

Work Cultures of the World

The world is becoming more and more global, so everyone should be familiar with foreign work cultures. An American businessman will greet you with a handshake, a Japanese businessman will bow to you, and a German businessman might give you a handshake and a nod — how you respond to these greetings is important. Work cultures can vary a lot and affect everything from how people greet each other to how many vacations they take.

There are many differences between work cultures of different countries. The Japanese put a lot of emphasis on avoiding conflict. For example, they rarely criticize a coworker directly. Instead, they use body language or their tone of voice to convey the true meaning of their words. It differs in places such as America and Germany, where one's complete message is usually explained through speech.

Some work cultures are very casual. The French work only 35 hours a week and are guaranteed at least five weeks of vacation a year. In France, coworkers share information about their personal lives and treat each other like family. Meanwhile, many people in Spain have three-hour lunch breaks. Even a 35-year-old might go home and get a home-cooked meal from his mother. After eating, Spaniards take a nap before returning to work. Some say that these practices are damaging the countries' economies, but work cultures are very resistant to change.