

CULTURAL INSIGHTS CHINA 中国 (zhōng guó)



a culture crash course every other month, sent right to your inbox!

QUICK FACTS

Group Orientation and Relationship Focused

In China, identity is tied to group and family. Group harmony 和谐 is more important than the individual and most Chinese find it uncomfortable to express individual opinions. Much time is spent building *guanxi* 关系, one's network of relationships, and the key to success at work and in social situations.

Hierarchy and Egalitarianism

Rank and status are closely observed. Managers tend to be authoritative, and subordinates are expected to be **deferential**. *Miànzi* (Mee-antz-uh 面子), or "face" is multi-faceted with respect, honor, and group harmony at play. Saying "no" to requests, pointing out someone is wrong, or causing one to feel embarrassed may cause one to "lose face" and people have a keen sense of shame for losing face.

A core concept in modern China is that of the "in-group" with a largely homogenous population, where 92% are **Han Chinese**. The Chinese government recognizes minority groups, yet there are unrecognized groups along with the LGBTQ+ community, not protected by the government.

Fluid Time and Preferences for Exceptions

There is general respect for scheduling and deadlines are set and expected to be observed, however, requests for extensions and re-scheduling are not uncommon and punctuality can be flexible based on the hierarchical levels. Many critical decisions are made with the longer-term perspective in mind. While comfortable with ambiguity, there is an expectation for managerial guidance. *The Chinese tend to prefer the loose application of rules based on relationships and broad consideration of context.* Rules, scope and meaning tend to be applied based on hierarchy, relationships, and broader consideration of context.

FUN FACTS

With thousands of years of history, China is the world's oldest continuous civilization, with values based on Confucianism, along with influences from Taoism and Buddhism.

WeChat is China's most popular social app. Forbes magazine calls it "... one of the primary ways for Chinese and foreign businesses to build a customer base." News, mobile payments, video games, file sharing, video conferences, messaging and more are done over WeChat.

BE AWARE!

Avoid wearing a green hat, as its hidden meaning indicates adultery or "cheating". Also, the number 4 is considered unlucky in China due to the pronunciation that sounds like the pronunciation for death.



COMMUNICATION IN CHINA

INDIRECT

Chinese believe that words can be inadequate and insufficient. Thus, the message is implied or suggested, and the focus tends to be on how something is said – relational meanings often outweigh literal meanings. Definitive responses are rarely given in Chinese culture and "yes" may have multiple meanings. Humility is a Chinese virtue that often translates into understatements and discrediting oneself.

HIGH CONTEXT

Chinese tend to expect and consider background information to provide context for decoding messages and making decisions, with hierarchy and relationships. Many details are assumed depending on the nature of the relationships which can take a considerable amount of time to develop.

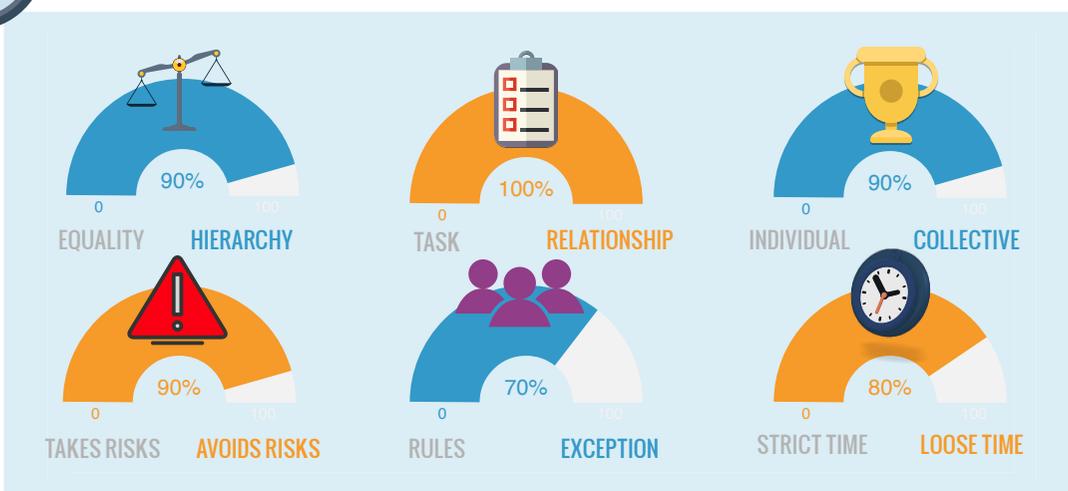
FORMAL & RESTRAINED

Behavior tends to be more formal with the "out-group" and less formal with those in the "in-group" often more reserved, without emotional display. A lot of attention is given to the hierarchy in the room with employees exhibiting upward dependence.



THE DETAILS

CHINA CULTURAL PROFILE



Want to learn more? Contact IOR Global Services!

Click to
Email us!