide to Korean funeral etiquette
* See also [Traditional Korean table etiquette](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korean_cuisine#Dining_etiquette).

### Pakistan

Also: [Etiquette in Pakistan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Pakistan)

### Philippines

The centuries of Spanish and [American](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Colonial_Period_%28Philippines%29) rule, as well as the influence of [Japan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japan), [China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China), [India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India), [Middle East](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle_East) and the [West](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Occident), have given the [Philippines](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philippines)has a unique and particularly formal sense of etiquette concerning social functions, [filial piety](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Filial_piety) and public behaviour. Age is an important determinant in social structure and behaviour, dictating the application of honour, precedence, and title.

*See also:* [Table manners#Philippines](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Table_manners#Philippines)

* Unlike in Western culture, where meals are a private affair, Filipinos who are chanced upon dining will invite visitors to eat with them. However, to actually sit down and eat upon the invitation is considered offensive. It is the host's prerogative to be gracious, but it is the guest's burden to avoid being overbearing. When asked to do so, it is polite to say one has already eaten or is still quite full rather than declining bluntly.
* Hosts will strive to appear gracious while guests strive to appear happily grateful in all situations. Any shortcomings by any party in this regard are seen as bad manners.
* Hosts will invariably serve a snack for their visitors, who should in turn always accept and consume the food. Declining is considered rude to the host who has taken to offer his own food to the guest. Only in certain circumstances is it socially acceptable to decline, i.e., if the guest is allergic or if it is against religious beliefs.
* Good posture is expected at the dinner table. A diner singing at table is considered rude in some areas.
* Waiters usually only come to take the order, refill drinks and bring the bill. Most will not return to ask if anything else is needed but are mostly attentive and can be easily summoned. However, except for formal dining establishments, Filipino waiters are not trained to answer questions.
* If someone is buying a meal for someone else, the buyer orders first. For the guest to order something expensive on the menu is considered highly rude and speaks of ill breeding.
* Filipinos use forks, spoons and knives differently than in Western countries, particularly because rice is the country's main [staple](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Staple_food). The spoon is held in the right hand, and is used to scoop up the food or cut up pieces. The fork in the left hand helps in cutting up and spearing the food. Knives are also sometimes used and always in the Western manner (spoons are left out when eating Continental or American cuisine). Chopsticks are not normally used outside of Chinese, Japanese and Korean restaurants or in the home when eating such food; rules on their use still apply.
* The last morsel of food is almost always left on the serving platter. If someone wants to eat it, he or she should ask if anybody else wants it; eating it is considered porcine and ill-bred behaviour.
* While splitting bills at restaurants is common amongst the youth, older adults consider it a matter of prestige to pay for the bill and will often compete for the honour. Moreover, allowing another to pay the bill without some customary protest is a *faux pas*.
* Filipinos still hold [gentlemanly](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gentlemanly) behaviour in high regard. In waiting rooms or on buses, men traditionally offer their seats to the handicapped, the elderly, the pregnant and women in general, although this is generally ignored today. To revive this, a Manila railway has designated separate seats for these groups, and a separate coach for women after several [indecent](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sexual_harassment) incidents.
* Filipinos place importance on proper introductions. Older people are introduced to younger people first; men are introduced to women first. Introduce a group to an individual first as the individual is not expected to remember all the names at first introduction. Failing to make the proper introductions can also be a *faux pas*. This is particularly true for children introducing friends or acquaintances to their parents.
* Always acknowledge the presence of older people in the room by shaking their hands. When greeting a parent, [godparent](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Godparent), grandparent or religious authority, Filipinos give obeisance with the important [*máno*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mano_%28gesture%29) gesture; the doer asks for the receiver's hand and brings it to the forehead. Kisses are not involved in such a case nor is there any regard for the cleanliness of the hands. It is unusual and awkward for someone to *máno* non-relatives or new acquaintances unless there is a relatively deep kinship involved. Youth in Americanised and urban areas have however begun switching to the more age-egalitarian kissing of cheeks as a form of greeting.
* Seeming reluctant to socialise, especially at an event to which one is invited, could be considered offensive. It is proper to hide one's self from attention than to directly ask for privacy or personal space.
* Never address older people at the same level; use the words "*tito*" ("uncle") or "*tita*" ("auntie") for extra-familial adults but only if they are close or merit some other honourific yet prefer to be addressed as such (usually to avoid sounding old). [Mister](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mister), [Mrs.](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mrs.), and [Miss](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miss) will suffice in more formal situations, especially if it is only the first introduction.
* When speaking to elders, respectful tone and language is absolutely required. Using "*opo*" (respectful form of "*oo*", the [Filipino](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Filipino_language) word for "yes") and its shortcut "*pò*" wheresoever required. "*Pò*", unlike "*opo*", may be inserted in more places in a sentence (usually Filipino, but sometimes in [Englog](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Englog) or [Taglish](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taglish)) instead of simply functioning as a reply in the affirmative. Example: *"Kakainna****po****tayo."* (We are going to eat now.) Not doing so is also extremely offensive and could be taken as a sign of aggression. The use of these respectful words is sometimes considered to be a fundamental tenet in local etiquette, especially when taught to children, and is also admirable in a child who employs this in conversation with adults. This rule may however not always apply to non-Tagalog speaking regions.
* Gift-giving is important on many occasions such as weddings and birthdays. Coming to a party empty-handed is considered a [*faux pas*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Faux_pas). If a gift is unavailable on short notice, a food item may be brought instead. If invited to a restaurant, do not assume the opportunity to buy the celebrant dinner; bring a gift instead.
* When attending a [wake](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wake), avoid wearing loud colours (especially red). Sombrecolours such as black, white, greys, muted and earth tones are proper for visiting wakes. Due to the Philippine heat and [*Tsinoy*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Filipino-Chinese) cultural influence, white as a mourning colour is increasingly preferred by many (although [Ilocanos](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ilocano_people) have used it for centuries). Wearing black or white is however slowly waning, and it usually limited to the immediate family. Money, flowers or Mass intention cards are acceptable gifts.
* If someone needs to walk in between a television and those watching it or between two conversing people, he or she must excuse themselves and lower the head (almost bowing) whilst passing through.
* When one meets an acquaintance at any form of public transport, he/she must never forget to greet the other. In some instances, one takes the responsibility to pay his companion's fare. Allowing this to happen without protest is considered rude.
* When one drives or rides one's own vehicle and sees an acquaintance on the street, it is prerogative to stop and offer a ride, especially if the acquaintance's destination is on the way. The one offered is free to decline or accept; either choice is acceptable.
* Boisterous or loud talking is generally frowned upon; this rule is almost never followed, except by the educated or when someone is in pain or distress.
* Kissing and displaying affection in public is still generally considered to be in bad taste or scandalous in this somewhat conservative country. It is however as rude to make a scene of it, so one merely ignores—or at best stares down—couples who make public displays of affection. This is becoming increasingly acceptable in urban areas, though this is a minority.
* When gesturing for someone to come hither, he or she must face the palm to the ground and gesture the fingers back. The Western gesture, where the palm is faced upwards, is considered a gesture for sex.
* While the Philippines is predominantly [Roman Catholic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholicism_in_the_Philippines), there is a significant [Muslim minority](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam_in_the_Philippines) and therefore many points of [Etiquette in the Middle East](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_the_Middle_East) can apply in Muslim areas.

### Singapore

* In Singapore, a former [crown colony](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_overseas_territories) of the [United Kingdom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom), many standards of etiquette in Western societies apply.[[11]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Asia#cite_note-10)
* Singapore has a very [heterogeneous](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heterogeneous) population with [Chinese](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_in_Singapore), [Indians](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_Singaporean) and [Malays](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malays_in_Singapore) as the largest ethnic groups. As such, many points of etiquette noted above in regard to China, India, Indonesia and Malaysia can apply.

### Thailand

* Thai greeting consists of a slight bow, with the palms pressed together in a prayer-like fashion. The higher the hands are held in relation to the face and the lower the bow, the more respect or reverence the giver of the wai is showing. A person who has given such a beautiful greeting to someone receives more respectful treatment in response.
* Touching someone (even a child) with the foot is a taboo as [Thai Buddhism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theravada) considers this an impure region of the body. Pointing with the foot or showing the soles of the feet is strongly discouraged. It is especially important to not to sit with the soles of one’s feet at images of the [Buddha](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gautama_Buddha).
* Thais regard the head as the highest part of the body, literally and figuratively. Touching someone’s head, even accidentally, requires an immediate apology.
* Thais hold their king in very high regard and any sign of disrespect is a major faux pas. Currency, postage stamps, magazines covers and any other items with the king’s image are never tossed to the ground or treated harshly. Even licking the back of a postage stamp is considered disrespectful. Most especially, these items are never trod upon as it is a sign of utmost disrespect to place one’s foot above the head of the king. Money or other items dropped accidentally should immediately be picked up and reverently brushed.[[12]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Asia#cite_note-2006_08.html-11)
* Kissing in the streets and any public display of affection are considered rude. While many Thais are relatively liberal-minded in matters of sexuality they maintain a strong sense of public decorum.
* When entering a house, stepping on the threshold is a faux pas that conflicts with Thai beliefs about good and bad luck.
* Some parts of Southern Thailand have a large Muslim population making applicable certain points of [etiquette in the Middle East](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_the_Middle_East). Western etiquette applies among the expatriate communities of [Bangkok](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bangkok) and [Pattaya](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pattaya).

### Turkey

* A small part of Turkey (3%) is in [Europe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Europe) and many points of European etiquette apply. As Turkey has a Muslim majority, points of [Etiquette in the Middle East](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_the_Middle_East) may apply as well.
* Shoes are often taken off in the foyer (not outside the house unless they are especially dirty). Slippers may be offered. It is a faux pas to refuse slippers unless one’s socks are extremely clean and in good condition.
* As beliefs regarding bad luck from open umbrellas indoors are taken seriously by some people, close umbrellas before bringing them inside. Some people believe that passing a knife directly to a person is bad luck as well. These beliefs are especially common among the elderly.
* Hosts typically insist that guests keep eating. One needn’t eat much, but should at least taste a bit of everything on the table and express appreciation for the taste and quality.
* Food or any small favor in general will generally be offered more than once and it is polite to decline it the first time with an expression implying effort to avoid causing inconvenience.
* Avoid hand gestures with which one is unfamiliar, such as making a fist with the thumb placed between the middle and index fingers. Many of these are offensive.
* Any comment to a person about the appearance of the latter's female relatives or wife might be seen as rude.
* If invited to dinner, one is expected to bring something (usually dessert). Avoid bringing alcohol unless sure that the host partakes. If the guest brings food or drinks (as usual) it is customary to offer it in the proper context during the visit.
* Friends might greet each other by shaking hands and touching or kissing one or both of the cheeks. This is inappropriate for business.
* Blowing one's nose at a table is met with disgust and frowned upon even if one has cold. As sniffing is also considered rude at a table, it is best to clear one's nose at a toilet as often as necessary. These activities are in general regarded distasteful, and are best kept away from social interactions.
* When sitting legs crossed, it is offensive to point one's hanging foot at someone, especially someone older or of higher status. Similarly, it is in general rude to show the bottom of one's shoes or feet.
* The entire country practices one minute of silence on 10th November at 9:05am. It is very interesting to see the most crowded places becoming quiet at once. This silence is observed in the memory of the founder of Turkey, Mustafa Kemal.[[13]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Asia#cite_note-most-common-cultural-habits-in-turkey-12)

### Vietnam

* When going out to eat with other people, it is prestigious to pay for the meal. It is therefore rude to prevent someone from paying if they have made the offer first. The offer can be made as soon as going to a restaurant is discussed or anytime thereafter. On the other hand, inviting others for a meal, drink or event automatically creates the expectation that the one giving the invitation will pay for the others. Among younger people, the practice of splitting the bill is increasingly common.
* It is customary to pour alcoholic drinks for others before pouring for one's self. Typically no one imbibes until everyone clinks their glasses together, at which time everyone drinks. This happens throughout the entire drinking session and not just at the beginning.
* Whether the meal table is Western-style with chairs or Vietnamese-style and close to the floor, it is rude to begin eating before inviting others to eat (particularly elders, guests, etc.). Children should always invite adults to begin eating first.
* When children invite adults to begin eating, it should begin with people with a higher prestige in the family. (It goes in order of oldest to youngest, with the male being higher than the female.) For example, the grandfather will be asked, then grandmother, then father, then mother, and then older brothers, followed by older sisters. Younger siblings can be invited, but it is not needed.
* Some [Vietnamese meals](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cuisine_of_Vietnam) involve scooping food into [lettuce](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lettuce) or [mustard plant](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mustard_plant) leaves and similar fresh vegetables at the table rather than employing [utensils](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cutlery). Fellow diners will typically enjoy helping newcomers master the technique.
* The [Vietnamese language](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vietnamese_language) is very rich in pronouns. Make sure you are addressing others correctly, according to their age, rank, gender etc.
* Do not show the soles of your feet to other. This is perceived as rude, because the feet are considered dirtiest part of the body.
* Do not touch the heads of others, especially the elderly, for this is where our spirit lies.
* Lower your head when receiving a gift or change, especially when it is being received from the elderly.
* Stand when someone of higher rank enters the room. This shows respect.
* Talking is usually avoided while eating. Small talk will usually take place over tea.

# Etiquette in Australia and New Zealand

Expectations regarding good manners differ from person to person and vary according to each situation. As the perception of behaviors and actions vary, [intercultural competence](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intercultural_competence) is essential. However, a lack of knowledge about the [customs and expectations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norm_%28sociology%29) of people in [Australia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australia) and [New Zealand](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Zealand) can make even the best intentioned person seem ignorant, inconsiderate or even rude.

## Shared expectations

Australia and New Zealand are separate countries, each with its own distinct national identity that includes particular customs and rules of etiquette. Confusing their identities in general conversation is usually not tolerated and will be quickly corrected. Points of etiquette that apply to both countries include the following:

### General

* Australians have a notable reliance on rote niceties, the classic "P's & Q's: especially the word "please," but also the phrases "thank you," and "excuse me." While apologizing or expressing appreciation has somewhat displaced the ubiquity of the rote expressions elsewhere in the Anglosphere -- in the US and England, especially -- Australians will sometimes visibly scowl if a stranger makes a casual request or initiates transaction without specifically saying "please" or "thank you." Likewise, even those suffering some obvious distress are expected to speak the words "excuse me" when asking to move past.

The expectation is not displaced by friendliness or apologies. For example: "I'm terribly sorry to bother you -- but may I have another napkin?" might illicit an eyeroll that could easily be avoided by simply saying: "may I have another napkin, please?" This may hold true even, perhaps counter-intuitively, if the latter is delivered somewhat more curtly or coolly.

When meeting friends or new people and when leaving the company of friends or people who one has just met it is becoming less common to require the handshake to be firm, though many are still offended by a 'limp' handshake. Giving someone a limp handshake is referred to as giving someone a "dead fish" and is often viewed with derision, especially in country areas. A quick clasping of hands may be OK for younger people. However, it is always respectful to make eye contact when you shake hands.

### Language

* Requesting a [fanny pack](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fanny_pack) can be considered obscene due to the use of "fanny" as a [slang](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slang) term for [female genitalia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Female_genitalia). "Bum bag" is the acceptable local variation in some areas.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Australia_and_New_Zealand#cite_note-fauxpas2-0) Australians and New Zealanders are generally tolerant of foreigners making this mistake.
* Enquiring about which sporting team "you root for" will be met with amusement. "Root" is a vulgar term in both Australia & New Zealand for sexual intercourse. Use "go for" or "support" instead. "Barrack for" is also used by some Australians.
* An enquiry about a person's well being (such as "How's it going?" or "How are you going?") is a common greeting. Generally the accepted response is "Not too bad", and it is considered polite to ask the person the same question back. It is also considered polite to greet *anyone*, including strangers, in this way.
* Bragging, or initiating discussion of one's own achievements, is usually considered in poor taste. (See [tall poppy syndrome](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tall_poppy_syndrome).)
* It is acceptable to host a barbecue without supplying all the food and drink. The host may ask guests to bring particular items such as beverages, salad, or meat, often using the acronym "[BYO](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BYO)"
* The term "[bring a plate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bring_a_plate)" is synonymous with "[potluck](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Potluck)"

### Public places

* As cars drive on the left side of the road in both countries, people moving forward will generally go to the left as well. When walking on the pavement (usually called the 'footpath'), one should walk on the left, whenever possible. When travelling on escalators or moving walkways, one should keep to the right when walking, or keep to the left when standing.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Australia_and_New_Zealand#cite_note-1)
* When using [public transport](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_transport), it is rude to board before letting other passengers disembark. It is polite to move from the aisle to the window seat if it is vacant, to allow others passengers to sit down easily.
* Trains and buses in all states of Australia and in New Zealand have seats set aside for elderly and disabled people. Sitting in these seats is acceptable but these seats should be offered to the people they are set aside for.
* Spitting on the street is frowned upon.
* When getting off a bus you may choose to say thank you to the driver, especially if they have been polite or provided a comfortable ride, although it is not bad manners if you don't.

### Bars and restaurants

* When paying a cashier, it is common to place the money in their hand. Change is usually placed in your hand in return. When paying at a restaurant it is acceptable to leave the money in the tray on the table, if one is provided. Otherwise, leave it inside the menu card and hand back to the waiter/waitress with a word of thanks. Paying at the cash register is most often the best way to avoid confusion.
* Tipping is not usually expected and some employees may not understand the gesture. Some employees are forbidden from accepting gratuities (this is mainly in positions of authority e.g. in a casino one cannot tip the dealer or a security guard however, this would not apply in a formal restaurant situation) and tipping face-to-face can create an awkward situation. However, it is appropriate to add a tip to restaurant bills if the service has been especially good. It is also acceptable to suggest that taxi drivers or waiters "keep the change", especially if the difference is small. Tips may be as large or as small as you feel appropriate. Where tip jars are provided, they are mostly used for loose change or coins.
* [Queuing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Queuing) (forming a line) is expected when there is any demand for an item. The only exception to this is a [pub](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pub). However, it is still rude to accept service from a [barman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bartender) before someone who has been waiting longer. A simple nod or subtle gesture towards the person who has waited longer will be understood by any experienced server to mean that the indicated person was before you.
* If you are in a pub and accidentally knock a person's drink over or bump into them and cause a spillage, it is both customary and polite to buy him another one - or at least offer to do so. Failing to do so may aggravate the average Australian bar patron and possibly cause them to respond aggressively toward you.
* When out with friends, co-workers or relatives, it is common but not compulsory for people to take turns buying [rounds of drinks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Round_of_drinks). This is referred to as a 'shout', e.g. "It's my shout."[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Australia_and_New_Zealand#cite_note-2)
* When entering the bar of a [RSL](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Returned_and_Services_League_of_Australia) (Returned Services Association - R.S.A. in New Zealand) or golf club, a man who does not remove his hat is considered rude and as a result rebuked by being told that he is expected to 'shout' (buy a round of drinks) for all those present.
* It is very rude to try to get someone's attention in a public place by saying "Oi!" or "Hey you!" or whistling especially in bars/pubs and restaurants.
* A person who takes the last item of food from a common plate, without first offering it to the others at the table may be seen as greedy or inconsiderate.
* You should treat people serving you as politely as you expect them to treat you. Use 'please' when placing an order or making a request and 'thank you' when you receive your order or service. They are there to help you, but they are not your 'slaves' or inferiors[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Australia_and_New_Zealand#cite_note-3)
* Complaints in restaurants are rare. Most will merely refuse to revisit an establishment after bad food or service[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Australia_and_New_Zealand#cite_note-4)
* Surcharges for use of less commonly used credit cards such as Diners Club and Amex commonly apply in many Australian establishments. To avoid conflict most establishments will advertise this with a sign of some sort near the cashier area[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Australia_and_New_Zealand#cite_note-5)
* Arguing or yelling with staff in a food & beverage establishment is considered rude and inappropriate[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Australia_and_New_Zealand#cite_note-6)
* Common restaurant manners include using the knife and fork properly, refraining from burping and placing elbows on a table, placing your napkin on your lap and leaving it folded on the table after use, and eating neatly. Chewing open-mouthed, slurping loudly and talking with a full mouth are considered rude.

### Driving

* Australians, in common with most other Commonwealth nations, drive on the left side of the road.
* Waving as a gesture of thanks to drivers that stop to allow you into their lane, exit a driveway, merging into the lane, or cross at a crossing, is viewed as polite.
* A common experience while travelling on state highways is being 'flashed' by oncoming vehicles. This is when an oncoming vehicle flicks its high beam headlights quickly but noticeably (day or night), and serves to warn drivers they are approaching a hazard: a speed camera or Police vehicle/Radar/Random Breath Test (most commonly), or a motor vehicle accident, or animals/rocks on the road . Many drivers acknowledge this with a return wave or a brief reply 'flash' of their high beam headlights.[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)]. It is also done to alert the other driver if they have neglected to turn their own headlights on when necessary.
* When driving on Australian highways, if you are passed by a vehicle that is towing it is customary to signal to the passing vehicle that they are far enough ahead to move back into the left lane by 'flashing' your headlights. It is then polite for the passing vehicle to quickly flash their left, right and then left indicator as a signal of thanks.[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Australia_and_New_Zealand#cite_note-7)
* When coming out of parking lots and driveways in an automobile, it is considered polite (and required by law) to let a pedestrian walking on a footpath pass first.
* If a fellow driver is in trouble in Australia (for example: broken down, flat tire, lost) it is polite to take some time to assist them, however if it is impossible for you to stop then it is not a necessity.

## Australia

### General

* It may be impolite for an outsider to remark on Australia's history as a [penal colony](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Penal_colony). The vast majority [immigrants](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immigrant) to Australia have been free immigrants.
* Compared to many people from the UK and US, Australians may be more casual in various social situations. Those who resist this attitude may be viewed as [snobbish](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Snob)[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)].
* Although viewed as a homogeneous society (70% Anglo-Celtic of predominantly English/Anglo-British origin)[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Australia_and_New_Zealand#cite_note-8), there is more acknowledgement of the country's growing ethnic/racial diversity.
* Making jokes at another's expense or "[taking the piss](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taking_the_piss)" is common in Australian society and is often a bonding process. However, it is frowned upon and considered cowardly to make jokes in the absence of the subject. Contrary to many other countries, Australians will generally wait until the subject is present before making derogatory jokes. For example, when an Australian meets a New Zealander on holiday, they may ask if they brought velcro gloves in order to get a better grip on those Australian sheep.[[10]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Australia_and_New_Zealand#cite_note-9) (See point below re New Zealanders thoughts on sheep jokes)

### Language

* In informal situations some language that might be considered foul or offensive in other cultures may be used to convey different things. However it is considered rude and offensive to behave in this manner in front of children and women especially in rural areas.
* "[Indigenous Australian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indigenous_Australian)" and "Aboriginal person/Torres Strait Islander" are polite terms, also regional/state preferences such as "Koori" are also acceptable as long the person in question and you both consider each other friends. Aboriginal refers to Indigenous people from the mainland, the Torres Strait Islanders are a separate group with their own cultural traditions. "Abo", "Coon", "Gin" and "Boong" or "Boonga" are all considered offensive and unacceptable in formal conversation when describing Aborigines but are sometimes in casual conversations even when one of the participants is of Indigenous descent, though this is controversial and often frowned upon. "Aboriginal" is now used only as an adjective, although older documents may still use it as a noun (eg, "Aboriginals"). Note that the words "Coon" and "Gin" are not always considered offensive in other contexts - the former being a popular brand of cheese and the latter a common drink. The politest option is to simply avoid the issue of race.
* State/ regional preferences for specific names for groups of Indigenous Australians have also arisen in recent years: The term [Koori](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Koori) (or Koorie) in [New South Wales](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_South_Wales) or [Victoria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victoria_%28Australia%29). Those from[Queensland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Queensland) use the term [Murri](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murri_people) (pronounced the same as "Murray"). [Nunga](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nunga) is used in most of [South Australia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Australia). [Noongar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noongar) is used in southern [Western Australia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_Australia). [Anangu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anangu) is used in northern South Australia, and neighbouring parts of Western Australia and the [Northern Territory](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northern_Territory). [Palawah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palawah) is used in [Tasmania](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tasmania). However, there were over 200 different languages at the time of European settlement, which means these terms are very specific.

### Ethnic issues

* Although those of Middle Eastern, Italian, Slavic or Greek descent may make flippant use of terms such as 'Leb' or [*wog*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wog) (as in recent film "[The Wog Boy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Wog_Boy)"), as well on television comedies[*Acropolis*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acropolis) and [*Kingswood Country*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingswood_Country)*)* others should be wary of using what might still be received as a serious ethnic slur. The alternative term "New Australian" is becoming ridiculed, and never was the preferred term among ethnic groups. It may be used with permission between very good friends of differing ethnic backgrounds but is considered to be offensive term to use towards any other person or in a formal setting.
* In the UK, the term "paki" is considered racially offensive, however the word also evolved in parallel in Australia as a shortened form of "Pakistani". Usually used in a cricketing context, in Australian usage the word refers specifically and solely to people who are Pakistani and carries no derogatory intent.

### Indigenous Australians

* Amongst Indigenous Australians, it can be taboo to refer to deceased Indigenous Australians by name, or through use of images.[[11]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Australia_and_New_Zealand#cite_note-10) Individuals with the same names are then expected to change their name, as not to use the name of the deceased.
* Within some Indigenous Australian cultures, it is considered taboo for mother-in-law and son-in-law to interact on any level, this includes being within the same building or room at any time.
* Indigenous Australian communities have varying etiquette. In general, it is not polite to ask strangers and new acquaintances personal questions and making eye contact is often rude or threatening.

## New Zealand

### General

* When visiting someone's home for the first time, ask if you should remove your shoes.
* Queueing (getting in line) is polite in stores, post offices, banks, public transport stops and entertainment venues. It is rude to cut in ahead of others.
* In stores, bars, pubs and restaurants use 'please' and 'thank you' frequently, e.g. when asking an assistant/server a question, when placing an order (e.g. 'two glasses of beer please'), or when offering or asking for an item to the assistant/server you wish to buy (i.e. "this/these please"). When being handed change say 'thank you' and when about to leave say 'thank you'.
* Table manners are similar to the United Kingdom. Do not put your elbows on the table, do not burp, ask for shared food items to be passed to you if they are out of reach, etc.
* Do not ask others what their income is and do not talk about your own.
* It is considered rude to talk about strangers to your friend/spouse/children etc when they close by.
* Money, sex and religion are not suitable topics for conversation in public places including bars, pubs and restaurants.
* Do not ask a newly introduced person overtly personal questions or disclose too many personal facts of your own. New Zealanders are reserved, modest people and prefer to learn about others over time.
* Do not say or imply that the way your country does something is better than the way New Zealanders do it, especially if you only visiting. If you are pressed to comment on an issue be sure to make clear at the outset you understand you are "just a guest/visitor and this is only my humble opinion." New Zealanders would not openly criticise your country on your home soil unless invited to and in return do not expect you to criticise theirs on their home soil.
* Do not criticise someone's home.
* The majority of New Zealanders are an easy-going, relaxed people and do not appreciate aggressive, pushy, loud, impolite or arrogant people.
* Relax, be polite, be modest, speak softly and you will get along fine.

### Language

* Be polite. Use 'please' and 'thank you' frequently.
* You may hear people swearing in public but most New Zealanders think this is offensive and think less of the people doing it. Swear privately or with friends but not in public places.
* Keep your voice down. Talking loudly so everyone can hear your conversation is bad manners.
* Sheep related humour is likely to bring derision from the majority of New Zealanders, who see this stereotype at once [clichéd](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clich%C3%A9) and offensive, and it should thus be avoided. Although in relaxed social situations a certain amount of banter will be engaged in, it is advisable to wait until you know people well, as in any culture, before engaging in such humour.
* The term "dairy" refers to a [convenience store](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Convenience_store), not a cow farm.
* It is rude to try to get someone's attention by saying "Oi!" or whistling, especially in bars/pubs and restaurants.

### Māori

* Correct pronunciation of [Māori](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M%C4%81ori_language) words and placenames, and the word "Māori" itself, is often important to Māori, although usually less so to non-Māori.
* It is incorrect to pluralise "Māori" and [loan words](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Loan_words) from Māori by adding an "s". Māori indicates plurality on particles (te/nga/ngati) appearing before the word rather word ending.
* Sitting on or resting one's backside against a table or desk can offend Māori. A table is where food is served and should not be touched by the "unclean" regions. Similarly, you should not sit on a pillow, the head is [tapu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tapu_%28Polynesian_culture%29) (sacred), and pillows are for resting heads only.
* Shoes should always be removed before entering the [wharenui](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wharenui) (meeting house) on a [marae](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marae). Never eat inside a meeting house — the building is regarded as tapu (sacred).

### Driving

* New Zealanders, in common with most other Commonwealth nations, drive on the left side of the road. As many of New Zealand's roads, including [state highways](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_highways) outside of metropolitan areas, can be winding and narrow (often both), it is polite when a vehicle (i.e. a truck and trailer, a caravan, or a generally slower vehicle) pulls left to allow you to pass to offer two **brief** toots of your vehicle's horn (roughly the length of the words 'thank' and 'you'). Be cautious of using your horn within metropolitan areas (even as a warning device) as many drivers take exception to this as offensive and disrespectful and can result in [road rage](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Road_rage). Also, use discretion in taking up a passing opportunity offered in this way as road width and traffic volumes can be unpredictable.
* The car horn is not used very often, only in emergency, or when extremely aggravated, or in [Auckland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Auckland).

### Tipping

* Tipping is seen as a foreign custom and sometimes as patronising; service is included in what you pay for. It remains fairly rare even in the main centres and should never be considered compulsory. Some cafés have "tip jars" for loose change at the counter, but putting coins in the jar is the exception rather than the rule. It has long been customary to tell taxi drivers or food delivery people to "keep the change", but taxi drivers are equally likely to round a fare down.

With the exception of cafes, bars, restaurants, taxi drivers and food delivery, people tipping is virtually nonexistent. If staff request a tip, it is considered grounds for complaint by the customer.

# Etiquette in North America

Etiquette rules in the United States and Canada generally apply to all individuals, unlike cultures with more formal class structures, such as those with nobility and royalty.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-0)

Both Canada and the United States share cultural and linguistic heritage originating in [Europe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Europe), and as such some points of traditional European etiquette apply to both, especially in more formal settings.

Among the most prominent writers on North American etiquette are [Letitia Baldrige](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Letitia_Baldrige), [Judith Martin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judith_Martin), [Emily Post](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emily_Post), [Elizabeth Post](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elizabeth_Post), [Peggy Post](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peggy_Post), Gertrude Pringle, and [Amy Vanderbilt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amy_Vanderbilt).

## Principles

Judith Martin states that if one wishes to become an accepted member of any society or group, one "had better learn to practice its etiquette."[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-msn8319038-1)

Early North American etiquette books claimed that the manners and customs of the "Best Society" could be imitated by all,[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-2) although some authors lamented that the lower classes, meaning those "whose experience in life has been a hardening process," in fact treated the rules of etiquette with "contempt and ... a sneer." [[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-3) Current etiquette books do not employ the concept of "best society," but rather define etiquette as a set of guidelines that "help steer our behavior as we move through our daily routines"[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-postch1p3-4) and that can help deal with "the pressures of modern life [which] make it all the more difficult to stay civil."[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-postch1p3-4) This change is reflected in the content of etiquette books; etiquette books published in the early 20th century contained detailed advice on the treatment of servants, the conducting of formal dinner parties, and the behavior of a debutante;[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-5) more modern books are likely to emphasize the importance of respecting people of all classes, races, and ethnic backgrounds.[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-postch1-6) Some books make a further distinction between*etiquette* and *manners*:

Etiquette is protocol, rules of behavior that you memorize and that rarely bend to encompass individual concerns and needs. Manners embrace socially acceptable behavior, of course, but also much more than that. They are an expression of how you treat others when you care about them, their self-esteem, and their feelings.[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-7)

Etiquette writers assert that etiquette rules, rather than being stuffy or classist, serve to make life more pleasant.[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-postch1-6)

Though etiquette rules may seem arbitrary at times and in various situations, these are the very situations in which a common set of accepted customs can help to eliminate awkwardness. While etiquette is often a means to make others feel comfortable, it is also the case that etiquette can serve to eliminate inappropriate behaviors in others by increasing discomfort.[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-8)

## Basic rules

* It is inappropriate to tell others they are not following proper etiquette, unless 1) they are specifically asking whether they are being rude, or 2) the person is under your instruction, such as is the case with a parent, babysitter, teacher, or supervisor.
* One should never attempt to preemptively excuse themselves from rudeness. "I don't mean to be rude, but..." is not an appropriate beginning to a conversation. Likewise, "Pardon me for whispering" does not make the whispering acceptable.
* One may use one's unique cultural differences as a reason to be more gracious, not less. For example, saying "Well, most people in my culture don't send thank you notes" is not considered acceptable.
* When in an extreme situation where someone's rudeness is causing an intolerable issue, one should bring it to the attention of the person in authority, such as a facility's management or the police. If a situation occurs in one's own home, it is appropriate for the host to speak to the person in question (privately, if possible) and if necessary to ask the offending individual to leave.
* Judgments of individuals are a personal matter, and it is not incorrect to hold certain learned beliefs about people. However, personal opinions should remain private in polite company.

## General standards

These etiquette topics are relevant in both the United States and Canada and pertain to basic interactions in society. It is understood that these are general rules to which, in certain contexts and depending on the expectations of the parties involved, there may be exceptions.

### Bodily functions

* One should attempt to suppress yawning in polite company, concealing the mouth with the back of the hand.[[10]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-9)
* Nose-blowing and other personal habits should not be performed in the company of others, but only after excusing oneself in order to do so in private.
* One does not cough, or sneeze without covering one's mouth in front of others.
* One does not chew with one's mouth open, slurp, or make excessive noise while eating.
* Burping or farting in the presence of others should be avoided. When this occurs, it should be ignored by all parties present. In the US, however, if one burps in the presence of others (though this still should be avoided), rather than simply ignoring it, she or he is obligated to say, "Excuse me"; it is usual for the volume of this exclamation to be in proportion to the volume of the burp.
* Spitting in public is considered inappropriate.
* One should wash one's hands following contact with bodily fluids and prior to eating.

### Cultural distinctions and identity

* One does not comment on the language skills, citizenship, nationality, family history, education, economic status, social abilities, behavior, beliefs, or other personal traits of another.
* A highly important social cue in North America: One does not comment on one's race, religion, or sexual orientation.

### Gender

* When a person needs to urinate or defecate, it is customary to do so privately inside a [closed room designated for that purpose](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Restroom), such as a public *restroom* (U.S.) or *washroom* (Canada). When a restroom has multiple stalls, the room may be occupied by persons of the same gender, but each stall will be occupied by no more than one person at a time. Although the room may be shared by multiple people, each person takes care to neither [discuss bodily functions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toilet_humor) nor [observe the bodily functions of other people](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Voyeurism).

### Greetings

* Greetings are offered in the form of a hand shake or a hug as dictated by the relationship's social distance and the comfort level of the parties involved.

### Hats

* Hats are generally not worn in houses or restaurants, nor in places of worship and important civil buildings. However, according to Peter Post, hats *may* be worn inside shops, in one's own house, in certain business places, and in public transit buildings (airports, etc.).
* However, as hats have severely declined in use since the 1950's, many in the US are unaware of the nuances and choose simply to not wear hats indoors at all, and that is the common rule in schools.

### Sunglasses

* Sunglasses are not worn indoors or at night.

### Language

* English is the predominant language in the United States and Canada, but is not universally spoken. French is common in areas of Canada, and Spanish is spoken widely in the United States.

### Money

* One does not discuss one's personal wealth, possessions or finances socially.
* It is not appropriate to ask about another person's salary, real estate holdings, or to make other such financial inquiries.
* Money and financial documents are concealed at all times by keeping them enclosed in a [wallet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wallet) or [purse](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Handbag). It is unacceptable to "flash" or flaunt money unless a specific amount must be presented during a financial transaction.

### Pointing and gestures

* Pointing is to be avoided, unless specifically pointing to an object and not in the general direction of other people.
* If a person is encountered who has a disability or disfigurement, it is considered rude to stare, point, whisper about, or ignore such a person. It is best to make no outward sign that the person is any different from another human being similarly situated.
* Obscene gestures are not appropriate.

### Privacy and personal space

* An arm's length of personal space is the normal comfort zone between unrelated individuals. Strangers who approach closer than this may be deemed hostile, belligerent, or sexually motivated.
* Personal matters should not be brought up except to those with whom one is highly familiar.
* Bumping into or touching an unknown person, even in a crowded area, should be avoided. If it is necessary to touch a person in order to pass by them or to get their attention, one should say, "Excuse me," "Pardon me," or "I'm sorry."
* Depending on the region and situation, it is sometimes appropriate in close quarters to navigate one's self around surrounding people with an alerting hand on the upper back or arm, lightly and never with the intent to displace said person. This is not, however, a standard practice where there is enough room to navigate safely without such.

### Smoking

* One should not smoke in another person's home or car without first asking, and even that should be avoided.
* Smoking in or near doorways of non-smoking buildings is not appropriate
* Ashes, butts, matches, empty lighters and such should be disposed of in appropriate trash receptacles.
* One should avoid blowing smoke in the direction of others, especially non-smokers; if, for example, one is smoking at a walkway and a person is walking through, she or he should either avoid exhaling a drag completely or at least redirect the smoke so as to not hit the passer-by.

### Honorifics and forms of address

* It is common in North America to use first names immediately upon meeting strangers (“Hi John–nice to meet you. I’m Clara.”), but such practices should not be followed in exceedingly formal circumstances as it is not correct etiquette.[[11]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-10) When first introduced to someone, etiquette permits only relatives or children to be addressed using first names. Otherwise, one should address another as Mr. or Ms. [*Lastname*]. It is considered appropriate to ask to be addressed by one’s first name once a friendship is established (“Please call me Shirley”' in particular formal situations, such a request can be considered a great sign of trust and intimacy.)
* While professional, academic, religious, military and political titles, such as “Judge”, “Colonel”, “Mayor”, “Reverend”, “Senator”, “Doctor”, “Professor”, *etc.*, are often used in social situations, no offense should be taken by anyone when being referred to with the titles “Mr.”, “Ms.”, “Mrs.” and “Miss” in the United States, as the United States is in theory an egalitarian society, and other honorifics are not considered higher socially.
* The stand-alone honorifics “sir” (for all gentlemen regardless of age), “miss” (for female children) or “ma'am" (for adult ladies) may be used for a person whose surname is unknown.[[12]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-11) “Mister” should not be used on its own (as in, “excuse me, Mister”) as it may sound impolite or ignorant. “Young lady” or “young man” should only be used to address pre-adolescents, as these terms are usually taken as patronizing.
* “[Ms.](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ms.)” is considered the default title to be used in conjunction with any woman’s name regardless of marital status, unless she indicates another preference. Traditionally, the title “[Miss](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miss)” was reserved for use by unmarried women, and “[Mrs.](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mrs.)” for married women. Various combinations of titles, the woman’s given and family names, and/or those of her husband have become acceptable. Any person’s personal preference should be honored once it is made known.[[13]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-12)[[14]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-13)
* There are complicated rules regarding proper usage of political titles in the etiquette-related field known as [protocol](http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/protocol).
* [Bowing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bowing), [genuflecting](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genuflection), or [prostrating](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prostration) oneself toward another person is socially unacceptable in most circumstances. Doing so might offend others, especially if it appears to be done in mocking or to designate servitude. One exception is the bowing of dance partners to one another, although it may be pretentious to do so except on a formal occasion or when bowing is integrally linked to the music genre. Genuflection is usually reserved for a [marriage proposal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marriage_proposal). Prostration is usually reserved for religious worship.

## Private life

### Death and mourning

* First mourning for the immediate family is considered to be the time between the death and the end of the funeral. During this time the close relatives should not attend any social engagements, including parties or weddings.
* Dark clothing is standard at memorial services, viewings and funerals. Light-hearted talk is not inappropriate, but joviality is considered impolite.
* Attendance at a viewing, funeral, memorial service, or wake is one method of expressing one's grief to the close relatives of the deceased. In addition, letters of condolence should be sent to the nearest family member(s), and a brief, prearranged visit to the family in the weeks following are appropriate. Gifts of flowers sent to the homes of the bereaved are appropriate, though it should be noted that flowers should not be sent to Jewish households (fruit is appropriate).
* Family members may request that no flowers be sent, or that memorial donations be made to a certain charity in lieu thereof. As the bereaved is not making the request himself, this is not considered inappropriate, as it would be with any other gift-giving situation. Another common and appropriate recognition of mourning to the bereaved's immediate family is prepared food brought by neighbors or more distant relatives.
* During the weeks following a death, family members are expected to send thank you letters in reply to condolence letters, gifts of flowers, food, or donations.

### Gifts

Many etiquette errors are due to an expectation of gifts. While gifts are common in some situations, they are never to be expected by anyone for any reason. All gifts must be looked upon as unexpected, accepted graciously and enthusiastically, and thanks should be sent promptly.

* **Faux Pas:** The belief of entitlement of gifts has led to many common though incorrect practices, such as:
* Asking for the receipt when receiving a gift,
* Giving gift registry information to those who have not asked for it,
* Inviting people to wedding showers who will not be invited to the wedding,
* Requesting that gifts be "cash only", or preemptively stating "No gifts, please."[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-14)
* Looking upon gifts or offers of gifts as "transferable"[[16]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-15) or "liquidatable."

**Accepting, Rejecting, and Using Gifts**

* The correct response to a gift is "Thank you," or "How thoughtful." As gifts are not expected, negative judgments of any sort are inappropriate. The following are incorrect responses:"I already have one."; "Do you have the receipt?"; "I'd like to return/exchange it for something else."; "It's not really my taste."; "Does it come in a different color?"; "I know someone who could use this."; "I like it because it's from you."

It may be appropriate to suggest you would like to exchange a clothing item for a different *size*, but more gracious to do so without involving the giver.

* One exception to accepting gifts graciously is when a gift has an expectation associated with it, i.e., strings attached. The classic example is a young woman refusing to accept expensive jewelry from a much older married man. One has no obligation to accept the "gift" of a puppy if one does not want it, as such a gift is a huge commitment and financial burden and can rightly be rejected (politely). Gifts which are meant to be insulting or are highly inappropriate may as well be returned to the giver. For example, giving a leather jacket to someone you know is a stringent vegan or animal rights activist.
* As a gift has no strings attached, the recipient has a right to do what he wishes with it, including disposing of it, selling it, or "regifting." These should be done without the original giver's awareness. Similarly, a giver should never inquire about a gift later, as this may embarrass the recipient.

**Expecting and Selecting Gifts**

* Gifts are commonly presented to children at birthday parties, and to the honoree at baby showers and wedding showers, such that there is an expectation at these events of gifts from guests. For this reason, these are also the only events where party favors for guests are to be expected. When invited to an adult birthday party presents are still expected, but are considered less important and/or trivial.
* When attending a personal or religious event, such as a birthday, wedding, shower, bar mitzvah, etc., one is supposedly sharing the celebration of a rather personal occasion. For this reason, etiquette considers the common gifts of cash, checks, and gift cards improper. One should know the honoree well enough to purchase something you believe he or she will find enjoyable. Donations "in your name" are not acceptable as the gift is not to the person (this does not apply to funerals.) If one does not really know the individual personally, the attendance at the personal event should be reexamined. Cash gifts are acceptable only for a person one supposedly does not know personally, but to whom one still wishes to give a gift, such as an employee, newspaper carrier, doorman, or delivery person.[[17]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-missmanners-16)

**Thanks for Gifts**

see also "Thank You Letters" section

* The recipient must thank the giver promptly for all non-trivial gifts, in writing, as soon as possible after receiving the gift, preferably within two weeks at a maximum. The gift in question should be named in the letter. Wedding gifts are not excepted from this rule, though there are common misconceptions that waiting for matching cards, photographs, or for the ceremony to pass are valid excuses to delay thanking people.[[18]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-17)[[19]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-18) Judith Martin states that the appropariate time frame for which to send thanks for wedding gifts is measured not in months, but in minutes.[[20]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-19)(See "Weddings" section.)

### Invitations

* Hospitality requires that when extending an invitation as a host, one anticipates and provides for the needs of the invited guests. “Strings” may not be attached to the invitation.[[21]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-20) Guest responsibilities include dressing appropriately to the occasion, and providing one's own transportation and lodging. As a courtesy, the host may include dress instructions.[[22]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-21) (See section on weddings for details on standard North American attire). A host cannot expect a guest to pay for part of the event or function, such as a portion of a birthday honoree's meal or gift.
* A person not hosting, but rather making arrangements for a gathering, such as a covered-dish meal (*a.k.a.* “potluck”), must tell those asked to attend up front what is expected from them. Expected contributions, materials, food, duties, *etc.* must be made clear when the "invitation" is issued, not after it has been accepted. If a participant is later told funds, goods, or services are expected, it is not impolite for him to reply that he has decided not to attend the function after all, as the original premise of the invitation was altered.
* Generally, etiquette writers consider it incorrect to include any suggestion that gifts are, or even could have been, expected at a hosted event, and therefore no mention of gift registries or other prohibitive or prescriptive statements on an invitation are permitted, such as "Monetary gifts only," or "No gifts, please."[[23]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-22) If a guest inquires himself, such things may only then be brought up by the host. Only overnight guests should feel obliged to bring a gift for the host.[[24]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-23)
* An invitation is meant only for the people to whom it is addressed. “*Mr. and Mrs. Jones*” does not mean “*Mr. and Mrs. Jones and any of their relatives they may wish to bring.*” If wishing to invite additional family members, the host should not add "*... and Family*," but instead should be specific rather than have the invitees guess what exactly this means. Individuals may decline or accept invitations extended to multiple persons. For example, a woman may accept an invitation extended to her entire family, even if the husband and children must send regrets (all in the same letter to the host).
* Invitations for mixed social events, such as parties, weddings, *etc.*, must be extended to the established significant others of any invitees, such as spouses, fiancés, or long time or live-in boy/girlfriends. The significant other must be invited by name, and the host should inquire if it is not known.[[25]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-24) If the couple does not live together, the host should inquire as to the partner’s full name and address and send a separate invitation for formal occasions. If a person’s socially established partner has not been invited, etiquette allows him or her to politely request that the host do so. Persons without socially established partners may not request to bring a guest, nor is a host expected to invite singles to bring a date (*i.e.*, “*[Invitee] and Guest*”).[[26]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-25)[[27]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-26)
* When receiving an invitation, one is obliged to respond in kind as soon as possible. This means if receiving the invitation by phone, reply by phone, *etc.* One must accept or decline even if “”RSVP” is not specified. To not do so is an insult to the host.[[28]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-buffalonews.com-27) Accepting an invitation is making a commitment. If one cannot be sure if the obligation can be kept, the invitation should be declined. “Maybe” is not an acceptable response, as it insinuates one would like to accept, but wants to keep his options open in case “something better” comes along. One can never cancel once one has offered or accepted hospitality. Traditionally, the only reasons considered acceptable were illness or death in the immediate family. As etiquette no longer applies only to those in high society, an ***extremely*** important work obligation which intervenes is also an acceptable reason. In any case of cancellation, notification to the host or guest must be **immediate**, with profuse apologies.
* Most formally, invitations are hand-written,[[29]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-28)[[30]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-29) but for large numbers, such as for weddings, engraved or printed invitations are acceptable, though less formal. Printing is considered less appropriate than "frank and honest" handwriting.[[31]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-30) Engraved invitations, which are more expensive than printed ones, are shipped with protective tissue paper to prevent wet ink from smudging, but as the ink has dried by the time they are received by the hosts, they should be removed before mailing to guests, and etiquette authorities consider their inclusion to be improper and a form of bragging.[[32]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-31)
* [Emily Post](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emily_Post)'s *Etiquette* gives examples of the traditional forms for formal and informal invitations;[[33]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-32) granddaughter [Peggy Post](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peggy_Post) provides updated examples of the forms in *Etiquette* (17th edition) that take into account non-traditional social relationships.
* Reply cards, with or without postage, may be included with an invitation according to some etiquette writers, though they need not be.[[34]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-33) However, Judith Martin calls response cards "vulgar",[[35]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-34) as they imply the guest would not reply without being prompted to do so.[[28]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-buffalonews.com-27)[[36]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-Martin.2C_Judith_Page_102-35) She advocates discarding them and replying on one's own stationery, while Peggy Post suggests that guests use them if included, to avoid interfering with the host's card collection system. Some say maps, directions, websites, and other information may be included.[[37]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-36) Others note that these are not formal aspects of an invitation, and therefore should not be included in formal invitations, and those who accept should instead later be sent the information via informal communication, such as postal mail, phone, or the internet.[[36]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-Martin.2C_Judith_Page_102-35)[[38]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-37) At-home cards may be included with wedding invitations. Traditionally, they announced the bride and groom's new address; they are now more likely to be used to announce the couple's choice of surnames.[[39]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-38) All etiquette authorities agree that gift registry information may not be sent with any type of invitation, however informal.

### Meals

See also [North American table manners](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Table_manners#North_America)

* One excuses oneself from the company of others when leaving the table temporarily.
* A guest may politely decline when offered food he does not wish to eat.
* A host does not press a guest to consume food that has been declined.
* One does not eat in front of others outside of mealtime or when others are not similarly engaged.
* If another person has offered to buy one's meal, it is customary to permit the other person to help choose what to order, and to order a meal of similar or lesser price if a choice must be made.

### 'Thank You' letters

* Thanks may be offered for any situation. A thank you letter is not required for all situations, but is never incorrect if sincere.
* Though pre-printed thank you cards are commonly used, handwritten letters are more personal and proper. In a business context, a typed letter is expected to be signed by hand.
* Thank you letters are required for all gifts, should mention the gift, and must be sent promptly in all cases, usually within two weeks at a maximum (see "Gifts" section for further details regarding funerals and weddings).
* In addition to a thank you letter, a gift may be sent as part of thanking someone. Since a gift is given, this would in turn require another thank you note to be sent. Receiving a thank you note alone however does not require another thank you note in reply, though doing so would not be incorrect.[[40]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-39)
* If receiving a cash gift, it is polite when thanking the giver to indicate, when possible, what was purchased with it.

### Receiving guests

* When a guest receives an invitation to someone's home, it is common but not necessary for the guest to ask, "Could I bring anything?" If the host declines, the guest should not insist, as this insinuates that the host is unable to provide adequate hospitality, especially for more formal situations such as dinner parties. Hosts accepting such offers should be clear, but not demanding; if one does not think the guest will be able to provide the correct item, politely decline the offer.
* It is polite to announce your presence when arriving at an informal occasion, such as a backyard barbecue, or if dropping by unexpectedly, although the latter is a faux pas unless the host has previously indicated that such visits are welcome.
* When visiting someone's home it is not necessary but permissible to bring a gift, such as sweets, a toy for the children, a beverage to be shared, flowers, *etc.* The purpose of such gifts is recognition of the hospitality, not as a payment for it. However, if one has been received multiple times in another's home, he should reciprocate by inviting the hosts to his home, a restaurant, or another appropriate place.
* Guests wishing to give flowers should consider sending them earlier in the day or the day before a dinner party rather than bring them just as the hostess is busy with last minute dinner preparations. A host might keep a vase handy if he or she suspects that flowers will be brought by guests.[[41]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-40)
* A guest may offer to help a host, and it is more appropriate in more familiar situations. The host should turn down help offered by people he is less familiar with. Judith Martin states: "A good guest offers to help but does not insist if the offer is firmly refused. A good host never requests help and offers mild resistance if it is wanted, but firm resistance if it is not."[[42]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-41)

### Bringing and Serving Food

* Bringing elaborate food items to a meal as a gift, such as [roast beef](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roast_beef) or [lasagna](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lasagna), obviously meant to be served immediately, is impolite as it implies that the host may not be providing enjoyable food.[[43]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-42) Such a dish may be welcome at times, but the guest should inquire in advance.
* As all gifts, including food, should never have expectations attached to them, a host should always feel he is able to put them aside for another time rather than serve them right away. If one insists on bringing food as a host gift, items such as [wine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wine), [coffee cake](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coffee_cake), [pie](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pie), or [nuts](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nut_%28fruit%29) are appropriate as they can be put aside. The host may reply, "Thank you. I'll look forward to enjoying this."
* Non-related guests should not bring up dietary restrictions unless first asked by the host. If worried there will be little food that one could eat, one should eat something before the visit, or decline the invitation if necessary. Relatives may discuss special dietary needs with the host, preferably when accepting the invitation, not when sitting down to the meal.
* For meals, hosts should not delay the food for more than half an hour past the invited time. Offering appetizers is a must if the meal will be served later. Likewise, guests should not be "fashionably late" when invited for meals. Drinks (water at a minimum) should be offered within ten minutes of a guest's arrival regardless of the time of day or occasion. Hosts should not be expected to hold up meals for tardy guests, especially when other guests are waiting to eat.
* A guest should have the opportunity to say, "No, thank you," before food is put on his plate. If serving food personally rather than passing it around, the polite host first asks, "Would you like some?" Not doing so might put a guest in the uncomfortable position of having food on his plate which he has no desire to eat, due to his tastes, appetite, or dietary restrictions.

#### Guests and gifts

* While gifts are customarily given, they are not to be expected by the recipient.[[67]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-66)[[68]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-67) Guests are under no obligation to spend a particular amount of money - enough to cover the supposed cost of their meal, for example - or to buy a particular gift, from a gift registry, for instance.[[69]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-68) Authorities differ on *when* a gift should be given; some say that guests have up to a year to give a gift[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)], while others state that a gift should be given before or as soon after the wedding as possible.[[70]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-69)
* Guests should not expect to receive [party favors](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Party_favor).[[71]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-70) It is considered improper for hosts to announce that they have made a charitable donation "in lieu of favors" as this is the broadcasting of a private matter which would normally not be discussed with others.[[72]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-71)
* Though common in some circles, asking guests "where their envelope is," wishing wells, and [money dances](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Money_dance) are considered vulgar by North American etiquette authorities, as they are blatant indications that cash gifts are expected from the guests.[[73]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-72)[[74]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-73) A wedding party member who is given an envelope by a guest should briefly thank the guest and discreetly put it away. Any guest being asked for such an item should politely state that he or she has already arranged for a gift.

## Public interactions

### Common courtesy

* In a line (or [queue area](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Queue_area) in British English), it is customary to wait patiently behind the person who came before you, as most lines are [first come, first served](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_come%2C_first_served) in North America. Cutting in line is[taboo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taboo); however, it is often possible to have people save places in line under ordinary and even extraordinary circumstances.
* When someone is heavily laden, a person nearby will customarily assist the burdened person. For example if he or she drops something (even a part of the burden), a person nearby may assist by picking up the dropped item. This is practiced even on the roads whenever a large or loaded vehicle requires extra time and maneuvering by giving the right of way to the loaded vehicle.
* Pedestrians have right-of-way when interacting with vehicular traffic. Courteous drivers who observe a pedestrian that appears desirous to cross the vehicle's path will customarily come to a stop and motion to the pedestrian to cross in front of the vehicle, though pedestrians unaware of this rule of etiquette might refuse to cross, in which case the driver should make a gesture of thanks and drive on quickly.
* When the aged or handicapped are amongst a group of people, the courteous will permit such a person to forgo formal rules of first come, first served. This special accommodation is particularly evident when the distances traveled are long or arduous and when able-bodied persons are expected to stand and wait in long lines.
* In times of emergency, panic, or evacuation, the able-bodied persons are expected to help those who are not able to fend for themselves. In previous times the custom included the nineteenth century adage "[women and children first](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_and_children_first_%28protocol%29)" when deciding who would be rescued first. The senior leader, or if none is designated, the best educated, oldest, and strongest male individual in a large group will customarily be designated the *ad hoc* group leader for the purposes of assigning tasks during an emergency. Just as the [captain goes down with his ship](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Captain_goes_down_with_his_ship), the group leader is customarily the last one to be rescued.
* When driving on an unfamiliar road, a driver should pull aside and permit others to pass rather than travel slower than the prevailing local traffic.
* When fishing, it is customary to avoid crossing lines with someone else, and to avoid doing so by fishing far enough away from others.
* When operating a motorized pleasure boat, one should slow down when near fishermen, swimmers, or boats adrift to prevent large [wake](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wake).

### Doorways

* It is polite to hold a door open for someone behind you. If someone opens or holds a door open for you, it is polite to thank them.
* It is polite to step aside and wait for people exiting an elevator car, subway, train, bus, etc. before boarding.

### Formal occasions

* [Applause](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Applause) is the acceptable way to show appreciation and satisfaction at a formal gathering. [Standing ovation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Standing_ovation) is reserved for an exceptional performance and for lavish praise. [Whistling](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whistling) and stamping the feet is considered brash, while [heckling](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heckler) is considered rude, as is clapping applause at certain religious events (e.g. the Roman Catholic Mass, though many congregations forgo this rule).
* When at a formal event, guests may be escorted from the back of the building to the location that they are expected to occupy during the event. The [usher](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Usher_%28occupation%29) or escort (traditionally, a man or boy) will greet the guest, face the direction to which the guest should walk, and then smartly extend one of his elbows toward the guest to indicate that the guest should lock arms with the escort. The escort and guest will then walk together to the designated location, at which the escort will then unlock and gesture for the guest to remain. If a woman is accompanied by a man and/or children, then only the woman will be escorted and the others in her party shall closely follow her.
* In some cases, a woman's escort will be the man who accompanied her to the event, and the couple will be expected to lock arms and walk side-by-side. At other times the couple will be designated formally, such as when a [Homecoming queen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homecoming_queen) is escorted by the one voted as the Homecoming king. The formal walk during the escort is typically slow and follows a path that is covered traditionally in [red carpet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_carpet).
* If [valet parking](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Valet_parking) or curbside dropoff service is offered for the event, an escort may accompany guests from the moment the guests exit their vehicle, even assisting them at the door, "women and children first."
* Gentlemen should stand when a woman approaches a party at a table, or excuses herself from the table.
* When the bride enters the room during a wedding and it is her first formal appearance, all stand and look at her.
* The bride's traditional escort is her father up until the time the groom meets her, at which time the groom becomes her formal escort for the rest of the formal [wedding ceremony](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wedding_ceremony).
* At a formal wedding, it is customary for the groom to remain stationary and wait until he is formally presented with his bride.

### Greeting

* It is customary to mirror or repeat a greeting back to the person who greeted you. Examples: "Good morning" would be replied with "Good morning" and not "Hi." A greeting of "Have a nice day" might be replied with "You, too" and not "Salutations."
* If a newcomer or stranger comes into the midst of one's group or comes unexpectedly to one's familiar surroundings, it is customary to welcome the stranger and attempt to assist the person. A common greeting is, "Hi. May I help you?"

### Restaurants

See also [Table manners](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Table_manners)

* It is appropriate to contact the waiter by making eye contact, nodding the head, or holding up the index finger. If necessary, "Excuse me..." or, if known, saying the waiter's name is appropriate. Shouting for, snapping fingers at, or whistling for the waiter's attention is rude.
* Diners may speak to servers, and should use polite terms such as "please" and "thank you," but need not feel compelled to if engaged in conversation with a fellow diner.

### Seating

* In North America people are accustomed to sitting in most public venues. The most common way to sit is on a [chair](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chair), [couch](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Couch), [bench](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bench_%28furniture%29), or [pew](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pew). [Stools](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stool_%28seat%29) are offered in some establishments. It is uncommon for people to sit directly on the ground except at informal outdoor gatherings.
* If seating is limited (or there is [standing-room only](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Standing-room_only)) in public transportation or waiting areas, it is polite for people in good health to offer their seats to those with special needs, such as the frail, disabled, people with infants, and pregnant women.[[75]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-74) It is impolite to assume someone is in good health and to ask them to give up a seat, or to chastise them for not having offered. A young person who appears healthy may, for example, have an orthopedic problem and may need the seat more than a healthy 75-year-old.
* It is not impolite for a gentleman to offer his seat to a woman, nor for the woman to politely decline.
* When enough seats are available (such as at a movie theater, uncrowded bus, park bench, or waiting room), strangers should sit at least one seat apart. If seating later becomes limited, it is common for the company responsible for the seating arrangements to send an usher or make an announcement admonishing patrons to "squeeze in" or sit closer together until the full capacity is reached.

## Shoes

* It is appropriate to wear shoes at every social gathering except for swimming and beaches.
* In most homes in the United States, guests are expected to keep their shoes on unless the host requests that shoes are removed. In Canada, the opposite is polite

### Tipping (gratuities)

* Tipping is done only by the host of a party; therefore guests should not leave additional tips. This applies to bar service at weddings and any other party where one is a guest. The host should provide appropriate tips to workers at the end of the event.[[76]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-75)
* The customary gratuity for satisfactory service is between 10% and 20% of the non-tax total of the bill. Bartenders may anticipate higher tips. For further details on tipping standards in North America, see the "[tipping](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tip_%28gratuity%29)" article.
* If one receives very poor service, it is best to speak to management so that the problem may be resolved. It is permissible in an extreme situation not to tip.
* Public servants, government agents, security guards, and police officers do not accept tips in North America. It is not only considered inappropriate, it is generally illegal to offer a gratuity to public officials because it may be considered bribery or graft.

### Worker interactions

* Workers such as waiters, store employees, receptionists, and government employees, should be spoken to with civilities such as "please" and "thank you." Snapping fingers, calling out loudly, waving money, or whistling for an employee's attention are not appropriate.
* Workers should refrain from wearing strong fragrances when working in close proximity to others (e.g. closed offices).
* While it is common for some to address co-workers or customers with terms such as: hon, dear, sweetie, darling, doll, honey, *etc.* (particularly in the American South), these terms are considered patronizing, unprofessional and condescending by many and should be avoided.[[77]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Canada_and_the_United_States#cite_note-76) Proper terms are "Sir", "Ma'am," or "Madam", or if the name is known, Mr./Ms./Mrs./Miss [Lastname].
* When paying a cashier, it is inappropriate to toss money onto the counter. It is preferable to hand the money to the cashier with the bills unfolded. The cashier should hand back change in the same manner.

# Etiquette in Europe

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

**Etiquette in Europe** is not uniform. Even within the [regions of Europe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regions_of_Europe), etiquette may not be uniform: within a single country there may be differences in [customs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norm_%28sociology%29), especially where there are different linguistic groups, as in [Switzerland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Switzerland) where there are [French](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_language), [German](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German_language) and [Italian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian_language) speakers.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Europe#cite_note-PiE-0)

Despite this heterogeneity, many points of etiquette have spread through Europe and many features are shared. The ancient Roman Empire is an historical source, and the cosmopolitan royalty and also nobility were effective in spreading etiquette throughout Europe. For example in the [château](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ch%C3%A2teau) of [Versailles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Versailles), where French nobility was concentrated, a complicated etiquette was developed.

For less reviewed pseudo-information on variations of stereotypes per country in Europe: <http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/National_etiquette_differences_in_Europe>

## Language and forms of address

It is never acceptable to write an anonymous letter or one that purports to be signed by somebody other than the writer (but does not make that clear).

Many languages use different pronouns to denote formality or familiarity when addressing people (the [T–V distinction](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/T%E2%80%93V_distinction)). This also applies in common phrases such as "How are you?".[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Europe#cite_note-1) The use of an inappropriately familiar form may be seen as derogatory, insulting or even aggressive. Conversely, forms that are inappropriately formal may be seen as impolitely snobbish[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Europe#cite_note-2) or distant.

The way politeness is expressed varies greatly with language and region. For example, addressing a person with an honorific or title may be expected in some languages, but seen as intrusive or too formal in others.

In many parts of Europe, using someone's first name also denotes a certain level of friendship. In social interactions with strangers, the last name and/or more formal mode of address is used, usually until the people involved agree to move to an informal level. But this may not apply among young people, among members of particular groups (e.g. students) or in informal settings.[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Europe#cite_note-1.2C2122.2C.2C00.html-3)

## Flowers

In some countries, certain flowers (such as [chrysanthemums](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chrysanthemums)) are given only at funerals[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)]. In France, red roses are given when someone is in [love](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Love).[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Europe#cite_note-4) In [Finland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Finland), the same applies except that school leavers are often given red roses on passing their [matriculation examination](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matriculation_examination) ([abitur](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abitur)).[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Europe#cite_note-Virtual_Finland-5) Yellow flowers are inappropriate at weddings in Ukraine and Russia as they are viewed as a sign that the bride or groom are unfaithful to one another[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)]. In Victorian Britain, an elaborate system of [language of flowers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Language_of_flowers) developed.

## Hats and coats

Among many segments of the European population, it is considered rude to wear hats or other head coverings indoors, especially in churches, schools, private homes and respected public institutions. In churches, however, ladies are often exempt from this rule or even obliged to cover their heads in[some Catholic churches](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_headcovering).

Wearing coats, boots or other outer garments inside someone’s home is often frowned upon as well. Sitting down to eat at table wearing a hat or coat etc. is even worse. Also one should remove one's hat when showing deference. Removing one's hat is also a form of greeting: the origin of this is that knights were expected to remove their helmets when meeting their king; not to do so would be a sign of mistrust and hostility.[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Europe#cite_note-6)

## Shoes

In some European countries you have to wear your shoes indoors, but in others, such as [Austria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Austria), Belarus, [Bulgaria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bulgaria), [Poland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poland), [Slovakia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slovakia), [CzechRepublic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Czech_Republic), [Croatia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Croatia), [Estonia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Estonia), [Germany](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Germany), [Finland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Finland),[Sweden](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sweden), [Denmark](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Denmark), [Hungary](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hungary), [Romania](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romania), [Iceland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iceland), [Russia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russia), [Ukraine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ukraine), [Norway](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norway) and [Bosnia and Herzegovina](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bosnia_and_Herzegovina), it is considered rude not to take your shoes off, unless you are told to keep them on. It is usual all over the world to remove shoes when entering someone's home if they are wet or dirty.

## Money

Talking or asking about one's personal wealth, possessions or success in business is widely viewed as [vulgar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgar). People will rarely say how much money they make or have in the bank nor will they request such information from someone else. It is impolite to ask colleagues about their salary and in some places of work it is forbidden.[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Europe#cite_note-loonzakje-7) Even elsewhere, for example where government employees' salaries are publicly known, it is still considered extremely rude to ask individuals how much they earn.

## Transport

When using escalators in the Netherlands, France, Spain, Russia and the United Kingdom people will keep to the right when standing still, so that those on the left can keep walking. Of course this does not apply to very narrow escalators. In countries where this rule isn't widely known signs are sometimes displayed, for example, in Germany: "rechtsstehen, links gehen" – "stand on the right, walk on the left". All European countries except Britain, Ireland, Malta, and Cyprus drive on the right. In early times, medieval nobility kept their sword ready to draw with the right hand, so that pedestrians and equestrians would pass one another on the left. However, later, teamsters would drive large wagons with no driver's seats. While keeping the whip on the right hand and the reins on the left, they would sit on the left horse, and drive on the right side of the road, in order to see that the wheels on the left would not collide with oncoming traffic. Nowadays cars drive on the right (with driver's seat at left), and pedestrians walk on the left if there is no footpath. This is included in road safety guidelines as it is easier for pedestrians to see oncoming traffic than traffic approaching from behind. (See Right- and left-hand traffic.)

## Queuing

UK citizens queue in straight lines. It is rude to attempt to cut in line or to ask to go ahead of someone, and they may decline the request.

## Exposure

In Europe, what qualifies as [indecent exposure](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indecent_exposure) includes generally at least the exposure of genitalia or anus. In case of women, exposing nipples is not seen as proper conduct, but this is not always considered criminal, and depends on individual countries' nudity laws. For the issue of breastfeeding babies in public, see [*Breastfeeding in public*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Breastfeeding_in_public). The intentional exposure of bare buttocks towards someone, [mooning](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mooning), is a deliberate insult. However, [public nudity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_nudity) may be allowed in some circumstances, which vary by country.[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)] On nudist beaches and in the changing rooms of swimming pools in some countries, keeping one's clothes on is frowned upon. Here it is good manners to undress. In [saunas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sauna), the rules about nudity vary according to the country. Because one uses the sauna naked, one brings at least one towel to sit on. In most saunas, one can also rent towels. Also, a kind of flip-flops are worn in saunas, not directly in the sweating rooms or in the steam rooms, but outside in the area for relaxing.

## Eating

[Table manners](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Table_manners) in Europe vary widely according to region and social context. Placing one's elbows on the table may be considered rude, as is speaking with one's mouth full. Generally the fork is held in the left hand, using the right to cut food into pieces.

## Bodily functions

Public display of bodily functions such as flatulence, burping, urinating, defecating, picking one's nose, loud snorting, belching are generally considered vulgar and/or disgusting. It is considered impolite not to cover one's mouth while yawning, sneezing or coughing, especially at the table. Opening ones mouth to talk whilst it contains food is also considered vulgar.

Spitting in the street is generally frowned upon and can actually be considered a misdemeanor in Britain, though such laws are rarely enforced

# Etiquette in Latin America

**Etiquette in Latin America** varies by country and by region within a given country.

## Generalizations

There are several definitions of Latin America, but all of them define a huge expansive of geography with an incalculable amount of different customs. However, some generalizations can be made:

* As every definition of Latin America connotes a shared cultural and linguistic legacy with roots in [Spain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spain) and [Portugal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portugal), and to a lesser extent [France](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/France), many points of [etiquette in Europe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Europe) are applicable, especially those specific to those nations.
* Some countries in [South America](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_America), primarily [Argentina](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Argentina) and [Uruguay](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uruguay) have more European cultural traits and influences.[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)]
* Compared to much of the [English](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_language)-speaking world, people from areas of Latin America may demonstrate more relaxed and casual behavior and be more comfortable with loud talk, exaggerated gestures and physical contact.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Latin_America#cite_note-AR2006090701067.html-0)
* In addition, many Latin American people have a smaller sense of [personal space](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Personal_space) than people from English-speaking cultures. It may be rude to step away from someone when they are stepping closer.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Latin_America#cite_note-AR2006090701067.html-0)
* In addition to varying greatly from one individual to another and along various demographic lines, this tendency towards comparatively warm and relaxed behavior does not necessarily hold true among many communities of [indigenous peoples](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indigenous_peoples), including those who have adopted [Spanish](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spanish_language) or [Portuguese](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portuguese_language) as their primary language.
* At some finer restaurants, it may be considered rude for the staff to bring a customer the check without the customer first requesting it.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Latin_America#cite_note-2006_08.html-1)
* Getting the last snack or canape left in a plate without offering it around first makes the person seem rude/greedy.
* It is considered impolite to "toss" objects to people instead of directly handing it to them.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Latin_America#cite_note-spanish-culture.htm-2)
* At the workplace, indiscretions, errors or overall poor performance should be pointed out in private. Mentioning them in front of other colleagues (such as in a meeting) is perceived as hostile.
* The American "come here" [gesture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_gestures) of palm upwards with the fingers curled back can be considered a romantic solicitation.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Latin_America#cite_note-spanish-culture.htm-2)
* Throughout Latin America, there are communities of people with strong ethnic and cultural ties to other parts of the world. One example is the 1.5 million strong [Japanese Brazilian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japanese_Brazilian) community for whom certain points of [etiquette in Asia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Asia) may be applicable. Some of these same points of etiquette would apply in [Chinatowns in Latin America](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinatowns_in_Latin_America). [Argentina](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Argentina) has large communities of[German Argentines](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Germans_in_Argentina), [Irish Argentines](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irish_Argentine), and so on.
* In many instances, points of etiquette applicable to Latin America will also hold true with [Latino](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latino) people in the [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States).
* Phrases like "in America" or "I'm from America" (especially when speaking Spanish) when referring to the United States is confusing or offensive to Latin American people as America is a continent, not just the United States. Therefore, all people born in the American continent are Americans. People from the United States of America are referred to by their nationality, "estadounidense" or "Norte americano" (lit. "United-Statian" or "North-American"). (But of course "North-American" is problematic for exactly the same reason just mentioned. Canada and Mexico are also part of the North American continent.)
* Many elements of U.S. American culture left an imprint on life in Latin America, but it is ill advised to bring up topics or discuss subjects about the impact of U.S. Foreign policy.
* Avoid talk of racial issues: Latin Americans have a history of the merger of the European and indigenous races into the [mestizo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mestizo), while other nations like Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Panama, Colombia and Venezuela have large percentages of African and mixed race African/Caucasian ancestors. In [Costa Rica](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Costa_Rica) and [Chile](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chile), many of the inhabitants rather identify themselves as "white" or [castizo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Castizo), a variant of the colonial [casta](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casta) system no longer in official practice, but each Latin American country has a unique different identity of their own. A few like[Guatemala](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guatemala) and [Paraguay](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paraguay) have a larger racial Amerindian minority and most inhabitants speak an indigenous language.[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)]
* [Religion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion_in_Latin_America) is not to be taken lightly; many Latin Americans are devoted to their faith, especially the [Roman Catholic Church](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholic_Church) from its Spanish and Portuguese colonial past, which is a major force in life in the majority of countries' polity and social life. Festivals and holidays dedicated to patron [saints](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saints) and holy figures of Catholic Christianity are celebrated. A few nations: [Argentina](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Argentina), [Cuba](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cuba)and [Uruguay](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uruguay) are comparably more [secular](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secular), where nominal church membership but irregular attendance is a common trait and even a stronger sense of the [separation of church and state](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Separation_of_church_and_state)(same goes with post-revolutionary [Mexico](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexico)), though all of Latin America governments guarantee the right of or had granted the [freedom of religion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_of_religion).[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)]

## Specific regions

The following points of etiquette apply most specifically to a certain region:

### Argentina

* Sunday is commonly the day Argentines gather in family for lunch or dinner.
* Table manners are Continental: hold the fork in the left hand and the knife in the right while slicing.
* Do not begin eating until the hostess invites you to do so.
* If you happen upon others that are about to eat, it is very considerate to say "buenprovecho" or simply "provecho" (lit. "I hope the food is good for you"). The same should be said if you need to excuse yourself early from a meal.
* In a formal setting, wait for a toast to be made before taking the first sip of your drink.
* If a toast is made, which can happen at various points during a dinner, make sure your glass isn't empty before joining in, as it is considered bad luck to toast with an empty glass.
* Likewise, you should take at least a sip of your glass after toasting and before placing your glass back on the table, as not doing so is considered bad luck.
* If a toast is done in a formal setting, you will have to softly bump glasses with the people near you. In a less formal setting you will probably have to bump glasses with people beyond arm's length, for which all the guests will raise from the chairs and travel around the table.
* A kiss in the cheek with or without a hug is a standard greeting amongst both men and women, with both people of the same or the opposite sex, except in very formal settings. Two kisses (one in either cheek) are common in some areas, again regardless of the gender of the participants. Handshakes are also common but generally reserved to men. A different version of the handshake in which the hand is wrapped around the other person's thumb and back of the palm is common amongst younger people but strictly informal.
* "Gracias" ("Thank you") should be followed a response of "de nada" (lit. "it's nothing", equivalent to "you are welcome"), except for the instances mentioned below.
* When someone sneezes, you should say "Salud" (lit. "health", equivalent to "bless you"). The appropriate response for this is "gracias", which should not be followed with "de nada".
* If you are offered [mate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mate_%28beverage%29) and you do not wish to partake of it, you might say "No, gracias" ("no, thank you"). If, however, you start drinking, you are expected to continue accepting mates until you signal that you have had enough. You do this by saying "gracias" after finishing and returning your last mate. This will not be followed by "de nada".
* It is often considered rude to point at a person or even an object with the index finger. People typically point with the whole hand or with a movement of the head and a puckering of the lips towards that which is being indicated.
* You are expected to greet the people you meet, and if visiting somewhere, or in a work environment, saying goodbye before you leave. A number of expressions are available that vary according to familiarity with the other persons or with the time of day. "Buenos días/Buendía" ("good morning"), "buenastardes" ("good afternoon") and "buenasnoches" ("good evening") are formal and adequate in every occasion. "Hola, quétal?" ("Hello, what's up?"), "hasta luego", ("see you later"), "hasta mañana" ("see you tomorrow") and a large number of similar variants are more informal but generally adequate. "Buenas" (short for "buenosdías/buenastardes/buenasnoches", "chau" ("bye", derived from the Italian [ciao](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ciao)), etc., are very informal, though not necessarily improper.
* Younger people are expected to give their bus seats to the elderly, and men to women.
* Punctuality is not generally observed, at least in informal settings.
* Gifts are generally opened when received, and the receiver is both expected to make some degree of fuss about it, as well as insisting that the giver should not have bothered, thus showing their gratitude. This won't be the case in large parties (weddings, some birthday parties) were the gifts are placed in special tables and opened later, in private.
* Public displays of affection are generally fine.
* If you are invited to dinner at someone's home, it is good manners to bring something for the dinner. A bottle of wine is a good choice, as is some dessert.
* Hats and sunglasses should not be worn indoors.
* It is considered bad manners to sneeze, cough or yawn without covering your mouth with your hand or with a handkerchief. Blowing your nose at a table is frowned upon. Other public displays of bodily functions are generally considered rude and should avoided.
* It is expected that you will tip the waiter.
* The [Malvinas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malvinas)/Falkland War is a very sensitive issue that should probably be avoided unless you are very familiar with it. If you call the Islands "Falkland" rather than "Malvinas", you will be seen as supporting the British side of the conflict, and thus considered hostile to the country.
* [Futbol](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soccer) is a very popular subject of conversation, though it is possibly to cause heated arguments, so tread lightly around this.
* Most but not all social norms in [Uruguay](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uruguay) are similar. But remember Argentina and Uruguay are different countries.

### Bolivia

There are important differences in social interactions and customs between the Andean area and the lowlands. The following apply mostly in the Andean area.

* When hosting you need to serve any kind of food to your guest and insist that they eat. Putting a plate of [finger food](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Finger_food) in the middle for people to help themselves creates an awkward situation for most Bolivians.
* Bolivians acting as host will often belittle and apologize for the food they are serving. This is just politeness.
* When you finish eating in company, even strangers, you must say "Buenprovecho" or "Queaproveche". This is answered with "gracias" which is not followed by "de nada".
* In the countryside guests will be served a plate and left alone to eat. This is courtesy and goes on until you've been accepted as a close friend of the family.
* Andean people are not very tactile. Cheek-kissing with women is a sign of closeness. In the city any [public display of affection](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_display_of_affection) between a couple, starting from holding hands, even if married, is at least awkward. Among young whippersnappers, friends of the same sex may hold hands and even hold each other by the shoulder, in public. Handshakes are softer and as a show of appreciation may hold a little longer, only between friends of the same sex.
* Politics, socioeconomics and racial groups are sensitive topics one should not get into in discussion.[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)]

### Brazil

* Brazilians speak [Portuguese](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brazilian_Portuguese), *not* Spanish. Addressing someone who speaks Portuguese in Spanish, although most Brazilians understand Spanish to a reasonable degree, may be considered very offensive.[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Latin_America#cite_note-3)[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Latin_America#cite_note-4)
* In [Brazil](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brazil), a form of the American ["okay" gesture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A-ok) may be obscene when directed at someone. However, the standard "okay" gesture is also used, as is the "[thumbs up](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thumbs_signal)" gesture.[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Latin_America#cite_note-airman.2F0406-5)
* The number 24 is strongly associated with homosexuality in Brazil. Giving someone anything with that number (i.e. a jersey) might be badly understood, but playful among close friends.
* The gesture of "flipping someone off" by hitting the wrist against the inside of the elbow (sometimes called "a banana" in Brazil) is considered playful and not very offensive (in some other parts of the world, this is more akin to "[the finger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_finger)").[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Latin_America#cite_note-airman.2F0406-5)
* Giving someone of the opposite gender a gift may be misinterpreted as a romantic overture, except in birthdays.[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Latin_America#cite_note-new006.html-6)
* Men shake hands on meeting and departing. They may share a hug if they are close friends. Men and women kiss on the cheek when greeting, women kiss each other on the cheek. The number of times people should kiss, alternating sides, varies according to the region, being three, two times or just once.
* Personal questions may be asked at an earlier time than what North Americans and Europeans are accustomed to. Nevertheless, questions about finances and personal gains are often considered rude.
* The concept of personal space is much less stringent than in (say) the United States. Brazilians may stand much closer to each other than Americans normally tolerate. For instance, people greeting each other on a public stairway may almost entirely block the passage of other people, expecting them to simply force their way through or squeeze around. Likewise, in crowds, physically bumping into other people is not only not seen as an offense (as it is in the U.S.A) but is also somewhat expected.
* When offering something, especially food, Brazilians will often repeat the offer several times and with increasing enthusiasm. Offering something only once can be rude. It is not impolite to refuse such offers, and in some cases they may be made just to be polite without really hoping a person will accept.
* In some parts of the country, most notably in rural areas in which homes may not have doorbells, the appropriate action is to stand in the yard and clap one's hands. If no one comes to the door, then the visitor may approach the door, knock, and then step back away from the door and await a response. This is especially applicable in regards to small, thin-walled cottages that offer less privacy than homes in North America.[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Latin_America#cite_note-airman.2F0406-5)
* People in Brazil are very receptive and not formal. Calling a young woman "Senhora" may be considered offensive. The word "Senhorita" (lit. little miss) is not used and is seen as an archaism.
* Punctuality is not taken too seriously in Brazil. Showing up exactly on schedule for a party is very uncommon. Sometimes is considered rude to show up on time[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)]; a half an hour delay is common.
* Different from other cultures, it is considered rude not to open the gift in front of the person who gave it.

### Chile

* In [Chile](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chile), good etiquette calls for wine to be poured with the right hand, and wine glasses should always be held by the stem.[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Latin_America#cite_note-South-America-travel-tips.htm-7)
* The customer of a restaurant must ask for the check for it to be brought.
* In past generations it was somewhat common for women and young men to greet male and female friends with a kiss on the cheek; however, for many years the trend has been to cheek-kiss only between men and women or among women (that is, not between men). Close male friends more typically greet one another with an *abrazo* or male hug, which usually does not involve face contact.
* Chileans tend to stand close to one another while talking or queuing. This is in part because Chileans typically do not recognize European queue etiquette and discipline.
* Opening the door for a woman or helping her with her luggage, etc., is not considered a flirtatious action.
* It is common for men to stare at women. (It is considered harmless and meant to flatter.)
* Women should be prepared to be bombarded with catcalls. (It is considered harmless and meant to flatter.)
* Both practices to attract the opposite sex are actually inappropriate in a professional setting.
* When eating in company, you should not put your hands under the table.
* Tipping bellboys and people who pack things on the supermarket can be considered a must sometimes, thus when not doing so it is recommendable to state you do not have money, but never that you do not want to do so.
* It is well looked upon to offer your seat to elderly people or pregnant ladies when inside public transport.
* Chileans, both male and female, tend to use lots of rude words when in confidence. Do not take this as an insult, it's meant to be endearing, but do not try to use those words yourself as it will appear highly humorous to them.
* When smoking, offer a cigarette to everyone. Chileans have a saying for those who neglect to share: "Did you learn to smoke in jail?"
* If two or more people are having a conversation and you need to leave or want to leave it is well looked to say *disculpe* ("excuse [me]") or *permiso* ("[with] permission").
* It is usual to greet family members with a kiss on the cheek.
* It is common for children to be prompted to greet everyone who already has greeted the adult that is with him or her.
* The term "caballero" is more commonly used than "señor" to politely address or refer to a male in public.
* Avoid discussion about politics (in regard to a history of democracy with civil unrest) or authoritarian leaders (*e.g.*, Pinochet), or making comments about Chilean backwardness (such as the high crime rate, or the deplorable state of public education and prisons in Chile). Even when Chileans themselves strongly criticize their own country, it would be considered quite insulting for a foreigner to make such comments.

### Colombia

* Gifts are never opened in public unless the giver insists.
* Group waves are extremely unacceptable.
* After finishing dinner, expect to stay for a few hours. Leaving right away might be perceived as that you were there only for a free meal.
* Avoid discussing the [drug trade](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Illegal_drug_trade). This is a delicate subject in Colombia.
* The elderly are given high respect; men are often referred to as Don and women as Doña, followed by their first names.
* There is a strong sense of cultural regionalism in Colombian society. Many Colombians (especially but not exclusively the older generation) identify themselves first with their home region, then their nationality. This is particular true in [Antioquia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antioquia_Department) and [Valle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Valle_department) departments. Bogota, being Colombia's melting pot, might not necessarily reflect such regional identity.
* Colombians that do not know each other typically begin every issue with small talk, no matter how trivial. "Getting to the point" immediately might be seen as impatient and impolite.
* Colombians have a great variety of regional accents. If you speak fluent Spanish, do not try to imitate the accents, for it may be viewed unfavorably by some.
* It is considered improper and slightly immature for adult men to wear shorts (except in recreational areas, such as parks, the beach, or pools).
* It is not usually acceptable to drop by someone's house without calling.
* In most areas (i.e. [Bogotá](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bogot%C3%A1)) it is common for men to greet women friends by kissing once on the cheek if they are friends. Kissing a strange woman is considered impolite sometimes (more if you are in a business gathering), especially if she is an elder.
* It is considered polite to say thanks after common actions such as someone opening a door, offering or giving something to drink or eat, or when plates are taken from the table, and after most routine actions whenever they are not expected.
* When referring to someone's height in a conversation, Colombians usually make a distinction between animals and humans in a visual manner by positioning their hand with the palm facing the floor when talking about animals and with the palm facing to the side (like when one is to give a handshake) when talking about humans height.
* Most Colombian women in urban areas respond gladly to decent male flattering (known as *piropo*). This is quite different from other countries where such expressions could be seen as sexual advances.
* People in Bogota and the central region of Colombia and to a lesser degree in some other parts of the country could be sensitive to the use of formal and informal Spanish. For example, in a business meeting it might not be appropriate to use the informal you (*tu*) instead the formal you is used (*usted*). See [Spanish conjugation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spanish_conjugation).
* In Bogota the wearing of sandals or open shoes by women is frowned upon in some exclusive commercial locations.
* Unlike the U.S., most (if not all) restaurants include the tip in the total amount to be paid by the customer; you may choose not to pay it anyway.

### Dominican Republic

* The [Dominican Republic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dominican_Republic) has a history of some strong cultural connections with the [USA](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USA).
* Dominicans tend to be direct in social situations, but are subtle when making requests and offering criticism.
* Personal questions may be asked at an earlier time than what North Americans and Europeans are accustomed to.
* Dominican society is extremely family-oriented; thus, [nepotism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nepotism) in organizations and workplaces is regarded as a good thing.
* Avoid discussing Haitian immigration, Dominican emigration and racial identity (most of the population are mixed-race African/Caucasian). Most people will let you know what they want to speak about so just listen. Most Dominicans love to talk about what is happening in the country; they might even battle each other about a certain topic.
* Salsa, merengue and even reggaetón may seem like "sexy dancing", but there are unspoken rules. It is rude for a man to dance too close to a woman who is not his wife or girlfriend, even if others seem to be doing it. (The same rules apply in [Puerto Rico](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Puerto_Rico).)
* Dominicans also expect you to look your best at all times. This is seen especially in the women who take pride in their appearance.
* When an invitation is issued (such as to go to dinner or to a bar), invitees typically assume that everything will be paid for. The same is true in Mexico and in other parts of Latin America.
* Dominicans are extremely friendly people. They usually shake hands and give a kiss upon the cheeks when they are introduced to someone or when they come across a known friend.
* The man is the one supposed to pay during a date.
* A woman never approaches a man first (usually).
* Is not considered polite to ask a woman about her age (also common in Puerto Rico and much of North America).
* When you're eating and someone arrives, the eater says "a buentiempo" (it means "you're arriving in good time"). It is usually polite to say "buenprovecho" (meaning "good eating", also subtly meaning "have a nice meal").
* Dominicans love to talk, but politeness is important in conversation.
* Dominicans are not punctual (more common in informal settings, less so in professional), usually arriving around 40 minutes after the scheduled time.
* The most popular sport in the country is baseball, so this should be the right choice of conversation.

### Ecuador

* Visitors to [Ecuador](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecuador) often marvel at the brightly-colored traditional attire of natives. However, it is impolite to [photograph](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Photograph) someone before asking permission. Some people will ask for a tip in exchange for this favor and to begrudge them this source of income is considered unkind.[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Latin_America#cite_note-South-America-travel-tips.htm-7) Moreover, do not dress in traditional attire; this will be perceived as mocking the local culture. Only the natives are entitled to do so, not even Ecuadorians from the city (non-Indians and rural areas).
* Beachwear should only be worn at the beach and not in towns. The same is true with short pants for adults, both male and female.[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Latin_America#cite_note-South-America-travel-tips.htm-7)
* Never refer to someone as an "Indian", unless they happen to consider themselves so.
* Men greet women, and women greet women, touching right cheek to right cheek and making a kissing sound. Not doing so is considered impolite.
* When invited, it is consider impolite not to bring a present. (If not asked, never bring food; a more appropriate gift would be flowers, wine, chocolates or a small toy for the host's child.) The same is true when you are (even for a short time) meeting someone at their home and they offer snacks or something to drink. It is often polite to decline the first time, but not accepting later would be consider impolite.
* Dance: (see Dominican Republic) Ecuadorian styles are more based on Andean and Colombian.
* There is a strong sense of regionalism in Ecuadorian society. Many Ecuadorians identify themselves first with their home region (specially if they are from the coast or the highland), then their nationality.
* While a few object to the title "American" in reference to citizens of the United States, most have no problem with this.
* Politics are a controversial subject in the country. One should avoid talking about religion, politics, money or illness at dinner with (not so close) friends and strangers.
* To blow one's nose in public, while eating or in a room is considered vulgar and one should try to avoid it. The same rule applies in Venezuela.
* Ecuadorian society, like in most South American countries, is very conservative and foreigners (e.g. foreign exchange students, in-laws, but not necessarily tourists) should observe this and try to behave like their peers.
* As in most South American countries, unmarried childless (young) women should always be referred to as "señorita" and not "señora", otherwhise you could offend them. If unsure, it's better to say "señorita". If married, she will feel herself flattered and will immediately correct it. In addition, asking women about their age is considered rude.
* Women expect doors to be opened for them by males, be helped with luggage, etc. These actions are not construed as flirtatious.
* When dealing with someone with an academic degree in a formal (e.g. at work) situation, it is usual to mention it. (Ingeniero/a, Licenciado/a, Doctor/a, Abogado/a, Economista, Contador/a, Arquitecto/a) If used outside a formal situation (e.g. between friends), the titles might sound sarcastic.
* People's hygiene habits are very important, especially in the tropical climate of Guayaquil or other tropical cities in the country. People are expected to take one or more baths or showers daily. Body odor, unshaven legs and underarms in women, ugly or dirty bare feet, or wrinkled clothing and dirty shoes are considered disgusting. Many men wear cologne and have a comb with them. Women usually wear high heels. Never use sport (running) shoes at a formal restaurant, work or going out with friends at night.

### Haiti

* Although tied more closely to France than Spain or Portugal, the etiquette regarding [Haiti](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haiti) is generally similar to other Latin American countries.
* Haitians often signify particular people through appearances or characteristics. Calling someone "white man" (blan) and "the dark skinned one" (neg) are often mere terms of acknowledgement with no racist overtones.
* Entering a household and not greeting the elders or owners of the household is regarded as highly offensive.
* Being overly generous can be interpreted as offensive as to them it may seem as if you pity them.
* Eating is considered a social event and so withdrawing from the center of activities during meals is considered slightly offensive.
* Avoid discussing Dominican life to Haitians as well as the corruption within government, as these are sensitive subjects (especially if you do not know about the subject).
* The infamous [Haitian Creole](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haitian_Creole) phrase "LangetMaman" is highly offensive, insulting one's mother. Uttering this to someone will almost certainly provoke conflict.
* Haitians use very good manners and take things seriously.
* Haitians expect to haggle when making a purchase.
* Men shake hands on meeting and departing. Men and women kiss on the cheek when greeting. Women kiss each other on the cheek. Friends, family and close acquaintances usually share a light kiss on the cheek.
* Punctuality is not highly valued and being late is usually not considered rude.
* People of the same gender holding hands is an ordinary display of friendship though women and men seldom show public affection toward the opposite sex but are affectionate in private.
* Because almost all Haitians are descended from African slaves, much African etiquette also applies to Haiti.

### Mexico

* In many situations, punctuality is less important than it is for people elsewhere. Showing up exactly on schedule for a party or gathering is undesirable. However, punctuality is expected for business matters.
* The courtesy titles "Señora" and "Señorita" (Mrs. and Miss, respectively) are taken colloquially as "Married Woman" and "Virgin Woman". This follows[Catholic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholic_Church) prohibitions against intercourse outside of marriage. Hence, it is more polite to address even an elderly woman as "Señorita" if her marital status is unknown. To do otherwise impugns her character.[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)]
* Some Mexicans are religious. It is a predominantly Catholic country. Church tours in the country are very solemn. While non-Catholic churches are present, be advised to witness some Catholic practices (the "trinity cross" hand gesture/prayer salute) in tours.
* Positioning yourself so your back is not facing another person is customary in Mexico. If a person's back is facing another person, he or she must excuse himself or herself.
* When an invitation to go out is issued (e.g. going to dinner) using the words or the phrase *"I invite you to..."*, it is common that invitees typically assume all the expenses will be paid by the inviter.
* Several kinds of food are eaten with the fingers ([tacos](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taco), tortas, churros, etc.) Eating them with a fork and knife is viewed as both comical and snobbish. In case of doubt, follow the lead of other diners.
* In some regions of Mexico leaving an empty plate after dining is rude, whereas in some others is rude to leave it with food. Then again, in some regions it is appropriate to accept a second portion, while in others a rejection is expected; always speak clearly about your eating in order to not get misunderstood.
* Before starting to eat it is a common courtesy to say/be wished *"Buenprovecho"* (as in "Bon appetit") when in company of new people. This courtesy is almost not used between long-time friends.
* Going to the bathroom during any meal is not acceptable but even more so in formal situations.
* The least a host can offer a visitor is a glass of water. Several other kinds of drinks can be offered. Offering alcoholic drinks is appropriate if meeting in the evening, or if the visitor is a well-known person to the host.
* Women expect doors to be opened for them by males. This also applies to lighting of [cigarettes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cigarette), turning off mobile phones in dates or appointments, and helping them to their seat. None of these actions are construed as [flirtatious](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flirting) but simply as a [gentlemanly](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gentleman) courteous gesture.
* Gender specific situations, phrases and behaviors are expected in conservative regions of the country. Many upper-class Mexicans are less chauvinistic and biased towards women in social roles. [Machismo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Machismo) (male assertiveness/aggressiveness) versus femininity issues are still present in older age Mexicans in conservative regions.
* As in the USA, unless service is atrocious, tips should never be below 10% of the bill total as they are commonly a waiter's main means of income; 15% or more is most appropriate.
* When dealing with someone with an academic degree in a formal situation, it is usual to mention it. For a BA-level, the distinctions are clear (Ingeniero and Licenciado for graduates of Engineering programs or for most other fields, respectively). Afterwards, it's usual to call a Master "maestro" and a Doctor-level student "Doctor". If used outside a formal situation, the titles might sound ironic.
* It is common for men to greet ladies (and vice-versa) by kissing one time on the cheek. It is not so common when introduced to someone for the first time, as this means closeness or relation.
* When someone sneezes, you should say "Salud" (lit. "Health"). This is the equivalent for "bless you" in United States. The person who sneezed should respond with "Gracias" ("Thank you").
* The use of the [Mexican flag](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flag_of_Mexico) for any other reason than for national holidays (such as [Independence Day](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexican_War_of_Independence)) is considered a serious insult and faux pas for Mexicans, as is painting, throwing, making clothing from it, etc., and is also penalized under the law.
* Using Mexican Spanish phrases and interjections like "Chihuahua", "Caramba", "Ándale", "Taco" (Mexican [Taco Bells](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taco_Bell) advertise Tacos as *Tacostadas* or *Tachitos*) or "bad words" thinking that by doing so you will "blend in" is sometimes seen as mocking and disrespectful coming from tourists.
* Mexican men can speak with [dirty language](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dirty_language) ([albur](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albur)) among themselves (be this friends or relatives). But women must avoid this, for it is regarded as vulgar and low class.
* Trying to use Mexican Spanish [double entendre](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Double_entendre) or [albur](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albur) is not recommended since the connotations of the double talk are usually sexual and may be used against the speaker. If keen on an explanation of the double entendre, it is recommendable to do so in a more private environment.
* Be advised that socioeconomic issues (i.e. [classism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Classism)) are very strong and prevalent in the country.
* Avoid discussions on politics, national differences between the U.S. and Mexico, and especially racial/ethnic issues. [Mexican-Americans](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexican-Americans) in the USA as an ethnic group have experienced discrimination. Mexicans are highly aware of the historical conflict with the United States in this case; likewise, economic disparity, political crises and global diplomatic issues are not discussed without respect and appropriate sympathy. In fact, the Mexican Constitution specifically says that only Mexican citizens are to formally participate in the political arena.

### Nicaragua

* In [Nicaragua](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicaragua), exchanges of hospitality are important. Refusing a drink (especially on a hot day) or not praising the host on the quality of the meal is considered rude.[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Latin_America#cite_note-1.2C2122.2C.2C00.html-8)
* Exchanging greetings is also very important. Seeing (even at a distance) someone one knows typically prompts approaching them to exchanging handshakes and kisses as appropriate. Waves and verbal salutations do not suffice.[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_Latin_America#cite_note-1.2C2122.2C.2C00.html-8)
* Greeting someone with "Hello" is always followed by the appropriate time of day greeting; "Good day", "Good Afternoon", and, "Good Evening."
* When speaking to an older adult, it is respectful to refer to them as "Don" or "Doña." This is a sign of respect.
* Saying goodbye is said in two popular ways "Adios" and "Chau." Although "Chau" is derived from Italian language, it is used in Nicaragua and was brought by the influential quantity of Italian immigrants.
* Nicaraguans are very expressive and passionate. Hand movements are usually accompanied when speaking.
* Salsa, merengue, bachata, and tango may seem like "sexy dancing", but there are unspoken rules. It is rude for a man to dance too close to a woman who is not his wife or girlfriend, even if others seem to be doing it.

### Puerto Rico

* When others are about to eat, it is very considerate to say "buenprovecho" (enjoy your meal).
* It is very common for members of the opposite sex or women to women to greet each other with a kiss on the cheek. This is never done between men however.
* Going out at night is an important time to dress your best and trendy. Simple jeans and T-shirt, khaki shorts, flip-flops, etc., are considered tacky.
* In Puerto Rico the older generation is looked upon for knowledgable insight and highly respected. In family or social gatherings the children and younger adults will give seats to elders first.
* Remember that [Puerto Rico](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Puerto_Rico) is an unincorporated territory or colony of the United States and as such, most rules of the United States are applicable here as well.
* Among Puerto Ricans, conversations are usually very interactive and full of interruptions. If you're talking to someone else and a third person joins you, you are expected to stop what you're saying and acknowledge the newcomer.
* Watching [television](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Television) is a very social activity. Asking for quiet is typically considered both unreasonable and impolite.
* Refusing a second or third helping at a host's home is considered rude. To do so because of any diet is even ruder.
* [Salsa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salsa_%28dance%29), [merengue](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Merengue_%28dance%29) and even [reggaetón](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reggaet%C3%B3n) may seem like "sexy dancing", but there are unspoken rules. It is rude for a man to dance too close to a woman who is not his wife or girlfriend, even if others seem to be doing it.
* It is considered vulgar and ostentatious to open gifts in public. Gifts are never opened in front of a group of people to avoid people comparing the merits of different gifts.
* Do not praise anything you do not want to receive as a gift. In rural areas in particular, to give away objects something a visitor likes is considered polite and a way to show detachment from material objects.
* Women in Puerto Rico are very independent and many of them dislike to feel patronized or bound to traditional roles. While talking to a woman in informal situations avoid calling them "señorita" (miss) or "señora" (Mrs), as they could interpret those titles as 'inexperienced'/'ignorant' or 'old'.
* Political issues, and racial or socioeconomic distinctions can be touchy subjects in Puerto Rico. Questions about such matters are best asked in private. In public, they are seen as a sign of immaturity.

### Peru

* Waving at a stranger is awkward and should be avoided.
* Using your index finger to motion a person to approach you, as practiced in the United States and other places, is considered rude. A more polite way to beckon someone is to place the palm down and gently sweep your fingers toward you.
* In a gathering, you must greet each and everyone, especially the eldest.
* It is very common to greet with a kiss (From men to women and women to both men and women). Nevertheless, two men don't greet with kiss, since it's frowned upon (Peruvians are very uptight). Two male relatives can kiss in the cheek (normally father-son and grandfather-grandson).
* In churches and monasteries, err on the side of discretion (low-rise pants, midriff shirts, peekaboo thongs, and anything else that reveals a lot of skin is not usually acceptable).
* Discussion of drugs (and coca-plant cultivation) and religion should be handled with great tact.
* In a country in which nearly half the population is Amerindian, expressing respect for native peoples is important. Try to refer to them not as *indios*, which is a derogatory term, but as*indígenas*.
* Peruvians shake hands frequently and tirelessly, and although kissing on the cheek is a common greeting for acquaintances (and people you just met), it is not practiced among strangers (as it is in Spain, for example). Amerindian populations are more conservative and even shy. They don't kiss to greet one another, nor do they shake hands as frequently as other Peruvians; if they do, it is a light brush of the hand rather than a firm grip. Many Indians from small villages are reluctant to look a stranger in the eye.
* Photographing military, police, or airport installations is strictly forbidden. Many churches, convents, and museums also do not allow photography or video.
* Be sure not talk too much or in depth about the SenderoLuminoso ("Shining Path", a guerrilla movement).
* Peru, like most of South America, has a problematic history with politics. It is advised not to bring up political issues casually.

### Uruguay

Out of all of Latin America, [Uruguay](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uruguay) is the least religious, about 40% of the population is secular or irreligious and 60% is in some religion (primarily [Roman Catholic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholic)). Uruguay has a secular tradition evolved in the country during the late 19th and early 20th century. Official holidays like [Christmas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christmas) and [Easter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Easter) are referenced as "family days" and "gathering week".

Uruguayans have a comparable standard of living to that of [Anglo America](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglo_America), [Western Europe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_Europe) and [Australia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australia), although their customs and etiquette are closely linked with its geographical neighbor[Argentina](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Argentina).

Their culture is conservative but have a history of experimental socialist policies like universal health care, retirement benefits and a developed social security system for unemployed and low-income people.

### Venezuela

* In [Venezuela](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Venezuela), it is often considered rude to point at a person or even an object with the index finger. People typically point with the whole hand or with a movement of the head and a puckering of the lips towards that which is being indicated.
* In many situations, punctuality is less important than it is for people elsewhere. Showing up exactly on schedule for a party or gathering is undesirable. However, punctuality is expected for business matters.
* People tend to stand very close together when carrying on a conversation. Venezuelans often touch each other’s arms or shoulders during it.
* Coffee or a cold drink is typically offered to guests. It is often polite to decline.
* Street directions are expected to be given in a very detailed manner, very often describing trees and the color of buildings nearby. Omitting an obvious landmark such as a mango tree or a bright red wall is considered careless.
* When a male is introduced to a female, it's expected for the male to make the motion and kiss the female once on the cheek along with a handshake. The handshake should start gently and match to the female's grip.
* When visiting someone's home, remember to bring along something for the house. For example, a small decorative piece if you are familiar with the decorative style, a dessert, or a bottle of the man of the house's favorite alcoholic beverage. For an informal lunch visit, it is common to bring fresh bread from one of the numerous bakeries, desserts, soda, wine, or beer. For breakfast, white cheese or shredded beef for the arepas are always welcome. In any case, it is always rude to show up empty-handed.
* Phrases like "in America" or "I'm from America" when referring to the United States is confusing to Latin American people as America is a continent, not just the United States. Therefore, all people born in the American continent are Americans. People from the United States of America are referred to by their nationality, "estadounidense".
* For business or informal matters, it is good practice to follow up morning appointments with an invitation to lunch.
* Unlike lunch, dinner is for socializing, not for business.
* When dining, wait until everyone is served before beginning to eat.
* Before starting to eat, saying "Buenprovecho" (lit. "I hope the food is good for you") is expected to wish the others at the table a good meal. The others will say "gracias" and repeat the phrase "buenprovecho" so everybody at the table has a good meal.
* Avoid making noises with your cutlery on the plate. Do not bite on your fork or spoon.
* Meals are to be enjoyed with conversations, as long as there are not mouths showing food in them. Swallow first, talk later, or cover your mouth while with food in it.
* To indicate you have finished eating, place your cutlery in parallel and diagonally across your plate.
* Expect to stay for a couple more hours more after dinner, leaving right away might be perceived as that you were there only for a free meal. Coffee and liquor, as digestive aids, will be offered.
* To blow one's nose in public, while eating or in a room is considered vulgar and disgusting, and one should try to avoid it. The restroom is the appropriate place to do it.
* When entering a room with other people, it is a friendly and informal gesture to say just "Buenas" instead of the full "buenosdias" (good morning) or "buenastardes" (good afternoon). However it is always appropriate to say the complete "buenosdías" and "buenastardes/noches" in formal situations.
* Shorts and other forms of beachwear are appropriate only in those environments.
* When someone sneezes, you should say "Salud" (lit. "Health"). The person who sneezed should respond with "Gracias" ("Thank you").

# Etiquette in the Middle East

Many matters of etiquette in the Middle East are connected to [Islam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam) as it is written in the [Qur'an](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qur%27an) and how it has been traditionally understood and practiced throughout the centuries. Prescribed Islamic [etiquette](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette) is referred to as [Adab](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adab_%28behavior%29), and described as "refinement, good manners, morals, ethics, decorum, decency, humaneness and righteousness".[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_the_Middle_East#cite_note-0)

As such, many points discussed in this article are applicable in other regions of the [Islamic world](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_world). This holds especially true in [Muslim majority](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Majority_Muslim_countries)countries outside Middle East.

The Middle East is home to many people who follow faiths besides Islam. Most notable among them are the churches of [Eastern Orthodox Christianity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_Orthodox_Church),[Copts](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Copt) and other adherents of [Oriental Orthodoxy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oriental_Orthodoxy), [Maronites](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maronites), [Melkites](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Melkite_Greek_Catholic_Church) and other Catholics of the Eastern Rites as well as the Roman Rite, [Zoroastrians](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zoroastrians),[Bahá'ís](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bah%C3%A1%27%C3%AD_Faith), and various [Jewish denominations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_religious_movements).

In many cases, however, Muslims and non-Muslims in the Middle East will share characteristics, whether it is the prohibition against [pork](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pork) ordained by both [Islamic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Halal) and [Jewish](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kashrut) dietary restrictions, a preference for the beverage widely known elsewhere as "[Turkish coffee](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turkish_coffee)", or knowledge of how to conduct business in a crowded [souk](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Souk) without being cheated. As coexistence, rather than conflict, has been the norm between people in the Middle East throughout much of history, it is a place where people with different beliefs often share the same traditions.

## Points of etiquette

Although the Middle East is a large expanse of geography with a variety of customs, noting the following points of etiquette can be useful when dealing with people around the world who have been raised according to the traditions of the Middle East or, in some cases, Muslim societies elsewhere.

* Conducting business effectively in a souk or [bazaar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bazaar) requires an understanding of how to [haggle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haggle) like the locals. This is an art requiring participants to be appropriately aggressive, keen to how much should be offered at a given point in a transaction, etc.
* The [modesty](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modesty) of one's personal attire is of great concern to many in the Middle East, although the parameters of this modesty vary. In [Saudi Arabia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saudi_Arabia), for example, many families expect all female members to wear a [hijab](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hijab) while even men and women visiting from other cultures should wear very non-revealing clothes to avoid harsh confrontation. In another example, males and females in shorts, skimpy t-shirts or other "immodest" clothes might find themselves evicted from a variety of places, especially holy sites (be they tended by Muslims or Jews). Get specific guidelines from locals when possible.
* Regarding head attire specifically, the etiquette at many Muslim holy sites requires that a [headscarf](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Headscarf) or some other modest head covering be worn. For women this might be a [hijab](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hijab) and for men it might be a [taqiyah (cap)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taqiyah_%28cap%29), [turban](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turban), or [keffiyeh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keffiyeh). A [kippah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kippah) or other head covering is expected for men in[synagogues](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Synagogue) and other places where Jews pray. Orthodox Christian sites might require the removal of hats by men but will expect women to cover their hair with a [kerchief](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kerchief) or [veil](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Veil).
* Among Muslims, the left hand is reserved for bodily hygiene and considered unclean. Thus, the right hand should be used for eating. Shaking hands or handing over an item with one's left hand is considered an insult.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_the_Middle_East#cite_note-airman.2F0406-1)
* Public displays of affection between people of the opposite gender, including between married people, are frowned upon everywhere more conservative values hold sway. Public displays of affection include activities as minor as hand-holding.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_the_Middle_East#cite_note-2)
* In many cases, people of the same gender holding hands while walking is considered an ordinary display of friendship without romantic connotations.[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_the_Middle_East#cite_note-1.2C2122.2C.2C00-3)
* In a related point, many people in the Middle East claim a more modest amount of [personal space](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Personal_space) than that which is usual elsewhere. Accordingly, it can seem rude for an individual to step away when another individual is stepping closer.[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_the_Middle_East#cite_note-AR2006090701067-4)
* Special respect is paid to older people in many circumstances. This can include standing when older people enter a room, always greeting older people before others present (even if they are better known to you), standing when speaking to one’s elders and serving older people first at a meal table. [[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_the_Middle_East#cite_note-airman.2F0406-1)
* Many people throughout the Middle East, especially Persians and Arabs, take great pride in shows of [hospitality](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hospitality), never failing to at least serve [chai](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chai),[coffee](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coffee) and a snack such as [figs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Figs) but preferring to present guests with a lavish choice of expensive delicacies in abundance. To refuse such hospitality can cause offense.
* In some areas in the Middle East, it is common for people to take their food from a common plate in the center of the table. Rather than employing[forks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fork) or [spoons](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spoon), people may scoop up [hummus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hummus) and other oodstuff with [pita bread](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pita).
* In many Middle Eastern countries, grouping the thumb and fingers together, and shaking it up and down, fingers pointing upwards, indicates "wait".
* In Iran, the "[thumbs up](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thumbs_signal)" gesture is considered an offensive insult[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_the_Middle_East#cite_note-airman.2F0406-1)
* Displaying the sole of one's foot or touching somebody with one's shoe is often considered rude. This includes sitting with one's feet or foot elevated. In some circumstances, shoes should be removed before entering a living room.[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_the_Middle_East#cite_note-5)
* Many in the Middle East do not separate professional and personal life. Doing business revolves much more around personal relationships, family ties, trust and honor. There is a tendency to prioritize personal matters above all else. It is therefore crucial that business relationships are built on mutual friendship and trust.[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_in_the_Middle_East#cite_note-kwint-6)
* Responding to an anger or seriousness with light laughter or a smile is common. This must not be seen as an indication that the other person is not taking you or the situation seriously.
* A common custom in many Middle Eastern countries is 'tarof' (or [taarof](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taarof)) which can be translated as 'offering'. It is common for a person not to accept an offering (food, beverages etc.) the first or possibly second time, instead taking up the offer the third time. This traditionally implies dignity, self-respect and respect for the host. In addition, if there is only one item of food left, the host must offer, or taarof it, to everyone, regardless of whether or not he or she wants it. Finally, it is considered rude if a person gets food for himself or herself without bringing some for the guests.
* Positioning yourself so your back is not facing another person is customary in [Iran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iran) and [Iraq](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iraq). If a person's back is facing another person, he or she must excuse himself or herself.