



Quick E-Tips



INTERNATIONAL
ADVANTAGE

December 2003

WELCOME! Bienvenu! Bienvenido!

Enjoy these 2 tips on *business culture and language learning*...

Culture/Communication Tip: Incentives and Gift-Giving

I thought a good topic for this month would be gift-giving and incentives, since we are somehow...somehow already in December!

I have been asked lots of questions from both global and local companies about appropriate gifts for employees and clients who have different cultural backgrounds. Indeed, it is easy to make a mistake on this. Good relationships help ease the embarrassment of a *faux-pas*, but a poor choice can affect business and/or lower your esteem in the eyes of your counterpart.

When choosing a gift for the French, for example, the idea is to buy something of very high quality, even if the quantity is small (which can go against the American cultural pre-disposition that "more is better"). Avoid the too-lavish or too-skimpy. Good taste is everything. A gift which reflects the area you are coming from or items that reflect intellect (books, music) work great.

When choosing a gift for Mexicans, there are different cultural precepts. One client told me the story of his attempt to reward a star employee, a Mexican. The two tickets to a Diamondbacks game were never used. Why? The employee gave away those tickets since he would be unable to take more than one child. Of course, this is a behavioral manifestation of the most commonly known aspect of Mexican culture: families are often more united and tend to socialize as such.

Even more important than WHAT to give, however, is the MANNER in which a gift is presented. To Mexicans, for example, often the best way to present something is in an extremely gracious manner, with a good dose of pomp and circumstance. If you are recognizing someone's good work, a sincere, short speech about the individual and the accomplishment, presented in front of that person's peers, subordinates, or superiors (depending on the situation) is often most satisfying for the recipient.

Tip: Think about what to give? Yes, but also consider HOW to present the gift most appropriately, relative to the culture and circumstances. Otherwise, it may not have the results you intended.

Language Tip: To learn new vocabulary, have you ever labeled everything in your house? Made flashcards? Joined a conversation class? Bought tapes to listen in your car?How successful was it? The answer will partly depend on your learning style. If you study the language (or anything else you want to learn) in a way that best matches your learning style, you will be more successful.

A Colombian friend gave me this 35 question survey (attached) that helps learners identify their learning style. This is fun and was "right on" for me!

There are no "right" or "wrong" answers. With this tool, you identify your learning preferences and should be able to infer whether you learn best working with partners or groups, with written exercises,

with writing stories, giving speeches, finding patterns and making graphic organizers, using music, creating or designing something or by reflecting independently.

Happy Holidays! Felices Fiestas! Joyeux Noël y Bonne Année!

Feel free to suggest topics for future E-tips!

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Lisa Koss

International Advantage - Leading Across Cultures

(623) 516-2482 (U.S.A.)

www.intladvantage.com

lisakoss@intladvantage.com