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Anke Betz (www.a-z-translations.com),
Julia Frenzel (www.jf-languageservices.de),
Martina Hesse-Hujber (www.hesse-hujber.de) and
Robert Taubman (turbotrans@telitec.com)

© Illustrations:
Ninon Seydel, Ninon_Seydel@web.de

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Bundesverband der
Dolmetscher und Übersetzer
Bayern

BDÜ Landesverband
Bayern e.V.

Geschäftsstelle
Tatjana Otto
Rottmannstraße 11
80333 München

T: +49 89 283330
F: +49 89 2805451
by@bdue.de
by.bdue.de

Business hours:
Mo–Fr 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.



BUSINESSKNIGGE Germany



10 Tips

for successful communication
with your German business partners

Bundesverband der
Dolmetscher und Übersetzer
Bayern

BDÜ

1. GERMANS TEND TO BE RATHER FORMAL:

During business meetings, shake hands with everyone present – both when arriving and when leaving. Address everyone by their last names unless you have been specifically invited to use their first names.



2. ALWAYS ARRIVE ON TIME,

or even better, a few minutes early. If you are running late, please call in with a reasonable excuse. Otherwise, you may be considered impolite and unreliable.



3. SEND FRIENDLY GREETINGS:

Even when corresponding via e-mail, do not forget to start and end your message with a friendly salutation.



4. GERMAN IS A VERY COMPLICATED LANGUAGE,

and it gets confusing when Germans use words that sound like English but are not. For example, if Germans talk about their "handy", they are referring to their mobile phone.



5. BE PREPARED

to hear people greeting you with "Mahlzeit" (literally mealtime) on their way to or from the canteen. At work, you will hear this from about 11 a.m. till 2 p.m. Feel free to reply in kind.

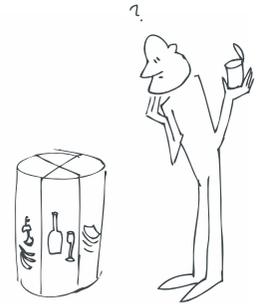
6. WHEN SOCIALIZING

with Germans you will often hear them say "Prost" or "zum Wohl" as they raise their glasses and touch them with everyone else's at the table. Be sure not to miss anyone, and look them in the eyes while doing it! And don't worry if everybody pays for their own drinks – paying separately is very common. On the other hand, if your companion says "I invite you", he/she means "This one's on me."



7. EVER WONDERED

why there are at least three waste bins at train stations, offices, and of course also in households in Germany? Well, Germans love recycling. They separate paper, plastics, glass and organic waste.



8. GERMAN BUILDINGS

are air-tight fortresses. So in order not to die of suffocation and to allow fresh air to circulate in the offices, they put their windows on tilt or even worse, they rush air in every other hour ("Stoßlüften"). So be prepared for sudden cold breezes!



9. BEFORE GERMANS ACT,

they precisely schedule, plan and calculate. They love to manage projects, draw charts and diagrams, and to optimize all their processes.



10. ON SUNDAYS,

however, Germans enjoy their leisure time. If they have work to do, they do it quietly inside their houses. They would never dare to wash their car in the driveway or mow the lawn. Beware – it's Sunday!