

# How Businesses Might Prevent Issues Arising from Cultural Differences in Online Negotiations

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## ABSTRACT

In this work talking about when foreign trade happening, which is a form of trade with great cultural differences, changes online, what kind of online cultural differences and communication difficulties will be caused is the main goal of research. Many cultural differences caused by online business negotiation have been found in the research. Therefore, business negotiations are divided into four different parts of the analysis: (1) non-task sounding (2) task-related exchange of information (3) persuasion and dissuasion (4) concessions and Agreement. In the four processes, five symbolic problems of cultural differences are selected for analysis, and corresponding solutions to relevant problems are proposed.

**Keywords :** *business negotiation, cultural difference, online negotiation*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

With the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic that began in December 2019, tens of millions of people are at risk of falling into extreme poverty, and the number of undernourished people, currently estimated at nearly 690 million, could reach 132 million by the end of this year, according to the World Health Organization. The economic and social damage caused by the epidemic has been devastating. As a result, most intercity and international transportation are paralyzed during the pandemic, people need to work from home and even hold meetings and negotiations online to avoid gatherings, and it is increasingly difficult for businesspeople to communicate face to face. Therefore, how to deal with the cultural differences in network negotiation is a prominent problem in the contemporary business community.

In this paper, analyze the concept of business negotiation at first. Business negotiation is the process by which two or more parties (each with its own goals, needs, and perspectives) seek common ground and reach an agreement to solve problems of common interest,

resolve conflicts, and exchange values. When companies need to expand their business around the world, they must communicate with other countries to reach a consensus. In addition, they should be familiar with other people's cultures to overcome huge cross-cultural barriers, such as the concept of time, cultural attributes, and high and low contexts. During this time, however, most offline meetings become online with tools like Zoom, Skype, FaceTime, etc.

## 2. ONLINE BUSINESS NEGOTIATION BARRIERS DUE TO CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

### 2.1. Collectivism and Individualism

For a negotiation process in a foreign trade enterprise, two parties are involved in potential cultural differences that affect the quality and validity of the bargaining. The main characteristic of individualism is defined as the negotiation process from the point of view of personal interests. Such cultures are often so self-oriented that they ignore the impact of the behavior on other aspects [1]. On the contrary, collectivism is concerned with the maintenance of a relationship, and

this type of culture is more inclined to an indirect approach, and they do not act in a way that does not favor their image or the image of others [1]. The main problem of online corporate communication is based on mutual trust, which does not affect the transactions between old customers, but the negotiations with new customers will be affected. According to interviews with Chinese and U.S. foreign trade leaders' offline meetings provide more opportunities for more mundane interaction and more active discussion of issues of concern (See Appendix). The same face-to-face offline communication brings more mutual trust and brings companies closer to each other. Applying this to the dimension of collectivism and individualism, according to [2] find about the individualistic customers are more likely to act on poor service quality, i.e., to make demands, requests. Collectivism is the opposite in this case, and through this investigation, it is possible to learn that individualism seeks for itself due rights based on egoistic aspects, and collectivism chooses concessions, euphemistic means by preserving the face of the group.

## **2.2. High & Low Context**

In the process of business negotiation, the difference in language expression will affect the efficiency of the negotiation. Especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, people must reduce travel to prevent the spread of the virus, which has led to many restrictions on travel by plane and train. In the case of international flights, it has stopped foreigners from entering the country. In this case, business negotiation becomes difficult, because negotiation is not only important in the process of negotiation, but also pays attention to the etiquette and communication experience between each other. But in this situation where you can't communicate in person, the accuracy of the language becomes particularly important. It is difficult to get to know each other when people from two different regions or countries are communicating only online, especially when the language of two different cultures is spoken. If the two countries belong to different contexts, it will have more impact. Because different contexts will lead to different modes of thinking and communication, which will cause some misunderstanding in this case. For high and low context, it's not just a language, it's more about the way people speak and express themselves. In high-context countries (France, New Zealand, China), people are less familiar with direct questions and are used to using vague language to express content. It is mainly through the listener's thinking to understand and solve the problem [3]. So, in this process, different people will have many different understandings of a language. In this case, it is easy to misunderstand.

For low-context countries (Germany, the US,

Canada), people tend to use a more confrontational and explicit way to convey information. As a result, the expressions of high-context and low context countries in foreign trade will be very different. This difference will greatly affect the online communication process, and the different ways of thinking will easily affect each other's language understanding. For example, if a North American executive is unhappy with a sales proposal submitted by one of his subordinates, his response might be clear and direct: "I can't accept the proposal submitted, so come up with a better idea." In the same vein, a Korean executive might say, "While I have great respect for your abilities, I regret to tell you that I am not entirely satisfied with this proposal. I must ask you to take it a step further and come up with some more ideas for this sales plan." A statement of purpose [4] is a declarative sentence that summarizes the specific theme and goal of the document. It is usually included in the introduction to give the reader an accurate, specific understanding of what the document will cover and what he or she can gain from reading. It makes communication slow and affects overall efficiency. When offline communication is expressed differently, online understanding will be a bigger problem.

## **2.3. Physical Act**

The influence of cultural differences on the negotiation process is not only reflected in the process of verbal communication but also in the process of nonverbal communication. Verbal communication is very important, but it is only one of the ways of communication. Especially due to the current impact of the epidemic, many companies must conduct business negotiations online and turn on the camera. Under such circumstances, nonverbal communication, especially body language communication, is more obvious to the negotiators of the other party.

Some studies have shown that in communication, only 35% of the information comes from verbal communication, and 65% of the information is transmitted through nonverbal communication, such as facial expression, body posture, voice (timbre, tone, volume), gesture, eye contact, etc. Negotiators send or receive a large amount of information, more important than verbal information in a nonverbal and more implicit way, and all such signals or gestures are always carried out unconsciously. Moreover, due to the influence of cultural differences, the meaning of the same action is even opposite in different countries [5]. Therefore, when negotiators send different nonverbal signals, negotiators with different cultural backgrounds easily misunderstand these signals and are not aware of the mistakes.

For example, most countries nod their heads in favor and shake their heads in negation. But in India, Nepal, and other countries, it is just the opposite - shaking head

means Yes, and nodding head means No. If negotiators see the other party nodding during the negotiation and think that the agreement has been reached, then it can be a huge mistake. In addition, when negotiating with the Japanese, the Japanese nodding constantly during the other party's speech can not be regarded as a sign of agreeing with the point of view [6]. And they are likely to just say they hear what the other party means [7]. Another example is negotiating with Americans. If the negotiators on the other side don't look into their eyes or make them feel that their eyes are a little erratic, they will worry about whether the negotiators are not honest enough or have fraud in business; when negotiating with the Japanese, if the negotiators stare at them, they may think that the negotiators do not respect them. In different cultures, this kind of nonverbal behavior is expressed in different ways, which is easy to cause misunderstanding between the negotiating parties [8].

#### **2.4. The Sense of Time**

The attitude of time is also an important way of nonverbal communication though company can not have direct contact with time. The difference in the sense of time is formed because of the cultural difference, like society, value, history, just to name a few, in various countries. Different cultural background leads to a different attitude to time and processing of time. So, there is no denying to say that the determination of time in meetings can affect whether the negotiation is a success or not to a large extent.

Westerners attach importance to speed. They divide time into small segments, and they are happy at a certain time. To do one thing, this is a single-time utilization method. For Americans, time is money. They have a strong sense of time and are always punctual. After they meet, a few simple greetings will come to the point.

In addition, the difference in the sense of time also contributes to different purposes of profit. During the negotiation, the westerner, like the Americans, will try to shorten the timeframe of each negotiation and will strive to solve the problem effectively in the shortest time possible. The Chinese often consider the general situation and generally do not pursue short-term gains too much for long-term benefits [9].

For example, David is the manager of an American chain supermarket. He imported a batch of tea from a Zhejiang company. I was very pleased with the quality and packaging of the tea leaves. On Thanksgiving, he was optimistic about the terms of the sale. At the same time, many bilingual announcements were made in local newspapers and radio. Due to the high load, the accounting department suggested raising the price to compensate for the loss, but the Chinese representative suggested lowering the price to attract customers. When the product has occupied the market, the sales volume

would increase significantly, and eventually, both parties will benefit from it. David did not want to sell at a loss and did not take the Chinese representative's suggestion. Three weeks later, the Chinese side learned that sales were poor and once again offered to lower the price,

David was no longer interested [9]. In some eastern countries that are backward or have strong feudal ideas, there are multiple ways of using time, and the concept of time is relatively indifferent. People always do not pay attention to time, they will not participate in business negotiations or banquets on time, and sometimes to show their unique status, they will deliberately be late. And countries such as Arabia, South America, and Asia also have multiple ways of using time. Local people will not follow the schedule completely. They have very loose time and emphasize the use of more time. For example, some business talks may not last for several hours or several times without involving the topic, and there will be indispensable courtesy in the process, such as lacing homework, drinking coffee, etc. The purpose of this is to communicate with each other and establish good interpersonal relationships.

#### **2.5. Stereotypes**

"Stereotypes have been defined as a false classificatory concept to which as a rule a strong emotional feeling tone of likes or dislikes, approval or disapproval is attached." Most of the time, individual attitudes are deeply influenced by group interactions, not everyone is independent and not everyone thinks alike. However, when in a group, everyone influences each other, and makes up a collection of ideas or attitudes that make up each person's mind and creates pictures in their heads. These pictures may not be the truth, but it is their perception of the truth, it is the thing that they see as true based on all their past experiences [10].

In society, different people acquire different ideas, attitudes, and mental pictures from the world and from each other. These attitudes develop out of their past experiences or interactions and are utilized to process and evaluate social information. Therefore, these mental pictures aid people in identifying people's current behavior and form their response. However, no matter what mental pictures one has toward another person or location, they are never the truth and can only try to be as accurate as possible, and these are called stereotypes [10].

Stereotypes emerge in the same way prejudices and attitudes do. They are formed and developed via social interactions and group norms. Therefore, stereotypes are entirely acquired and influenced by social conditioning. Also, stereotypes can be generated by rumors, stories, anecdotes and sometimes actual experience, which play a significant role in the formation and development

of stereotypes [10]. More significantly, stereotypes have great effects in business, triggering stereotype threats. They negatively affect employees in the workplace. For example, conflict, low morale, lower productivity and retention, and litigation are some of the negative effects resulting in stereotypes. In a business communication, these effects would greatly impact and entail some unnecessary disputes making the communication more complicated and aggravating the result of the communication. This can be damaging for a business in many aspects [11].

### **3. POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS**

#### ***3.1. Focusing on Product Attributes and Making Certain Viable Concessions***

The Four Little Dragons of Asia, namely Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, and South Korea, will clearly articulate collectivism and Individualism as a cultural difference that brings about corporate communication problems. According to the findings presented by [12] Individualism directly affects corporate negotiation styles, nationality is a moderating variable of individualistic attitudes and negotiation styles, and negotiators in the Four Little Dragons prefer different negotiation styles. Some discussions can be made based on the differences in communication habits styles brought about by Individualism or collectivism represented by different cultures. First, according to [13], through the four cultures differ in education, beliefs, arts, morals, customs, laws, and economics, of which education directly affects education negotiation style [14]. Once a Japanese colony, Taiwan adopted Japanese educational ministries and retained specific ties with Japanese culture [15]. Before its return to China, Hong Kong was a British colony and followed British practices, and Singapore was also a British colony [14]. Korea was under both Japanese and Chinese rule, so it combines influences from both sides. According to [16], the conclusion can be drawn that Hong Kong has the highest individualistic attitude among the four societies, and on the contrary, Taiwan has the highest collectivistic attitude. Each culture in the Four Little Dragons has developed its own economic and educational system. The differences between collectivism and Individualism have brought specific attitudes and values to each region that have influenced their relations with foreign countries. These differences have infused each region with a specific set of values and attitudes that have influenced their relationship with foreign cultures, [12].

The concessions between companies in the middle and late stages of negotiations can slightly solve the problems caused by cultural differences and mainly apply in a relatively unimportant conflict, but it is a relatively quick solution [17]. It is likewise a smoother

gesture, in individualism, which then exceeds the individual's goals, emphasizing the consistent points and downplaying the inconsistent ones, [18]. It is essential to retain this harmony appropriately.

Based on our interview results, online corporate communication under pandemics will ultimately result in a technical communication situation, and utilizing emotional feel is a less appropriate strategy for collectivism. Online communication requires technical communication between companies, including providing product attributes (See Appendix).

In terms of product attributes, Individualism is inclining with the personal product and purchase attitudes, distinctive product features, product customization [19], individual preferences, and functional product aspects. When the corporate negotiating group is individualistic, Companies need to meet customer satisfaction. Individualism is more inclined to personal service experience and maintaining their unique needs. Companies provide strategies through individual needs to help the negotiation process customers to meet their expectations for their needs [20]. Collectivism increases the psychological benefits derived from selecting products and services that meet social preferences [21]. When the corporate bargaining group is collectivist, companies need to promote public brand image! A higher brand image increases the trust of collectivists people who make more commitments,[22]. Different cultural backgrounds and perceptions can lead to differences in the purchase intentions of customer groups and the types of products they focus on. The online communication process between companies can be adjusted to make it harmonious. Collectivism cares more about the durability and effect of the product in the long term, while Individualism focuses more on the service quality of the product now, and they need perfect after-sales service during online situations, [2]. Ultimately, online meetings will always expose the problems caused by cultural differences in the context of the pandemic, but it will remain a situation that all companies will need to overcome in the coming years. Negotiate by focusing on product attributes during the negotiation process and make certain viable concessions to the other side if necessary to keep the negotiations effective for online foreign trade companies.

#### ***3.2. Improve the Frequency of Communication & Strengthen Learning to Understand Each Other***

Through practical interviews with four different foreign trade enterprises, it is learned that most of the foreign trade companies in China and Europe or The United States believe that the biggest cultural difference between online business negotiations during the epidemic period lies in the problem of language

understanding. (See Appendix) Because of the differences in language and thinking logic, it is difficult to ensure that the other party understands their meaning even if they can be translated or standardized in the same language. Therefore, solving this problem requires mutual understanding and communication between the two parties. Instead of communicating online at random times via email, you'll be able to communicate via video every week or a few days apart. This kind of video communication does not require too many people to participate, just a specific recorder in the normal work, recording the progress and problems of the company's work every day. When it's time to communicate, share the problems first, and then ask for new problems. This mode can improve the efficiency of communication and speed up problem-solving. Of course, this kind of online video communication should also determine an accurate communication time to ensure that each communication is effective.

In addition to enhancing communication, high-context countries can reduce subjectively ambiguous expressions in communication. Learn to express yourself more directly and not rely so much on the listener's understanding. In a serious business negotiation, it's easy to slow down the communication with too much ambiguity, which can be irresponsible or unprofessional. For countries with low context, some highly confrontational expressions can be reduced when communicating with the other side. Too aggressive words will easily make the other party feel uncomfortable or angry, which will bring bad consequences or influence on the negotiation. At the same time, you can learn more about the other company's operation mode, negotiation habits, and working style before the negotiation, which can help solve problems better.

### ***3.3. Investigating in Advance and Responding Flexibly to Understand Differences in Physical Act***

Before the negotiation, negotiators should be prepared to deal with cultural differences, avoid judging each other's cognition by their standards, and learn to understand, accept and respect each other's culture and customs, especially because the two parties are negotiating online, the time will be shorter than offline negotiations, and there will be no greetings and mutual understanding time offline. When negotiating, negotiators should have clear objectives, be flexible, and work actively and creatively. Both sides of the negotiation should pay attention to whether there are communication barriers between the two sides and observe whether there are misunderstandings in somebody's language caused by different cultural backgrounds.

Negotiators should be good at looking at problems

from the other party's perspective, be good at understanding the other party's way of thinking and logical judgment and make their negotiation style suitable for negotiations of different cultural types. Adequate preparations shall also be made before negotiation, including evaluation of negotiation background, evaluation of people and situation, facts to be verified during negotiation, agenda, and best options, etc. [23]. Negotiators also should avoid the error of overgeneralization when judging and inferring the culture or the nonverbal behavior of other cultures. Negotiators should first make a detailed observation, then make tentative explanations, and finally make a comprehensive and sufficient summary. In addition, negotiators should always realize that since there are always exceptional cases in the general inference, there will always be limitations in any comprehensive generalization. In the process of negotiation, negotiators should learn to adjust the response to nonverbal behavior differences [24] [25]. Negotiators should know more about relevant knowledge, make responses, and try to overcome their emotions when similar situations occur, which is the key to effective negotiation.

### ***3.4. Rectifying the Sense of Time for People in Different Countries to Reach Consensus***

Under the pandemic, all the negotiations and meetings turn online. The starting time, processing, and ending of the meeting are all decided online, through some apps like zoom, FaceTime, and Skype. Under this condition, it is hard for the easterner to have a chat before the meetings or have a further conversation with other attendees after the meeting. The process of the meeting is relatively constricted. Therefore, the solution to this kind of cultural difference can solve in three steps. The companies should first try to gain information about other attendees such as their races, age, the main products, or position in their companies, just to name a few. People can be divided into two parts, synchronic and sequential. The synchronic people prefer to have free time for meetings, while the sequential people prefer to have exact starting and ending times of the meeting. In this situation, most of the easterners are sequential, while the westerners are synchronic. So, company should make different plans for them. And the second step is to discuss with other attendees for the time online. Besides, before company try to negotiate the starting time of the meeting, company should start earlier and be aware of other's schedules, such as jet lag and holidays. The third step of the preparation for the meeting is to check your device. The network delay will slow the efficiency of communication.

During online meetings, people can not have direct contact with others, so the process of the meeting will be simplified at most. It may be a comfortable way for westerners, but the easterner may not be familiar with

this kind of meeting. As the westerners, they can have a chat with easterners, usually about 5 minutes. Thus, it can minimize the discomfort led by the cultural differences between easterners and westerners.

After the meeting, since the westerners are inclined to work in a simple and high-efficiency way, they may decide the next meeting time when the meeting comes to end. So as easterners, they should prepare for this though it may not be decided so quickly. And virtually, how the meeting going, and the end is according to the meeting.

As I mentioned before, the sense of time is quite different in different countries, so the meeting time, especially in online negotiation, is a result of both sides consensus. So, understanding other's cultures and try to compromise with others is the most important rule to reach consensus.

### **3.5. Five Steps to Overcome Stereotypes**

Being aware of the stereotype threat and taking steps to mitigate its negative effects on employees can make a significant difference in both morale and productivity. Stereotype is challenging to fix, and it is a biased thought that company can not 100% eliminate it among all the people, but it can be diminished and avoided as much as possible through five steps: examine, evaluate, accept, redefine, and reflect [26]. First, people begin by studying the stereotype's origins and why it is so commonly believed. Stereotypes can frequently hold negative attributions, so the first step is to eliminate potential stigma. Second, people should evaluate the reasons for the stereotype's existence and influence. Third step is to accept, which means to encourage acceptance of differences instead of demonizing them. Stereotypes can be overcome as company accept these differences and even encourage them. Then, company should redefine, thinking things from different perspectives. A free society is based on people's willingness to think and look at things from multiple perspectives. The final phase is to reflect, which implies that the company should consider and reflect on the impressions of people who are different from us and take a minute to consider your own prejudices about others (Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program).

## **4. CONCLUSION**

Online negotiation has become the mainstream method under the epidemic, and cultural differences between foreign trade enterprises will be magnified in online negotiation. Although cultural differences cannot be eliminated, foreign trade enterprises can be analyzed by understanding the characteristics of various cultural groups. Conducting concessions strategies in the individualistic and collectivistic dimensions motivates companies to introduce product attributes, thus

helping to generate more rational transactions. In the high-context and low-context dimensions, negotiation efficiency is stimulated by increasing the number of inter-firm communications. In the physical act dimension, the adverse effects of misleading information are avoided through a complete understanding of the non-verbal communication of the negotiation partner. The problem of time perception before the negotiation is also mitigated through advanced communication. Ultimately, by accepting and understanding the culture of each country and thus minimizing the inefficiency of communication brought about by stereotypes. A positive negotiation development process between enterprises is enhanced. Online foreign trade negotiations can be implemented according to the negotiation sequence to help narrow the risk. In the general environment of cultural differences, minimize the distance between companies brought by online meetings and expand the future communication bridge.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Conduct concession measurement strategy centered on product attributes of foreign trade enterprises. Cultural differences between enterprise negotiations should be solved by customer satisfaction and corporate image. According to the different characteristics of individualism and collectivism for product needs, the elaboration of product attributes during the pandemic helps to solve the problem in population needs and improve the efficiency of cross-cultural communication between enterprises.

2. Increase the frequency of communication to once a week to eliminate the information gap caused by the long timeline. Through this process, the misunderstanding caused by cultural differences between low and high context can be avoided.

3. Begin with looking into the stereotype's origins and evaluating the reasons why it exists. Then, think things with different perspectives and reflect your attitudes about individuals who are different from you. Eliminating stereotypes in the business negotiations eliminates anxiety and higher creativity, flexibility, and speed, making the negotiations much productive and smooth.

4. Investigate or consult other people's non-verbal communication survey reports before the start of the negotiation to understand the differences in non-verbal communication among people from different countries and regions. This can prevent the negotiating parties from misjudging the negotiation situation due to the difference in non-verbal communication during the negotiation.

5. Get advanced communication with other parties by email to know whether they are sequential or synchronic

and reach a consensus before meeting. This action can rise the efficiency of meeting and avoid cultural differences about the sense of time.

## APPENDIX

interview question and answer

Question1: What is the preparation for online negotiation

A1(Male, Head of Chinese foreign trade enterprises):  
Time: Test the video conference in advance to ensure the stability of video and audio. Content: Prepare materials that may be needed in advance so that they can be presented during the meeting in a format suitable for online pre- sensation.

A2(Male, Head of Chinese foreign trade enterprises): Online video equipment needs to be adjusted in advance; Set a date and time for negotiation, considering time differences; Send related product information to each other in advance

A3(female, Head of Chinese foreign trade enterprises): Understand the positioning of the product to prepare for a series of pre-communication. A4(female, Head of America foreign trade enterprises): online meeting companies need to pre- pare a product profile, in order to ensure the perfect meeting, should need to shoot the product display to customers or companies. It is also necessary to ensure the grooming of the staff and the reasonable choice of the venue.

Question2: What is the preparation before normal negotiation

A1(Male, Head of Chinese foreign trade enterprises): Business leaders do not see much difference with the preparation of offline meetings.

A2(Male, Head of Chinese foreign trade enterprises): Offline negotiations need to prepare the meeting room and hospitality etiquette, pay attention to the entire meeting environment and com- fort.

A3(female, Head of Chinese foreign trade enterprises): Time: Arrive early to ensure that you are on time for meetings. Content: Text and information can be prepared appropriately for reference during meetings and review afterwards.

A4(female, Head of America foreign trade enterprise): Collect information, provide information, participate in drawing up negotiation plan and design negotiation program. Before the negotiation, it is necessary to fully understand the strength, goal and intention of each side, especially the other side, and the extent of concessions. Is to identify the negotiating team. Selecting appropriate members to form a negotiating team is the key to the success of the negotiation. The negotiating team usually consists of

three or four people, led by the boss, who is both the director and the leading actor. Other assistants, including secretaries, are supporting actors who bring their professional experience to the negotiations.

Second, set a time for negotiations. When a negotiation is held and when it is concluded is very specific, and sometimes even affects the process and outcome of the negotiation. Negotiations must wait for the right time, otherwise it will be difficult to achieve the desired goal. In addition, to avoid the boss or other important negotiators in the physical discomfort, excessive fatigue, mental mood is not good to arrange negotiations. In addition to respect each other, based on the opinions of the other side, choose the time agreed by both sides to negotiate.

Third, to determine the venue for negotiations. When choosing a negotiation place, the more familiar the environment, the better, because everyone is born with a sense of domain, in their familiar environment, can easily play their wisdom and eloquently, and easy to persuade each other. Negotiation environment refers not only to the place of negotiation, but also to the atmosphere and mood of the negotiation. The quality of the negotiation environment will have a serious impact on the negotiation

Question3: What is the biggest difference between online and normal negotiation preparation A1 (Male, Head of Chinese foreign trade enterprises): It is easier to build trust and convince customers face-to-face. Whereas online meeting, the relationship between companies can be- come stranger and have a sense of distance.

A2 (Male, Head of Chinese foreign trade enterprises): Online meetings are conducted by video or voice, and the perception of the customer or company will be different, creating a psychological effect. Offline meetings, on the other hand, allow both parties to meet and provide enough trust and a more intimate feeling.

A3(female, Head of Chinese foreign trade enterprises): The biggest difference between online and offline will be the interactivity of communication. Online, one person will speak to many people, while offline, there will be more ordinary interaction and more active discussion on the issues of concern.

A4(female, Head of America foreign trade enterprise): In online communication, we need to pay more attention to language expression, while in offline business negotiation, we can deepen our understanding and have a better understanding by meeting and communicating with each other in different details.

Question4: The advantages and disadvantages of online and offline negotiation

A1(Male, Head of Chinese foreign trade enterprises): Online meetings can respond quickly and

communicate quickly. However, online business communication can create a certain distance, and the connection between companies becomes less. Offline meetings between companies become more interactive communication, and employees will be more enriched about the process of communicating with each other. Of course, offline meetings would be more labor intensive and costly, and offline meetings across borders during the pandemic are not feasible.

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A2(Male, Head of Chinese foreign trade enterprises): Online negotiation saves time, and the company spends relatively less money. But online meetings lack mutual trust. Offline meetings are time consuming as well as physically demanding for employees, but they are more rewarding. The offline negotiation about the product introduction and information will also be clearer.

A3(female, Head of Chinese foreign trade enterprises): It's easier to negotiate online because it doesn't matter where you are, you can go to the meeting whenever the time is right. Offline negotiations will have better results, because face-to-face communication can increase mutual trust and deeper communication.

A4(female, Head of America foreign trade enterprise): Advantages: Online -- if there is a network, you can make appointments anytime and anywhere, no geographical restrictions; Saving travel expenses, economical and convenient; There is no limit to the number of participants; You can record the content of a video conference simultaneously.

Offline - face to face communication, close the communication distance, there are more topics to extend the interaction.

Disadvantages:

Online -- The network signal is not good, the time delay, the communication content is easy to be blurred and unclear; Offline -- there are limits on the venue and the number of people; If the discussion takes many rounds, the negotiators must wait until the meeting is over

Question5: The difference between online and offline negotiation skills

A1(Male, Head of Chinese foreign trade enterprises): Personally, I don't think there is much difference in this respect.

A2(Male, Head of Chinese foreign trade enterprises): Online meetings are more often focused on the details of the product and less likely to provide too much hospitality service. Offline meetings will be more attentive to the details of the service and will be more likely to contribute to the success of the

negotiations.

A3(female, Head of Chinese foreign trade enterprises): No difference

A4(female, Head of America foreign trade enterprise): It's easier to negotiate online because it doesn't matter where you are, you can go to the meeting whenever the time is right. Offline negotiations will have better results, because face-to-face communication can increase mutual trust and deeper communication.

Question6: Whether companies prefer to negotiate online or offline

A1(Male, Head of Chinese foreign trade enterprises): Treating people with authenticity is very important for companies to receive. Likewise, focusing on the product itself is a key point. For online and offline meetings, companies don't overly favor one way or the other.

A2(Male, Head of Chinese foreign trade enterprises): In the impact of the pandemic, online meetings are more convenient, after all, offline meetings will waste too much time, such as quarantine.

A3(female, Head of Chinese foreign trade enterprises): Online negotiation should pay more attention to the presentation of content, because the online presentation mode is relatively single, and it needs more skills to make participants understand and feedback. On the contrary, the off-line need to pay more attention to flexible processing and strain capacity, for potential problems to be prepared to reply.

A4(female, Head of America foreign trade enterprise): The specific content of the negotiation depends on, online and offline can be accepted. As a garment trade industry, online negotiation is more convenient and faster.

Question7: Whether you have encountered any problems arising from cultural differences in foreign trade in the past

A1(Male, Head of Chinese foreign trade enterprises): You deal with customers from different countries, different religions, different cultures and different backgrounds, then you must take care of other people's feelings and respect other people's culture. Understanding this kind of difference can solve this problem.

A2(Male, Head of Chinese foreign trade enterprises): For Western companies, cultural differences may be reflected in their preference for offline meetings under the epidemic, which makes the negotiation process relatively difficult. A3(female, Head of Chinese foreign trade enterprises): The problem of cultural differences exists. For some products, the problem characteristics are described in different ways, which can easily lead to misunderstandings and new problems.



A4(female, Head of America foreign trade enterprises): There are cultural differences between China and foreign countries, for example, the West prefers offline meetings even in the case of the epidemic, while China rapidly developed online mode during the epidemic, which is also widely welcomed by everyone.

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