



Quick E-Tips



INTERNATIONAL
ADVANTAGE

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Thank you for subscribing to this newsletter brought to you by International Advantage™ – *Leading Across Cultures*. Every month we bring you tips to help your team and organization, especially those operating in culturally diverse environments, reach their business goals.

Topic this month: Need Information FAST about Your International Travel Destination?

The first thing I saw in the airport was an enormous sign with a photo of Nelson Mandela with a reference to “Madiba.” I was in Cape Town, South Africa.

Wow. I had just finished the better part of Nelson Mandela’s 625-page book, *Long Walk to Freedom*, and had learned that “Madiba” is Nelson Mandela’s clan name – and a term of respect – that all South Africans know him by. (*Am I the only one who loves seeing evidence of my learning shortly after reading something new?*)

Of course, the idea of reading the book was to learn more about South Africa, its history, and the context of my work.

No time for 625 pages about the history or culture of the place you are going? (Me neither, oftentimes.)

Here are a few other ideas when traveling to different countries, in order to understand the context and aid in building relationships.

6 Tips: How to Gather Information About Your Travel Destination... When Time Is Short:

1. If you have some time the week beforehand: Buy a book (or get a book from the library) about your destination. When all you can find are 400-page novels that you will not make time to read, consider a children’s book, where the history is often laid out simply and clearly.
2. If you have an extra hour: Do an Internet search for headlines in that country, print out the most recent 10 news items, and read them while in flight.
3. If you have only the time at the airport: Buy a newspaper or magazine that covers that area of the world and scavenge for articles of interest. The magazine, *The Economist*, has articles broken down by region and country!
4. If you are already in the air: Find out if the person next to you has in-country experience or buy a newspaper as soon as you land. In the latter case, study the photos and decipher the headlines. Make sure to have a pocket dictionary to translate.
5. If none of these ideas will work for you: Ask your taxi driver what is going on in the country and city and get as much info as possible before you reach your destination. (Once, when talking to a taxi

driver in Mauritius – an island off of Madagascar – I found out that President Bush was planning to arrive the next day for an environmental conference! P.S. He later cancelled his trip.)

6. With any of these above ideas, try to retain 3 topics to bring up during conversational moments. Remember, you don't have to be an expert. Your counterparts will be impressed you have taken the time to learn something about their country. Once you bring it up, let your in-country counterpart do most of the talking. (It is also helpful to know cultural norms regarding whether people avoid or welcome differences of opinion when building relationships. The U.S., for example, avoids.)

News

1. **Results of Latest Workshop -- Returning Client, Pulte Homes, Inc.**

The results of our recent training with Pulte Homes, Inc. are in. After the four-hour workshop entitled "**Effective Leadership of a Latino Workforce in the Construction Industry**," participants in Palm Desert, California, reported that their **efficiency would improve 49.6%** (average) as a result of what they learned. Fabulous.

Pulte Homes, Inc. is the largest residential homebuilder in the world, established in the U.S., Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Argentina. The workshop included leadership and communication strategies for V.P.'s and Managers in Project Management, Operations, Customer Relations, and others. (*International Advantage® has had the pleasure of working with Pulte since 1998.*)

2. **Returning Client, ITESO – Guadalajara, Mexico**

This month we will return for the fifth straight year to deliver the **MBA course "Negotiation and Executive Behavior in NAFTA Countries,"** at the Instituto Tecnológico de Estudios Superiores de Occidente. The intensive course will be held March 24 – April 2. For information, contact LRI. Paola Sandoval, ITESO – MBA, Tel.: 3669 3414

3. **Event Announcement at the Institute of Management Consultants –AZ Chapter**

Attend our meeting at the **Institute of Management Consultants, Arizona Chapter**. Always the second Friday of the month.

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To your continued success around the globe,

Lisa

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