

5 recommendations for conducting an international meeting

When conducting a meeting with an international audience, you may need to make adjustments to ensure effective communication and understanding. Cultural differences can significantly impact the dynamics of a meeting, and by being mindful of these variations, you can create a more inclusive and productive environment for all participants.

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Be mindful of cultural differences

Understanding cultural variations in the workplace is crucial. Different cultures have different customs, such as socializing before meetings or valuing punctuality. By being aware of these differences, you can adjust your approach and create a more comfortable environment. However, it's important not to fixate on how people from specific cultures are expected to behave, as individuals can adapt and adjust their cultural norms.

2

Set clear expectations

Establish protocols and norms at the beginning of the meeting to ensure that everyone understands what is expected. For instance, if punctuality is important to you, make it clear that meetings will start and end on time. By being explicit about your expectations, you can avoid misunderstandings and actions that may be perceived as disrespectful.

3

Build relationships

If you are planning to host a recurring meeting with international team members, take the time to get to know the personalities of each member to understand how culture may impact their behavior. Foster trust and inclusivity by building bonds among team members. Encourage informal conversations and team-building activities to bridge cultural differences and promote understanding. Don't forget the significance of team bonding outside of meetings to mitigate cultural differences.

4

Be creative with conflict

Different cultures have varying views on open debate and disagreement. Some cultures may see disagreement as aggressive, while others view it as an opportunity to build relationships. To accommodate these differences, consider alternative methods of conflict resolution. For instance, asking team members to share their ideas via email before the meeting can help separate the disagreement from the individual, making it less personal and more focused on the ideas being discussed.

5

Be flexible

Recognize that meetings are just one element of decision-making in the workplace. If cultural differences are making group meetings challenging, try soliciting opinions in other venues or breaking up the group into smaller subgroups. Additionally, understand that in some cultures, important discussions may happen outside of formal meetings. By being flexible and adaptable, you can accommodate different cultural norms and ensure that everyone has a chance to contribute.



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