CULTURAL INSIGHTS
United States

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

CULTURAL DIMENSIONS

Task Orientation and Exact Time

In the US time is a highly valued commodity not to be wasted. Scheduling, punctuality, and "getting down to business" take precedence over developing relationships. Work tends to be closely connected to identity and self-esteem and there is a preference for accomplishing tasks "one at a time" and sequentially. The US is known for its strong drive for speed and innovation over perfection.

Equality and Individual Orientation

Americans admire democratic ideals and are often taught to question and even challenge authority. Hierarchical roles tend to denote less special privilege and power than in other countries. Americans value equal opportunity and strive towards the ideal that any individual can fulfill their dreams and potential through hard work. Personal success or failure are primarily attributed to one's own actions/decisions and self-reliance and independence are highly regarded. Individuals continuously seek self-improvement and are often motivated by receiving additional responsibility.

Tolerance for Ambiguity and Balanced Competition

There is high tolerance for ambiguous situations and risk taking. The entrepreneurial spirit is admired and celebrated, and change is viewed as progress. Choice is considered a right. Americans strongly believe that competition is healthy and that challenges present opportunities. However, being a "team player" and "a good sport" are also important while excessive managerial oversight In the business context is unfavorably perceived as "micro-management".

DID YOU KNOW?

- Washington, DC is the federal district established in 1790 as a capital of the United States and falls under the jurisdiction of the US Congress
- D.C. residents do not have full voting representation in Congress. They elect a non-voting delegate to the House of Representatives and have no representation in the Senate
- About 15 percent of D.C. residents are foreigners who speak at least 168 different languages at home
- As per the Office of the Secretary, Washington, DC is home to one of the largest diplomatic communities in the world as well as many international agencies. 186 embassies and two special interest sections are located in the District of Columbia

BE AWARE!

Discuss delicate topics such as ***politics, race and religion*** with sensitivity, curiosity and open mindedness

Do not stand too close! The US is a geographically vast country and people are accustomed to a greater degree of personal space than in other countries

COMMUNICATION IN THE UNITED STATES

DIRECT

Americans tend to say what they mean and mean what they say. Little attention is given to non-verbal cues and body language and verbal risk-taking is expected. However, sensitive topics like politics, race and religion are often discussed only among close friends and relations since differences of opinion and disagreement are viewed as conflict.

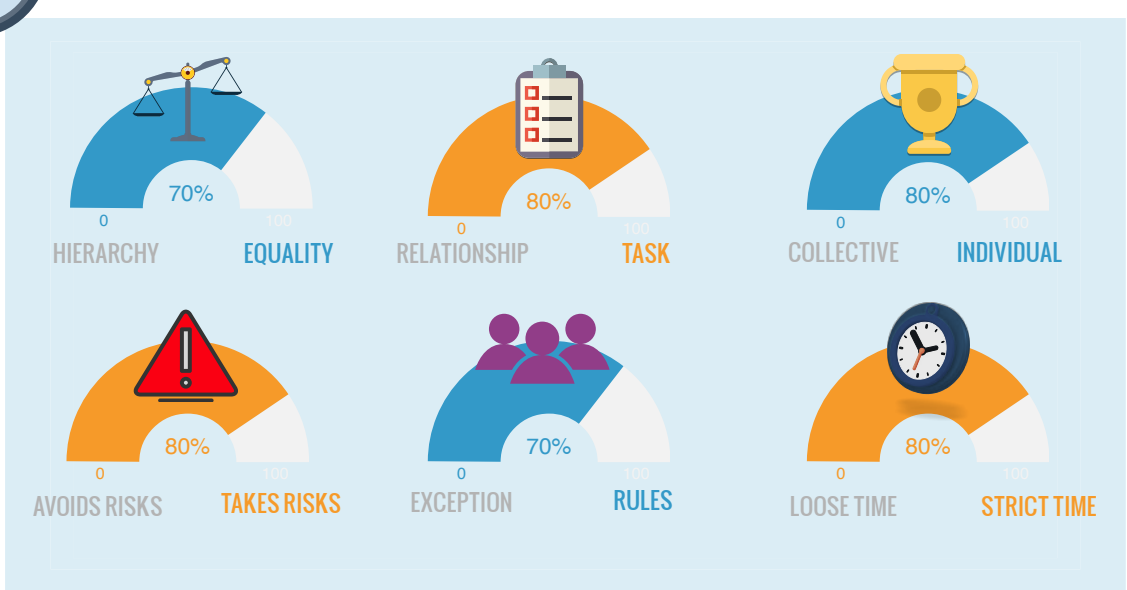
EMOTIONALLY RESTRAINED

In the United States, emotions are discredited as unprofessional in the business context. There is a tendency to be less emotionally restrained among family and friends.

INFORMAL

Interactions are relaxed, friendly, informal and occasionally spontaneous. A firm handshake is a common greeting in a business as well as social context. Eye contact is made and held during a conversation. Smiling is common and expected- this display of friendliness is a vestige from past immigrant roots and Westward Expansion whereby Americans were compelled to connect with others in their newfound communities.

THE DETAILS UNITED STATES CULTURAL PROFILE



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