

Japanese Business Culture An Introduction



Angela Kessel Access Culture

Intercultural Training and Consulting
Germany



EU-Japan Centre
for Industrial Cooperation
一般財団法人
日欧産業協力センター

Co-funded by the
European Union



<https://www.eu-japan.eu/>

Table of Contents

Preparations for the Trip

- First Meeting
- Indirect Communication
- Socialising
- Summary



Presents in general

- ➔ Gifts are seen as means to connect and build or maintain good relationships.
- ➔ Not needed for Centre staff.
- ➔ No need to buy expensive items.
- ➔ Consider nice wrapping.
- ➔ Chocolates for booth.



Photo: Fotolia_42152119



Suitable Presents

- ➔ Chocolates and biscuits (packed separately)
- ➔ Delicacies or other special items from your country
- ➔ Interesting company goodies



Photo: Clipdealer_A40657269_A7904031



Business Cards



Photo: Clipdealer_A18229992

- ➔ Bring plenty.
- ➔ Have a holder.
- ➔ Think of jacket pockets for quick access.



Business Cards

- ➔ English is fine unless you have a long or complicated name.
- ➔ In case that Japanese is needed, look for professional translator.
- ➔ No need to change titles or ranks.



Table of Contents

- Preparations for the Trip

 First Meeting

- Indirect Communication

- Socialising

- Summary



EU-Japan Centre
for Industrial Cooperation

一般財団法人
日欧産業協力センター

Co-funded by the
European Union



<https://www.eu-japan.eu/>

First Meeting



Dress Code



- Formal
- Suits for men
- Pant or skirt suits for ladies
- Avoid too much heavy make-up, jewelry or perfume.
- Avoid naked legs and shoulders.

Photo: clipdealer_4910441_blog



EU-Japan Centre
for Industrial Cooperation
一般財団法人
日欧産業協力センター

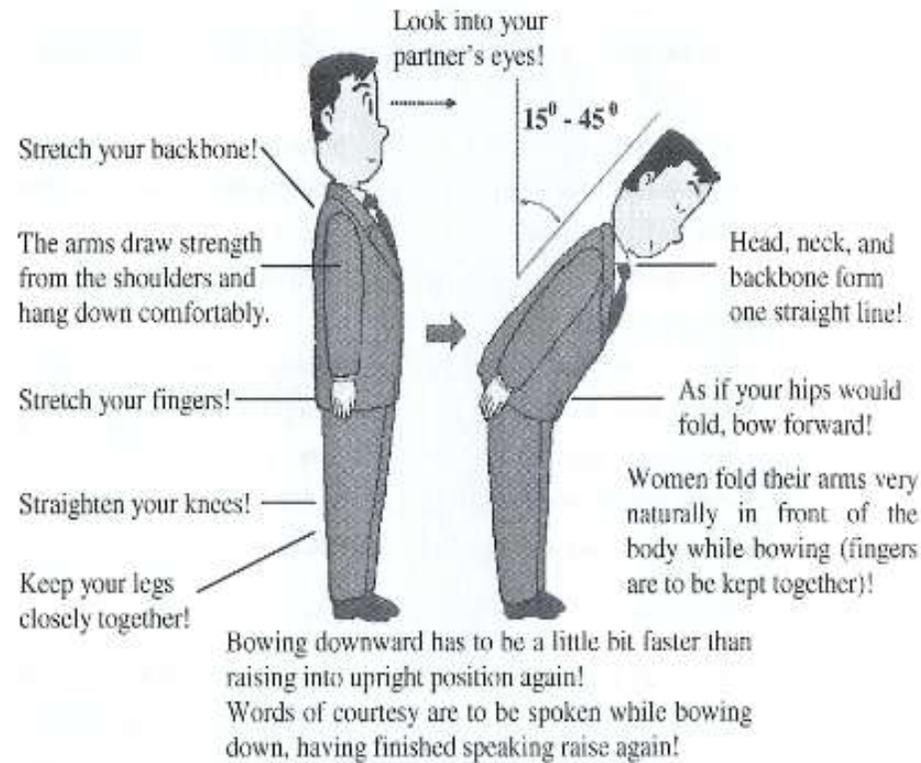
Co-funded by the
European Union



<https://www.eu-japan.eu/>

First Meeting

Bowing



A light European handshake will be fine!

Source: Suzuki Kabushikigaisha, Freshmen Course; in: From freshman to middle management, Holger Bungsche, Iudicium



EU-Japan Centre
for Industrial Cooperation
一般財団法人
日欧産業協力センター

Co-funded by the
European Union



<https://www.eu-japan.eu/>

First Meeting

Business Cards

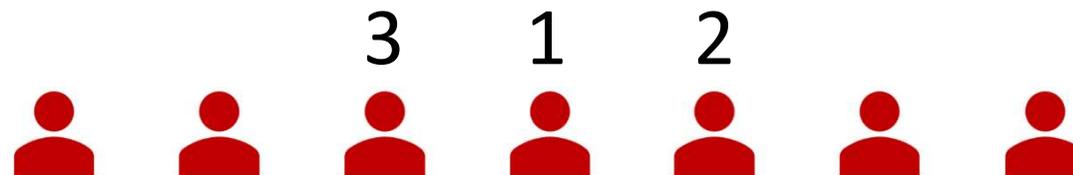
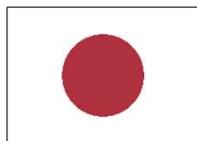
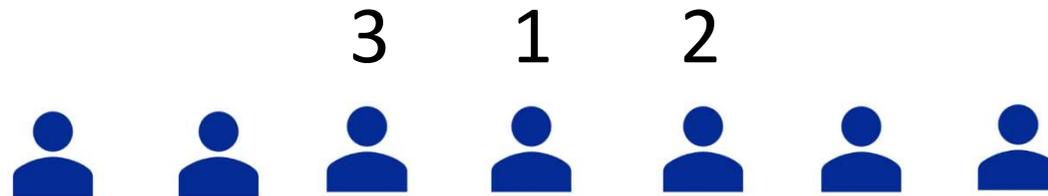
- Hand business cards over with both hands or just the right hand.
- Hold them in such a way that your partner can read them.
- Receive with both hands or right hand.
- Repeat partner's name or position.
- Do not write on the cards while your partner is still present.



First Meeting



Seating Orders



Entrance



EU-Japan Centre
for Industrial Cooperation
一般財団法人
日欧産業協力センター

Co-funded by the
European Union



<https://www.eu-japan.eu/>

First Meeting



Modesty and Reserve

- ➔ Try to figure out who seniors are.
- ➔ Behave in a generally polite and respectful way towards them.



Photo: 11808433_Clipdealer



First Meeting

Women in Business

- ➔ Can be found on all levels.
- ➔ Need to be treated according to their rank.



Photo: 11808433_Clipdealer

First Meeting

Gift Giving

- Hand over towards the end of a meeting.
- Gifts may be opened immediately nowadays after encouragement to do so.
- You may explain your gifts but do not boast off.



Photo: Clipdealer_18232614



EU-Japan Centre
for Industrial Cooperation
一般財団法人
日欧産業協力センター

Co-funded by the
European Union



<https://www.eu-japan.eu/>

First Meeting



What to expect from first Encounters

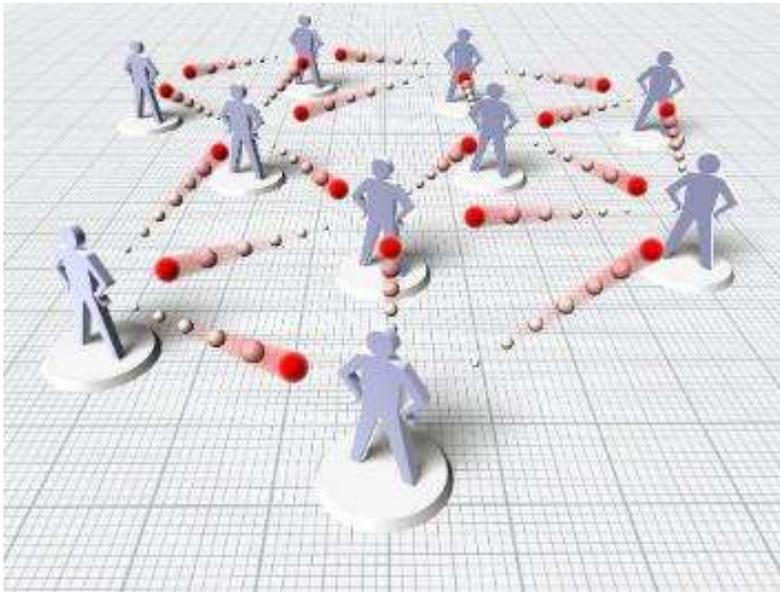


Photo: Fotolia_42152119

- ➔ Networking
- ➔ Base for future trustful contacts
- ➔ Not too many concrete results



EU-Japan Centre
for Industrial Cooperation
一般財団法人
日欧産業協力センター

Co-funded by the
European Union

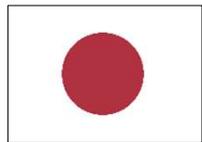


<https://www.eu-japan.eu/>

Table of Contents

- Preparations for the Trip
- First Meeting
- Indirect Communication
- Socialising
- Summary

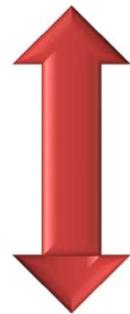
Indirect Communication



Indirect



People focus
Harmony
Avoidance of conflict / criticism



Direct



Matter focus
Honesty
Avoidance of Misunderstanding



EU-Japan Centre
for Industrial Cooperation
一般財団法人
日欧産業協力センター

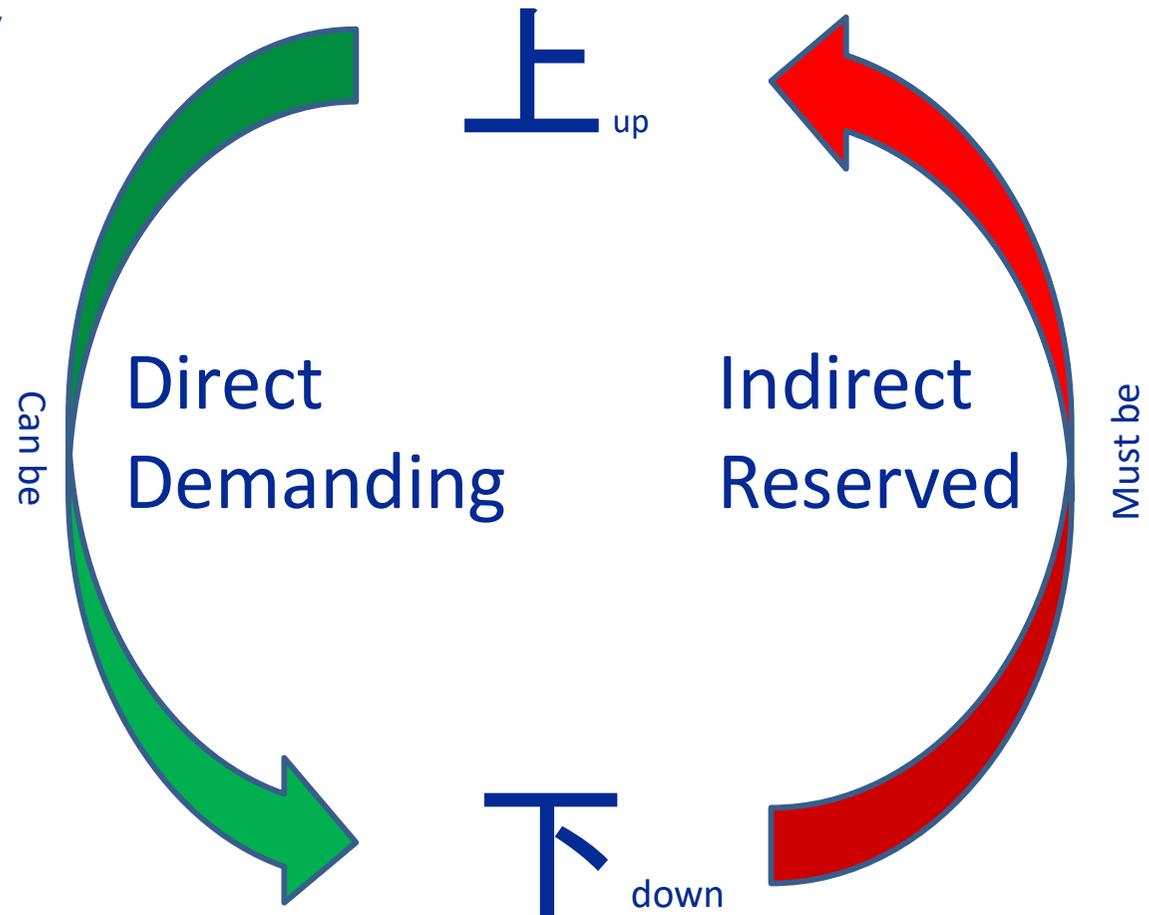
Co-funded by the
European Union



<https://www.eu-japan.eu/>



Hierarchy



Communication Case Study

Mr King works for a company that distributes watches and jewelry in a number of European countries. At a trade fair he has met a Japanese manufacturer of wristwatches. The products are very interesting for European consumers. Mr King has bought some of the Japanese watches and has introduced them to his European customers with much success.

He has now travelled to Japan to meet with the Japanese manufacturers to give them feedback. He starts off with positive comments and everything goes well. When he asks whether one certain watch can be equipped with an alarm function, the atmosphere somehow changes. The Japanese scratch their heads and mumble something about “very difficult”. Mr King gets no clear answer from their side.

Indirect Communication

Verbal:

- "It is very difficult."
- "I am not sure." "Please let me think about it."
- "I will try."

Non-verbal:

- arms crossed, head tilted to the side
- sucking air through the teeth
- scratching the head

Tactical:

- silence, no reaction, ignorance
- sudden changes of topic
- elusive answers

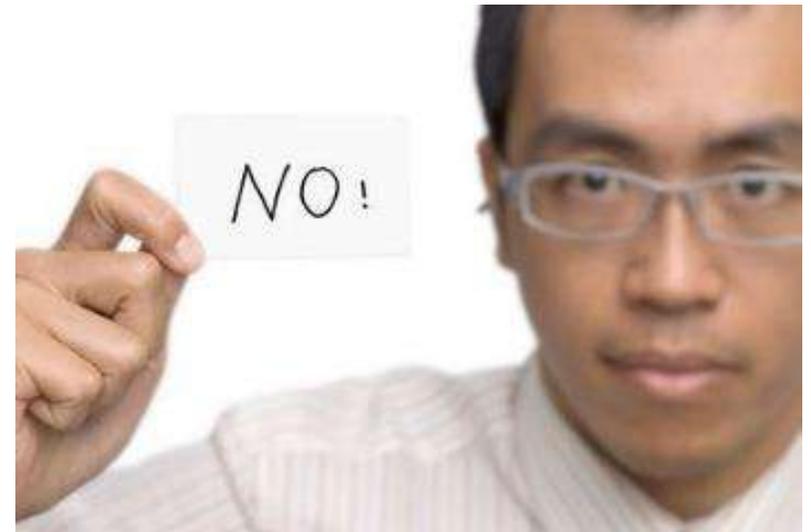
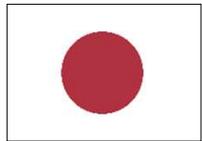


Foto: 6469182_clipdealer



Indirect Communication



Would you mind to send me the data?



I need these data from you.

May I perhaps kindly ask to you send the data?

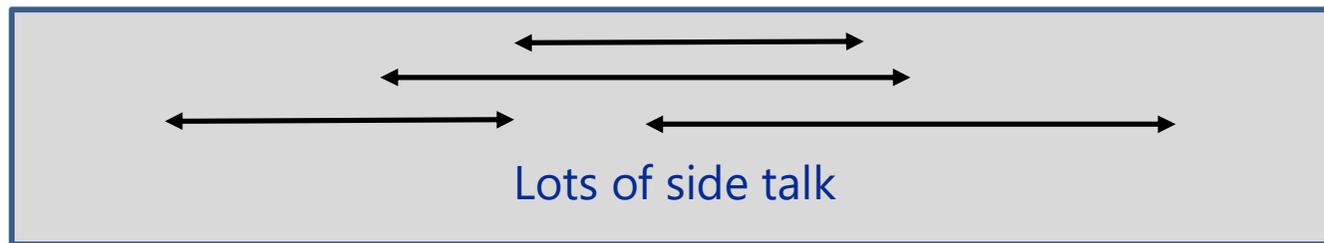
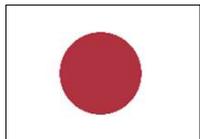
Please send me the data.



Indirect Communication



The team



Members listening with eyes closed

Pauses and silences when thinking



EU-Japan Centre
for Industrial Cooperation
一般財団法人
日欧産業協力センター

Co-funded by the
European Union



<https://www.eu-japan.eu/>



Tipps for Communication

- Avoid an open “no” from the start.
- Reactions like nodding of the head and comments like “yes yes”, *sô desu ne* do not indicate agreement, but attentive listening.
- Use simple language. Repeat statements and questions.
- Utter doubts or criticism as a question.
- Use unofficial situations to address delicate issues



Table of Contents

- Preparations for the Trip
- First Meeting
- Indirect Communication
- Socialising
- Summary



At a Restaurant

- Be prepared to take off shoes in restaurants
- Wear slippers on wooden floors
- Only wear socks on *tatami* floors



Photos: Clipdealer_70633869 and 3384575

In the Evening



Different Foods



O-bento Lunchbox

Shared Plates



Course Menu

Photos: Clipdealer_A70761786_A46251791_A15172649



EU-Japan Centre
for Industrial Cooperation
一般財団法人
日欧産業協力センター

Co-funded by the
European Union



<https://www.eu-japan.eu/>

In the Evening

Eating and Drinking

- Do not pour yourself alcoholic drinks, others will serve you.
- Use end of chopsticks for eating from shared plates.
- Blowing your nose, burping and munching are impolite.
- Finish the meal by moving items back to original place.



Photo: pixta_1200985

Behaviour at social events

- Japanese may drink quite a bit, loosen up and show different behaviour than during the day.
- There is no need for foreign ladies to adapt to Japanese “female behaviour”.
- Join in if you are invited to *karaoke*.
- **Good topics**
 - What you like about Japan
 - Comparisons with your country
 - Food
 - Personal background
- **Topics to avoid**
 - Whale and dolphin hunting
 - Fukushima
 - Japan’s role in world war II



Photo: pixta_1200985

Summary



Preparations for the trip

Get business cards and presents ready.



First Meeting

Respect etiquette and concentrate on networking.



Indirect Communication

Show reserve and avoid criticism.



In the Evening

Grab the chance for deepening relations.



EU-Japan Centre
for Industrial Cooperation

一般財団法人
日欧産業協力センター

Co-funded by the
European Union



<https://www.eu-japan.eu/>

Topic Title

**Thank you very much
for your attention!**



EU-Japan Centre
for Industrial Cooperation

一般財団法人
日欧産業協力センター

Co-funded by the
European Union



<https://www.eu-japan.eu/>