



BUSINESS ETIQUETTE IN GERMANY AND AUSTRIA AS PERCEIVED BY AMERICAN TOURISTS

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Gift etiquette and appropriate dress have become an important part of the domestic and international business cultures and are often used to promote goods or services as a way to strengthen relationships with customers and suppliers. The purpose of this research was to investigate global business communication practices and determine differences in protocol, gift etiquette, and dress in two European countries, Germany and Austria. The main objectives were to (1) identify current customary business practices in protocol, gift etiquette and dress; (2) develop a list of gifts that would be culturally appropriate items for presentation in a cross-cultural business environment; and (3) develop dress codes for conducting business in Germany and Austria.

The researcher participated in a bus tour of Germany and Austria where a survey of global business practices was presented to 42 tour group members in summer 1998. The participants were asked to rate statements from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1).

The majority of those surveyed (83.3%) felt that a handshake is a necessary aspect of a business meeting. Most of the respondents (88%) also felt that direct eye contact is important. An average response of 4.16 was given when asked the importance of having business cards in the language of the country in which you are doing business. A pen set was selected as the most appropriate gift with the highest response rate (83%). Respondents (76.1%) said women should dress in a professional business suit or dress. Color was almost equal among navy (4.74), black (4.54), and gray (4.48).