

# Intercultural Competence

April 2019



THINKING OF TOMORROW

[omya.com](http://omya.com)

# Agenda

- Vorstellung Christophe Schmitt, Christian Rainer
- Intro Omya
- Kulturelle Kompetenz
  - Was ist das ?
  - Einordnung in integriertes Management
  - Beispiele
- Schlussfolgerung

Diskussion



# Who I am ? Christophe



Grew up in Alsace with German, Swiss and Italian roots

Studied in France

Met my wife Brunella with Italian roots in Geneva

Married over 25 years with Brunella, great wife and coach, and living together with our almost 18 year old daughter Carla

This document contains proprietary information which shall not be used and disclosed without Omya explicit written authorization



## My professional exposure Christophe

Grace in France and the US

BP Chemicals in Switzerland,  
Germany and UK

Novartis in Switzerland

Omya in Switzerland

Today: 70% of the time outside Switzerland

**Who I am ?  
Christian**



**Grew up in  
Austria**

**Studied in  
Austria / CH**

**Travelled to  
everywhere in  
Europe**

**Met my wife 35 years ago in Vienna**



## My professional exposure - Christian



**Today: 70% of the time outside Switzerland**





Welcome to Omya



THINKING OF TOMORROW

“

*We are where life unfolds.*

*To enhance our customers' businesses  
in multiple markets.*

*With unrivaled expertise, solid experience  
and true passion.*



Global producer of  
**Industrial Minerals**

Worldwide distributor of  
**Specialty Chemicals**





COMPANY PROFILE

## Facts & figures

More than **175 plants and offices** in over **50 countries**



Global ownership of mineral deposits for the next **100 years**

**7** laboratories and **7** pilots plants for innovation



Privately-owned **Swiss** corporation with headquarters in Oftringen, Switzerland

**8,000** employees



CHF **3.9** billion turnover

## Commitment since 1884

- Founded 1884 in Switzerland, by Gottfried Plüss and Emma Stauffer
- Producing glazing putty, made of fine chalk mixed with linseed oil

KREIDE- & KITTFABRIKEN

OFTRINGEN

PLÜSS-STAUFER

Werkzeugmaschinen  
KITZBERG-OFTRINGEN

CHALONS-MARNE  
FRANKREICH

Médaille d'or et d'argent  
N. CH. MARSEILLE 1889  
GENÈVE



PLÜSS & STAUFFER  
OFTRINGEN,  
SUISSE

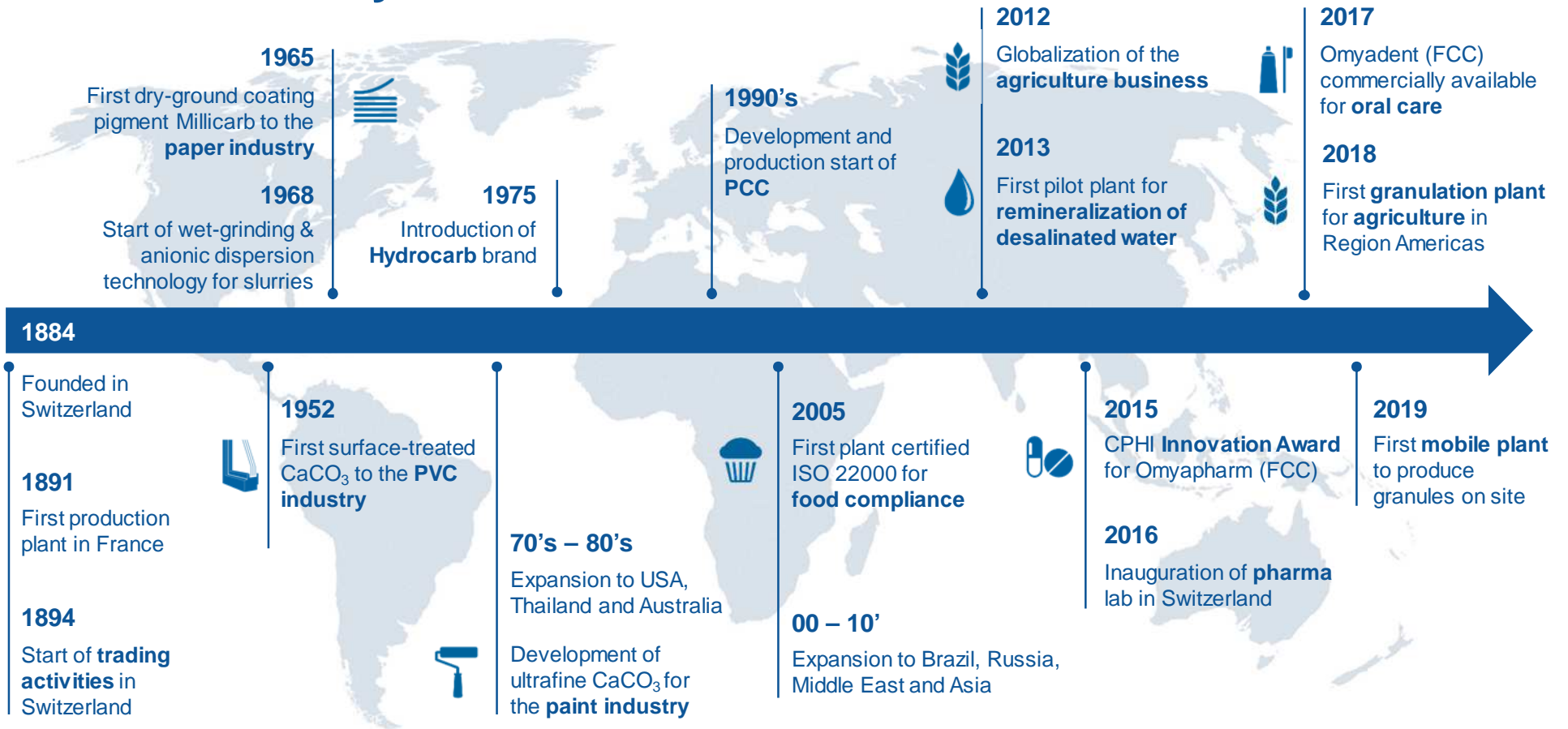
Am 6. April 1884

*Handwritten signature: Johann Effenberger, Ingenieur*



COMPANY PROFILE

# More than 130 years of innovation



**5 Fakten wie die Eventbranche sich bis 2020 verändert**

**Wie weiter ?**

- Es wird kein Event mehr geben, das nicht auch digital stattfindet.
- Es wird von jedem Event mindestens ein Video auf YouTube geben.
- Es werden 80 % aller Eventeinladungen digital überbracht.
- Es werden Eventtickets mit dem Smartphone bezahlt.
- Es werden Offlinevents einen neuen Hype auslösen.

**AUSBILDUNG & WEITERBILDUNG**  
 In der Eventbranche braucht man mehr als nur Ehrgeiz, ein gutes Netzwerk und langjährige Erfahrung. Ausbildung und Weiterbildung sind für den Erfolg essenziell.  
 FOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK

**Kunden**





# Digitale Revolution

08.04.2019





08.04.2019



**change management !**



*A strong value-led corporate culture is guiding our activities - every day, around the world.*





## Safety is core to our operating principles

### MODESTY

- We never underestimate the risks of a situation.

### COURTESY

- We always take care for the safety of our people.

### INTEGRITY

- We report all unsafe situations.

### PERSEVERANCE

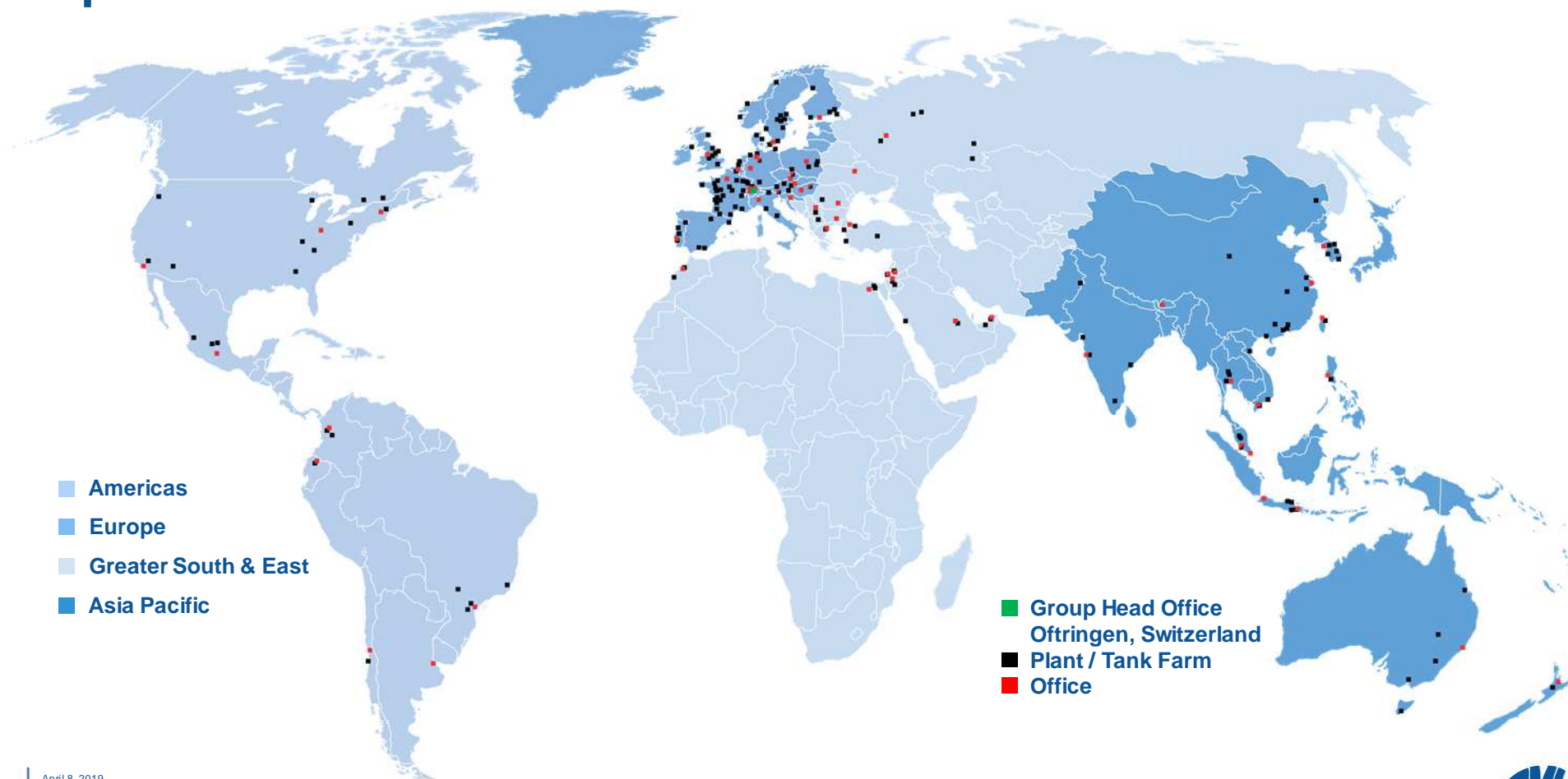
- Our target is zero injuries.



*We demonstrate leadership in living our safety commitment.*



# Operations worldwide



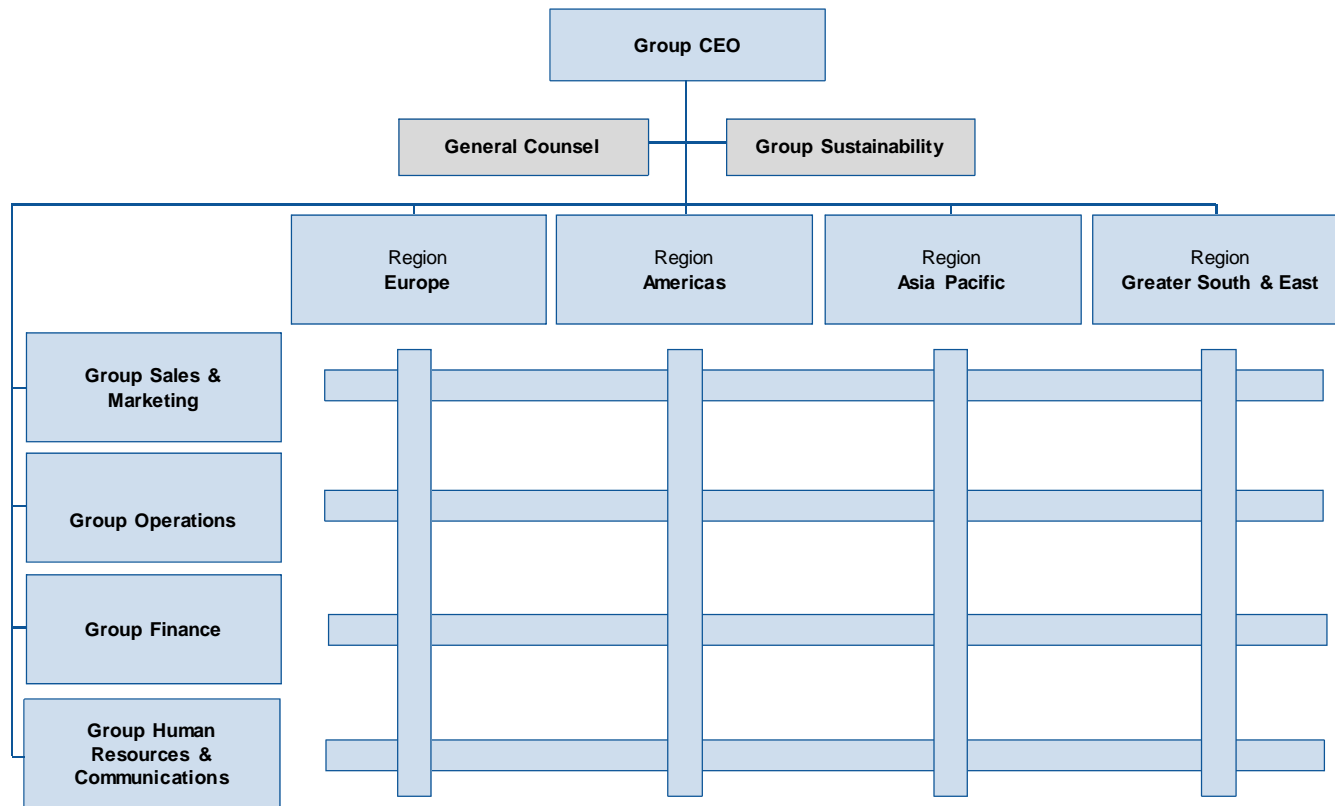
- Americas
- Europe
- Greater South & East
- Asia Pacific

- Group Head Office  
Oftringen, Switzerland
- Plant / Tank Farm
- Office



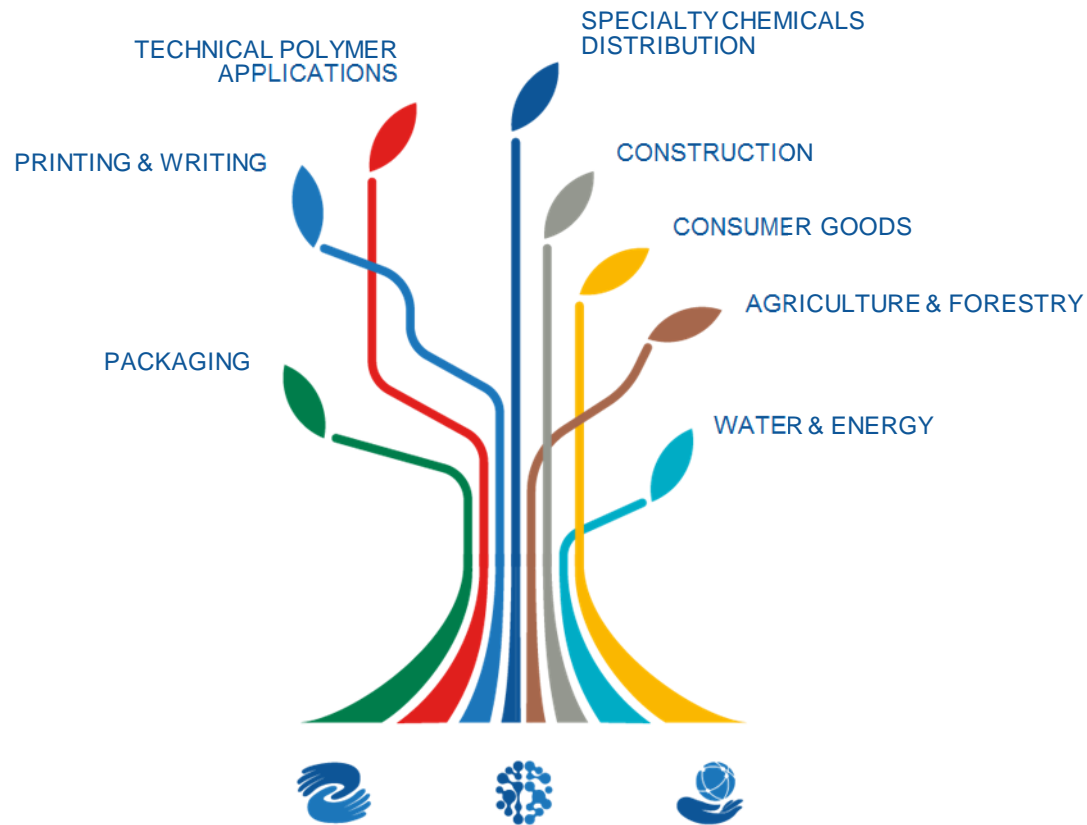


# Matrix Organisation



COMPANY PROFILE

# Business segments



April 8, 2019

## *Thinking of Tomorrow*



CUSTOMER CARE



INNOVATION



SUSTAINABILITY



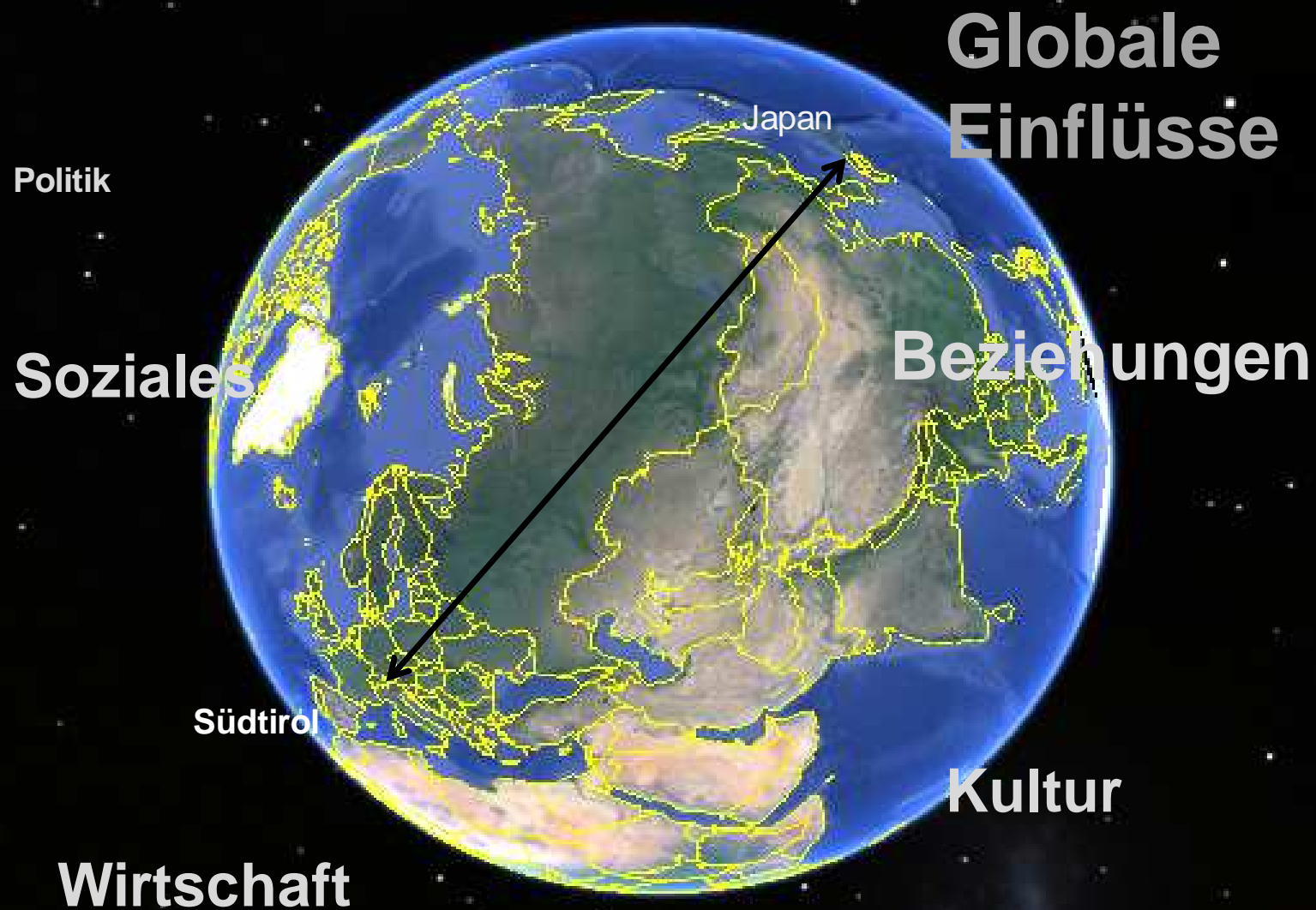
Führung und Gestaltung

Markt

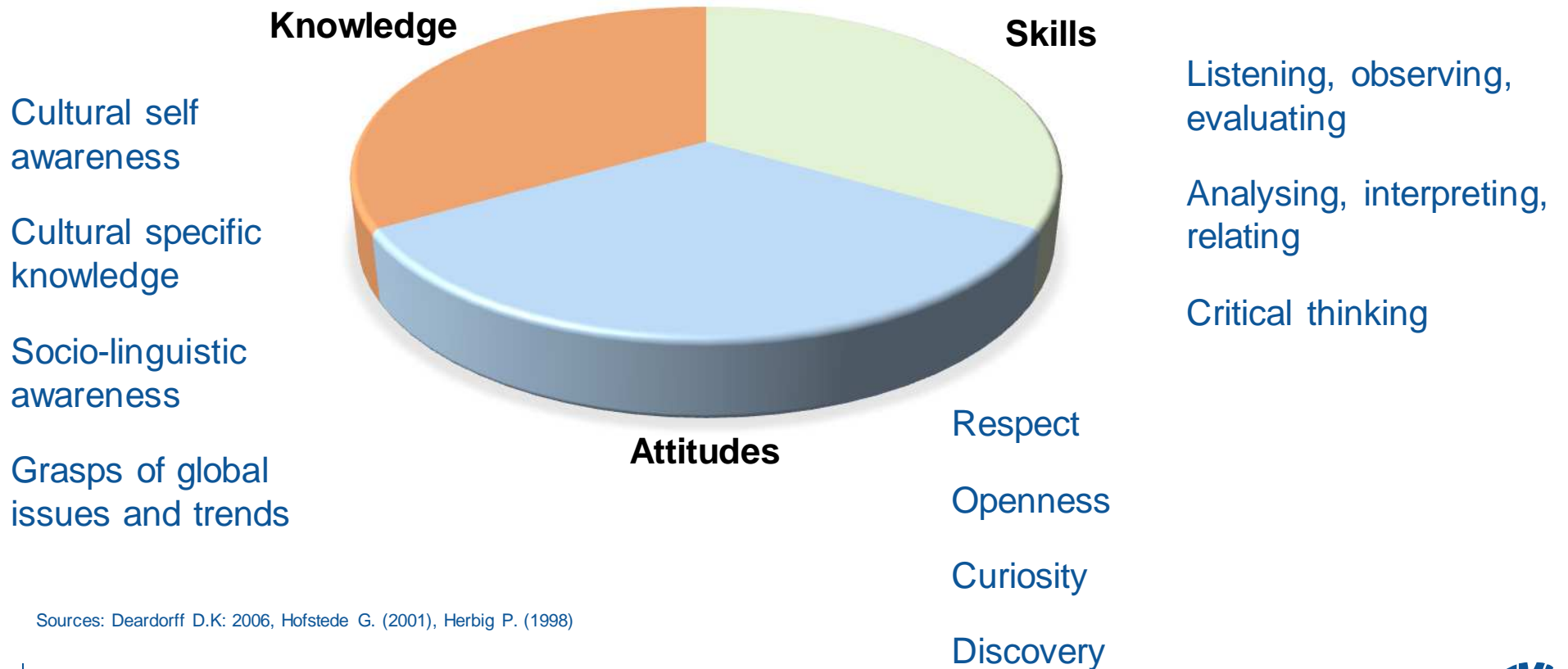
MitarbeiterInnen

Umwelt, Kultur

Gesellschaft



# Constituent elements of intercultural competence

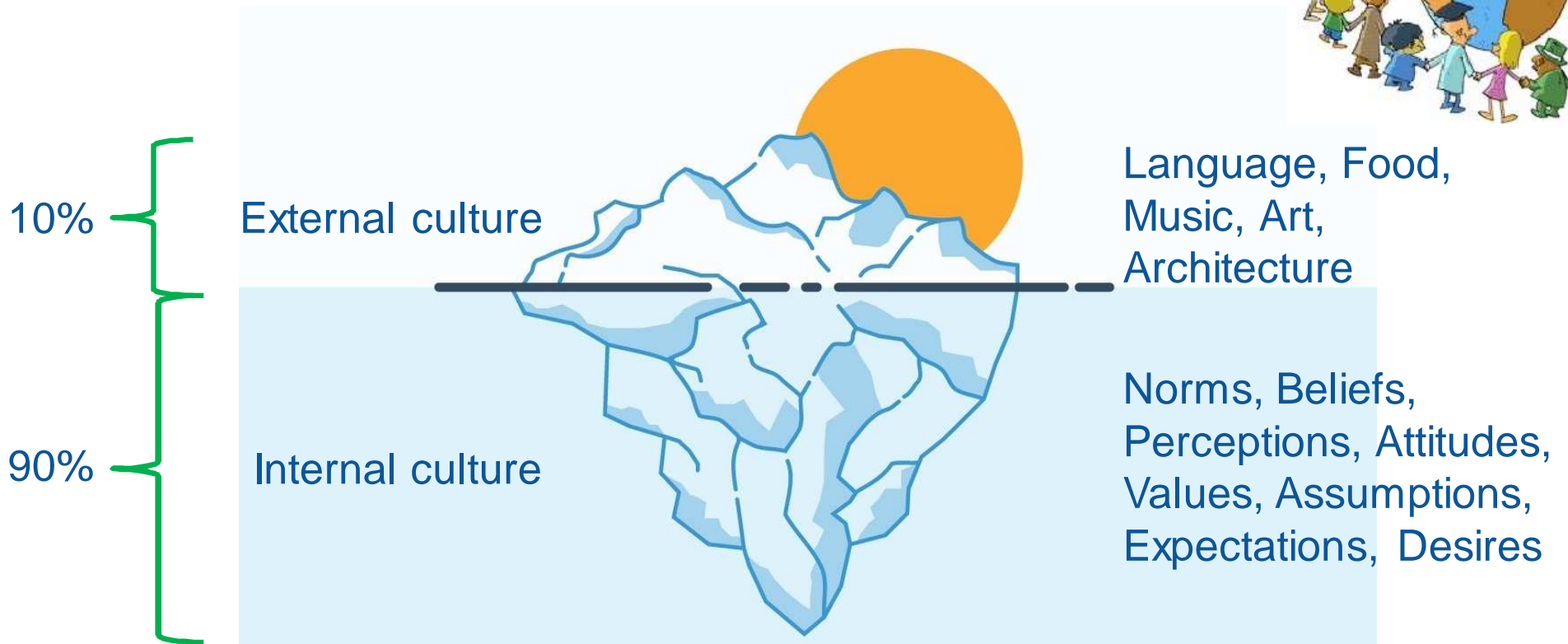


Sources: Deardorff D.K: 2006, Hofstede G. (2001), Herbig P. (1998)



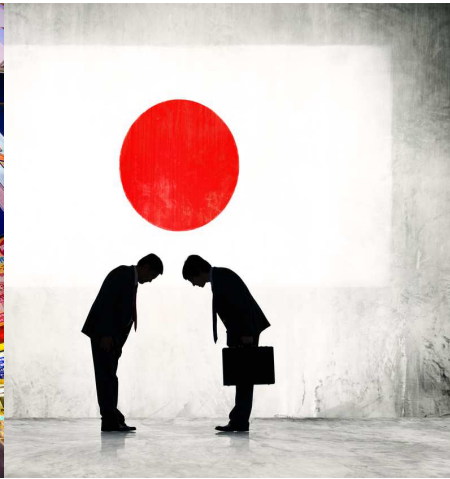


# Intercultural Communication



## INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

# Japan



- Silence is golden
- Group solidarity is paramount
- Age equals seniority
- Hierarchy !
- Privacy is valued
- Losing face is a no-go



## Japan

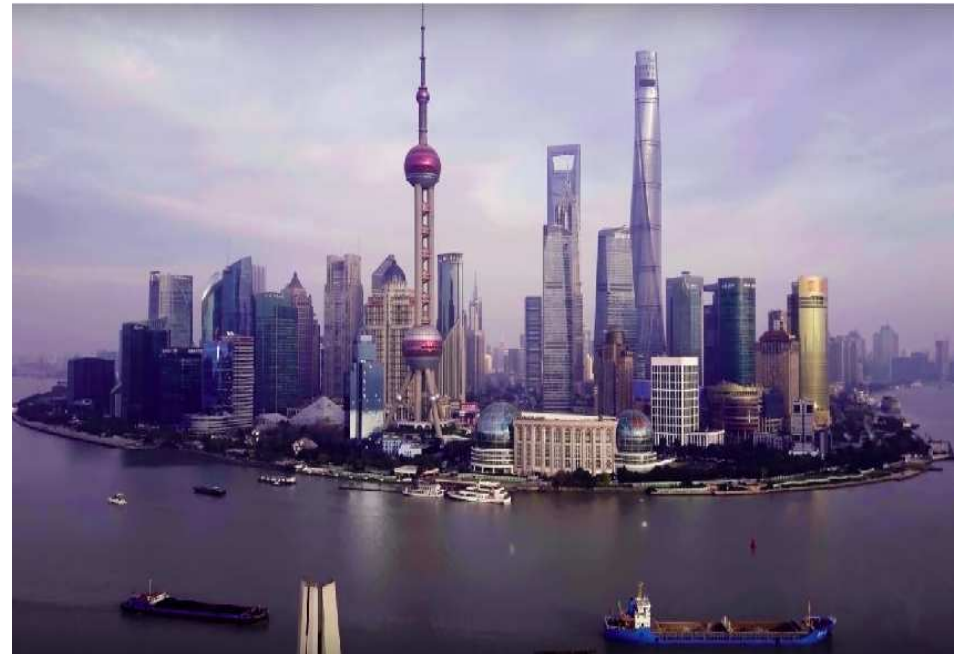
- Be prepared for more (meetings) and repeated (meetings)
- Contracts are honored
- Never comment about your employees / your competitors
- The small stuff matters
- Arrive 10 minutes earlier
- The other side of the table thinks in Japanese
- Being polite. They do not want to be rude by rejecting an offer.  
They want the foreign executive to lose interest

# China



Shanghai in 1990

The skyscrapers in China do not mean that all western habits are lived there

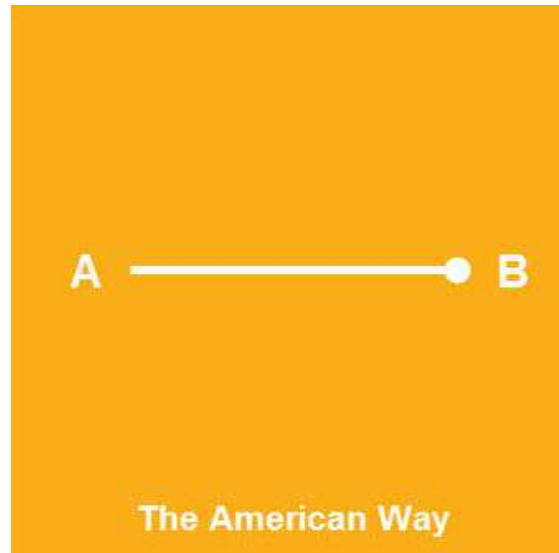


Shanghai in 2019



# China

- The “Yes” confusion
- Loosing or gaining face
- The questions not to a
- Be ready for more ...





## China

### What is “yes” meaning?

- The Chinese often answer with a quick “yes” whenever you ask a question
  - ➔ we tend to assume that “yes” mean “I agree”
- The Chinese “yes” is an habitual answer. It is a neutral constant
- This can have serious consequences when negotiating agreements
- “yes” is not an agreement
  - ➔ confirm what “yes” means in the specific context of your discussion



## China

### Loosing or gaining face



- When there is risk of loosing face (yours or theirs), the Chinese will often pretend to understand your meaning
- This happens often especially when other Chinese are present
- Explanation of a Chinese colleague:  
"Usually, in our culture, the Chinese pretend to understand. I can't always say 'sorry' or I will lose face. The Westerner will think, 'Why can't you understand?' so I just fake to understand. I say 'yes'. If I can do that, I give you face"

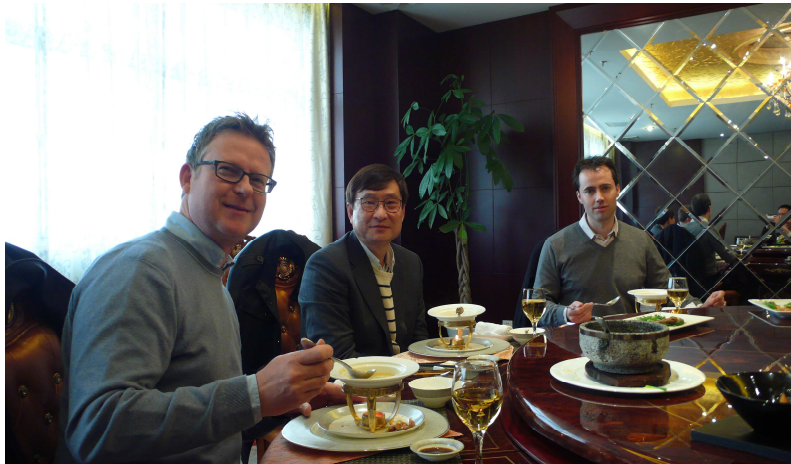
## China

### Asking the right question

- It is a mistake to ask the question “Do you understand?”
  - it is condescending
  - no Chinese will ever confess to not understanding. It is an embarrassment
- The same applies to the question “Do you have the authority to make a decision”
  - do not ask questions which invite a “no” response
- If anyone says “no”, the conversation is over



## China

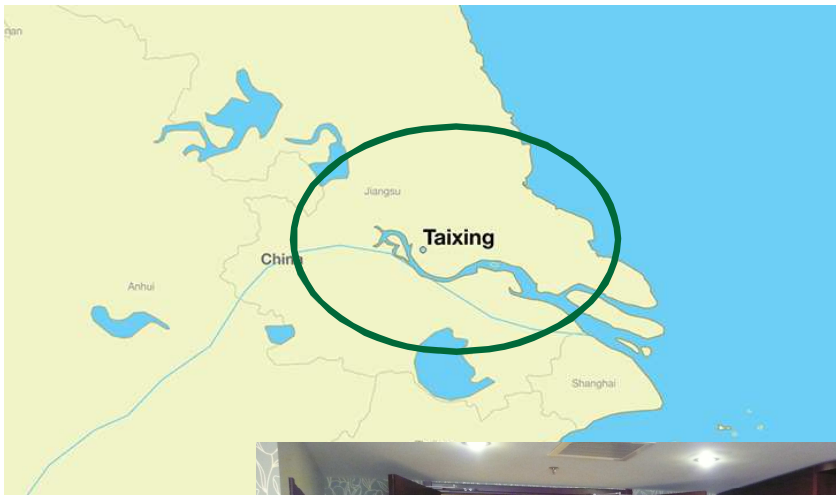


Be prepared for more ....

- Expect to be invited for long dinners
- At dinner don't talk business unless your host does
- Point with an open hand or get eye attention instead of using your hands
- Toast modestly ...
- Expect courses you may not be familiar with ...

## INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

# China



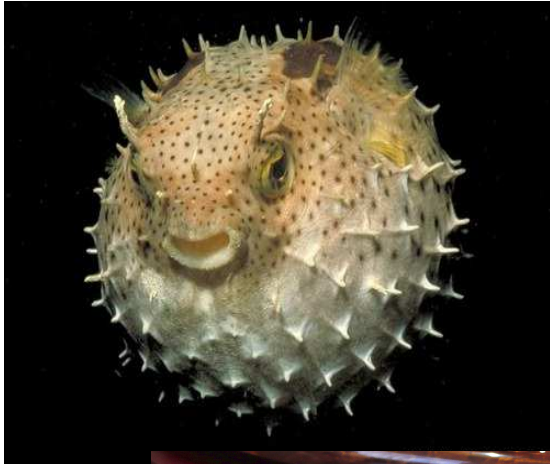
- Taixing in the Jiangsu province with some 80'000 people
- 2h30 hours from Shanghai





# China

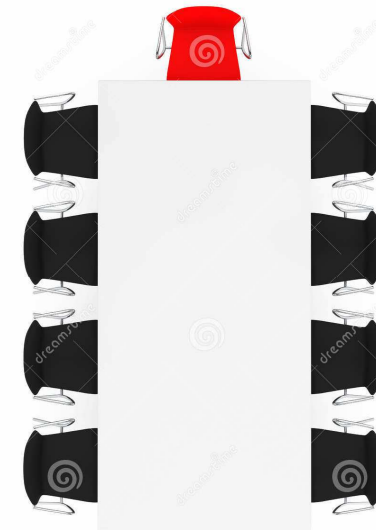
- The fugu dinner (Kugelfisch)





## India

- Indians in general are sensitive and watchful of smallest of gestures
- Sell yourself before you sell your product or an idea
- Hospitality is common practice
- Feelings and relationships are important. You need to build trust



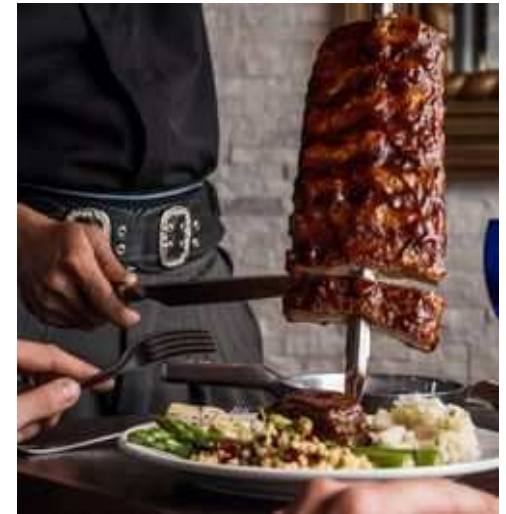
## Brazil (Latin America)

- Business mentality
  - Brazilians negotiate with people not with companies
  - Do not show feelings, impatience or frustration
- Greetings
  - Greetings involving women will involve kissing on both cheeks. Hugging is common
- The art of conversation
  - Constant interruption whilst somebody is talking is often considered acceptable
  - Good conversation topics are football, family, music
  - Bad conversation topics are politics, poverty, religion and .....  
... Argentina
  - Brazilians are known to arrive 10-20 minutes late



## Brazil (Latin America)

- Negotiations occur over meals, often lunch
- “manana” = tomorrow / maybe
- Body language
  - good eye contact is expected
  - back slapping is common amongst men
  - during conversation a lot of touching of the arms is common
  - they speak in very close proximity
  - the OK sign is considered rude



## Summary

- A traveler without observation is a bird without wings (Persian Poet, Saadi)
- What is perceived to be different provides an opportunity for learning more, with and about each other and about oneself
- Intercultural contact have the potential to lead to self-enrichment and benefit
- People's intercultural competence needs to be developed in order to enable them to understand, appreciate and respect each other across cultural differences, and to enable them to contribute actively to societies that benefit from diversity
- Developing intercultural competence through education (individuals and institutions) is a tool for achieving intercultural understanding, appreciation and respect







Thank you

# Back up



## What is intercultural competence, why is it important?

- Culture can be defined as “the sum of a way of life, including expected behavior, beliefs, values, language and living practices shared by members of a society. It consists of both explicit and implicit rules through which experience is interpreted”
- It is the ability to function effectively across cultures, to think and act appropriately, and to work and communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds
- It is a valuable asset in an increasing globalized world where we are more likely to interact with people from different cultures and countries who have been shaped by different values, beliefs and experiences
- It is part of a family of concepts including global competence, global citizenships, education, skills for global employability. These recognize the globalization as a force for change, and the importance for graduates to be able to engage and act globally

## Japan

- **Silence is golden**  
Silence is linked to credibility. It speaks loudly about wisdom and emotional self control. “The duck that quacks is the first to get shot” . Stress / difficulty → revert to silence
- **Group solidarity is paramount**  
We value individual contributor and believe in recognition as individual praise. The opposite is true in Japan
- **Age equals seniority**  
Hierarchy is paramount. Treat older executives with more marked deference. Great the most senior person before others
- **Privacy is valued**  
Only < 30% of Japanese use social media. A more introvert formal approach especially at the beginning of business relationship is likely to be better received