
Business Etiquette and Cross-Cultural Conduct for Senior Executives Training Course

2 – 6 August 2027
Milan





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Programme Summary

Business etiquette and cross-cultural conduct for senior executives is a five-day training course for directors and senior officials at strategic level, culminating in a delegation hosting and conduct plan for an upcoming international engagement. Leaders meeting foreign counterparts are judged on introductions, seating, correspondence, dining and gifts before substance is discussed. The approach links cultural models to concrete conduct choices, then rehearses them in realistic hosting and meeting scenarios. Mars Training Centre UK delivers this programme in business etiquette and cross-cultural conduct.

The Business Case

A misjudged form of address, a seating error or an unsuitable gift can cost goodwill built over months, and it reflects on the whole organisation. Leaders who read cultural expectations correctly and apply consistent standards protect reputation and shorten the path to agreement.

- Partner and Stakeholder Confidence: Strengthens as delegations receive consistent, culturally aware hosting.
- Reputational Risk Exposure: Falls as gift, hospitality and correspondence decisions follow agreed standards rather than individual habit.
- Engagement Outcomes: Improve as meeting conduct and pacing match each counterpart's decision style.

Principles and Evidence Base

- The Culture Map Communicating and Trusting Scales: Frame how implicit messages are read and how trust is built, applied to first meetings in Session 1.
- The Culture Map Deciding, Disagreeing and Scheduling Scales: Guide how meetings are paced, how objections are raised and how consensus is reached, applied in Session 3.
- Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions: Explain expectations about hierarchy, formality and time, applied to precedence, forms of address and hosting choices in Sessions 2 and 4.

Intended Participants

- Leaders who receive official or commercial delegations and represent their organisation at senior meetings.
- Executives who travel to negotiate, sign agreements or attend high-level visits abroad.
- Heads of executive offices who prepare principals for meetings, visits and formal dinners.
- Senior public relations and external affairs officers who set hospitality and gift standards.



The programme serves government ministries and agencies, diplomatic and international affairs units, energy and infrastructure companies, and banks and investment firms with cross-border partners.

Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to diagnose the cultural expectations of a counterpart using recognised cultural models.
2. Participants will be able to apply correct forms of address, introductions and order of precedence in formal and business settings.
3. Participants will be able to adapt meeting conduct, pacing and disagreement style to the counterpart's decision culture.
4. Participants will be able to plan the hosting of a visiting delegation, from arrival and seating to dining and departure.
5. Participants will be able to evaluate gift, hospitality and dress decisions against organisational standards and the counterpart's norms.
6. Participants will be able to construct a delegation hosting and conduct plan for a forthcoming engagement.

Programme Structure

Day 1: Business Etiquette Foundations and Cultural Reading

How does a leader read what a counterpart expects before the first meeting?

- Executive Presence and First Impressions
- The Culture Map Communicating and Trusting Scales
- High-Context and Low-Context Messages
- Counterpart Cultural Profile Template
- Personal Conduct Self-Assessment

Day 2: Forms of Address, Precedence and Correspondence

How are rank, titles and written exchanges handled without causing offence?

- Titles, Honorifics and Forms of Address
- Order of Precedence in Meetings and Ceremonies
- Introductions, Greetings and Business Card Exchange
- Formal Letters, Invitations and Replies
- Email and Messaging Etiquette for Senior Correspondence

Day 3: Cross-Cultural Meeting and Negotiation Conduct

How should meetings be paced and disagreements handled across cultures?



- The Culture Map Deciding, Disagreeing and Scheduling Scales
- Agenda Design and Meeting Room Seating Plans
- Interpreters and Bilingual Meeting Management
- Silence, Directness and Saving Face
- Follow-Up Records and Commitment Tracking

Day 4: Hosting Delegations, Dining and Hospitality

How is a visiting delegation hosted from arrival to farewell?

- Delegation Visit Programme and Arrival Planning
- Formal Dinner Seating and Table Etiquette
- Dietary, Religious and Hospitality Considerations
- Gift Selection, Presentation and Disclosure Rules
- Dress Codes for Official and Business Occasions

Day 5: Applying Business Etiquette to a Live Engagement

How are cultural reading, precedence, meeting conduct and hosting combined into one plan?

- Counterpart Profile for a Forthcoming Visit
- Seating, Programme and Hospitality Choices
- Simulated Delegation Meeting and Peer Feedback
- Recovery from Etiquette Errors
- Delegation Hosting and Conduct Plan Presentation

Methodology

The programme relies on simulation supported by case analysis. Participants play host and guest roles in staged arrivals, meetings and formal dinners, receive feedback on conduct, and analyse cases from government visits, energy partnerships and financial negotiations.

- Suggested activity: Building a seating plan for a bilateral meeting with mixed ranks.
- Suggested activity: Rewriting a formal invitation for a counterpart from a hierarchical culture.
- Suggested activity: Role-playing a formal dinner with a gift exchange and a toast.

Capstone Output

Each participant completes a delegation hosting and conduct plan for a real engagement. It contains a counterpart cultural profile, the order of precedence and seating, the visit programme, dining and gift choices, dress guidance and a briefing note for the principal, shared with the team running the visit.



Frequently Asked Questions

Is business etiquette and cross-cultural conduct training suitable for experienced senior executives?

Yes. It suits leaders who already meet international counterparts and assumes senior experience but no formal protocol background.

Which models underpin business etiquette and cross-cultural conduct in this programme?

It rests on Erin Meyer's Culture Map, particularly its communicating, trusting, deciding, disagreeing and scheduling scales, and on Hofstede's cultural dimensions for hierarchy, formality and time.

How is the business etiquette and delegation hosting plan used at work?

You take back a plan for a real visit, with a counterpart profile, seating, programme, hospitality and a principal's briefing note.

How does business etiquette and cross-cultural conduct differ from an official protocol programme?

It focuses on personal conduct, meetings and hosting by leaders themselves, rather than the full planning of state ceremonies, flags and official events run by protocol departments.