

How to overcome cross-cultural barriers in legal business communication

Cultural factors are among the most important aspects responsible for the success or failure of business negotiations when people with different cultural backgrounds meet, and legal business is a special area where not only cultural factors, but the entire matrix of cross-cultural problematic settings becomes more than evident.

It can be difficult for international legal negotiators to establish and maintain relationships of confidence and trust with clients of different national cultures. Working across jurisdictions requires not only linguistic or legal knowledge, but also involves understanding and conveying real concepts, and not only words. Nevertheless, international lawyers cannot approach effective cross-cultural communication in the same way as domestic lawyers. Instead, they follow the important rule of assuming difference until similarity is proven, rather than assuming similarity until difference is proven.

In attempting to understand their foreign clients, successful legal experts focus on observing what is actually said and done and gathering all possible information, rather than merely interpreting or evaluating a situation. Evaluation rarely helps in trying to understand or communicate with people from other cultures. Therefore, effective legal negotiators delay their judgement until they have sufficient time to observe matters from the perspectives of all cultures involved.

All international legal business activities involve communication at various levels. Achieving effective cross-cultural communication while working across jurisdictions or with foreign clients is a challenge for lawyers worldwide.

After developing an interpretation of or explanation for a situation, successful legal experts consider them a guess or hypothesis to be tested, but not as a certainty. They constantly check with their colleagues from home and abroad in order to confirm that their explanations are plausible. This approach avoids situations in which accepted interpretations are partially wrong or provide a fallacious opinion.

Effective legal negotiators prefer to wait when there is a silence. They do not rush in to fill the silence in a meeting. A foreign client is probably just looking for the right words or thinking more slowly due to the use of his or her non-native language or is waiting for an internal or external translation.

In conclusion, there are various ways to increase the chances of accurately and properly understanding foreign clients. In situations of cross-cultural communication, legal experts see themselves confronted with the limits of their own perceptions, interpretation, or evaluations

and might suspect that alternative realities are at play. However, with caution and cross-cultural sensitivity, it is possible to overcome cross-cultural barriers and to succeed in legal business, in particular by developing proper strategies. ■



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NEW SERVICE

COMPETENCE CENTRE FOR LEGAL TRANSLATION BRINGS ADDED VALUE TO LGP'S SERVICES

LGP transforms its Translation Department into the Competence Centre for Legal Translation and offers traditional legal services at a new level.

Today, most international clients speak English, and some even speak German. This enables communication and provides an opportunity to speak directly to your expert. Nevertheless, LGP decided to go a step further. This year, LGP transformed its Translation Department into the Competence Centre for Legal Translation in order to offer the entire legal consultation process in clients' native languages. This decision shows that the company, on the one hand, is performing well on an international scale, and on the other hand, it shows that LGP is willing to offer its clients much more than merely translating documents.

When working with international clients, LGP has proven that it provides quality services by engaging legal experts who originally come from the same countries as its clients. This helps avoid misunderstandings arising from certain cross-cultural barriers and mitigate and clear up discrepancies that may occur between the Austrian mentality and those of the clients, as well as between the legal business style in Austria and the one in the client's country of origin. The company has

learned from its own experience that cultural misunderstandings can considerably hinder the work process and even convey a completely wrong impression of a client to the outside world.

By adding the Competence Centre for Legal Translation to its bundled services, LGP is not only continuing to provide high-end legal expertise, but is now offering considerable advantages to its clients by doing so in the clients' native languages. The Competence Centre ensures quality management, timely delivery and very strict quality and cost control.

Apart from that, it is also constantly expanding the number of languages with which it works. Working across jurisdictions and cultures, the Competence Centre helps bring traditional legal services to a completely new level.

Dr. Victoria Froltsova



COMPETENCE CENTRE FOR LEGAL TRANSLATION

The LGP Competence Centre for Legal Translation offers added value to LGP's legal services. Whether assisting with a statute, agreement, hearing or business negotiations, it is a highly competent partner in a wide range of legal or economic matters originally formulated in a foreign language.

Experts with a legal background

Our team members are not only educated in legal and economic disciplines, but also have extensive experience in consulting. Additionally, their understanding of cultural context ensures effective client-attorney communication.

High-end service based on quality and reliability

The highest accuracy and very strict quality management makes our services unmatched on the market.

Customer-tailored solutions

We give our clients flexibility and offer reasonable prices. To ensure value for our customers, we tailor custom-fit solutions to best match their needs.

Time-saving solutions

Our clients need not spend time looking for a good translator or interpreter. Our Centre provides flexible and time-saving solutions for clients regardless of their geographical location.