

GLOBAL SUCCESS: Tips for Engineers

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Your generation...

- Almost all centenarians, possibly all...
- Significant steps in Human-Machine integration
 - you are among the lucky minority with the right initial foundation for this brave new world to advance technologies

During active work life, significant continuous learning, most likely in new (possibly related) fields

- REPEAT! (at least 3-4 times)

Advice for engineers...

- *When applying & Interviewing for jobs*
 - Go for the jobs you'll like doing; if the job is not **challenging** do not waste time
 - Ask clarifying questions to understand exactly what your role will be

Let's say everything looks positive

- State your willingness and desire to continue developing yourself in the job
 - lifelong learning
- Make sure you state that **you want that job** clearly
 - do not assume they know

Advice for engineers...

- *On the job*

- Start focused, start strong and impress right away (FIRST IMPRESSION)
 - You only have one chance to make the first impression!
- Be always truthful, if you do not know something say so
 - Ask clarification questions, confirm that what you understood is what is requested
- Always keep your manager/leader informed and in the loop
- We work with people: always be fair and respectful to your peers
 - Competition with others should not be a priority,
 - Aim to excel in what you do, everyone respects achievements

Global Economy

- *Soon you'll enter into a GLOBAL WORK ENVIRONMENT!*
- *Software / engineering projects are mostly associated/achieved in collaboration with a global partner(s)*
 - *Partnership*
 - *Joint development*
 - *Supplier relationships*
 - *Customer relationships*
 - *...*

Keys to Success in Global Workforce

- Awareness and sensitivity about the culture you're working with is a prerequisite for project success.
- Spending some time to understand the culture you'll work with will help you get started on the right path
- Learning a few greetings in your partner's language will go a long way in building a relationship
- Know email etiquette, relationships can be ruined by poor email communications
- Since making decisions and tracking progress is done in joint meetings, they become delicate environments (minefield)

Culturally challenging Partner

- In 2005, I started a major project with a French company
- Rude AWAKENING!
- Say “Good morning, nice day isn’t it?” And a barrage of arguments start flying...???
- Asked for help to learn French business culture, particularly the engineers’
- French engineers need
 - Proof
 - Statistics
 - Challenge ideas especially when they believe those ideas have merit
 - Enjoy playing devil’s advocate

Differences in Meetings

- Let's look at differences in how meetings work in 3 different business cultures:
 - USA
 - Asia (Japan, Korea, China)
 - France

What can be achieved in meetings...

France

- Quite informal
- Flexible/no agenda
- Decisions (rare)
- **Information exchange**
- **Progress**
- Brain storming
- ~~Task assignment~~
- Problem solving
- ~~Confirmation (ritual)~~

US

- Quite informal
- Flexible with agenda
- Decisions (frequent)
- **Information exchange**
- **Progress**
- Brain storming
- Task assignment
- Problem solving
- ~~Confirmation (ritual)~~

Asian

- Formal
- Formal Agenda
- ~~Decisions~~
- **Information exchange**
- **Progress**
- ~~Brain storming~~
- ~~Task assignment~~
- ~~Problem solving~~
- Confirmation (ritual)

What to do/not to do in meetings with Chinese, Korean and Japanese Partners

- Avoid too much eye contact, do not point at someone
- Show respect, remain calm
- Silences are important. Don't break them even if you're not too comfortable
- Don't think while you speak
- Prefer facts rather than concepts. Give examples
- Use simple English with a single idea per sentence
- Don't use negative questions
- Don't use multiple choice questions
- Speak clearly
- Use summary, reformulate to make sure of the understanding of your counterpart

What to do/not to do in meetings with Chinese, Korean and Japanese Partners (cont'd)

- Be cautious not to put someone on the spot (risk of losing face)
- Do not use humor
- Do not just grab and put the business card in pocket or on the table

Behavior Change...

- Asian behavior changes a lot depending on who attends to a meeting: don't want to lose face in front of...
- French behavior changes a little bit and North Americans are in between
- Asian perception of the fact that westerners don't change is that westerners are insensitive, rude and disrespectful
- French and North American perception of the fact they change is that they are inconsistent and we cannot trust them
- Solution : We must be sensitive and respectful to seniority and loss of face. Do not interrupt senior people and make sure that we do not put our counterparts in a position where they would loose face.

Relationships with Foreign Engineers (particularly with Asians)

- Communication is mostly based on peer to peer relations not groups
- Need to build the relationship with your counterpart first
- Relation is based on trust and need to be built in face to face meetings
- To accelerate the construction of the relation,
 - you must go out and meet if invited;
 - or be willing to have social chats/calls if it is a distant partnership
- Once you have a good relationship established with your counterpart, progress may start

Contracts/Agreements

- For ***Europeans and North Americans***, contract is the envelope of the relation. It defines the boundary of the agreements
- For ***Asians***, contracts are just the skeleton. We can get rid of them since we are friends and we trust each other. Asians may change contract without any issue...

Relationships make the projects work

- We are not living/working alone
- Master the art of relationship building (Caution: not natural for engineers!)
- A little time investment to understand the counterpart's culture in advance will make a day and night difference in achieving your goals
- Maintaining a relationship is a regular (little) effort, but a **MUST**
- Building relationships with foreign partners is key to success
- And it is a lot of **FUN!**

BEST OF LUCK TO ALL OF YOU!