



Introduction to French Business Culture

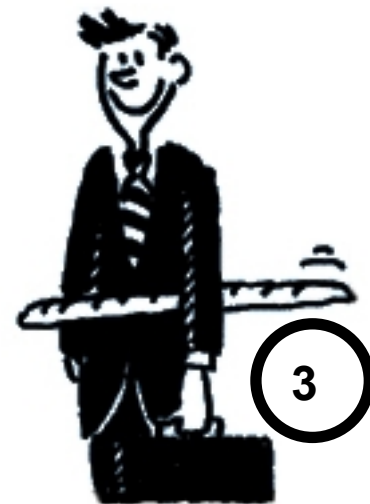
Agenda

- The French Culture In General
- The French Business Culture
- Employment Problems In France
- HR Management in France



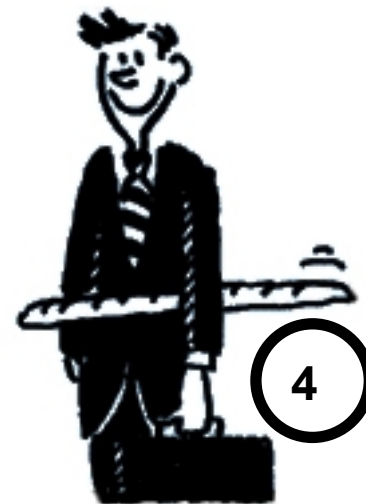
First Part */ première partie*

The French Culture In General



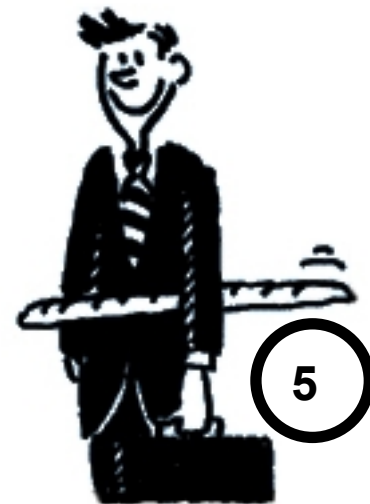
Behaving French!

- French body language is very expressive.
- French are comfortable with touch and less personal space.
- Punctuality is treated very casually in France
- Remember...
- Slapping the open palm over a closed fist is vulgar and should be avoided.
- Sitting with legs spread apart is impolite
- The French are discreet about their personal habits.



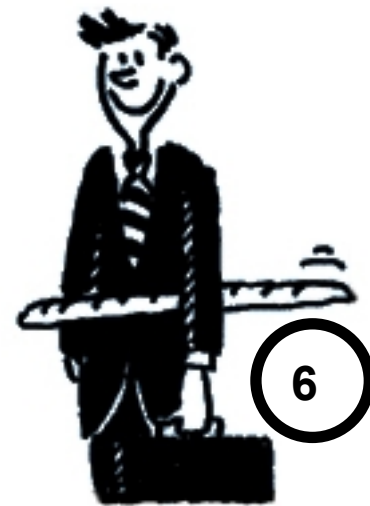
Parlez français?

- It is important that you do not begin a conversation in English
- The French have a great appreciation for the art of conversation.
- French conversation moves rapidly to new topics.
- The French frequently interrupt each other, as the argument is a form of entertainment.
- Keeping the volume of your voice in check is important.



Understanding French Relationships

- The French are private people and have different rules of behavior for friends and family and those who are not.
- Although the French are generally polite, it is only with their close friends and family that they are free to be themselves
- Do not expect to visit someone's home and do not ask to visit.



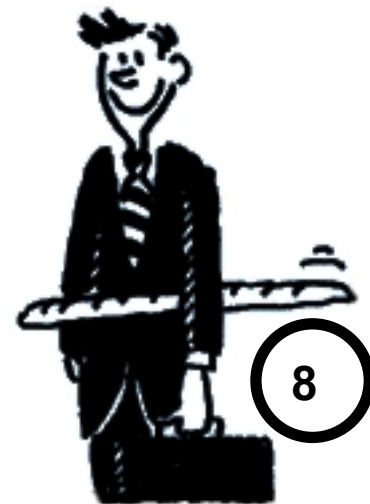
The Intial Rendez-vous

- A handshake is a common form of greeting when arriving and leaving. Impolite if you do not do so.
- Friends may greet each other by lightly kissing on the cheeks. Some start with the right cheek, some with the left. Some make a kiss-simulating noise with their mouth. The total number of kisses depends on the region, the person, and many other things. -Go with the flow-
- First names are reserved for family and close friends. Wait until invited before using someone's first name.
- Using someone's formal titles is important



French Gourmet

- If you are invited to a French house for dinner:
 - Arrive on time. Under no circumstances should you arrive more than 15 minutes later than invited without telephoning to explain you have been detained.
 - Do not dress too casually, the French version of casual is not as informal as in many western countries.
- Be ready for a long meal (especially on Christmas or New Year's Eve)
- Try to be open-minded when eating- refusing a dish is seen as impolite
- At the end of the party, the hostess will offer orange juice or something like it: which implies "the meal is over."
- If headed out for a social drink then usually the French sip an aperitif or two, but are not generally heavy drinkers.
- In a restaurant divide the bill up evenly.



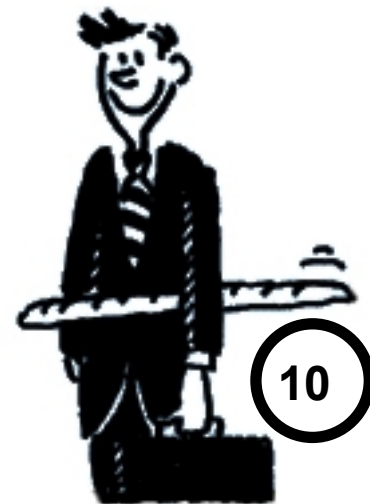
Dining the French Way

- Do not begin eating until the host/hostess says 'bon appetit'
- Do not rest your elbows on the table, although your hands should be visible and not in your lap.
- Women should not refill their own wine glass.
- It is polite to finish everything on your plate.
- Leave your wineglass nearly full if you do not want more.



Choosing the Right Gift!

- Bringing a gift is a decision left up to the guest.
- Flowers should be given in odd numbers-13 is considered unlucky. Also white lilies and chrysanthemums are traditionally reserved for funerals, red carnations symbolize bad will, and any white flowers are used at weddings.
- If you decide to give wine, make sure to purchase the best quality you can afford.
- Gifts are usually opened when received.



Second Part / *seconde partie*

The French Business Culture



Convince With Your Appearance!

- Important part of self-presentation
- Wear fancy and modern clothing!
- Conservative clothing for women
- Preferably patterned or dark, not bright
- Use high quality and brand-conscious!



Behave Correctly!

- Punctuality: casual South, strict North!
- Handshakes are common (brief, eye-contact)
- Do not discuss private issues in negotiations
- Use lunchtime to meet with business contacts
- Vivid discussions are appreciated
 - Do not use pressure!
 - Argue logically!



How To Communicate?

- Before actual business talks, form relationship
- Use titles when possible
- Apology for missing French knowledge
- Use at least french phrases
- The first name is reserved for family and friends



The Way Meetings Go

- Appointments at least 2 weeks in advance
- August and July is vacation time!
- Good debating skills are highly respected
- Meetings are for discussions not for decisions!
- Accept the detailed examination of contracts



Third Part / *troisième partie*

Employment Problems in France



Problems in France

- Social infrastructure
 - Like no other country
 - The State is bankrupt
- Strike
 - Everybody like to go on strike for everything
- Large ethnic-minority population



Ethnic Minorities and Immigrants

- 15% of population
 - Mostly from North and West Africa
- Unemployment
 - discrimination
- New situation
 - Forefront: banks and insurances
 - New customers
 - Globalization and recruiting needs



Ethnic Minorities and Immigrants

- “Garnier”
 - Racist recruitment campaign
 - Only “BBR”-women
- New government line of President Nicolas Sarkozy
 - ◆ 👍 junior minister posts
 - ◆ 👎 € 6.000,-- for each family if they go back



Disabled People

- More than 5 million people
- Unemployment
- Solutions:
 - 1 unpaid working day
 - Individual benefit
 - Special department for disabled people
 - New law



Law on equality of rights and chances, participation and citizenship of disabled persons

- Broad consensus
- Definition of disability in French law
- Equality and discrimination
- Reasonable accommodation
- Protection
 - 6%
 - Contribution to AGEFIPH



Fourth Part / *quatrième partie*

HR Management In France



Human Resources

- Employment :
 - Unemployment rate: 8,7%
 - Unemployment rate among young people: 21%
 - The case of the CPE (First employment contract) which led to violent protests in 2006
 - Unemployment benefits (RMI): 445€ per month (minimum)



Human Resources (2)

- The 35 hours-working week :
 - Measure adopted in 2000 under Prime Minister Lionel Jospin
 - Objectives:
 - Reduce unemployment
 - Improve the quality of life
 - A very controversial measure:
 - Results on employment were not what it was expected
 - Many people would like to work more to earn more.



Human Resources (3)

- Salary:
 - High minimum wage: 1254 € in 2005, received by 16,8% of the working population. It increases every year
 - Very high assessment for companies
- Training:
 - School is obligatory until the age of 16
 - Training is highly supported by the state (employers are required to support training or pay a tax to the state)
 - Systems of reintegration for unemployed with training time



Surprise! / *surprise*

Are you ready for a quiz?



French Culture Quiz

true or false?

1. The American 'OK' sign is the equivalent of the figure 'zero'.

True

2. When invited for dinner at a French friend or colleague's home, you should always bring a bottle of wine?

False. A French host will be expected to carefully choose the wine to match the meal.

3. Interrupting during business meetings is a sign of disrespect. You should remain silent until your counterpart has finished speaking.

False. Interrupting is a sign that you are interested in what your business colleagues have to say.



French Culture Quiz

4. Slapping the open palm over a closed fist is considered a particularly rude gesture.

True

5. It is customary to leave a small amount of food on your plate at the end of a meal to signify you have enjoyed it and to avoid insulting your host.

False. Leaving food on your plate is considered impolite.



Fini! Merci de votre attention!

Thank you for your attention!

Any questions?

