



Quick E-Tips



INTERNATIONAL
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WELCOME! Bienvenu! Bienvenido!

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

Culture/Communication Tip: E-mail use

Imagine that you need to ask a colleague or client – whom you do not know very well for a favor or to take some action. What do you do?

Write an e-mail?
Pick up the phone? or
Stop by their office?

Fill in the blank: "It depends. But in most cases, I would _____."

Part of the challenge of communicating in our global environment is that we tend to use the communication style that works best for us, instead of using the style of the person who is receiving the message.

Americans tend to be "low-context", unlike most of the rest of the world. A "lowcontext" communicator might assume that email is most efficient for both parties (and a core value for both parties), as well as considerate (not distracting the recipient from a higher priority). The interpretation can be different. Consider that:

1. The very use of email as a medium is relevant to the "high context" communicator. Receiving important information (large company change, performance commentary, a death, etc.), for example, can be received as an insult or as "cold-hearted".
2. It is difficult to move off your "cultural space" with email. Sitting in front of your computer, you are less likely to keep in mind other cultural adjustments that may be important for the recipient.

Suggestions for communicating (especially across cultures):

- Ask the recipient their preferred media.
- Use multiple media when communicating.
- Use email to give information as to what is on the agenda for a face-to-face meeting.

Quick E-Tips

- Avoid sending important information via email. If you cannot avoid it, have someone else read it to check your tone, word choice, and possible cultural misinterpretations.
- Consider that email may be most effective when strong rapport exists.

Language Tip: Practice your second language in time blocks

If you are working on learning a second (or third) language, hopefully you have someone with whom to practice regularly. When you practice with that person, attempt to stay in the foreign language for as long as possible, before reverting back to your native language. It is not as effective to switch back and forth between your first and second language.

Switching to your first language whenever you run into trouble denies you the opportunity to practice your circumlocution skills. In other words, if you don't know the word for "landscaper", for example, describe the idea with words you do know ("the person who designs a yard"). Circumlocution is a fundamental skill in negotiating meaning as you work toward fluency.

Our apologies if you did not receive the **January Quick E-tip**. It has come to my attention that some never received it on January 8th. To view the January E-tip (or other past issues), click <http://www.intladvantage.com/etips.htm> .

Feedback?

Any comments, questions or suggestions about these tips are welcome! Also, there is an "Ask Lisa" page on the website. Check out others' questions or submit your own!
<http://www.intladvantage.com/asklisa.htm>

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Lisa

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