Mind Your Manners

Tips for Business Professionals Visiting Germany

DATAKONTEXT
FOREWORD

Germany is a major trading partner for many countries throughout the world, not to mention the most important single market in the European Union. Almost everyone wants to be active in this market, and for the most part, almost everyone already is. For this reason, stiff competition exists among many almost identical products and services.

This fact not only leads to increased pressure to differentiate product quality and characteristics, but it also increases the importance of how a business presents itself to the German market. Of course, a company's products play a large roll in its performance, but, more subtly, so do its employees.

Most of us know just how important social behaviors are when doing business in our own cultures, and this holds true when working abroad as well. Whether one is taking part in trade fairs, carrying out price negotiations with partners or colleagues, talking with end-customers, or applying for a job abroad, appropriate business conduct helps create mutual trust and understanding and is, therefore, often the key to business cooperation and success.

But what behaviors are expected in Germany, a country where the people are known for their guttural language, their obsession with "Ordnung", their square-jawed seriousness, and other habits and sensitivities? You can help ensure the achievement of business success with the Germans when you are informed about the cultural differences and expectations in Germany and the situations in which they are important. It is then possible to act appropriately when the time comes and improve your chances of closing that "big deal" or establishing respectful working relationships thus setting yourself and your organization ahead of the competition.

The purpose of this book is to help the business professional or student prepare for an assignment in Germany. We surfed the web, combed through the literature, and talked to a whole spectrum of foreign professionals working in Germany. After lots of brainstorming, we developed a list of practical and useful guidelines for helping business students and professionals negotiate the social challenges of a business encounter. Our advice is also designed to help avoid uncomfortable situations and tactfully handle predictable and unpredictable situations at all social levels in German business. Correct conduct with German colleagues and customers, how to master negotiations, the correct tone to use in e-mails and letters, and table manners are just some of the topics that can prepare you for a successful trip to Deutschland.

This book is divided into three sections. The first section contains ten basic behavior tips, the second section will provide you with a few guidelines on applying for a job or an internship in Germany, and the last few chapters contain tips on the more baffling aspects of German business culture such as carrying out negotiations, networking, and dealing with conflict. Because these tips can be just as helpful for actual Germans, we have written the book in both German and English. As a foreigner, you should take advantage of the dual language aspect of the book, and refer to the glossary to help you understand key terms. Finally, remember that cultural differences might seem daunting at first, but they are also what attract us to foreign cultures and essentially make doing business in foreign countries challenging, interesting, and fun.

At this point, the authors would like to mention that this book could not have developed into its final form without the cooperation and intense discussion that took place between both English and German native speakers, and we would like to thank everyone who assisted us. We especially thank Nicholas Lusty from England and Barbara Parsons and Jason Rihel from the USA for their help with the English version, as well as Gerhard Beck, Kristina Zimmermann and Frauke Thiele for their help with the German version.

A special thanks goes to Alexandra von Rohr, who, through her ongoing work with German language and business courses (www.businessgerman.com), was able to guide and inspire us throughout the writing process. We also appreciate the creative work of Günter Mayer (www.comixart.de) and thank him for his never-ending patience and his talents, which allowed us to illustrate the book and give it its own personality.

Finally, we thank all of the teachers and students in the German intensive courses at the TREFFPUNKT Language Institute. If it hadn't been for their questions, expectations, ideas, and perceptions of cultural differences, the motivation for this book would never have been triggered.

To read current updates on the topics you find in this book, to find out about related topics, or to take part in our discussion forum, visit our website at: www.german-business-etiquette.com.
FORWARD TO THE THIRD EXPANDED EDITION

Two years have gone by since the first edition of *Mind your Manners* came out, and we were thrilled by the great response that our book received. In this edition, we have included even more suggestions and questions that have come from our readers. In an effort to remain true to the book's compact form, we have also managed to keep the chapters short and packed full of useful information. Several chapters have been completely revised in order to keep up with today's changing business environment. These include "E-mail Etiquette" and "New Strategies for the Job Hunt". We have also included several completely new topics for which we have noticed increasing interest: "Efficient Meetings", "Celebrating at Work", "Small Talk", "How to Read Job Ads", and "In Case of Emergency: Information for Visitors to Germany".

Suitable manners and cultural knowledge have gained even more importance in the last few years. Main driving forces in the business arena today are constant competition and pressure for success, regardless of whether this is with colleagues, customers or while applying for a job. This is of special significance for Germany – the world's export champion of the year in 2004 – because hardly any other country has such a complex network of business relationships reaching across international borders. There is strong pressure on Germany to open up new markets and decrease expenditures. This will continue because of high domestic wages and great market potential in foreign countries. Therefore, Germany remains an attractive partner for foreign businesses. Successful business relations start with knowledge of the German market, German business and social etiquette and German culture. For example, an American dental supplier was confronted with a problem in recent years when, despite superior quality, it was not able to place products successfully on the German market because German-specific issues were ignored. This is where our book offers useful support to foreigners who are planning on doing business in Germany.

Special thanks go to Barbara Parsons for her help with the English version and to Martin Schippel for his help with the German version of this second edition.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Your Compact Guide to Doing Business in Germany:**

The ten blunders you should avoid 9

**Part 1: Etiquette Basics**

1. Introductions: Who introduces whom? 13
2. Pecking order: Who shakes whose hand? 16
4. Addressing someone: Should I use "Du" or "Sie"? 22
5. Gift Giving 25
6. German Expressions and Sayings 26
7. Small Talk 30
8. Business Attire 36
9. Business Dinners 39
10. Telephoning in Germany 44
11. Presenting in Germany 53
12. E-mail Etiquette 57
13. Distance Zones 63
14. What does a German mean when he says…? 65
15. German Stereotypes 67
16. Traveling with the German Railroad (Deutsche Bahn) 67
17. In Case of Emergency: Information for Visitors to Germany 74

**Part 2: Applying for a Job in Germany**

18. New Strategies for the Job Hunt 81
19. How to Read Job Advertisements 87
20. The Job Application 94
21. The Job Interview 98
22. Questions and Answers for the Job Interview 104
23. The Job Reference Certificate 112

**Part 3: On the Job**

24. The Unwritten Rules and Culture in German Organizations 118
25. Efficient Meetings 122
26. Negotiating Successfully 129
27. The Meeting with the Boss 137
28. Dealing with Conflict 142
29. Building a Successful Network 145
30. Celebrating at Work 153
31. Saying Farewell 160
32. Glossary 164

About the Authors 176
Your Compact Guide to Doing Business in Germany:

The ten blunders you should avoid...

Do you always manage to make the impression that you want to make? If you are unsure, the following ten tips will provide you with a short survival guide to help you avoid making common etiquette blunders when in Germany:

1. A weak handshake
A weak handshake gives others the impression that you are insecure and not convinced of your abilities. For this reason, always shake hands firmly without squeezing and without holding on to the other's hand for too long or too short a time. A firm handshake sends a message of trust, frankness, sincerity, consideration and honesty.

2. Being too touchy
Everyone has a personal distance zone that surrounds them, and unexpected intrusions into this zone are unwelcome. If this zone is not respected, a person will usually try to get out of the situation by moving out of reach which can end up being a very awkward and embarrassing situation for both people. Simply placing your hand on someone's shoulder may be irritating and make you appear too authoritative. If your business partner is not a long time friend of yours, then a handshake is the only situation in which you would make physical contact with someone. If you should accidentally bump into someone or kick them under the table, then you should immediately excuse yourself, with, "Entschuldigung, das war nicht meine Absicht." ("Excuse me, that wasn't my intention"). Do not touch someone without permission, even if you think that you could be making a welcoming or friendly gesture. Others could interpret this as suggestive or aggressive. See Chapter 13 for more on this topic.

3. Not paying attention!
If someone is speaking to you, and you are looking in another direction, you are being rude. Depending on the topic being discussed and the relationship between individuals, such an action can result in a negative interpretation of your behavior. The impression you end up making can range from insecurity or insincerity to even demonstrative disinterest or disrespect. Remember, by simply paying attention to what another person is saying, you are paying them one of the greatest compliments. However, be sure that you are responding with appropriate expressions, questions, and gestures.

4. Interrupting someone while they are talking
Do not interrupt your business partners while they are speaking. Let them finish making their point before you respond, even if you are dying to say something. By waiting your turn, you are not only being polite, but your business partner will then be more willing to listen and understand your argument. Remember: having the ability to listen and ask the right questions is the secret to successful communication. See Chapter 26 for more about this topic.

5. Removing your suit coat or sports jacket
Do not take your suit or sports jacket off at a reception or business function. Always wait until your host has removed his jacket or asks you to remove yours. Also, you should button your jacket when standing, and, while standing up to greet someone, fasten the middle button. Read more about appropriate business attire in Chapter 8.

6. Smoking
At many company events smoking is prohibited. If you ignore this fact, you will not only be unpopular among the non-smokers, but also among the smokers who are respecting the rule. Smokers should also be extra conscience of the strong smell that smoke can leave behind in their hair and clothing; otherwise, you might notice others trying to avoid contact with you. If you do move to a designated smoking area, make sure that you do not let ashes fall on the floor.

7. Holding your glass incorrectly
Stemmed glasses should always be held by the stem. Ideally, you should grasp the middle of the stem. If a toast is made, make sure you actually clink your glass with others’. This is not only important when toasting with champagne, wine, or cocktail glasses, but also with beer glasses. If you are holding a glass for a longer period of time, it is best to hold it in your left hand so that your right hand is free to greet others with a hand shake. Do not use your right hand to support your glass in your left hand. This gives an impression of insecurity. More tips on eating and drinking are found in Chapter 9.

8. Talking or laughing too loudly
Even if you are the most popular and charming story teller in your company, you could come off as being pompous and obnoxious if you get too loud. Keep your voice calm and modulated, and gauge the tone and volume to the situation. However, be sure not to speak too softly, this forces others to pay extra attention, and they may lose interest in what you have to say. Avoid speaking in a dialect that could be difficult for others to understand, and do not feel that you have to end each sentence with a laugh.

9. Too much alcohol
Pay attention to how much you drink. Even if you find yourself in a laid back and fun atmosphere, you must control your alcohol consumption. Others will think less of you if you drink more than you can handle. Getting drunk can lead to a raised voice, arrogant remarks, and even insults, which can destroy a positive atmosphere and ruin your reputation. More tips on celebrating in the workplace can be found in Chapter 30.

10. Arriving too late
And finally, when it comes to professional conduct in Germany, the most important thing you should remember is to always be punctual! "Punctual" means that you should show up a maximum of five minutes BEFORE an appointment, and never AFTER the set time. This not only goes for personal appointments like interviews or meetings with your boss, but for all other appointments as well. By being punctual, you demonstrate your interest in the topics being discussed and respect for others who are present. This is especially important when you are a supervisor or have personnel responsibilities. If you cannot make it to an appointment on time, be sure to call the individual who planned the appointment, apologize for your tardiness, and tell him when you will arrive.
Part 1: Etiquette Basics

1 Introductions: Who introduces whom?

When it comes to making introductions in Germany, there is a noteworthy difference between how it is done in private life and how it should be done professionally. Within an organization, the individual of higher rank is responsible for introducing anyone who is new to the group. For example, a trainee would be introduced to his or her new colleagues by his supervisor or his mentor. A new professional employee would be introduced by his or her manager. Note, however, that rank refers to an individual's professional position in the corporate hierarchy, and not his or her seniority at a company. For example, in Germany, an older office assistant would have less rank than a young manager.

If a single person enters a group of people, this person should always be introduced to the rest of the group – this holds true in both private and professional situations. Whoever prefers to introduce him or herself can choose from several different forms: "Ich heisse Renate Bartels." ("My name is Renate Bartels.") is just as good as saying "Ich bin Renate Bartels." ("I am Renate Bartels."), or "Mein Name ist Bartels." ("My name is Bartels.") The shortest form, simply stating one's last name, "Bartels", although brief, is very practical, especially if you need to introduce yourself to several people in a row, like at a welcoming reception.

However, introductory phrases such as, "Ich bin Herr Schmidt." ("I am Mr. Schmidt.") or "Ich heisse Herr Ralf Schmidt." ("My name is Mr. Ralf Schmidt."), in which the title "Herr" ("Mr.") are included, were never customary when introducing oneself and are not considered to be good business form. Remember, "Ich bin / Ich heisse" ("I am / My name is") statements should be followed with both your first and last names.

If visitors have come from abroad to visit your organization, it is always polite to introduce the foreign guests to the natives. Guests may feel especially honored if they are introduced to the director or the CEO.

Specific Questions:

1. When you are talking about someone, is it enough to refer to him or her using only the last name?

   No, never! This could give the impression that you do not respect the person that you are talking about. Before stating someone's last name, you should always use the titles "Herr" ("Mr.") or "Frau" ("Mrs."), and any academic title that they might have. For example, "Herr Dr. Schmidt hat mir gesagt, dass er morgen später kommt." ("Dr. Schmidt told me that he is coming later tomorrow.") If you refer to somebody only by first name, without using the titles "Herr" or "Frau", you are signaling that you know that person personally and that there is a familiarity between the two of you. Even if you are talking about a young adult or a
2. **When I meet someone on a professional level, is it acceptable to give him or her my business card right after I have been introduced?**

Yes! There are several reasons for this. For one thing, it could make it easier for business partners to remember your name and how to pronounce it, especially if it is not a German name. Secondly, business cards help in situations where several people are introduced to each other at one time. Just by glancing at a few business cards, you can keep track of the names and positions of your business partners.

3. **Could a woman introduce herself simply by saying, "Ich bin Frau XYZ." ("I am Mrs. XYZ.")?**

Yes! Although men should refer to themselves WITHOUT using the proceeding title "Herr" ("Mr."), women can choose from the following introductions: "Ich bin Heike Meyer." ("I am Heike Meyer."), "Ich bin Frau Meyer." ("I am Mrs. Meyer."), or "Ich bin Frau Heike Meyer." ("I am Mrs. Heike Meyer.") However, for both genders, the trend seems to be moving towards the simplest form: first name, last name: "Heike Meyer."
2 Pecking order: Who initiates a handshake?

In Germany, shaking hands is a common custom, which is not just carried out when two people meet for the first time. In fact, you will notice that hand shaking takes place almost every time that daily greetings are exchanged. However, initiating a handshake can be more perplexing than you might expect. In deciding whether or not to make the first move when introducing oneself or greeting somebody, keep the following tips in mind:

- The colleague higher up the corporate hierarchy always has the "handshake initiative", or the right to offer his or her hand first.
- If you approach a group of people, as when entering a business meeting, you should always extend your hand and introduce yourself to everyone present, without hesitating to shake the hands of those you already know.
- To show respect, always extend your hand to older individuals first.

However, the hierarchy rule mentioned above does not just apply in close circles within an organization. It is generally important, when faced with a tricky situation, that you develop a sixth sense as to who should assume the "handshake initiative". Observe those around you to get clues or ask a trusted colleague.

Here are 3 examples:

1. A job applicant would be well advised not to rush toward a personnel director with an out-stretched arm, but to make a polite, calm, and somewhat reserved entrance. The personnel director will then receive the applicant respectfully when he or she considers the moment right to do so.

2. Young professionals, who have a lot of contact with customers, should put good thought into how they greet their older customers. As older customers, they have double rights to the "handshake initiative". On the other hand, a friendly greeting with an extended hand can also act as an icebreaker with older clients, especially since younger professionals can come off as intimidating experts in their fields. This approach is recommended if older visitors seem insecure or are hesitant to get to know you. In most cases, however, older individuals will take the initiative when it comes to shaking hands.

3. However, according to professional rank, there are cases where it could be appropriate for younger professionals to initiate a handshake with older colleagues. If an older individual walks into the office of his younger boss, for example, he should wait until the boss offers to shake his hand. This would actually...
be the opposite case outside of the office. In private life, it would be left to the older individual to extend his or her hand first.

Specific Questions:

1. Should I let my boss or a client enter the elevator or go through the door before I do?
   Yes, always. It is a sign of good manners and respect to follow your boss or your client into an elevator or through a door.

2. Should I let my boss or my client exit the elevator before I do?
   In this case it is better to be logical. The people that are standing at the front of the elevator should be the first to exit.

3. In a professional setting, should the "handshaking initiative" always be left to the one who holds a higher position in the company?
   Yes! Position wins out over age (seniority) and gender.

4. After a while, can I just leave off my colleague's academic title when I am addressing him or her?
   No! Always address colleagues and business partners with their academic titles until they tell you to do otherwise.

5. Should a woman remain seated when being introduced to a business partner?
   No! It is always recommended that you stand up during introductions or greetings so that you are on the same eye level with your visitor. This makes it easier to get involved in a discussion. Both women and men who take their hosting role seriously are expected to stand up anyway.

6. Would it be considered polite to open the passenger door of my car for a colleague who is riding with me?
   Yes, it is always a nice gesture to open the car door, especially when someone is getting into your car for the first time.
3  Greetings: What should I say?

Make a positive impression from the start. By standing up and walking out from behind your desk to greet somebody when they come to meet with you, you are subtly expressing respect for that person. Such an action sends the message that you would like to communicate without a barrier between the two of you. Your guest may not consciously notice this gesture, but it will help create a comfortable atmosphere for a meeting.

If you are busy working when someone comes to meet with you, stop what you are doing immediately and turn your attention to him or her. If you are on the phone, or it is otherwise not possible to greet the person, at least make eye contact when he or she enters, wave her into the room, and point to a chair for her to be seated. Do anything you can to make a positive impression, then quickly end your phone conversation and offer a warm welcome.

Specific Questions:

1. I often hear "Guten Tag" ("Good Day") used as a greeting in Germany, but some people use the phrase "Grüss Gott" ("Greet God"). What is the difference, and which greeting should I use, where? As a basic rule: "Grüss Gott" is used in the regions of Bavaria and Baden Wurttemberg, and also in Switzerland and Austria. "Guten Tag" is used in the rest of Germany. If you do happen to say "Guten Tag" in an area where it is not used, you will immediately be recognized as someone who is "not-from-around-here". Even when Germans from two different regions first meet, the differences in their greetings can make the situation a little bit uncomfortable. For example, if a Bavarian were to go to Hamburg and greet someone with "Grüss Gott", the Hamburger would probably form the opinion that Bavarians are ignorant and don't appreciate the local customs. In the same sense, when a foreigner in Germany uses "Grüss Gott" in an appropriate region of the country, it is easier for Germans to consider them as "insiders". Additionally, by using the correct greeting, you show that you appreciate and acknowledge regional practices and customs.

In West, North, and East Germany you should never say "Grüss Gott" because it will sound extremely ignorant, as it just is not used there. However, in Switzerland and Austria, you can actually get by with using "Guten Tag" or "Grüss Gott" because everyone will be able to tell you are not from the region by the first sentence out of your mouth – that is how different the regional dialects are.
2. *Is it alright to put my hands in my pockets if I am talking with somebody or greeting them?*

No! The Germans may interpret keeping your hands in your pockets while you are conversing as somewhat arrogant. A person may often keep his hands in his pockets when he wants to appear calm and laid-back, but the truth is he will probably just come across as being insecure. This rule also holds true when giving presentations.

3. *Do the Germans like to make small talk?*

Yes and no. Generally, German business managers like to get straight to the point. Even when small talk is made in the workplace, it is usually not made up of more than a few comments. On the other hand, when the atmosphere is more relaxed, like at a meal, Germans love to gossip and to chat. However, questions about family or politics tend to be avoided. Topics like cars and technology, traveling and foreign cities, what you did on vacation, hobbies, and sports are more popular because they do not get too personal. See Chapter 7.
Addressing someone:
Should I use "Du" or "Sie"?

Making the choice between "Du" ("you" familiar) and "Sie" ("you" formal) is not only a problem for foreigners. Determining who should address whom, how, and when, differs from place to place, from industry to industry, and even from department to department. The use of "Du" or "Sie" is usually an important indicator of the type of relationship that people have with each other. As a general rule, "Sie" is used with anyone who is not a close friend or a family member. The use of "Sie" also indicates that there is a recognized distance between two people, and that they do not know each other on a personal level. If you address someone with "Sie" you would also address him or her with his or her title ("Herr", "Frau", "Dr.", etc.) and his or her last name. For example, "Frau Schneider, hätten Sie eine Minute Zeit für mich?" ("Mrs. Schneider, do you have a minute for me?") "Sie" is the most neutral form for normal, everyday interaction because it does not define a recognized relationship between people, and therefore, neither person has expectations of the other as might be the case in a friendship.

"Du", on the other hand, is a personal way to address someone. It expresses to everyone that two people understand each other not just on a professional level, but on a personal level as well. Before using "Du", two people usually get to know each other pretty well and come to respect each other's opinions. In fact, the change from "Sie" to "Du" is sometimes so formal, that you may even be asked beforehand, "Können wir uns duzen?" ("Can we refer to each other by 'Du'?") If you agree, you can both address each other with "Du" and call each other by your first names.

If a switch from "Sie" to "Du" is made too hastily, a German could get nervous and think, "Can I actually trust the person enough to address him or her with 'Du'?" If someone asks you to use "Du" rather than "Sie", and the situation seems too awkward or presumptuous, inform your business partner or colleague of your uneasiness as politely as possible. The best way to say this is: "Das Sie mir das Du anbieten, ist eine große Ehre für mich, doch im Berufsleben möchte ich gerne beim Sie bleiben. Ich hoffe, Sie sind mir nicht böse deswegen." ("I am honored by your suggestion, but in the workplace I prefer to use "Sie". I hope you don't mind.")

So, be careful not to use "Du" too quickly. In delicate situations, as in more formal business relationships, using "Du" too quickly may cause a feeling of mistrust rather than helping to build the trusting relationship that one might expect.

The question as to who should be the first to address whom with "Du" can be answered with a glance at the corporate hierarchy. An employee, regardless of his or her position, should always leave it to the boss to address him or her with "Du" first.

However, if your boss asks you to refer to him or her with "Du", it would be careless of you to immediately reject the offer. After all, your boss is a main player in your career's development. A better decision would be to wait a bit and observe how he or she then refers to you in the everyday work atmosphere. Maybe it was an accident that your boss addressed you with "Du" or maybe just a good mood that led to the suggestion. In
order to avoid any doubts that you might have, continue to refer to your boss with "Sie". If you then notice a negative reaction when you do so, it is best to admit that it was a slip-up on your part, and from then on use "Du". If you are, in fact, not comfortable with referring to your boss with "Du", tell him or her when the opportunity presents itself.

It is also helpful to know that both in the business world and in German private life a new trend is spreading known as the "Hamburger Sie", which is a combination of using "Sie" and addressing someone by his or her first name. For example, "Monika, könntet Sie mir helfen?" ("Monika, could ("you" formal) help me?") would be a normal way to address someone in Hamburg.
Gift Giving

In Western Europe, it is no longer customary to bring gifts from one's home country when visiting a foreign country on business. There are several reasons for this. For one thing, business traffic between countries has increased greatly in the last few years. As a result, it has become fairly normal to buy whatever you cannot find in your own country whenever you are visiting other countries, and this makes foreign gifts less novel than they used to be. At the same time, there has also been a move towards concentrating much more on actual business and less on formalities and rituals, like gift giving, when on a business trip.

Although this may be considered a loss of tradition and culture in Arabic or Asian countries, it is a fact that in European business situations nobody expects gifts and nobody wants to have gifts expected from them. However, for special occasions like retirements, weddings, or a visit to somebody's home, gift giving is customary and gifts will be appreciated.
6 German Expressions and Sayings

Here are a few up-to-date tips to help you get by with both written and spoken expressions and sayings in Germany:

Written Expressions

1. If I am addressing a letter to a man and his wife is it appropriate to write something like: "Herr und Frau Peter Boss" ("Mr. and Mrs. Peter Boss")?
   No! You should write both names separately when addressing something to them. For example: "Herrn Peter und Frau Anja Boss" ("Mr. Peter and Mrs. Anja Boss"), or "Herrn Peter Boss und Frau Anja Boss" ("Mr. Peter Boss and Mrs. Anja Boss.")

2. If I am writing a letter, should I abbreviate the title "Doktor" ("Doctor") to "Dr." but leave the title "Professor" as it is?
   Yes! Since 1997, the new German spelling rules suggest that "Doktor" be shortened to "Dr." when written. This rule also holds true if you are referring to a doctor in the middle of a letter. The title "Professor", on the other hand, should always be left unabbreviated. For example, "... und so haben Sie, Herr Professor Dr. Schnurrbart, die Möglichkeit, kostenfrei unseren Service in Anspruch zu nehmen..." ("...and so you have the possibility, Mr. Professor Dr. Schnurrbart, to use our service for free..."). Also, be sure that you always address a professor with a doctorate using both titles, "Professor Dr." and make sure that the "Professor" always comes before the "Dr."

3. Can I use the abbreviation "MfG" which is short for "Mit freundlichen Grüßen" ("With friendly greetings") when I am sending a fax or an e-mail?
   No! "MfG" developed long ago in German offices, where abbreviations were intended to increase work efficiency by shortening some of the lengthy words for which the German language is famous. This abbreviation, however, is considered especially impolite in e-mails and faxes, the two media in which it is most common for the writer to be brief. This may be because the "MfG" abbreviation gives the impression that the writer does not have enough time for a formal greeting and this could, in turn, be seen as disrespectful.

Verbal Expressions

1. What is the best way to answer someone who has just greeted me?
1. The easiest way to imply "You too!" is to simply say "Gleichfalls!" ("Likewise!") or "Ebenfalls!" ("The same to you!") "Schönen Abend" ("Good evening") is a goodbye phrase that can be answered with "Gleichfalls!" However, remember that this reply can only be used when the person to whom you are responding also has the potential to experience the same event. For example, if an unmarried colleague says, "Ich wünsche Ihnen einen recht schönen Abend und sagen Sie Ihrer Frau einen Grüß von mir..." ("Have a good evening and say hello to your wife for me..."), you should answer, "Vielen Dank und auf Wiedersehen." ("Thank you and good-bye.") In a case like this, it would, of course, be ridiculous to say "Gleichfalls!"

2. If I receive a gift, what is the best way to thank somebody?
   Answer with, "Vielen Dank, (aber) das wäre doch nicht nötig gewesen." ("Thank you, but that really wasn't necessary.")

3. Should today's business professional avoid using phrases like "Mahlzeit" ("Have a good meal") or "Kein Problem" ("No problem")?
   Yes!
   "Mahlzeit"
   Instead of saying "Guten Tag" or "Grüss Gott", "Mahlzeit" is the greeting that is used at lunchtime at a business or a factory. When coming or going to lunch in Germany, you will often hear people calling "Mahlzeit" to each other. They also greet each other with "Mahlzeit" when someone sits at their cafeteria table or stands up to leave the table, regardless of whether they know the person. However, it should be noted that almost nobody likes this meaningless, old-fashioned phrase, but that it still manages to be used frequently. It is a saying that is just said to be said – so that people don't have to encounter others in silence and risk being impolite. If you would like to greet someone on a more personal level at lunchtime, you can choose from other, more contemporary expressions like, "Einen guten Appetit" ("Enjoy your meal"), or even, "Lassen Sie es sich schmecken." ("I hope it tastes good.") – a phrase that you should only use when greeting people you know.

   "Kein Problem"
   The problem with using the phrase "Kein Problem" ("No Problem") is that nobody really knows what a person is implying when he or she says it. "Kein Problem" could be interpreted in many different ways:
   • The speaker wants to show he can handle anything, and that he considers everything "Kein Problem"
   OR
   • In the speaker's opinion, he sees no problem with the work at hand, giving the often false impression that he is willing to accept unsatisfactory or incomplete work OR
   • The speaker is trying to express his competence and that the problem really isn't a problem for him
   OR
   • The speaker is simply trying to comfort a worried colleague by reassuring him that everything is ok, even though this may not be the case.
   As you see, "Kein Problem" is a confusing expression that should be avoided because it has many different meanings, and its real significance is dependent on the intent of the speaker.

4. Would the wife of a doctor be called, "Frau Doktor" ("Mrs. Dr.") if she did not hold the degree herself?
   No in Germany, but yes in Austria! Unfortunately, in Germany you cannot be awarded a higher degree title just by getting married. But in Austria, a woman married to "Herr Dr. Schmidt" would be referred to as "Frau Dr. Schmidt". In this case, what would be considered ridiculous in Germany is a part of everyday life in Austria.
7 Small Talk

Everyone has probably experienced a situation like this: you have just started working in a new department, and you find yourself at an office birthday party for a colleague you don't know. Your new colleagues are chatting, telling jokes, and laughing, and as the newcomer, you feel a bit out of place. Instead of feeling awkward, use the time wisely to gain an impression of things. What kind of an impression do you get from the way the colleagues interact with each other? Which colleagues could be interesting conversationalists? Situations like this give you the opportunity to identify and approach individuals that appear to be interesting and knowledgeable, or who you may not have the opportunity to work with everyday.

With colleagues

Once you've gotten the lay of the land, approach a group of colleagues with a smile and an open and interested demeanor. Listen carefully to the discussion that is going on before making your own comments, which should be agreeable and friendly. At this point, avoid complicated remarks, but simply use the opportunity to briefly introduce yourself: first name, last name, how long you've been in the company, which department you work in, and your job responsibilities. It is best to wait and give this short introduction when the time seems right or when asked to do so. Keep the conversation going with questions, and refrain from self-indulgent monologues. Who, what, where, and why questions about the organization can help you to build a complex view about the informal work environment. This is your opportunity to get information to help you create a personal network and get to know colleagues who can later help you manage difficult tasks that you might not be able to handle on your own. For your own job it is important to find out who has the best know-how in certain areas. In a small talk situation, you must be especially careful not to come off as too curious or opportunistic. If important work topics come up, it is a good idea to ask for permission to contact the person about the topic at a later time. This is not the best atmosphere for making important business decisions. Instead, try to find topics that are interesting to the majority of those present.

There are many interesting and neutral conversation starters: travel, cities, sight seeing, vacation, sports, culture, food and drink. In comparison to many other countries, in Germany it is not appropriate to ask about someone's family or partner in a business situation. Other topics that should be avoided are politics, religion, death or illness, and anything that has to do with gossip, sex, critic, conspiracy, rumors and money. Any topic that could insult someone's personal views, upset someone, or create an awkward atmosphere should definitely be avoided. These "controversial" topics also include complaints about job stress as well as gossip about the boss or other colleagues. Such comments could leave behind an unprofessional impression in the eyes of co-workers. For this reason, you should also be careful when telling jokes. The atmosphere for a joke must be appropriate and the joke should not be morally degrading or prejudiced. If such jokes do come up, others should try to change the topic or move on to a lighter subject.

The first impression

It does not matter how witty or funny you try to be, when it comes to small talk, it doesn't always depend on the words. Your body language and attire also play an important role. Gestures, facial expressions, charisma, your voice and your communication skills also leave a lasting impression. Many believe that they can easily label optimists, over-achievers, perfectionists and skeptics based on these characteristics. For this reason,
learn to control your body language. Make sure that you sit upright and do not slouch. Stay calm, and don’t fidget. Inappropriate clothing can also lead to others forming stereotypes about you which are hard to disprove during a conversation. Studies show that clothing and body language make up fifty percent of a person's first impression. The person's voice contributes another forty percent, and the last ten percent actually has to do with the matter of the conversation. This is the point at which others are differentiating between whose comments are really worth listening to, and whose comments are simply passing remarks.

The first impression therefore plays an important role. Behavior studies have shown that people form a critical impression of someone else within three seconds. These few moments answer the questions: What do they look like? How do they talk? What is their demeanor like? How does this impression fit with what I have already heard about this person? What could he want from me and me from him? Do I like the person or not? These questions are quickly answered by our brains with little thought.

As far as further contact with the person goes: birds of a feather flock together. Individuals feel comfortable in a situation in which their conversation rituals correspond to those of the others. This means that the topics are of interest, you do not need to reveal more about yourself than you find comfortable, humor has its own place and there are no misunderstandings. Conversation style is normally defined by behavior rituals where the unwritten rules of the others' actions and reactions steer the conversation.

"Men Talk" and "Women Talk"

The fact that different conversation rituals exist is most evident in the differences between how men and women converse. For example, at a small party with colleagues, one of the men is telling the story of his visit to the International Automobile Exhibit in Frankfurt. All of a sudden, all of the men are renowned experts on design, engines, car bodies, and horsepower. They all start throwing out technical terms and try to impress each other with their knowledge and exaggerated stories of driving experiences. If you are a woman who sees a car as a means of travel, you would probably refrain from having an opinion on the issue and keep quiet. This type of scenario is a typical ritual for men trying to start small talk, and at the same time, size each other up. Even if a man has no idea about the subject, he can demonstrate adaptability and other strengths in this type of a situation. The fact is that less attention is being paid to the substance of the conversation and more to how it is taking place. Who is listening to whom? Who has the most listeners? Who has the last word? This is how the hierarchy is formed and each man can orient himself in the structure.

If this were a "girl talk", this type of behavior would be interpreted as showing off and blowing lots of hot air. When women are conversing, indirect conversation patterns are preferred to the direct style used by men. It all has a lot less to do with the transfer of information, and more to do with establishing harmony, which gives the impression of equality among those present. When a woman says something, she checks the effect of what she has said on the people she's talking to, and bases her next comment on the other's reaction. Men, on the other hand, have a tendency to talk without worrying about others actually listening: comments are made to which no reaction comes, and the conversation can turn into competing monologues. After the conversation, the men know almost nothing about the others, except whether or not the group approves of them, which has been signaled mostly through gestures.

These are rituals that you should observe, influence, and use, depending on what your goals are in a conversation. If you find yourself being too modest or introverted in a conversation, you should try to change this step by step. When the right time comes use small talk to make clear what you want and what you are capable of.

"Denglish"

Another tip on words and the substance of small talk: In Germany, it is common to hear a mixture of German and English in everyday conversation. This is especially true in social circles of the "career-oriented", whether this be a group of business students at a university or managers at a company. This way of speech has come to be known by the Germans as "Denglish". Much controversy exists as to whether this language-morphing is considered neutral or negative – but, the fact is that especially in technology and business sectors, many English words simply are not translated, but integrated into the German language. It is important to understand these terms if you don't want to be seen as a layman in the corresponding sectors. How intensively one actively uses English words when conversing in German is up to the individual. However, throwing a few English words into a German conversation no longer makes the intelligent and sophisticated
impression that it once did. Instead, it could be interpreted as an attempt to set oneself apart from others. On the other hand, it is interesting to see how common it is for many cultures not to translate foreign words, but to adopt them in their own language. For example, it is common to hear the word "Rucksack" in English, and most Germans don't know that "Kindergarten" also exists in the United States.

A few good ways to start small talk

Here are a few ideas for questions that can lead to "safe" small talk. We have picked four common business situations:

1. During breaks at a conference
   - I am here from the automobile industry. May I ask which industry you work in?
   - The snacks are great. Aren't you looking forward to the meal afterwards?
   - I have the feeling that I have heard the last speaker present before? Have you heard him / her present before?

2. At business events
   - I thought the last topic was really presented well, didn't you? Do you know what the next topic will be?
   - This is the first time that I have ever visited a conference/ seminar on this topic. Can you recommend any others?
   - Did you have as much trouble as I did trying to find the hotel last night?

3. At social events with colleagues
   - I have only been with the company for a short time. Do you know how long this company location has existed?
   - And what are your vacation plans this year?
   - Is this where the line for the buffet starts?

4. At private parties
   - May I ask how you know the host / hostess?
   - I can never find a parking place in the city. Do you have any special places you could recommend?
   - This wine tastes great. Do you know which region it is from?
   - The neighbors in the apartment building that we just moved into are almost all in a tennis club. Are all of the Germans so tennis-crazy? Do you all belong to sports clubs?
8 Business Attire

The importance of being appropriately dressed for an occasion cannot be stressed enough. This holds true in both business and private life. By dressing-up for an occasion, you express your respect not only for the occasion, but also for the other guests, the surroundings, and especially the host or hostess.

In the business arena, especially when clients are present, unprofessional clothes like jeans, shorts, biking pants, leggings, sport shoes and T-shirts should not be worn. The following guidelines should also be kept in mind when dressing for business in Germany:

1. The safest attire is typically conservative – gray, black, or dark blue suits of good quality. However, in certain business sectors, you may find many managers and sales representatives wearing loud colors and wild accessories. Although they might be trying to express how innovative or dynamic they can be, some customers and business partners may interpret this style as unprofessional. The best advice is to take your cues from those around you in similar positions within the organization.

2. On the other hand, a dark gray suit should not give the impression that you are trying to blend in to the point of being overlooked. By wearing elegant and well-made clothes, you can separate yourself from the masses and get noticed. Just remember that the clothes you wear should correspond to the amount of attention you want to call to yourself and should also convey the proper impression you wish to make. Also, be careful not to be overdressed, for this may cause suspicion among your colleagues.

3. In contrast to men, women are entitled not only to more color in their wardrobes, but also to more variety (dresses, suits, slacks, skirts, sweaters, scarves, etc.) with which to create an elegant but professional impression.
4. In Germany, it is fairly common to see clerical or non-professional employees wearing clothes that should not be worn by serious customer or career-oriented women. Remember that your clothing should not distract others or diminish the impression that others have of your professional abilities. Very short miniskirts, shirts or tight sweaters with revealing neck-lines, dramatically tight clothing, bizarre hair styles, and extremely high heels are to be avoided in most business settings. A few other articles to avoid include big or dangling fake gold or silver jewelry, nap leather, spaghetti straps, long fake or brightly colored fingernails, and wildly patterned tights. On that note, naked legs are also unacceptable.

5. Jewelry, accessories, and your own personal hygiene should help accent your wardrobe, not take away from it. The most expensive designer suit cannot help you make a good impression if you have bad breath, body odor, or if the heels of your shoes are so high you can hardly walk. Stringy hair, dirty or untrimmed fingernails, an unshaven face, or too much make-up can also leave a bad impression.

Specific Questions:

1. **Should the tip of my tie end at my belt line?**
   Yes! This gives your figure better proportion. All too often, men wear ties that end right where they want the least attention: At their bulging bellies!

2. **Do I have to wear socks (men) / stockings (women) in the middle of the summer heat?**
   Yes! It is always more professional, especially when meeting with customers. The same response goes for the question: "Do I have to wear a tie?" However, it is okay to take your jacket off during the summer heat when there is no air conditioning, except when you are meeting with a client or customer for the first time.

3. **Do I have to pay attention to the requested code of dress in written invitations?**
   Yes! The host is trying to ensure that the guests all come to the event in the same level of dress. This also gives a clue as to the nature of the event. If you are unsure, be sure to ask the host or the inviting business department's secretary for clarification before the event.
9 Business Dinners

It is traditional in Germany to eat the main meal of the day at lunchtime, between 11:30 AM and 1:30 PM.

In contrast to a long, several-course meal, a German lunch usually consists of an appetizer (usually soup), a main course, and a dessert.

When you are attending a business conference, both lunch and dinner are considered important components of the conference. Meals allow those attending to make personal contacts and to continue discussing business issues in a more casual atmosphere.

Ladies at the dinner table
Contrary to earlier traditions that frowned upon women speaking with the waiter, tasting the wine, or paying the bill, all of these things are normal in Germany today. It is not only acceptable for a woman to ask for the bill, but also to enter a restaurant first, and – if acting as hostess – to try the wine before it is served. However, this last situation will usually not come into question at business luncheons because, in most cases, only non-alcoholic beverages are served during the work day.

Alcoholic beverages
Nevertheless, the consumption of alcohol in Germany, even in the business environment, may be more common than you are used to in your country, and when others drink, you may feel pressured to drink as well. Again, you don't need to worry – modern etiquette suggests that it is acceptable to refuse a drink. In fact, you can even offer to order drinks for others and refrain from drinking alcohol yourself.

Leaving a tip
Formally, the rule states that 10-15% of the bill's total should be left as a tip if you were satisfied with the service you received. If you weren't satisfied, you can simply not leave a tip, and others will not frown upon you. You may, on the other hand, want to leave more than the standard 10-15% tip if the restaurant staff really went out of their way to accommodate your needs.

However, an informal German tipping rule comes into play if you are having an informal meal or just a beer or a coffee at a bar or in a café. In these cases, if you have been served by a waiter or waitress, you should ALWAYS round the bill up to the next Euro or half Euro. For example, if your bill is €11.50, you should pay at least €12.00 and not expect change, although it will be offered to you. In such a case, you would give the waiter €12.00 and reply, "Es ist schon in Ordnung." ("It's alright.")

Also, when leaving, it is polite to thank the staff or your waiter / waitress with, "Danke schön." ("Thank you.") This lets you express your appreciation in addition to the tip that you leave behind.
Specific Questions:

1. **When in Germany, should I conform my table manners to those of the Germans?**
   For the most part, you do not have to make too much effort to mirror the Germans at the table. If you practice good table manners at home, they will suffice in Germany; it is not necessary to worry about how to hold your fork or where to place your napkin. But be careful – some behavior should be avoided. For example, in Southern Asia, it is normal to chew loudly when eating and to belch after a good meal. If you were to do this in Germany, it could embarrass you as well as those sitting with you.

2. **What are a few table manners that I should keep in mind in Germany?**
   - Before eating, wish everyone at the table "Guten Appetit." ("Enjoy your meal.")
   - Only take as much food as you plan on eating. The Germans usually "clean their plates".
   - When you or others are eating, keep your hands on the table, not under it.
   - Sit up straight, close to the table.
   - Don't prop your head up with your hands.
   - Don't bend your head over your food when you are eating or "shovel" your food in your mouth.
   - Don't begin eating until everyone at the table has been served.
   - Don't begin drinking until everyone has something to drink and a toast has been made.
   - Look others in the eye when toasting.
   - Do not get up to leave when you have finished eating, but wait for the others; if you came to dinner with others, then leave with them also.
   - Do not belch or chew with your mouth open.
   - When you are finished eating, place your knife and fork together and rest them on your plate.

3. **Should a host pay the bill at the table with the guests present?**
   No! It is much more polite to pay the bill at the bar in order to avoid misunderstandings or discussions about paying. This also allows the host to inconspicuously pay, look over the bill, leave a tip, and order an aperitif for everyone.

4. **Is it acceptable to ask for the house wine in a good restaurant?**
   Yes! A good house wine is a good advertisement for a restaurant. Also, you can be sure that a wine from wine countries such as Germany, France, and Italy will never be of bad quality. When your budget doesn't allow an extremely expensive wine, ask the waiter to recommend a low cost, quality wine. By naming the amount that you are willing to spend, you show that you are confident in the situation and not embarrassed to ask.

5. **When I order soup, is it polite to tip up my soup cup and drink the last bit of soup?**
   Yes! However, in order to do this tactfully, take hold of one of the soup cup handles, tip, and drink. Keep in mind that this is only polite when your soup comes served in a CUP, not a bowl!

6. **Is it appropriate to use toothpicks or put on lipstick at the table?**
   Yes! These are not the most tactful things to do at the table, but if they have to be done, then go ahead. Lipstick can be put on discretely almost anywhere, but is it really necessary to put it on at the table? If you really want to freshen up your make-up, be sure to go to the bathroom.
7. **When I attend a social event, should I wait to take off my sport coat or jacket until I am asked to do so by the host?**
   Yes! Good hosts and hostesses should react quickly when they notice that the room temperature is rising and offer to take your coat for you.

8. **Is it true that I should not lay my paper napkin in my plate when I am finished eating?**
   Yes! In Germany it is customary to fold your napkin after eating and place it to the left side of your plate. The Germans have a very strict recycling system, and this helps ensure that the napkin ends up in the correct recycling bin. Cloth napkins should also be folded and laid to the left side of your plate, never in the plate!

9. **If I would like to say a few words at the table or to make a toast, is it appropriate to bang on the side of my glass to get people's attention?**
   No! Although you typically see this in old German movies, today it is more appropriate to stand and ask for their attention in a slightly raised voice. Those seated at the table should automatically stop talking and pay attention.
10  Telephoning in Germany

In Germany, it is generally customary to state your name when you answer the phone. In accordance with corporate identity trends, the customary way to answer a phone at a German company is to state the name of the company, the name of the person answering the phone, and a greeting. For example: "Baugesellschaft Luftschloss, Müller, Guten Tag" ("Luftschloss Construction, Müller, Good Day"). The name of the department may also be stated, but this differs from company to company. One should not answer the phone with an extremely long greeting, as it may be awkward for the caller and may make it difficult to catch your name.

On the other hand, when answering the phone at home, a German often states only his or her last name. It is also becoming more common to answer the phone with just "Hallo" or "Ja" ("Yes"), without identifying one's self. This might just be carelessness or perhaps a sign that people do not want to immediately identify themselves when answering the phone. Many Germans, however, frown upon this brief greeting. If you do not state your name when answering, you will usually be asked to identify yourself anyway. Many Germans will respond to a simple "Hallo" or "Ja" with the question, "Mit wem spreche ich bitte?" ("With whom am I speaking, please?")

A recorded message on an answering machine at a professional place of business should always include a few essential details, such as the name of the business, your name and telephone number, and a greeting. A greeting is a polite gesture and can come before or after you state your name.

For customers and other colleagues, it is also helpful to list your cellular and fax numbers in the recording. In case you cannot be contacted for a longer period of time, it is helpful to list an emergency number or the name and number of a person who can represent the business and deal with problems when you are not available to do so. In such a case, be sure that you state both your substitute's name and telephone number and not just one or the other.

It is absolutely necessary that you speak very distinctly when you leave a message on an answering machine, especially when listing digits. Remember that it is much easier for the listener to understand when you list one number after the next, "sechs, vier" ("six, four"), rather than combining them, "vierundsechzig" ("sixty-four"). Because the pronunciation of certain German numbers is so difficult to understand over the phone, the following substitutes will often be used:

- "Zwo" ("two", pronounced tzwo)
- "Juno" ("June", pronounced yuno)
- "Juli" ("July", pronounced yu-lie)

Mobility with a cell phone

When is it appropriate to use my cell phone?

To help clarify, let's consider two situations that may be familiar to you: Fifteen people are sitting in a conference and a cell phone starts to ring. Thirteen of those present divert their attention from the topic at
hand and start to dig through their briefcases to figure out if it is their telephone that is ringing. Or better yet: A businessman is sitting in an ICE train (see Chapter 16). He has specifically reserved a seat with a table so that he can work on his laptop during the trip. Around him, cell phones are ringing like crazy, and other travelers are having loud, one-sided conversations.

Should these situations be considered normal or annoying?

The first example was meant to be ironic, and the second should not be considered the norm – unfortunately, this is just wishful thinking. The examples were not meant to imply that it is impolite to have your cell phone with you. Instead, they were meant to show that disregarding others by having a conversation, failing to turn off a cell phone, or answering a ringing phone can be irritating and rude.

When cell phones are inconsiderately and thoughtlessly used, "innocent listeners" will respond with reactions that range from sarcastic laughter and rude remarks to eventually hanging signs that prohibit the use of cell phones in public places.

So, turn off your cell phone when you find yourself somewhere where answering your phone could interrupt the concentration of others or annoy them while they are trying to relax, meet, or work. These places include a theatre or a concert hall, at the movies, in a museum, at a speech or in a lecture, in the waiting room at a doctor’s office or business, or in a restaurant. These are places where people are sensitive to disturbances and can become quickly irritated when a cell phone begins to ring. You should also limit the use of your cell phone at business functions and business meetings, or certain social functions, such as receptions, cocktail parties, or dinners. This also holds true for conferences, presentations, and especially when meeting with customers or, most importantly, a potential employer. In these situations, it is better to turn the phone off and let your voicemail answer for you.

By the way, in Germany, a cell phone or mobile is called a "handy". The word is pronounced just as it would be in English, and although many Germans think the word is American, it is, indeed, a German invention.

The best time to make a telephone call

If you are calling someone who may not be expecting your call, or if you have a matter of concern that could require a significant amount of time to discuss, try not to place the call on a Friday. On Fridays, many business people are trying to "tie up loose ends" before the weekend starts, and in Germany, some companies actually close at 2:00 PM.

The best time to call a business is probably between 8:00 and 10:00 AM, mostly because workers are just starting the workday with an open mind and the morning meetings have not yet begun. Around 2:00 PM is also a good time to place a business call. At this point in the day, most people are back from lunch and ready to start back to work. After 3:00 PM is the worst time to call a business. This is the time of day when the workload and appointments accumulate and when employees start to look forward to the end of the workday.

The best tips for making professional telephone calls

1. What you should realize: every phone call comes as a surprise!
   - In order to minimize your intrusion, inform the person as to the purpose of your call. If you have a problem that is going to take some time to clear up, ask the person you are calling if the present time is convenient or if you should call back later. If you know the person you are calling, you can also ask which meeting or task you are interrupting with your call. This can be a friendly way to bridge the conversation to your topic and make way for a discussion.

2. To make the most efficient use of your time and that of the person you are calling, it is helpful to make the following preparations:
   - Write down the primary objectives of your discussion
   - Keep a pen or pencil within reach
   - Go through all information on the topic at least once
   - Get some information about the person you are calling
• Write down any possible objections to your arguments and how you would respond to them
• Make out a flow chart if you are planning a telephone interview or the exchange of important and complicated information over the telephone

3. First contact: you are making the call…
• Never forget to start the conversation by greeting the person you are calling
• Identify yourself, tell the other person why you are calling, and ask if he or she has time to speak with you
• Do not interrupt the telephone call to speak to somebody else
• Take down all important information (data, facts, statements)
• Summarize any important points and/or agreements that were made during the discussion
• Keep the first phone call relatively short

4. First contact: you receive a telephone call…
• Ask directly why the other person is calling if this is not clear within 30 seconds
• Have the other person repeat the important points or agreements that were met
• Ask for a written confirmation of any agreements
• Take down all important information (data, facts, statements)

5. Every minute counts: the first few seconds
• Make sure that you know the name of the person with whom you are speaking and how to correctly pronounce his or her name. Use the person's name when appropriate, but not so often that it seems contrived or mechanical.
• Always address the other person with "Sie" (formal you) and use his or her correct title ("Mr.", "Mrs.", "Dr.", "Professor")

6. During the call: standard behavior
• Speak slowly and distinctly
• Use short sentences
• Pause between sentences
• Do not interrupt the other person while he or she is speaking
• Be obliging and polite
• Ask questions
• Make sure that you have understood important statements with the following questions:
  – "Habe ich richtig verstanden, dass...?"
    "Have I understood correctly that...?"
  – "Wie meinen Sie das genau...?"
    "What do you mean exactly when you say...?"
  – "Was verstehen Sie unter ...?"
    "What do you understand to be...?"
  – "Was bedeutet für Sie...?"
    "What does... mean to you?"
• Acknowledge that you are paying attention to the conversation by occasionally repeating or clarifying an important point.
• Give positive confirmations
7. During the conversation: be discrete
   • If other people in the room can hear you speaking and you are dealing with a sensitive topic, ask others to leave the room. This reassures the person you are speaking with that no one else can hear the conversation.

8. During the conversation: Think positively and use positive words
   • Pay attention to your choice of words. Some negative words can kill the discussion. Avoid negative phrases like "Sie müssen..." ("You have to..."). In this case it is better to say, "An Ihrer Stelle würde ich mich ... entscheiden." ("If I were you, I would decide to...") or "Haben Sie... berücksichtigt?" (You may want to consider...or...have you considered...”). Another phrase to avoid is: "Sie dürfen nicht" ("You are not allowed to..."). A better alternative is: "Das würde ich Ihnen nicht empfehlen" ("I would not recommend that you do that."). Also, be careful not to overuse words like "Bitte" ("Please") and "Danke" ("Thank you"), this could make an artificial impression.
   • Consider the impression that your words could make on the person with whom you are speaking. Be careful that you do not create any thought or discussion barriers. Be especially cautious when it comes to your judgment or opinion of personal issues and other people. Do not make statements that could negatively reflect on you.

9. The end of the conversation
   • Summarize the most important agreements and confirm them
   • Thank the person you are speaking with for his or her time
   • Make sure to confirm that you may call back should you have any additional questions

10. Evaluation: The next step to success
    • Go through the notes that you have made, put them in a list based on priority and decide who is responsible for following up on which task by when.
    • If, at the end of a telephone call, you have made a future appointment with the other person, confirm the appointment with an email or a short letter.

Typical phrases that are helpful to learn for telephoning in Germany...

"Können Sie mich bitte verbinden mit..."  
"Can you please connect me with..."

"Erlauben Sie, dass ich mich vorstelle, ich heiße..."  
"Allow me to introduce myself, my name is..."

"Passt es Ihnen jetzt?"  
"Have I caught you at a good time?"

"Hätten Sie einen Augenblick Zeit für mich?"  
"Do you have a second for me?"

"Der Grund warum ich Sie anrufe ist."

"The reason I'm calling is."  

"Der Grund meines Anrufs ist, dass ich gerne mit Ihnen einen Gesprächstermin vereinbaren würde."

"The reason I'm calling is that I would like to arrange a meeting with you."
"Kann ich zurückrufen?"
"Can I call back?"

"Können Sie mich bitte mit jemanden verbinden, mit dem ich über...sprechen kann?"
"Can you please connect me with someone can discuss…with?"

"Können Sie das bitte buchstabieren?"
"Could you please spell that?"

"Darf ich (nochmals) nach Ihrem Namen fragen?"
"May I ask your name (again)?"

"Sie haben mir sehr geholfen, vielen Dank."
"You have been very helpful, thank you."

"Ich bin Ihnen für Ihre Hilfe sehr dankbar."
"I appreciate your help."

To call back or not to call back?

**Situation:**
With digital technology today, telephone displays often make it possible to see the numbers of those who called you while you were away. When I have missed a call, and I can see the number on the display, should I feel obliged to call back? What if the caller has not left an answering machine message? What is the difference if the call was made to my cell or my land line? Are there any gender issues: what about a man calling a woman or the other way around? What is the correct thing to do?

**Answer:**
The question, "Should I call back or not?" certainly raises many issues, but in the business arena, it is always better to call back than to have missed a customer's call. Failing to return a call may lose you a customer, but returning a call may not.

When deciding to return an uncertain call, there are a few rules that you should keep in mind:

- The telephone number should be one that you recognize. You should at least have the feeling that you know who could have been calling. If a mere telephone number is shown, and you only recognize the main desk number at a large company, you will not be doing yourself any favors by returning the call.

- If you absolutely do not recognize the telephone number or you suspect that the number could be a costly ploy, we suggest that you do not call back.

When making a return call that was not requested, it is important that you make the reason for the call clear with an open, neutral and short statement. A good phrase is: "Ich habe bemerkt, dass Sie (mich) (gestern, vorhin…) angerufen hatten. Was kann ich für Sie tun?" ("I noticed that you called me (yesterday, earlier...). What can I do for you?")

The important thing is that you focus on the business issues during the phone call. It is not important if an answering machine message was left, the call was made to a cell phone or a land line, or whether or not you are returning a call to a male or a female. This issue can, however, become much more complex when it comes to private phone calls. But that would open up an entirely different set of considerations!
11 Presenting in Germany

For the most part, when giving a presentation in Germany, you don't have to worry. Depending on the audience, it is often acceptable to present in English, but it is always a good idea to confirm this beforehand. This fact might make presenting in Germany sound easy; however, Germans expect presentations to go beyond superficial information about a topic and to provide supporting facts for business decisions. Although they prefer to focus on hard facts and their sources, it is acceptable to lighten up your presentation with a few stories or anecdotes. At the same time, be careful not to tell long, self-praising stories or to add too many jokes or anecdotes – you do not want to come off as being too arrogant or unprofessional.

Whenever you find yourself in a foreign culture and before a foreign audience, it is especially important to avoid stress and insecurity as much as possible. A well-prepared, well-structured presentation will enhance the audience’s understanding when supported with strong documentation and attractive visual aids.

Before presenting, make sure you know which aspects of your topic the audience is most interested in and which they are not. Ask yourself which objective you want to achieve with the presentation. Then, choose material that will make it possible for you to reach your objective within the allotted amount of time. You should also know which questions your audience wants to have answered by the end of your presentation.

Consider these guiding questions:
1. Who are my listeners?
2. Who do I want to convince of what?
3. What is my audience expecting?
4. How should I make ideas clear?
5. What do I want to emphasize?
6. How should I convey the individual points of my argument?
7. How much time do I have?
8. How should I divide up my time? When should I plan a break?

When preparing your presentation, keep the following pointers in mind:

- A good way to minimize your nervousness at the beginning of your presentation is to memorize the first few lines of your introduction.
- Distribute handouts to audience members so that they can better follow your presentation and take notes.
- The most successful presenters capture the audience's interest with their first sentence. Telling a joke is a good way to do this, but remember this is not always customary in Germany. A joke should at least have something to do with the topic being presented. As a general rule, if you tell more than three jokes during your presentation, you will be treading on unprofessional terrain.
- Use attractive visuals to enhance comprehension. A picture IS worth a thousand words. Visuals also add interest and help reinforce the written documents. The use of colors, pictures, and symbols has the ability to help capture and maintain the interest of the audience.
- Computer-based slides are the most popular presentation medium used in today's business world. Here are a few tips for creating optimal presentation slides:
  - Do not use more than 3 different colors per slide
  - Arrange text in blocks
  - Topics of the same nature should be presented in the same format
  - Leave some "white space" on each slide
  - Do not use abbreviations
  - Use pictures and symbols
  - Summarize your main points; avoid using too much text!

Because many people are visual learners, these aids can help you make complex facts more understandable and easier to portray.

- Finally, remember these golden rules:
  - Don't let your audience get bored AND
  - Always thank them for their attention.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Optimal division of presentation contents:</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Goal: to create suspense, capture the audience’s attention</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Make a professional appearance
- Start on time
- Make eye contact with the audience
- Speak loudly and clearly
- Greet your audience
- Introduce yourself and the topic
- Make the reason for and the objectives of the presentation clear
- Go through the agenda
- Use rhetorical methods to get your audience's attention: anecdotes, quotes, active participation
- Create a transition to the main body of the presentation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Body</th>
<th>75%</th>
<th>Goal: To convey argument and relevant information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Get audience to visualize the information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Place focus on the main message</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Make abstract ideas tangible with visual aides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Speak as freely as possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Use note cards and avoid using a pointer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Vary your speech volume and rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Do not use clichés or informal language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Use gestures to support your speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Actively and emotionally involve the audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Summarize and repeat main ideas while</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>presenting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Be receptive to the audience's responses and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>react accordingly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Express your viewpoint openly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Do not speak to the slides on the wall, and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>be sure to maintain eye contact with the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>audience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conclusion</th>
<th>10%</th>
<th>Goal: Climax of the presentation, repeat your argument or appeal, summarize message</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Summarize main points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Answer any open questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Moderate a round of questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Clear up any misunderstandings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Make your argument / appeal clear to listeners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Thank the audience for their attention, interest, participation, and time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12 E-mail Etiquette

The fast spread use of e-mail has made communication much easier, especially with overseas business partners and clients. Unfortunately, this form of communication also increases your risk of making written mistakes and e-mail faux pas. For this reason, online etiquette rules (also known as Netiquette) were developed. Here are a few of the most important things you should remember when corresponding through e-mail.

Business and private life
You should try to adhere to e-mail etiquette rules not only when composing business e-mail, but also when sending e-mail on a personal basis. Even if you have a friendly or casual relationship with colleagues, you should remember that on-the-job correspondence means that an e-mail message is a business letter, which should include salutations, greetings and disclaimers. Only when quickly corresponding back and forth via e-mail, is it acceptable to leave salutations off without showing a lack of respect.

When composing formal e-mails or sending documents such as legal warnings or final contracts, and especially when sending an e-mail to several people, your grammar must be correct. Typing mistakes do not give the impression that you are extremely busy, but that you are careless, and could be interpreted as impolite. So, be sure to thoroughly read through an e-mail before you send it, and do not hesitate to use your spell and grammar check.

When sending personal e-mails, a forgotten salutation, the absence of a signature listing personal details, and even typing errors will be tolerated. If you jumbled the letters in a word because you were typing too fast, don't worry. However, if simple grammar errors are made, regardless of the language in which you are corresponding, you may look sloppy, if not incompetent.

Worse yet is the incorrect spelling of a person's or a company's name. Such an error will simply be interpreted as a lack of concern and interest.

For many it has become a sort of hobby to strive for atomization and speed when it comes to using e-mail and the Internet. For this reason, you should always attach an automatic signature, if only to satisfy the requirement of identification when sending or publishing information electronically. In addition to this, a company's individual data protection laws should be respected and the electronic sending of internal corporate information to external addresses should be avoided.

When it comes to automatic signatures, especially in consulting, banking, and law, it is common to receive every e-mail answer and reply with an automatic signature, which lists confidentiality claims in German and/or English. By always including this long and complicated standard text, you are indeed demonstrating extremely correct e-mail form and legally protecting the content. However, one copy of the text is enough. You do not want to distract the reader's attention from the main message.

Addressing e-mail
When starting your letter, the best forms of address are still, "Sehr geehrter Herr..." ("Dear Mr. ... "), "Sehr geehrte Frau" ("Dear Ms. ... ") and "Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren" ("Dear Sir or Madam...") despite the more informal style associated with e-mail correspondence. This rule holds true especially when writing to individuals whom you have not yet met in person. By using a formal manner of address, the recipient will feel...
honored and respected. Although "Hallo" ("Hello") is heard and read frequently, this word is too informal and demonstrates poor style even if it is often written out of habit. Having said that, even when writing personal e-mails, a formal address such as "Dear...." ("Liebe / Lieber") is always a better start.

**Sending an e-mail to several recipients**

We have all received those annoying e-mails in which 20 lines of recipients are listed, only to be followed by a message of three sentences. If you only want e-mail recipients to see the message and not be confronted with a distractingly long list of recipients, you should send the mail to yourself and list the intended e-mail recipients in the field "BCC" ("blind carbon copy"). If it is important that all recipients know who is receiving the mail, you can include a list of the recipients in a P.S. note after the actual message: "Diese E-Mail wurde verschickt an:"

Helpful tips to consider:

- In the field "AN" ("To") you should only include individuals who have requested the e-mail or who have a responsibility or task to fulfill in response to the e-mail.
- In the field "CC" ("carbon copy") you should include individuals whom you want to inform of the fact that you have sent the message. These individuals are not usually direct recipients of the e-mail, and should not have a responsibility to fulfill based on the e-mail.
- Be careful: If individuals from several different corporate levels are to be addressed in the different recipient categories, the above rule may not apply. For example, I may address my boss, who is only being informed of the message, in the "AN" field to show respect, and list the rest of the recipients in the "CC" field.
- In order to promote open communication, the field "BCC" ("blind carbon copy") should only be used in special cases. If you must use this field, an indication of the general nature of the message should also be mentioned. For example: "Nur zur Info" ("For your information") or "An alle Vereinsmitglieder" ("To all organization members").

Further tips for composing, reading and organizing e-mail:

**Be short and sweet**

It takes three times longer to read text on a computer screen than on a sheet of paper. For this reason, it is acceptable to compose your text in a more informal style than you would in an actual letter. You should include longer messages and transactions as attachments that you refer to in the e-mail.

**Use an e-mail application**

Whenever possible, compose your text directly in an e-mail program or application. This usually makes writing easier and saves the reader time. This also helps if you later need to do a search in your e-mail program.

It is preferred form to make appointments in the calendar function instead of in the body of e-mail messages. In most cases, this saves the recipient the trouble of having to enter the meeting manually and it reduces your chance of making time or date errors. This also automatically saves the meeting in your own calendar.

**Structure your text for easier reading**

- Begin a new line every 60-70 characters (<Shift> <Enter>)
- Include a paragraph or text break after every 5 lines of text
- Use *** or --- before and after a word or phrase to highlight text
- Avoid "SCREAMING" (writing in all caps) or using only under case letters
Including Internet addresses in your e-mail

To ensure that "www" or Internet addresses can be activated when the recipient clicks on them, keep them as short as possible. Otherwise, your e-mail application could "break" the Internet address. To ensure that this does not occur with longer addresses, include a statement like:

- German: Bitte beachten Sie, dass lange Internetadressen (URL’s) unbeabsichtigt in zwei Zeilen zerbrochen sein können. Kopieren Sie in diesem Fall die gesamte Internetadresse in den Browser.

- English: Please note that long URLs may break into two lines in some cases. Cut and paste, should this occur.

Include a meaningful "Subject"

Let the recipient know why you are sending them a message. By doing this, you catch the reader's attention and reduce the risk that your message is mistaken for SPAM. Never leave the "subject" field empty.

Use abbreviations, but not too many!

In Germany, you will commonly see the following abbreviations used in e-mails:

- s.o. (siehe oben) (see above)
- u.a. (unter anderen) (among others)
- MfG (Mit freundlichen Grüssen) (With friendly greetings)
- i.d.R (in der Regel) (normally)

Other abbreviations, like asap (as soon as possible), are also becoming wide spread through international e-mail traffic. However, if you would like to shorten a message by using "homemade" abbreviations, make sure that you have discussed these beforehand with the friends and colleagues who will be receiving mail from you. The exaggerated use of abbreviations is wide-spread in Germany. In fact, the following, more exotic abbreviations are used commonly, but may not be obvious to everyone:

- HB (Handlungsbedarf) (need for action)
- nzi (nur zur Info) (for your information)
- nfm (no further message)

In order to transfer large amounts of data (over 3MB), it is best to save these on a shared server and then simply include the link to the server in the e-mail. The same thing goes for pictures. Be sure, however, that the recipients have access to the servers. A second option is to use a compressor (i.e. zip) to minimize the size of the file. However, this has little effect on the size of photographs or pictures, and you also run the risk that the receipt does not have the correct software to open the data.

Is security a problem?

Whoever works with e-mail in a professional setting must have a virus scanner. In addition, a SPAM-Filter helps filter out unwanted and possibly "virused" mail. Before opening attached files, save them on a hard drive and scan for viruses. When it comes to security, the question of plain text format always comes up. And yes, those who place a lot of importance on security only accept e-mail in plain text format.

Finally, before sending e-mail invitations for official appointments or get-togethers, consider the formality of the event. Remember, it is always more appropriate and effective to send formal invitations via "snail mail".
13 Distance Zones

Behavioral studies indicate that individuals perceive a comfortable distance for personal interaction and nonverbally define this as personal space. The acceptable breadth of personal space varies between cultures, and because a violation of this personal space can have seriously adverse effects on communication, it is important that you learn to respect the distance zones that are maintained by Germans.

You should become familiar with four different distance zones:

• The first is the intimate distance zone. This entails very close, physical contact with a maximum distance of 15 cm (~6 in.) between two people. Touching someone can cause an unwelcome or unexpected intrusion into this distance zone, which may lead to a negative, or even an aggressive, response. In the business arena, this zone should be carefully respected. When coming into first contact with customers or work partners, disregarding this zone is simply taboo.

• The second is the personal distance zone. This entails a distance of between 50 cm (~20 in.) and up to one meter (~3.3 ft.). This distance allows the most common form of greeting – the handshake. Be careful to respect this zone. If a handshake takes place too closely (head to head), this could cause an awkward situation.

This distance zone may be the most difficult to understand if you are from a country where greetings are carried out by touching cheeks or where kisses on the cheek are common even in business situations. However, in Germany, hugs and kisses should be reserved for best friends, and even in private situations these greetings could be interpreted awkwardly. Your best option is to let the Germans do the greeting, and then follow their lead.

• The next zone defines a distance between approximately 1 and 2 meters. This is known as the social distance zone. In this zone, individuals encounter each other and make observations. Try to stay in this zone when you first arrive at a gathering and do not know many people.

• Finally, the open distance zone entails several meters of distance. This zone plays the least important role when interacting with colleagues, supervisors and customers. In this zone, personal contact in the form of a greeting is rarely possible and is usually not welcomed. For example, if you see someone you know across the street, do not yell loudly and jump up and down to get their attention. This will usually result in an embarrassing situation for both you and the other person.
What does a German mean when he says…?

You can usually go on the assumption that Germans mean exactly what they say. In Germany, individuals expect each other to adhere to promises – given that they are of a realistic substance. Those who do not hold to their word set their trustworthiness in great jeopardy.

Here are a couple of examples that you will surely encounter in Germany:

- **Greetings:**
  
  "Wie geht es Ihnen?" – "How are you?" Although the meaning is the same as in English, the German understands this simple question to be one to which he should truthfully and elaborately answer. So, if he is having a bad day, this could be an uncomfortable question for him to honestly answer.

- **Commands:**
  
  "Rufen Sie mich an." – "Give me a call."
  
  If you agree to call someone, even casually, they do expect to receive a reply from you within the next few days. Likewise, if you ask a German to call you, expect the phone to ring!

- **Invitations:**
  
  "Nächstes Jahr um die gleiche Zeit statten Sie uns aber einen Gegenbesuch ab...." – "Next year around this time, pay a visit to our place..."
  
  Be prepared: The Germans will be there, standing on your doorstep!

- **Promises:**
  
  "Ich werde Ihnen die Präsentationen in den nächsten Tagen per E-mail zusenden." – "I will send you my presentation via email in the next few days."
  
  Do not expect your German colleagues to remind you to do some thing. When you make a promise, you are obliged to keep it.

- **Punctuality:**
  
  "Wir treffen uns um 11.00 in dem Konferenzraum." – "We are meeting at 11.00 in the conference room."
  
  When the Germans set up an appointment, they adhere strictly to the time. Even a few minutes delay might not go unnoticed. In fact, in some cases, a meeting will not be started until everyone is accounted for.
for. Also, be careful when making statements like, "Ich bin in fünf Minuten da." – "I will be there in five minutes." These time frames will be interpreted literally.

From these examples, it is very important to notice that what may be a casual or "empty" promise in another country is usually taken as a serious one in Germany.
German Stereotypes

Nobody knows exactly where they come from or why they exist, but in the minds of many non-Germans there are persistent beliefs about what "typical German" characteristics entail. Like with all stereotypes, these ideas are not made up of tenable facts, but of opinions.

The following list of "German" characteristics does not reflect the authors' point of view; rather, it is a collection of "positives" and "negatives" that most non-Germans are said to perceive of the Germans.

Positives
The following "good" characteristics are commonly associated with the Germans:
- Hard working
- Exact
- Punctual
- Orderly
- Quality focused
- Resistant to bribery
- Trustworthy
- Committed

Negatives
The following negative characteristics also prevail in the minds of non-Germans:
- Perfectionists
- Stubborn
- Inflexible
- Obsessed with work
- Serious
- Know-it-alls
- Grouchy
• Unfriendly
• Cold and reserved

So, how should you really take these assumptions that provide an all-too-simple platform for basing our own actions and reactions? Our suggestion: Be cautious about relying on the exactness of these stereotypes. You will almost always come into contact with a German who embodies the exact opposites.

You should only allow yourself to perceive the world as it actually presents itself. Only then can comfortable, friendly, and open contact with Germans really start. As the German saying goes, "Wie man in den Wald hinein ruft, so schallt es heraus." In short: The way you act towards others is the way you can expect them to act towards you.
16 Traveling with the German Railroad: The Deutsche Bahn (DB)

Despite a drop in the number of train travelers in the last few years, the train is still the quickest, most punctual, most modern, and most comfortable means of transportation in Central Europe. It is also one of the most economical travel solutions when considering the high fuel prices in Europe. Taking a train, a taxi, or the subway is always the best travel option, especially when you have to get around in Europe's large cities and urban areas.

The convenience of train travel can help to relieve at least one factor of travel stress. In fact, if you are traveling less than 500 kilometers (310 miles) within Europe, railroad travel usually offers time advantages in comparison to air travel. All of Germany's big cities are connected to each other within several hours' train ride, and since all main train stations (Hauptbahnhof) are located in the city centers, you can get off the train in the middle of town. This saves you the time of traveling from airports that lie just outside a big city, like in Munich.

However, train travel can become problematic for foreigners if they don't understand the different train connections, ticket prices, or features of the German trains.

Starting with a few etiquette rules, here are several personal tips from someone who has traveled with the German train system many times:

1. Minding your manners on the train

To ensure that your train trip is a relaxing experience, keep the following in mind:

- Seats marked for the handicapped must be offered when they are needed.
- When choosing your seat on the train, make sure that you check which seats have already been reserved by others. If you do take a reserved seat, you may be asked to get up and move later in your trip.
- Be sure not to block other seats or the aisles with your briefcase, shopping bags, or luggage. Also, do not hesitate to ask others to move their things so that you can sit down or get through the aisle.
- If you have had a long day and want to stretch your legs onto the seat opposite you, this will be tolerated if there are enough empty seats on the train. In order to avoid angry glances, put a newspaper under your feet. If you are on a train with closed, 6-seater compartments, it is polite to move your feet from the seats when someone enters.
- "Space hogs" are known for propping their legs or elbows in someone else's space and not moving despite repeated angry glances. If you do not want to come off as being rude and ill mannered, pay attention to how much space you are taking up.
2. **Types of trains**

Although many different types of trains exist in Europe, the most important types you need to be familiar with in Germany include the following:

- **ICE (Inter City Express)** trains are the most modern in the German railway system, and they connect large metropolitan areas at speeds of up to 280 km/hr (174 miles/hr). Particularly speedy routes are those from Würzburg to Hamburg via Hanover and from Cologne to Frankfurt. The extra services that are offered on the ICE train are also enough to justify the extra cost of travel. However, this train is very popular, so it is always best to reserve a seat, otherwise, you could find yourself having paid a lot to stand in the aisle of a packed train.

- **RE (Regional Express)** trains are standard German trains that stop at most train stations along the way. The RE prices are more economical, but travel times are usually longer than when traveling with ICE trains.

- **RB (Regional Bahn)** trains are the slowest in Germany. They stop at ALL train stations, and offer the same standard travel prices as the RE. The advantage of RB trains is that they deliver travelers to out-of-the-way destinations and rural areas.

- **S-Bahn (Schnell Bahn)** trains connect the centers of Germany's big cities with the city's surrounding areas quickly and frequently.

- **U-Bahn (Untergrundbahn)** trains make up the underground metro lines that run under most big German cities. To ride on these trains you must have a special U-Bahn ticket, usually available from one of the vending machines in the underground station.

If you would like additional or specific information about the various trains, you should visit Deutsche Bahn's (The German Railroad) Internet site: [www.bahn.de](http://www.bahn.de) and click on "International Guests" for information in English or "Service" for information in German.

3. **Travel plans**

- **Price:** The Deutsche Bahn Internet site also offers an electronic schedule that allows you to enter departure and arrival stations and your requested travel times in order to compare alternative train connections. It is worth your while to look at these travel plans very closely. In addition to the different time durations from point A to point B, there are usually also several different tariffs. If do not have the opportunity to research your options online, simply go to the ticket counter in the train station and ask for advice. Deutsche Bahn employees tend to be friendly, and most speak English.

Finally, be sure that you always purchase a train ticket, either from the DB ticket counter, on the Internet, or from one of the ticket vending machines, before you get on the train. When traveling in Central Europe, you will almost always be asked to show your ticket, even when only traveling a short distance. If you don't have a ticket, this could lead to a very embarrassing and expensive situation.

- **Changing trains and connections:** When looking at your travel schedule, pay attention to how often you have to change trains. How much time do you have between the arrival of the first train and the departure of the next? If you only have a few minutes to change trains at the next stop, and the train you are on is delayed, it could help to speak to the ticket collector. He or she can call ahead and ask your next train to wait at the station for a few minutes.

Due to problems like this, it is often preferable to take a slower direct train than to take faster trains that require a connection. It is much more enjoyable to sit on one train drinking coffee and reading the newspaper than to run, with all of your luggage, from one busy platform to the next to catch your connection or, as is more often the case, to stand in the cold until the connection arrives.
**Reservations:** If you plan on traveling with an ICE train, it is best to reserve a seat whenever possible. Make sure that you reserve in your desired smoking zone: "Raucher" ("Smoking") or "Nichtraucher" ("Non-smoking")! It is even more important to make a reservation if you are traveling evenings, Fridays, Sundays, or in a group. Reserving a seat is a MUST if you plan to travel to a fair, such as CeBIT (the world's largest information technology and telecommunications fair) or the Hanover Industrial Fair. The ICE can bring you quickly and comfortably from any town in Germany to the fair location. In fact, special ICE trains are organized to transport large numbers of people from Frankfurt, Munich and Hamburg directly to the fair.

**First class:** Almost all of the German trains have first class wagons. If you have not reserved a place in one of these wagons, do not sit in a first class seat or you may find yourself having to pay the additional cost. However, if you are traveling on business, you may want to reserve a first class seat because the second class RE and RB wagons can be particularly crowded and noisy. In comparison, first class wagons offer electrical outlets for laptops and the seats are more comfortable. First class wagons are also ideal for meetings if you are traveling with colleagues and want to use your travel time wisely. Finally, these wagons are usually located right beside the restaurant wagon, just in case you get hungry.
Health and security
Germany is known for being one of the safest countries in the European Union, and while you could possibly find yourself on some of Earth's safest terrain in Germany's smaller towns and villages, traveling in larger cities can be dangerous. The most serious threat for visitors or tourists are pickpockets, who are known for frequenting crowded places like airports, train stations, busy train wagons or buses, and tourist attractions. For this reason, it is best to leave valuable items and documents in a hotel safe.

Medical emergencies
You should obtain medical insurance that is valid in Germany before leaving your home country; otherwise, you will be charged for doctor or hospital visits abroad. For less serious illnesses, you can seek advice in one of Germany's many pharmacies (Apotheke).

Pharmacies (Apotheke)
German pharmacies are abundant, even in smaller towns, and are easy to find. Just look for a red stylized "A" or the word "Apotheke" (www.apotheken.de). Pharmacies are usually open from 8 AM – 6 PM and are generally closed evenings, Saturday afternoons, Sundays and holidays. Each of them, typically, has a list on the door of pharmacies in the area that remain open to handle emergencies. Most pharmacists can offer advice on minor illnesses and recommend over-the-counter remedies. Be aware, however, that all medicines (even aspirin) are behind the counter, and must be asked for, even if you do not need a prescription to purchase them.

It is also a good idea to bring any prescription drugs from your home country with you for the duration of your stay abroad. While you will probably be able to find equivalent drugs in Germany, you will need a doctor's prescription, which will not be free of charge. Prescription drugs cannot be sent legally through the postal service if you are planning on having them sent from home.

Doctors
Finding a doctor in Germany can be an intimidating process because of the language difference, but it should not be. You can refer to the yellow pages (Gelbe Seiten: www.gelbeseiten.de) or a local telephone book (www.dasoertliche.de) in which doctors are listed by their specialization. For a general physician look under "Allgemeinmedizien", or, simply ask a colleague or friend; the best references are often by word of mouth.
Other good sources of medical care are university clinics, which can usually be found in major cities or university towns. These clinics are staffed by highly skilled doctors who often speak English.

Making an appointment
When making a doctor's appointment by telephone or in person, the person you will speak to is the Arzthelferin or doctors assistant. She may not speak English, but do not worry, you will not be asked many questions, you simply need to set up a day and a time for an appointment.

Some helpful phrases for an appointment are:

"Ich möchte einen Termin machen."
"I would like to make an appointment."

"Es ist dringend. Haben Sie keinen früheren Termin?"
"It is urgent. Don't you have an earlier appointment?"

"Wo befindet sich Ihre Praxis?"
"Where is your practice located?"

Urgent situations
If you have an urgent medical situation during evenings, weekends or holidays you can always find an available doctor who will provide after hours medical assistance.

You can find an "on call" emergency physician by:

- Calling a general physician listed in the telephone book. If he or she is not available, you will most likely hear a recorded message with the telephone number of an emergency doctor.
- In large hotels medical care is usually provided on the premises. If not, ask the receptionist to contact a doctor for you.
- Calling the "Ärztlichen Notdienst" (19222 in all of Germany) for the name of a doctor in your area, see also: www.aerztlichepraxis.de/Bereitschaft and www.aerzte-notdienst.de.
- Going directly to the hospital or emergency room.
- Taking yourself or the patient to the nearest hospital or out-patient clinic. Throughout Germany, the number 112 will be answered by an operator who is an experienced member of a rescue team. This is also the number you can call in case of a fire or when an ambulance is needed.
- Checking a local newspaper. Look through a local newspaper for the heading "Notdienst Kalender" ("Emergency Calendar") to find an emergency doctor in your area.

Seconds matter in an emergency:
How to correctly report an accident.
In an emergency, a few seconds can be a matter of life and death. When calling for help, you need to concentrate on relaying essentials without forgetting important facts.

When reporting an accident in German, keep the 5-W's in mind:

- Wo geschah es?  
  (Where did the accident happen?)
- Was geschah?  
  (What happened?)
• Wie viele Personen sind verletzt?
  
  (Who and how many people are injured?)

• Welche Art von Verletzung oder Erkrankung, soweit äußerlich erkennbar?

  (Which injuries or ailments are recognizable?)

• Warten auf Rückfragen und durchgeben der Rückrufnummer.

  (Wait for questions and give a number at which you can be reached.)

By going through this list you can be sure that all important information has been correctly taken down by the emergency rescue team.

**Car accidents and other emergencies**

**Police**
The German police can be identified by their predominantly green and beige uniforms, and green and white (or silver) signs and automobiles. Motorized police units, known as the "Vekehrspolizei" (traffic police), look after safety on the streets, roads and motorways, and can be identified by their white hats. Uniformed policemen patrolling city streets have a hat that is the same color as their uniform. Those policemen who are responsible for criminal offences, known as the "Kriminalpolizei" (criminal police), are usually dressed in plain clothes, and show their identification only when necessary. Many of the German police personnel speak English and are approachable and easy to find in busy areas like airports and train stations. The number 110 can be used to contact the police throughout Germany.

**Car accidents**
If you or someone else has an accident or a serious breakdown on the German motorway, you can use one of the special orange telephones that are set every 2 kilometers along the shoulder of the road. These telephones contact an operator who will inform the appropriate emergency services. The emergency numbers 110 and 112 can be accessed by every telephone, including mobile phones, free of charge.

**German automobile clubs**
If you are staying in Germany for a longer period of time, membership in a German automobile club has several advantages. The largest automobile club in Germany is the ADAC (Allgemeine Deutsche Automobil-Club: www.adac.de). This organization offers information in English, sells insurance, publishes detailed maps and provides emergency roadside assistance. Most cities have an ADAC office. In addition, the ADAC has partnership agreements with some foreign automobile clubs, including AAA in the United States (www.AAA.com).

**Lost and stolen property**
Thefts and burglaries must be reported immediately to the criminal police (www.polizei.de). If an insurance claim is to be made, a certificate must be obtained to show that the stolen property has been reported. If you have lost a valuable item, try contacting the city's "Fundgrube" (Lost and Found). These exist in every German city and are often in the city hall or "Rathaus". See www.fundbuero24.de. The German Railway has its own lost property office known as the "Fundbüro der Deutschen Bahn AG". The same applies for most airports.

**List of Emergency Numbers**

Emergency or Illness

- Fire Department and Ambulance: ☎ 112
Police: ☎ 110
Emergency Doctor/ Ambulance: ☎ 19222
Airborne Rescue
(Deutsche Rettungsflugwacht): ☎ (0711) 70 10 70
Emergency Poison Hotline: ☎ (0761) 192 40
Fundbüro der Deutschen Bahn AG
(German Railroad Lost and Found): ☎ (01805) 99 05 99
Zentrales Fundbüro Berlin
(Central Lost and Found of Berlin): ☎ (030) 69 95

Lost Credit Cards
- Central number for all bank cards (EC), credit cards and cellular phones (with a German contract):
  ☎ 116116
  (toll free within Germany); from abroad: ☎ 0049/116116
- American Express: ☎ (069) 97 97 10 00
- Diner's Club: ☎ (05921) 86 12 34
- Euro-MasterCard: ☎ (069) 79 33 19 10
- VISA: ☎ (0800) 81 49 100

German Automobile Clubs offering roadside assistance
- ADAC (Allg. Deutsche Automobile Club): ☎ (089) 76760
- AvD (Automobilclub von Deutschland): ☎ (069) 66060

Useful Telephone Numbers
- Directory enquiries, national numbers: ☎ 11842 or 11833
- Directory enquiries, international numbers: ☎ 11834

Embassies
Embassies and consulates can provide a number of useful services for their citizens while they are traveling or living abroad.

If your passport is lost or stolen, officials in a consulate can issue you a replacement. The consulate will also renew passports, help you obtain legal advice, hire a translator if necessary, and assist you in contacting your family. If you think that your passport has been stolen, report it to the local police and obtain a police declaration. It is recommended that you make a copy of your passport and other important papers and keep them in a safe place to expedite replacement of lost or stolen documents.

Should you lose all of your money and other financial resources, consular officers can help you contact a bank, employer, or family member and arrange for them to send you funds. In extreme circumstances, they may be able to arrange for financial loans to finance the purchase of a ticket home.

A list of foreign embassies in Germany and of German representatives abroad can be found at www.auswaertiges-amt.de.
Part 2: Applying for a Job in Germany

18 New Strategies for the Job Hunt

Since the year 2000, the number of job offers in Germany has been continuously decreasing. This makes it all the more important that individuals looking for a job in Germany approach the application process from several different avenues.

The following are absolute “musts” if you want to take advantage of all available opportunities for finding employment:

- Read through the job postings in German newspapers and magazines
- Surf the German employment web sites on the Internet
- Contact a personnel-consultant
- Keep on the look-out for job fairs and visit them
- Visit industry fairs
- Go to the German employment agency
- Send “blind” applications
- Post your resume on Internet recruiting sites
- Seek employers via the Internet, look for any job offerings or job postings and application possibilities
- Seek out industry-specific publications and web sites for employment ads or postings
- Join professional organizations to build a network (see Chapter 29)
- Tell your friends and professional acquaintances that you are looking for employment
- Work for temporary employment agencies to become known by and to get to know different businesses

Job postings in German newspapers and magazines

When you start your job search, your first priority should be to comb through the job postings in the Saturday edition of the Frankfurter Allgemeine newspaper (www.faz.de) and the Süddeutschen Zeitung (www.sueddeutsche.de). These two German newspapers contain the most attractive job listings that can be found Germany-wide. If you are focusing your job search on a specific geographic area, or if you are looking for small or medium-sized employers, you should concentrate your attention on the job listings in the Saturday editions of local-area newspapers. Additionally, industry specific magazines and journals are also
an important job information source. Take a look at www.wuv.de for jobs in the advertising industry and www.computerwoche.de or www.heisejobs.de for jobs in the IT industry.

Job searches on the Internet

Looking for jobs posted on the Internet and then sending an application per e-mail or over an online form is a standard strategy in every comprehensive job search. After a consolidation phase of around 100 job search machines used in Germany during the years 2000-01, the following managed to survive (listed in order of popularity):

- www.jobpilot.de
- www.jobscout24.de
- www.stepstone.de
- www.monster.de
- www.stellenanzeigen.de
- www.top-jobs.de
- www.jobsintown.de
- www.jobs.de
- www.jobuniverse.de
- www.worldwidejobs.de

A current version of this list, as well as a list of the job search machines in Switzerland and Austria can be found under this book's website at www.business-knigge.com. Many other job offers can also be found on the Internet sites of business magazines such as www.wirtschaftswoche.de, www.capital.de, www.jungekarriere.de, www.handelsblatt.com und www.ftd.de, and major newspapers like www.faz.de, www.zeit.de und www.sueddeutsche.de. You may notice that job postings for the IT industry and other specialized industries tend to dominate the offers listed on the web, while jobs in marketing, sales, and distribution tend to take the back burner. This may be an indication that personnel for the latter can be found more locally, and that recruitment for these positions is carried out on shorter notice.

Take advantage of the opportunity that most Internet job sites offer and post your profile and resume online. This feature, as well as a job mail service, is standard for many job search websites and is often free of charge.

Contacting a personnel-consultant

Personnel consultants and professional search firms or "head hunters" are probably most helpful for those looking for top management and professional positions. If you are looking for a job with an annual income over €100.000, it is definitely worth contacting a professional search firm. The biggest search firms in Germany include Kienbaum Executive Consultants, Heidrick & Stuggles, Mülder & Partner, and Ray & Berndtson Unternehmensberatung Management Consultancy. The best way to find contact persons and addresses for these and similar companies is to look in the major German newspapers and in Handelsblatt (Merchant Page) www.handelsblatt.de. The consulting firms' current job advertisements will also give you an idea of their target clientele and their business sector orientation.

Professional search firms charge related fees for their services. These fees may be paid by the employer or the employee. Be sure to clarify the fee structure and services offered.

Visiting job fairs

College and university graduates and those beginning a career should take advantage of job fairs to make first contacts and to get a feel for their dream company. Industry-oriented fairs, like the Hanover Fair (www.messe.de) are also interesting because they have become platforms for making contacts with job applicants. A few of the more popular, industry-specific fairs are:

- www.academics.de (science)
- www.access.de (IT professionals)
• www.come-to-cebit.de or www.cebit.career-online.de
  (… look under CeBIT JOBMARKET)
• www.iqb.de (law professionals)
• www.career.de (mechanical and electrical engineers and physicists)
• www.medizinfo.de and www.jobcenter-medizin.de
  (medical professionals)
• www.bioberufe.de (biology and related areas)
• www.consulting-days.de und
• www.absolventenkongress.de (graduates and career starters)
• www.connecticum.de (international job fair)
• www.jobfair24.de (virtual job fair)

When it comes to job fairs, the most important thing to remember is to be well prepared to make a good first impression. This goes for your own self-portrayal (What do I want? – What do I have to offer? – How do others perceive me?) and for the information that you bring with you (resumes and/or business cards).

The German Employment Office
Many people turn up their noses at Germany's government employment office (www.arbeitsagentur.de) because it has a reputation for simply dispensing jobs rather than offering quality consultation and job placement. However, when the economy dips into a recession and the number of job hunters increases, the employment agency often ends up with more "business" than it can handle. For this reason, it is suggested that you personally go to the employment agency as soon as you start your job hunt. Not only do they have many job offers, but they can also provide you with application tips and information on government-sponsored job placements. This is also the place where foreigners can get information on the conditions that must be met to work in Germany, and how to go about getting a German work permit.

Sending "blind" job applications
You will often hear German job applicants claiming to have sent 50 or even 100 applications without having any success in finding a job. At the same time, many companies receive stacks of applicant mail when they have no concrete need for new employees. For this reason, many people who send “blind” or speculative applications, or who apply to a company on their own initiative will end up with a standard letter of refusal in their mailboxes. However, for individuals who have a special skill to offer or for those applicants who wish to gauge their employability, a blind application makes a lot of sense. There are two approaches that can be taken:

• A conventional written job application: If you choose this approach, it is important that your cover letter points out that you have specific and marketable skills to offer.

• Applying via e-mail and your homepage: This is the best option both for you and the personnel department. It is important that you write a short and concise e-mail as a substitute for a cover letter and that you then attach your resume. Or, instead of sending your resume, you can list all of your personal data, objectives, references and diplomas on your homepage, and include your homepage link in your e-mail.

Finally, if you really want to tune-up your application skills, the best recommendation that we can make is to take part in an application seminar.
In fact, if you would like to couple it with a language course in Germany, you can find more information at: www.learn-german.com.
If you still have questions about applying for a job, consider taking a look at the German web-site www.wer-weiss-was.de where you can search for advice and get expert answers to common career-oriented questions.
19 How to Read Job Advertisements

Many job applications are unsuccessful because applicants do not read job advertisements accurately. Consequently, they do not familiarize themselves with the job requirements. In order to separate the wheat from the chaff as early as possible in the job application process and to avoid unnecessary work for both the applicant and the employer, an applicant should be able to fulfill at least 80% of the listed requirements and identify with the job conditions. If you feel anxious about one of the main listed requirements, it is better to resist applying for the job.

The Job Advertisement
Regardless of whether you are searching on the Internet or in printed materials, a classic, good job ad will tell you the following:

1. "Wir sind ..." ("We are...")
   ... the self-introduction of a business gives you information on the branch in which the business is involved, tells you which products or services are sold, and mentions the size, market placement and location of the business.

2. "Wir suchen ..." ("We are looking for...")
   ... the job description states a job title and explains the area of responsibility and additional work conditions, such as the starting date.

3. "Wir erwarten ..." ("We expect...")
   ... the job requirements and qualifications that an applicant must fulfill: level of formal education, job experience, additional qualifications and any soft skills or personal details, such as age.

4. "Wir bieten ..." ("We offer...")
   ... any special benefits, such as an above average salary, a company car, reimbursements for moving costs, and any out of the ordinary social benefits.

5. "Wir bitten ..." ("We request...")
   ... information about what you should include in your application (one page resumes only, references, etc.), the application process, as well as the name and telephone number of the contact person, reference word or code to list in the address, etc.

Reading and processing job advertisements
Here are a few tips for systematically going through job ads:

1. Cut the job ad out of the paper or print it out from the Internet.  
   (Do not forget to note the source and the date of the ad!)

2. Highlight any key words and check the ad for the following information:
   • Which company is looking for employees? Have you ever heard of it? What is their branch of expertise? How big is the company? Are they known for anything in particular?
   • What is the position to be filled?
   • What are the tasks involved in the job? What does the job profile tell you?
   • Which qualifications and how much experience should an applicant have? (Evaluate in order of importance.)
   • Is there an age limit?
   • Are there chances for career development?
   • Which financial incentives are offered?
• How should an applicant contact the employer?
• Should the applicant send a short, one-paged application or a complete application?
• Is there an application deadline?
• Are telephone calls welcome?
• Can you request your salary level?
• Is the earliest starting date listed?
• Is there a restriction notice?

3. Take notice of the ad's size, the word-choice and the image that it sends. Depending on whether you interpret the ad as sober and technical or relaxed and cool, tells you a lot about the image and tone that the company wants to project. The size of the ad tells you how much value the company places on the job being offered.

4. Pay attention to the statements that are listed in the advertisement. To make an initial decision on applying or not, concentrate on the degree to which your profile corresponds to the requirements and whether you can see yourself in the position. Also, pay attention to age requirements. If you are well over the age limit, your application will not go far. Also, keep in mind the lower salaries of younger employees.

5. What seem to be the primary (must-have) requirements and what seem to be the secondary (nice-to-have) requirements for the job?

6. Based on these criteria, evaluate your profile. How well do you realistically fulfill these requirements? (--, -, 0, +, ++).

7. While doing this evaluation, do not forget to consider your strengths, weaknesses, interests, and main qualifications. Will the job support and use your abilities or does the employer have other priorities? If yes, how can you make up for any discrepancies between your profile and the job requirements?

8. Based on what you have discovered by comparing your profile with the job ad, come up with three to five arguments for your cover letter:
   • Why are you perfect for this job, and why should the employer hire YOU instead of someone else?
   • Why do you personally see an opportunity in this job, and why exactly do you want to have THIS job?

9. Do not forget to take down any questions while going through the the job ads. Call the company and ask about any questions that you have or about anything that is not clear in the advertisement. Also, keep questions in mind for the interview, and always be prepared to answer the question, "Why should we hire you instead of someone else?"

**Phrases and standards**

Many statements in job ads may seem like meaningless phrases. To better understand what is actually being advertised, here are a few of the most common phrases you will find in German job ads:

• Key qualifications (must-requirements) are usually listed following statements like...
  - "Voraussetzung sind sehr gute/perfekte Kenntnisse in ..."
  "Requirements are very good/perfect knowledge of..."
  - "Als Erfolgsvoraussetzungen bringen Sie mit ...
  "You possess the following skills, qualifications, etc. ..."
  - "Erforderlich sind mindestens ... Jahre Berufserfahrung.
  "... years of work experience are required."

• Hints at desired or additional knowledge or experience (nice-to-have requirements) are usually made known with the following statements:
If it is not clear which requirements are "musts" and which are "nice-to-have", you should call the contact person listed in the ad.

If the company is looking for employees for a "junges team" (young team), then applicants should be under 35 years of age. If a "überschaubares Team" (manageable team) is the goal, you can assume that the area of responsibility is not constant, but always changing with new tasks.

"Teamorientierung" (Team oriented) means that the applicant will not be sitting in a quiet cubicle working alone, but will constantly have to get along and work with many different people. This also means that you must possess a sixth sense for when it is worth fighting to have your way and when it is better to compromise. If a "Höchstmaß an Flexibilität" (high level of flexibility) is required, you should be prepared for spontaneous calls to work at not-so-optimal times and even additional hours.

If "hohe Entschlusskraft" (determination) and "große Belastbarkeit" (resilience) are called for, then the company culture is probably rough and aggressive.

If the company is looking for a "Führungspersönlichkeit" (manager personality), this may sound attractive, but it also opens up a whole other book of questions. If nothing else is mentioned in the ad, try to find out what or whom you are to manage, how many employees are involved, and if there are any additional qualifications that have to be fulfilled for this position.

If the phrase, "Die Dotierung ist äußerst interessant" (the payment is interesting) sounds attractive, be sure to check what lies behind this statement: is this a salaried position or is it paid by the hour? How high is the rate of commission or are employees paid a royalty when the job is complete?

If a job ad gets your attention with phrases like "Top Verdienst von zu Hause aus" (Top earnings while working from home), or "Mehr als 7.000 Euro monatlich für leichte Tätigkeit bei freier Zeiteinteilung" (More than 7,000 Euro per month for easy jobs on your own time), be careful! If nothing else is mentioned about the job activities, do not apply. Nothing is free these days, and the job to which the ad is referring is usually one which you will only qualify for after having paid a fortune for a self-financed training module. In cases like these, there is usually nothing to be earned.

If serious uncertainties arise while reading a job advertisement, call or write the contact person listed in the ad. A call also gives you the opportunity to acquire additional information about the position directly from the company: why is the job being posted? Did the last person resign, go into retirement, or is a certain branch of the company expanding?

Deciphering the code
As in all areas of life, there are also some "black sheep" to be found among job advertisements. These companies believe that it is more important to make promises about salary, qualifications and work hours than to make clear and open statements about the actual job. Be careful when it comes to these ads, especially if there is not at least a little bit of information on the company, the position, the job requirements, and needed qualifications. An exception may arise when a professional recruiting firm has been hired to put out job ads for another company. If you are not sure if the company and position are right for you, prepare a letter describing your basic profile and asking the head hunter to contact you. If they are interested, then you can send your full application.
If you are applying to an ad that is only identified by a code, and you do not know who the actual employer is, you can use a "Sperrvermerk" (restriction notice) to avoid having your application sent to certain companies or individuals.

If you are uncertain about a company that you are applying to, do some research on the financial conditions, goals, and perspectives of the company. Use the Internet, business newspapers or magazines, and information services like the company data bank at the Hoppenstedt-Verlag (Hoppenstedt Publisher). Or, look in the following guides: "ABC der deutschen Wirtschaft" "(The ABC Guide to German Businesses"), "Kompass Deutschland" (German Compass) and WLW, "Wer Liefert Was" (Who Ships What). Valuable contact people can also be found at "Industrie- und Handelskammern" (chambers of commerce) in the city where a company is located or at "Handwerkskammern" (trade corporations). To find current addresses to these organizations see: www.businessgerman.com.

Salary
Last but not least, you many notice that many companies do not make any references to salary in the job advertisement. Instead, they ask applicants to name the salary that they wish to receive. Our tip: In your application, do not refer to salary at all, but wait until you are invited to an interview. At this point, you will have a better idea of what the minimum pay for the position should be. For this reason, it is wise to research enough about an industry to have a realistic idea as to salary ranges in similar jobs. This information can be found in industry reports on wage and salary surveys and by asking professionals in that particular field.

The early bird gets the worm.
React to job advertisements as soon as possible. Ads in local or regional newspapers should be answered within one week, and in national newspapers within two. If your application gets there later, you may give the impression that you are not really interested in the position.
20 The Job Application

The type of application expected by a personnel department can vary from one country to the next. In Germany, a written job application should always contain the following documents in the following order:

- Cover letter
- Photograph
- Resume
- Diplomas and certificates

All of the written documents should be printed on pure white, high quality paper that is perfectly clean and not wrinkled. The following details should be considered with respect to each of the application contents listed above:

1. **Cover letter**
   This is the most important document in the application because it establishes a direct relationship between you and your abilities and the job that you are applying for. A few quick tips: Keep the cover letter limited to one page with precise statements in error-free German. Keep your sentences short, and at the bottom of the cover letter include a list of the other documents that you have enclosed in the application. You can find more detailed tips on cover letters and examples that will help you write your own letters at: [www.job-pages.de/bewerbung-anschreiben.html](http://www.job-pages.de/bewerbung-anschreiben.html).

2. **Photo**
   Be sure to include a current professionally-made photograph with your application that is either scanned onto your resume or attached in the upper right-hand corner. The date and your signature should be written on the back of the photo.

3. **Resume**
   Your resume should list all of your personal data and your past job positions in a clearly tabulated form. You can see a simple example at [www.jobware.de](http://www.jobware.de), keyword "Richtig bewerben". It is important that you
do not leave any obvious time gaps in your resume and that it allows readers to follow a comprehensive summary of your life.

4. Diplomas and certificates

In this section of the application, recent graduates and career beginners should include high quality copies (not originals!) of important school and higher education diplomas, as well as any certificates certifying jobs or internships that they had in the past. Certificates that certify job-relevant training, such as language or computer skills, also belong here. For applicants that already have job experience, school diplomas are of secondary importance to current reference certificates (see Chapter 23). Nevertheless, copies of your most important educational diplomas, such as the diploma showing your university degree, should be included in the application. Samples of your work, references, and handwriting samples should only be included in this section if they are required or if they are requested in the job ad.

With all of the documents that you collect over your career, your job application could grow to become a small book. As a rule, you should not include more than 10, at the most 15, pages in your application. If you include more, employers may suspect that you just do not know how to distinguish between your important and unimportant experiences and skills. Just remember: More class, less mass! If you are missing important documents for your application, you should explain the situation with a P.S. in the cover letter. Before you send the application, you should thoroughly check that you have only included the important documents that accurately present you to a potential employer and that are relevant for an employer’s decision about the respective job. Finally, always remember that your claims in your application must be credible.

Ideas on organizing and presenting your finished application can be found at: www.bewerbungsmappe.de. However, sending your application in a high quality folder (preferably in a soft color without perforations), would suffice. Keep in mind that your application documents are like a detailed business card that reflects you and your abilities to others.

A few comments on reference certificates:

These are the most important documents concerning your career because they contain valuable information about your competencies and your behavior with customers, colleagues, and supervisors. For this reason, you should never fail to have a complete and credible reference certificate written before you leave a place of employment. In order to have the most control over what is written in your certificate, you should offer to formulate the certificate yourself and then present it to your supervisor for him or her to sign. In most cases, this is the most convenient arrangement for both you and your supervisor.

Once you have your job application contents ready, it is best to apply within three days of a job’s posting, and definitely within three weeks.

What will happen after you send off your application?

After a few days, you will usually receive a standard letter from the personnel department stating that your application has been received and is being processed. After that, the company will contact you within 2 – 4 weeks and you will either receive a rejection letter with the return of your application or an invitation to an interview.

If you find yourself waiting to hear from a company for more than six weeks, this usually means that you are not being considered for the job or, in the case of a speculative application, that there are no available openings. Eventually, your application will be returned to you, and the company will only keep your cover letter.

Good luck with your applications!
The Job Interview

During your job search in Germany, you will surely experience several job interviews. In order to be successful at interviewing, you should follow these three basic rules:

- Be well prepared and convincing
- Demonstrate composure, competence and confidence
- Be punctual and reliable

To avoid skating on thin ice at your next job interview here are a few tips:

1. Be prepared:
   Make it clear to yourself why the company should employ you rather than someone else. Obtain important information on the activities, successes, and the organizational culture of your potential employer. You can find many companies on the Internet. Other useful sources of information include annual reports, industry reports, trade fairs, organizational brochures, commercial registries, business groups, and newspaper archives. Read the employer's job ad very carefully and pay attention to current projects or problems. Whenever possible, you should also try to get a first hand impression of the organization to which you are applying. For example, if you would like to work in a bank, walk through the main teller hall as a normal customer would. If you can't personally view the organization, visit their display at a job fair. You can demonstrate interest and competence by mentioning your impressions during the interview.

2. Be on time:
   Whatever you do, do NOT be late! In order to reduce every risk of being late, you should include a little bit of buffer time in your plans. Time spent in a traffic jam or looking for a parking place can add up and could cause you to start off the interview making a bad impression. Instead of taking your own car, it is better to take the train, the subway, or a taxi. That way, you will know almost exactly when you will be arriving. However, you should also be sure not to show up to an interview more than ten minutes too early.

3. Outfit:
   Plan what you are going to wear before the day of the interview. If you first discover on your way to the interview that your skirt is too short, your shirt has a spot on it, or your socks are the wrong color, it will only add to your nervousness and insecurity. Dress in the way that you would dress if you worked at the company where you will be interviewing. If you buy a new suit or new shoes for the interview, try on everything beforehand and let yourself get used to the outfit so that you feel comfortable in the clothes. Instead of choosing to wear a strong perfume or cologne on the day of the interview, settle for a neutral or scent-free deodorant. As everyone knows, different people have different tastes, and you should not let overpowering cologne prevent you from getting the job.

4. Making your entrance:
Many psychologists are convinced that the first ten seconds of contact decide whether an individual comes across as being personable and whether or not they "fit in". For this reason, your first impression is priceless. Try to come into an interview looking energetic and open-minded. You should make sure that you get enough sleep the night before the interview. Drinking lots of water and avoiding alcohol and cigarettes will also have a positive effect on your appearance.

5. During the interview:
Your potential employer wants the job position being discussed to be your first choice. For this reason, it is important that you explain why you find the company interesting and how the company can help you pursue your personal career goals. Don't forget: The company's goals should also be your goals. Also, make it clear how you, in particular, can help the company or the department to thrive. On the other hand, be careful not to leave the over-confident impression that you can improve and reorganize the entire organization before you have even seen it.

Be friendly without being effusive and try to positively show your real personality. Whoever pretends to be someone different than they really are usually fails to get the job, because a facade rarely remains consistent and credible over several rounds of interviews. When discussing a serious topic, be careful how you express yourself. Look the interviewer in the eye without staring. When it comes time to shake hands, smile and wait for the interviewer to offer his or her hand, then press firmly without squeezing, and try to avoid having sweaty palms. Also, pay attention to the distance between the two of you. If you get too close to the interviewer, you might come off as being too aggressive (see Chapter 13).

Finally, do not talk too much, and try to present goal-oriented and relevant information. Do not go off on tangents and do not lose focus of the most important issues – the job position and capturing the employer's interest in you.

6. Pay attention:
Memorize the name of your interviewer. Nothing is more embarrassing than having to ask for his or her name later on. It is also a good idea to remember a few of the interviewer's main points so that you can refer to them later in the interview.

7. Body language:
Do not face your interviewer with downcast eyes and crossed arms. This makes an unfriendly and insecure impression. As the interview goes on, try to mimic the interviewer's body language, as this will have a more positive effect. Of course, if the interviewer is slumping in his chair, do not try to mimic him.

A few more tips: Do not lean back in your chair, prop your feet up, put your hands behind your head or play with your hair. A professional demeanor is always impressive.

8. Politeness:
Do not interrupt your interviewer. This can give the impression that you are nervous, over-ambitious, insensitive, or that you just have bad manners. Also, avoid asking questions that are irrelevant to the topic or that are too personal – if they do not directly arise from the conversation. If you are not used to German business culture, it is easy to get too personal, and this will make it uncomfortable for the interviewer!

9. Confidence:
A good way to strengthen your confidence is by listing all of the things that you have achieved in both your business and private life. Make it clear to yourself why you are good, and why you should be the employer's first choice for the job. Compare the job profile with your qualification profile. Read over the notes that you make several times so that you can mentally prepare yourself for the interview. Do not memorize statements, but practice answering critical questions out loud. Check your facial expressions and gestures by talking in front of a mirror.

10. Course of the interview:
Familiarize yourself with the usual sequence of elements in a German job interview so that you know what to expect when the time comes:

- **Introductions**
  - The company and the job position will be introduced to you, or
  - You will first talk about yourself, your goals, and your motivation for the position
  - Depending on the situation, you may be given a tour of the company or the factory (this is usually only done at the second interview)
  - Final questions will be asked and answered, and
  - You will agree on how you will get in contact with each other in the near future

Do not expect that you will immediately be offered a job. In most cases, such a decision will require at least one day. At the same time, you should not immediately agree to take a job, but should call the next day with your answer. Finally, the most important tip: Do not begin to confront your interviewer with questions about the job salary, but wait for a good opportunity during a question and answer session. By the way, salary negotiations in Germany are always carried out in annual gross Euro amounts.

11. **Decency:**
   Never talk badly about others. Complaining about former employers or colleagues makes a bad impression. You could be considered difficult and in the worst case, as not being a team player. Express your dissatisfaction with your former or current employer in a diplomatic way, and do not directly attack anyone. A few good phrases are: "Our expectations just weren't the same any more..." or "My goals are different." If possible, talk about both the positive and the negative sides of your former or current job position – for example, a lack of growth and promotion possibilities. These are good reasons to leave a job. Do not neglect to mention something positive, for example, the positive work atmosphere. Finally, when asked whether you work better in a team or alone in your office, think the question over very well before answering. If you have done your homework, you will know enough about the company to answer well.

12. **Credibility:**
   Say very openly which competencies you can contribute to the company and which expectations you have of the job. In this way, you avoid taking a job that is not compatible with your skills or interests or running the risk that your employer will not be satisfied with your job performance. A decision to accept a job is always a compromise of give and take, but your acceptance of a job should always be connected with a personal obligation.

13. **Briefing:**

   Before the interview, go through the job application that you sent to the company. Which questions might the interviewer ask? Which of your qualifications or which missing pieces of your history could be of particular interest to the employer? It is also a good idea to simulate an interview with a good friend. Make a note of your weaknesses and your difficulties during this trial interview.

At the end of your interview, you should clear up who should contact whom and when. If you get a polite "we'll call you" form of rejection, do not worry – you can't make everybody happy.

Once you have survived the interview, analyze what went well and what didn't. What kind of a gut feeling do you have about it? What is good and what is bad about the job? What impression did the company make on you? In fact, the best thing to do after a job interview is to go directly to a café or a park, or anywhere you can think in peace. Do not forget to write down your thoughts. This will help you to get your ideas in order for later decisions and interviews.
22 Questions and Answers for the Job Interview

During a job interview it is important to keep calm even when you are asked tricky questions. Here are a few guidelines for strengthening your confidence before making your one and only "first impression".

1. Be prepared to sell yourself!
   In most cases, after greeting your interviewer(s), you will be asked to say something about your professional background. If this occurs, make sure you repeat the most important points listed in your resume. When it comes to interviews, those individuals who talk a lot but say nothing are rather unpopular in the German business world. However, equally unpopular are those who make a reserved impression and must have every word dragged out of them; therefore, try not to come off as being brusque and emotionless. Respond to the situation as it presents itself, but it is not necessary to go into too many details about things.
   Later in the interview, you will be asked specific questions about your work history. Make sure you have prepared convincing answers for explaining any resume gaps.

2. Try to see things from your interviewer's point of view…
   …and ask yourself:
   • What is expected of the ideal employee?
   • How do I compare to that ideal?
   • What must the job have in it for me?
   • What can I survive without?
   • How will my future career path look if I get this job?
   The better you think through these questions before the interview, the more confidently you will be able to answer them during the interview. In comparison, it is much less helpful to know the profile of the "ideal German employee" and to then try to manipulate your own profile to match it. At the same time, remember that no matter how you represent yourself; you are setting expectations for your future performance. Do not lead the interviewer(s) to think you can do something you cannot.

3. Remain credible
   Professional interviewers lead structured interviews and expect precise, lucid, and honest answers. If what you are saying does not correspond with your personality profile, it will be obvious that you are just telling stories. If you make a false impression, it is more likely that interested employers will request
references from ex-employers or educators. Your last reference certificate (see Chapter 23) will also be taken into account and carefully reviewed.

4. **Go through the most popular questions and answers before the interview.**

For each interview, personnel directors like to dig through their rich collection of standard questions. Therefore, you can usually plan your "impromptu" answers. Here are a few examples of personnel's favorite questions:

- **What did you have most fun doing during your educational years / in your previous jobs? What did you have least fun doing?**

  When answering these questions, don't be afraid to show enthusiasm, but don't forget to relate the answer to your most desired future job or position. Be careful how you express yourself when talking about less positive or more difficult experiences or topics. Also, avoid making negative statements. It is always better to make comparisons than to risk making a bad impression by complaining or gossiping about other people or companies.

- **What would you consider your strengths and weaknesses?**

  A good trick for naming your weaknesses is to choose those that can also be considered as strengths: for example, impatience or perfectionism. Then, explain what you mean by using specific examples from your school or work experience. However, be careful not to bore your interviewer with typical responses. Also, if you immediately mention that you have problems with procrastination, you will have already lost the game.

  It is not bad to admit some weaknesses, because everyone knows that nobody is perfect. A good tactic for gauging your answers is to think about how you would interpret the answers if you were the interviewer. A strong answer may be, "I am very creative, but sometimes a little unorganized." You can make the statement milder by adding, "...but I always keep my appointments and meet my deadlines."

- **So, you studied music, but you are now applying for a trainee position in marketing? How do the two correspond?**

  If such questions come up, it is important that you make it clear that logical and understandable motives support your decision to apply for the job. For example, it is possible to compare music to marketing by relating common elements like creativity, discipline, skill, timing, etc., which will help you draw common parallels between the two disciplines. If you can successfully do this, you can easily turn this supposed disadvantage into a trump card.

- **Why did it take you so long to finish your education?**

  Certain organizations in the consulting branch prefer to hire applicants that finish their studies in a short period of time and have stellar grades. However, if you are not applying at such a company, do not let yourself be provoked by a question about the length of your education. Personnel usually just want to see how you answer uncomfortable questions. After all, they did invite you to the interview. The best tactic is to briefly answer the question and not to go into a long-winded justification speech that sounds defensive. Thinking through this question before the interview should help you identify reasonable and mature responses.

- **Where do you see yourself in 5 years?**

  In this case, your interviewer wants to know what goals you have set for yourself and if you fit in with the organization's vision. The ability to plan in the long-term is essential for those in responsible positions. If you are not familiar with the organization's career path, relate your response to career development opportunities, such as increasing your responsibilities or to the contributions you would like to make.
• Why should we hire you in particular?
  This question will always be asked in some form. Despite this fact, few applicants are ever prepared for it. This question deals with your self-assessment. The best thing to do is to briefly summarize your professional and personal strengths, and relate them to the position for which you are interviewing.

• How much would you like to earn?
  Be careful with this question. Approximately one third of all job applicants are rejected because their salary expectations are too high. For this reason, it is best to look through salary reports in your industry and for your desired position before going to the interview. You can often find salaries listed in professional or business magazines or in salary surveys on the Internet. Your minimum expectation should be the "market rate" for the job based on your qualifications. If you are offered less than you would like, bridge the difference by asking about the opportunities for training and further on-the-job education opportunities. Caution!: Whoever thinks that all of their salary wishes will come true after starting the job and going through the first salary negotiations will only be left frustrated. At that point, you will already be locked into the inside promotion track, and you will first have to prove yourself in comparison to others.

5. Get bonus points by asking your own questions
  At an interview, you should ask questions that are important for your own decision making process. You should avoid "why" questions because they can come off as being too critical. It is better to ask open questions that begin with "who", "what", or "how" and that require longer answers. For example, ask who you would be working with. Interviewers also like to hear questions that show your interest in the organizational strategy, development possibilities, or the hierarchy of the positions within the organization. It is always helpful to prepare a list of questions before the interview because it is easy to forget what you wanted to ask when you get nervous. By the way: Take the list, as well as your application documents, with you to the interview. If you have done your homework by learning about the business or industry, try to incorporate this knowledge into the questions you ask.

6. What you should not answer...
  It is uncommon today for personnel directors to try to intimidate interviewees by asking inappropriate or uncomfortable questions. If it happens anyway, remain calm and friendly. If they want to know if you are homosexual, pregnant, or perverse, the best way to reply is by shrewdly asking if these are requirements for the job. If this line of questioning continues, you should seriously consider if you want to work in the organization. Such "stress interviews" show a lack of preparation from the organization's side or simply reveal an uncomfortable organizational culture.

  Some topics are unacceptable, especially when they have no relevance to the job for which you are applying. For example, your religious affiliation should not be an issue, unless, of course, you are applying for a job at the Catholic Church. In such a case, the interviewer has a justified interest in your religious beliefs. Consider the following topics and keep in mind that they could come up in an interview. You should be prepared to either answer them or respond without offending.

• The reason why you left or resigned from your previous company
• Political party orientation
• Public positions or posts
• Participation in clubs, groups, committees, societies, etc.
• Religion
• Union membership
• Marital status
• Whether you want to have children
• Pregnancy
• Previous convictions
• Financial situation
• Information about your previous colleagues or company

Finally, you can presume that your interviewer knows exactly what he or she is allowed to ask and what is inappropriate. Of course, in reality, it is often difficult to judge the extent of how much you should or should not say. When in doubt, avoid giving too much information if possible. You can always say, “Excuse me, but how is this information used to determine my qualifications for this job?” Having said that, if you still feel pressured to answer a controversial question, and you know which reply the interviewer wants to hear, then it is usually best to tell him or her just that.

7. **Aptitude test:**

When applying for a job, you may be confronted with a personality test or a personal questionnaire. Read or listen to the directions and follow them. Questions typically seek insight into your motivation, maturity, and sense of self. How you answer reflects your typical behavior, thoughts, and decisions, and there are no right or wrong answers. This information is used in combination with the interview, assessment center, and your resume, references, and experience to provide a more complete assessment of your “fit” in the organization. It is best to respond with diplomatic answers and to not try to portray yourself as a perfect Superman/woman!

However, some “aptitude tests” are known to contain questions that give you a choice between different situations or preferences. On such tests, there are usually “better” answers. Here are a few examples:

- You do not suffer from unnecessary mood swings, worries, fears, insecurities, inferiority complexes or guilt
- You don’t get hung up on perfectionism, and do not react too impulsively
- You do not have problems concentrating
- You are satisfied with your life; if you had another chance you would do things the same way
- You like being with others and have a large circle of friends
- You are the “leader” in a group
- You are not sensitive to changes in the weather and you don’t get migraines
- You are not disgusted by snakes or insects
- You are optimistic, self-confident, and have a good temper
- You complain (for example, when you are not served correctly), but you are not insulting
- What do you do in your free time?: You go to a party rather than read a book
- You would rather use the telephone than write a letter
- You prefer scientific literature to fiction
- If you are standing on a train platform you are more interested in the other people than the view of the countryside
- You are funny and like to tell jokes
- You think it is important to be popular, but you do not get paranoid when others talk badly about you
- You do put off your work or tasks
- You are not afraid of competition
- You would like to be a famous or important person
- You would rather spend your vacation doing something actively than lying on the beach
- Yes, you think about work when you are on vacation
- You are interested in sports, you like physical work
- Once in a while you do something dangerous to have fun
- You admit mistakes or accidents, otherwise you come off as being dishonest
- As a child, you sometimes did what you parents forbid
• Sometimes you get mad and find joy in another's misfortune, and yes, occasionally you lie
23 The Job Reference Certificate

Contrary to standard practices in many other countries like the USA and Japan, where an up-to-date list of references and letters of recommendation play an important role in verifying one’s work successes and work quality, official job reference certificates (known in German as an "Arbeitszeugnis") are of primary importance in Germany. When preparing a job application, keep the following information in mind:

1. Your most important document:
   An official job reference certificate is probably of greatest importance in the middle management realm. Because a “gap-free” resume is of great importance in Germany, an employer usually considers it necessary to require and check reference certificates from all job applicants. For this reason, always be sure to include your most current certificates or job evaluations in your applications. It is acceptable to include certified photocopies of the certificates, but have the originals ready in case you are asked to present them.

2. What is written in a job reference certificate?
   In the first part of the certificate, your job position and your responsibilities are described. An evaluation of your work follows thereafter, which is usually judged with respect to the following categories:
   - Technical expertise and knowledge application
   - Initiative and involvement
   - Stamina and work capacity
   - Diligence and attention to detail
   - Work method and performance
   - Composure and behavior
   - Team work and networking abilities
   - Leadership skills
The following is a very brief example of a reference certificate:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outline for a Reference Certificate</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Reference Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Dear Sir or Madam, Ms. Adelheid Schaupp, born on March 26, 1975 in Morgantown, West Virginia, was employed in the Logistics Department at Schneider Baugesellschaft from August 1, 1998 until September 30, 2005.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Description</td>
<td>During her time at our company, Adelheid's responsibilities included contracting logistics suppliers, monitoring the performance of suppliers, dealing with customer complaints, and recording and reporting on the day to day logistics activities for the entire company.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Evaluation</td>
<td>Adelheid was a very competent and hard working employee. She always met her deadlines, and she had no trouble carrying out her assignments to the highest quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior Evaluation</td>
<td>It was a pleasure to work with her on an individual basis and in a group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing</td>
<td>Ms. Schaupp has chosen to leave our company of her own will. She will be a great loss to our organization, and we wish her all the best in the future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Employment, Date Signature</td>
<td>Bonn, Germany, September 27, 2005</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you chose to resign from a job, this fact should definitely be mentioned in the last paragraph of the certificate. For example, "Mrs. Müller chose to resign from this position. We thank her for the work she did for us, and we wish her much luck in the future." The certificate must then be signed by your assigned supervisor, who may not necessarily be your direct supervisor.
3. **Pay attention to standardized phrases:**
   Just because a phrase might sound good, does not mean that it is constructive. In Germany, many of the evaluations that are written in reference certificates are made up of standard phrases. These may sound great, but an experienced personnel director can still manage to see through them. For example, a good evaluation would include a phrase like, "...met all of our expectations to the fullest", whereas a bad evaluation could include a phrase like, "...always tried his best". Additional examples of evaluations and an explanation of such standard phrases can be found at [www.focus.de](http://www.focus.de) under the heading "Beruf und Karriere" (Jobs and Careers).

4. **Your rights:**
   Whenever an employee leaves an organization, he or she has the legal right to an official certificate that is well-meaning. This also holds true in cases in which you might change departments within the same organization. If something in your job evaluation is not clear, or if you are not satisfied with your evaluation, we recommend taking the following steps:
   - Immediately ask to have a meeting with your boss.
   - Submit in writing your suggested changes to the certificate. However, keep in mind that you only have the right to suggest a change once.
   - Ask your boss to explain the reason for what was written in your certificate.
   - Discuss the certificate with an expert from the organization's worker's council (which, in Germany, is not necessarily a union).
   If your certificate causes a continuing disagreement between you and your employer, and if the involvement of an employment lawyer does not help, you can still make a legal claim against the employer. In such cases, your chances for success are relatively high because the employer must prove how you failed to do your job. If you receive a "good" or a "very good" certificate, do not argue over details or the definitions of the evaluation terms. Do not forget that it is important to maintain a good relationship with your employer in case you need references later!

5. **An accurate picture:**
   Even if an employer is required to formulate a well-meaning reference certificate, this does not necessarily mean that you will receive a "good" evaluation. If your job performance was only mediocre, this may be reflected in your reference certificate.

6. **Offer to draft your own reference certificate:**
   When it comes to your reference certificate, you should leave as little as possible up to chance – and if possible – take the initiative to formulate your own certificate. Suggest that your supervisor permit you to write the first draft of your certificate before handing it over to him or her. This will usually be a welcome suggestion. When drafting your own certificate, you may find it helpful to refer to phrases written in your previous "good" reference certificates, or ask to borrow examples from colleagues to craft your wording. Some CD-ROMs also offer good selections of up-to-date text building blocks for formulating such documents. In case your employer decides to personally draft the certificate, make it clear that you would like to go through it with him or her before the final draft is completed.

7. **An interim certificate as a signal to your employer:**
   If you decide to apply for a new job, it is to your advantage to include a reference certificate from your current employer in your application. But, be careful: If you ask your boss to prepare a certificate, this will usually signal that you are looking for a new job. For this reason, it is always a good idea to ask for an interim reference certificate whenever you get a chance. An appropriate time might be when you are promoted or transferred to a different department within your organization. If you do choose to leave a job, an interim certificate can have an impact on your final reference certificate, because it will contain information about your performance that must also be included in your final evaluation.

8. **Timing:**
Be sure that you have your reference certificate in your hand before or on your last day at the organization. Later contacts and telephone calls usually just lead to frustration and bad results. In addition, the certificate should be dated no later than 3 days after your last day of work.

9. Certificate-check:

Every sentence in your reference certificate counts, and for this reason, even the casual comments made by a personnel director can give away a lot about their judgment of you. If you are uncertain about whether or not your certificate is a recommendation or a warning to future employees, there are ways to have it checked over by personnel experts. For example, starting at €50.00, the online company Büro für Berufsstrategie (Office for Job Strategies) at www.berufsstrategie.de will advise you on your documents.

Take every certificate very seriously, even if you think that you have found a job that you will keep for the rest of your life. Who really knows if or when you will have to go through the application process again?

There is an exception to this rule: If you are a manager making more than €150,000 a year, you can do without the certificate. In such cases, your reputation and your personal contacts carry more weight than what is written in a reference certificate. In fact, it would be considered unusual if you were to present a reference certificate at this management level.
24. The Unwritten Rules and Culture in German Organizations

Globalization and international takeovers and mergers are causing different cultures and mentalities to collide more frequently than ever before. With this latest combination of external factors, new organizational cultures are starting to develop. For a new employee just starting out in a company, this means finding the answers to the following questions as soon as possible:

- How do the organization's employees perceive and act on the "official" organizational politics and principles?
- Which unwritten rules play an important role in the organization?

You may find, especially in traditional firms with little turnover, that the accepted behavior code and company culture are not always obvious. For this reason, the range of acceptable behavior may cover a broad spectrum for a new employee. For example, you might rent a car your first week instead of taking a taxi, without knowing that rental cars are normally reserved for those higher up the corporate ladder – even if this were never directly said. This could lead to a few uncomfortable questions when you turn in your travel costs later in the month. Or, you might not know that the assertive "noise maker" is always recognized, even if team cooperation and performance are endorsed as "corporate principles".

In order to avoid making such mistakes, most newcomers need a way to interpret these secret "culture codes". Here are a few tips:

1. **Starting at the company briefing**, you can try to ask a little bit about the culture, especially in an informal atmosphere, like at lunch. You could ask:
   - What do the organization, my boss, and my future colleagues tend to value?
   - Which (situations, characteristics) would be viewed as negative within this organization?
   - What would be viewed as especially positive?
   - Could you give me an example of a situation in which an employee's own initiative would be awarded?
   - Which leaders, like the company founder, are recognized in the company? What are their main accomplishments?
2. **Adjusting to the new job:** Quite often, an experienced colleague will be responsible for answering all of your questions – both technical and organizational. However, you should also try to initiate conversations with other colleagues, especially in other departments. This is the best way to start making valuable connections, and it will also help you build a personal network throughout the organization. Try to focus the conversations on the "unwritten organizational rules". Rather than approaching questions as a neutral outsider, mention your first impressions as if to show your insecurities as a new employee. In this case, you have an advantage as a newcomer, because you can ask almost anything you want without anyone misinterpreting the question. The resulting answers will usually be pretty informative:

- If you get elaborative answers to your questions, this indicates that detailed, constructive dialog takes place between the employees. If your questions are answered half-heartedly, with phrases like, "You should always take the initiative...", or "No, we don't do it that way...", or "We don't have that here..." in order to quickly bring the conversation to an end, you can usually assume that the intra-organizational barriers are quite thick and that there are a lot of hidden pitfalls lurking in the shadows. In this case you should stay calm, but always be on the lookout.
- Hidden boundaries are also made visible when the words "we" and "they" are used.

3. **Unwritten rules are made clear in normal conversation:**

- How does conversation change when the boss enters the room?
- Who talks to whom about what and on what level? Are they always talking about work, or are they making insinuations and spreading rumors? Are they expressing their true feelings?
- Do employees talk behind each other's or the boss's back?
- Have you noticed what doesn't get talked about: successes and failures? the boss's behavior? the working climate and colleagues?

4. **Analyze procedures and decision-making processes:**

- Are decisions agreed upon, communicated, and implemented?
- How do the employees handle critique and conflict?
- Are agreements respected?
- Who always has a say? Who never says anything? Who is always asked for his or her opinion?

5. **If you do make a mistake,** do not try to justify it in front of anybody, that usually only leads to more loss of face. The best thing you can do is to genuinely apologize with the promise that you will be more careful in the future.

Keep in mind, that in every position in every organization, whether it has to do with your work expertise or not, it is all about "power", and this means that everything depends on the final result. As the sociologist Max Weber put it 100 years ago, "Power is the probability that one actor in a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests."

At the same time, human knowledge, social competence, the ability to understand other mentalities, the ability to coerce, and good observation skills are the keys to understanding and mastering the hidden rules and culture within an organization.
25 Efficient Meetings

Meetings are a part of everyday work life. They come at managers at a rate of almost every quarter hour and act as platforms for preparing and making decisions. For this reason, meetings are the keys to success, sustainability, and improvements, which may be why managers make more time for meetings than for anything else.

So, get to your next meeting, it will lead you to success! Unfortunately, this is far from what actually seems to be the case in the real world. What is true, however, is that many things cannot be decided or dealt with over the telephone, per e-mail or in an online conference. You often need to see others face-to-face to understand their point of view, to decide on the next steps to be initiated in a team, or to renew or build motivation.

Surveys show that today's employees are dissatisfied with every second meeting or "Sitzung", as meetings are called in formal German. At the same time, German employees are avid meeting-goers with employees attending an average of 2.1 hour-long company meetings each week. Also, the bigger your company and the further up you are settled in the company hierarchy, the more meetings you can expect to attend. Efficiency is the name of the game at these get-togethers because no communication medium costs a company more than a meeting. Now you understand why so many books have been written on this topic alone. We have decided to focus on the essential aspects of meetings with "test questions" so that you can tell if you are well enough prepared for your next meeting.

1. Good reasons for a meeting
   It is important to initiate or attend a meeting whenever...
   • You want to have influence on the development of a topic.
   • A team is being formed for a particular project.
   • A controversial topic needs to be solved and a collective decision must be made.

2. Attending a meeting
   Test Questions: Am I prepared?
   • Have I read through the minutes of the last meeting and taken care of the topics that concern me?
   • Am I sure that I can arrive punctually to the meeting or do I need to inform the organizer that I will be late?
   • Have I formed a personal objective for this meeting?
   • Do I have a positive feeling about this meeting or do I have to collect more information to better prepare?
   • Am I prepared for the contents of the meeting?
   • Do I have questions?
   • What do I want to contribute?
   • Do I have all of the documents that I need?
   • Have I looked over the attendance list? Are there any topics I should address with others who will be present? Is there anyone to whom I need to introduce myself?
Test Questions: During the course of the meeting...
- Am I being friendly?
- Am I using short and direct phrases?
- Am I avoiding abstract images and using examples instead?
- Am I listening attentively to what others have to say?
- Am I openly stating my opinion?
- Am I interrupting others?
- Am I helping others develop and express their ideas?
- Am I concentrating and paying attention?
- Am I contributing to the achievement of the meeting objectives?
- Am I helping to avoid misunderstandings?
- Are my arguments relevant to the topic?
- Am I asking the right questions at the right time?
- Am I relaying information that is useful for everybody?
- Am I letting others state their opinions?
- Am I refraining from making "killer statements" like, "That will never work!"
- Am I verbally attacking or insulting anyone?

3. Moderating a meeting
Test Questions
- Have I contacted key individuals to schedule a time for the meeting and made sure that they will be able to attend?
- Has everyone received an invitation to the meeting including the time, place and duration of the meeting?
- Have I invited the correct people?
- Have I sent an invitation, agenda, objectives and information on how to get to the meeting location? (This information should be sent at least 7 days in advance, but no earlier than 14 days before the meeting takes place.)
- Is everything organized in the meeting room? Correct room, PC connection, dry-erase board, writing materials, drinks, snacks or meals, signs to direct people to the meeting room?
- Have I done everything I can to reduce my stage fright? Here are a few tips:
  - Be well prepared with your arguments!
  - Look over the agenda and make notes on the topics that you would like to say something about.
  - Write down any contributing points that are going through your head during the meeting. These will help you to stay focused and offer an anchor in case you suddenly forget what you want to say.
  - If you feel nervous, discuss your ideas and arguments with a friend to practice before the real meeting.
  - If you get really nervous, try taking a few deep breaths.

To help fight nervousness, start the meeting with the following sentence: "Entschuldigung, ich fühle mich noch ein wenig unsicher bei meinen Formulierungen auf Deutsch, doch ich möchte es versuchen. Fragen Sie bitte gleich, falls Sie mich nicht richtig verstehen." ("I feel a bit insecure about holding the meeting in German, but I would still like to try it. Feel free to ask questions, if there is something you do not understand.")
4. Starting a meeting

Start a meeting by...

- Being punctual!
- Greeting all who are present.
- Making the purpose of the meeting clear in a few sentences.
- Going through the meeting agenda: mention who will be speaking, the break times, where coffee will be served, if and when a meal will be served, if questions and a discussion will follow the speakers and the scheduled end of the meeting.
- Deciding at this point who will take the meeting minutes if you have not already done so.

5. Test Questions: starting and conducting a meeting

- At the start of a meeting: are the subject matter and objectives clear to everyone?
- Have you gotten off to a good start by greeting everyone and creating a positive atmosphere?
- Have you listed the goals of the meeting (priorities and needed measures)?
- Have you gone over the agenda and the meeting schedule?
- Did you start and end the meeting punctually?
- Do you act as a buffer to create a comfortable discussion atmosphere, filter out the most valuable information in each person's argument and make sure that the situation allows each individual to participate?
- Are you actively listening with an open mind?
- Do you always try to reach a group consensus when decisions are made?
- Do you motivate the group to agree on a feasible solution?
- Do you try to motivate the participants? Do you praise them for making good contributions and also allow them to take over the leadership of the meeting for a short period of time?
- Have you allocated responsibility for tasks that should be taken care of by the next meeting?
- Have you informed everyone of your expectations concerning the issued tasks?
- Are the actions to be taken following the meeting clear to everyone, and have you agreed on a time and date for the next meeting?

6. Bringing a meeting to an end...

- Recapitulate the meeting's success by summarizing the decisions and achievements that have been made during the meeting. By doing this, you increase the persuasive power of the meeting results in the minds of all attendees. While ending the meeting, keep the following in mind:
  - Remind everyone of the tasks at hand and who exactly will take care of what by when. Then, get a confirmation for the completion of the tasks from the respective individuals.
  - Make certain that everyone has understood the goals, expectations and task deadlines.
  - Make clear in which form and to whom the finished assignments will be presented.
  - Set objectives for future meetings.

If a follow up meeting is planned, you have a chance at this point to decide on the time, place and date for the next meeting. This gives everyone the chance to look in their calendars before they go their separate ways, which saves a lot of time, money and phone calls.

Thank everyone for their attendance and participation at the meeting.

7. Taking the minutes at a meeting

No meeting should be conducted without taking the minutes. This is a rule that should never be broken. Even if every discussion point during the meeting is clear and each task is allocated to an individual, the
minutes are documentation of what was actually agreed upon. These can be helpful in case of later misunderstandings when everyone suddenly has their own version of the meeting.

The minutes are a summary of what was discussed and decided upon in a meeting. In addition, the minutes make clear who is responsible for which measures and set a date by which these measures should be carried out.

Test Questions: While taking the minutes…

• Have I mentioned all important basic information: name of the company and department, date and time, name and address and email (when applicable) of the attendants, points of discussion as they were discussed and the measures to be taken or tasks to be carried out? If yes, by whom and by when?
• Have I kept to the agenda?
• Have I formulated brief sentences and adopted an objective view?
• Have I avoided abbreviations or explained the ones I've used?
• Have I received a copy of all the documents and presentations that were made during the meeting and made them available with the minutes to everyone who was present?

A routine meeting: Taking the minutes should not make your life more complicated than it already is. If a meeting is a routine affair with the same team members, you must not follow a formal procedure, but can drastically simplify the minutes. In such a case, a meeting member simply keeps a brief record of the conclusions reached at the meeting. The main points being: who does what by when? At the end of the meeting, make copies of the “mini-minutes” and distribute them to everyone. Finished!

Last, but not least: offer an evaluation of the meeting once all major topics have been discussed. Remember, where one meeting leaves off, the next meeting will start. Evaluating a meeting is important because:

• The concept of a team is strengthened during a meeting.
• This will lead to fewer misunderstandings and unnecessary tasks.
• You have the chance to remind the group of the common goal.
• You show the group that each person is involved and that his or her contribution counts.
26 Negotiating Successfully

In the German business world, you must negotiate constantly with clients, suppliers, colleagues, and even supervisors. Consider the following 12 points, and you will be able to successfully incorporate the freedom to decide into discussions with business partners in order to reach sound business decisions.

1. The perfect negotiator:

   A famous German diplomat once described a good negotiator as having the patience of a clockmaker and not suffering from prejudices or stereotypes. Keeping that in mind, be sure that you do not confront the other party immediately with arguments and demands. Take time at the beginning of the negotiations to break the ice and establish rapport. This can be achieved by discussing a non-controversial current event which might include sports, entertainment, business issues, etc. However, don’t go into detail about the traffic jam on the highway, the search for a parking spot, or the bad weather – you need to save time for the “major” topics to be discussed.

2. Set up your goals and plan your negotiation time:

   As the saying goes, "If you do not know where you want to go you will never get there." Be sure that you go into negotiations with concrete goals in mind, based on the answers to the following questions:
   - What is my most important goal?
   - What is NOT negotiable?
   - What are the possible trade-offs or concessions? What do I require in return?
   - Where is the compromise threshold or where should I draw the line?

   In order to make the threshold of possible compromises clear, you can call on a higher authority. However, be very careful when making this move, otherwise you could leave the impression that you do not possess bargaining authority. If the other party chooses to bring a higher authority into the discussion, ask them exactly what their intention is.

   Many negotiators reserve a higher authority for final ratification or the approval of the tentative agreement. This empowers the negotiator to engage in meaningful discussion until the end of the negotiating process. Every negotiator must know what his limits are PRIOR to negotiations or he runs the risk of his efforts not being approved.

   Also, be sure that you do not just have your own goals in mind. In order to remain reputable, you also have to consider the needs of the other party, otherwise a compromise will not be possible. A successful negotiation results in both parties getting something they value.
For example: If you ask your boss for a raise, and you cannot justify your asking by listing a few of your major accomplishments for the company or your increasing responsibilities, you are destined to fail.

In addition, before going into negotiations, it is helpful to learn what you can about the other party's interests, needs, philosophy, style and level of knowledge. This will help you to better understand the other party's position and the arguments offered. In this way, you can prepare compromises that allow you to achieve the full extent of your goals.

3. Genuinely communicate your own strengths:

Make sure that you communicate your own strengths, regardless of whether others have the same strengths or not. Today's negotiation coaches recommend saying what you really think. Fixed negotiation formulas and behavior schematics are, on the contrary, no longer "in". Honesty and trustworthiness are most important because the other party will quickly see the discrepancy between verbal and nonverbal communication. If you are fuming on the inside, nobody will buy the stoic mask that you are trying to play off on the outside. For this reason, it is better to allow your feelings to come into the negotiation process when it is appropriate and in ways that are constructive.

4. Pick the right moment:

As you prepare for your negotiations, do not just think about which arguments you plan to use, but consider which point in the negotiation process would be the best time to use them. By planning in this way, you will be able to make your arguments more potent. Timing is also important when it comes to making an appointment for the negotiations. For things that are considered to be especially important – to you, your employees or your colleagues – you should always make a separate appointment to discuss them. A serious and executable decision can seldom be made when negotiations are hurried.

5. Be fair and objective:

When negotiating, keep cool and do not let your emotions get the best of you. If your proposal or position leaves the other party annoyed, do not consider this to be a sign of success. In fact, this usually means you have put a barrier in the way of a resolution. Statements that start with, "You are..." or "You have..." often make the other party feel as though they are being attacked, and they may try to justify themselves in response. These statements often create defensive behavior that inhibits cooperation and encourages competition.

If you feel provoked or insulted by the other party, change the subject and address the negotiation climate rather than the subject matter. If the other party tries to intimidate you by shouting or to make you pity them by crying, the best thing to do is not react at all. Instead, take a break, wait for a little while and resume at a new, uncontroversial or shared point in the discussion as if nothing had happened. If you feel yourself starting to get too emotionally involved, take a deep breath, count slowly to five and then reply. Another way to manage your anger is to think of something pleasant. One of the best visions to use for this purpose is a mental picture of a beautiful sunset above the white sands of a deserted beach.

6. Listen attentively, ask questions, repeat, and summarize:

In order to avoid misunderstandings and vagueness, and effectively navigate the other party through the negotiations, keep the following points in mind:

- Concentrate on the other party's body language. By leaning forward, making eye contact, nodding your head, and by "um-m-m-ing" and "ah-a-a-ing" you signal your interest in what the others have to say. Always listen until the other party has finished their last word rather than starting to think about your own counter argument as soon as they begin talking.

- Being patient, talking less, and waiting are often the keys to a miracle. Your silence allows the other party to express their ideas which will not only make them feel as though they are being taken seriously, but will also give you time to get an overall grasp on the situation. When negotiating, stamina and endurance usually count the most.
• Ask questions, rather than simply interpreting a statement in the way you believe to have understood it. When asking, use certain key words that the other party mentioned in their last statement. "The one who asks, leads", as the old German saying goes. Skillfully formed questions show that you are listening attentively and that you are trying to figure out the motives and the background behind the other's argument. They also give you the opportunity to think things through and to elegantly change the direction of the discussion. Depending on the reply that you want to elicit out of the other party, you can work with different types of questions:

− **Open questions**, such as, "What arguments are there against my suggestion?" encourage the other party to express their views and to tell you what they know about the issue. It makes the most sense to ask this type of question at the beginning of a dialogue in order to get into a topic and to uncover as much information as possible. Open questions almost always begin with "how", "what", and "why", and cannot be answered with a simple "yes" or "no".

− **Closed questions** are those that can be answered with "yes" or "no". They are most suitable for clarifying issues and concentrating the discussion on important points. However, if you ask several closed questions in a row, to which the answers are "yes", then the other party may feel intimidated and react aggressively.

− **Suggestive questions** are often lead-ins to assumptions or manipulations. Consider the question, "You want us to expand, don't you?" In such cases, the person asking the question is seldom interested in the other party's true opinion. The best way to handle such questions is not to reply or to reply with a counter question.

− **Indirect questions**, otherwise known as trick questions, are often used in job interviews. For example, "How would your best friend describe you?" When it comes to these questions, you must be extremely careful with your reply, and anticipate such questions in advance.

When negotiating, use the question, "What would you suggest?" as often as possible. This will not only satisfy the other party, but will send the message that you are interested and listening. It also has the advantage of giving the other party the opportunity to express their opinion or make suggestions, which helps build a foundation of mutual respect.

• **Do not accept all problems** that get sent your way, but figure out a way to send them back. Problems often are not as serious as they seem at the beginning of negotiations. Try to put "problems" aside so that you can concentrate more on goals that are practical and achievable until the heat has gone out of the argument. By the way, you should know that the word "Problem" ("problem") is frowned upon in the German business world, and it should be avoided whenever possible. Use the word "Schwierigkeit" ("difficulty") instead. This word leaves more of an impression that the situation can be solved.

• **Repeat points throughout the negotiation process** with statements like, "So, I understand that to mean...". This lets others know that you are paying attention to what is being discussed and, when you express issues in your own words, you ensure that you have understood correctly. Avoid making your own interpretations, judgments or allegations. Restating a proposal or position also helps bring focus when the discussion has strayed. Repetition also has other advantages:

− If you do not want to reply to a question immediately (or at all), repetition wins you more time.

− If someone is talking too much but saying very little, repetition will allow you to capture the gist of what the person is trying to say and refocus them on the subject.

− If someone says something vague or confusing you can repeat or restate what they have said to help clarify your understanding. ("So basically, you are saying that...")

− If many different arguments are at hand, restatement allows you to prioritize the issues ("So the most important thing for you seems to be...")

− By repeating what someone has said, you often lead them to supply additional arguments. Therefore, if you want to get additional information from the other party, you may find this method useful.
• Put together a summary at the end of each negotiation phase. Summarize what was agreed upon and what needs further clarification. This summary will allow you to refer to the main points of the negotiations, structure the rest of the negotiation process and provide a basis for the next discussion.

7. "Visualize" your arguments:
Don't just make claims, but make your ideas clear with easy to follow steps. You can do this by using charts, graphs, or diagrams, or by using a flip chart or overheads. These visual aids make your arguments and your calculations easier to understand and accept.

8. Use clever phrases:
To keep the negotiations from running headlong into a brick wall, do not always reply directly, but form your arguments wisely:
• Transform the argument: Instead of saying, "I see this differently..." you are better off saying, "You are talking about a point that can be seen from many different angles. In this case, the most important thing is..."
• Re-interpret: Instead of saying, "I am of a completely different opinion..." say, "That is a good point, but I think we should also take.....into consideration."
• Avoidance: Instead of saying, "No, that will never work..." say, "Yes, that is an important point, but let's concentrate on the following situation for now..."
• Postponing an argument: Instead of saying, "We will not come to a solution that way..." you should say, "Before we come to a conclusion, we may want to consider..."

9. "I" & "We":
Use the word "I" when you are stating your own convictions. On the other hand, if you are talking about performance, always use the word "we" ("We have...","We are...","We think...") because everyone knows that a whole team stands behind a complex project. In Germany, you will almost always make a better impression if you don't personally try to hog the limelight. On the other hand, when talking about defeats, use "I": ("I am disappointed that...", "I wonder why..."). It is less threatening for someone to hear your individual opinion than to be confronted with "we statements" that could be interpreted as accusations.

10. Dealing with defeat:
Be aware that negotiations are a constant game of give and take. Do not automatically consider a compromise as a defeat. Negotiations are not based on the principle of "all or nothing, win or lose". A negotiation strategy that focuses on destroying the other party or winning so they lose should not come into play because it does not focus on building fair and constructive business relationships. As Bismarck once said, "Whoever destroys his opponent, or wounds his opponent's pride, should be aware that he has created an enemy who will later seek revenge."

11. Impromptu negotiations:
Even if you set up a meeting on short notice, make sure you inform others (the best way is via e-mail) as to what the meeting's focus and proposed agenda are. In this way, you give others time to prepare, and this will allow a more goal-oriented discussion.

12. All is well that ends well:
At the end of the negotiations, summarize what was discussed. Repeat all of the important points that were agreed upon. Those points that are mentioned at the end usually stick best in peoples' minds, and both parties can walk away with the knowledge that they have reached a solution. When a group has been involved in the negotiations, it is wise to put these agreements on a flip chart for all to see and acknowledge. In the case of a personal discussion, a follow-up memo confirming the agreement is appropriate and minimizes the possibility of future misunderstandings.
27 The Meeting with the Boss

Whoever knocks on the boss’s door before developing a strategy for discussion, will merely be rebuffed. Remember that a main part of your boss’s job involves responding to the varied requests and concerns of employees, and that he or she therefore has much experience in such matters.

A meeting with your boss will usually revolve around one of the three following questions:

- How do I forge a constructive discussion about a promotion and my salary?
- How do I give and accept criticism?
- How do I assert my opinion?

If you take time to actually develop a strategy before going into a discussion, you have a better chance that your boss will listen. Seventy-five percent of meeting success depends on good preparation while the rest depends merely on the kind of day you are having and a bit of luck. Having said that, use the following checklist to help you with the part you can control:

Are you ready to discuss your salary? You should only go into salary negotiations once you have thoroughly worked out answers to the following groups of questions:

1. What were my responsibilities over the past year, and how well did I fulfill them? What accomplishments do I have to show for them?
2. Am I picking the right time for this meeting?
   Remember that supervisors are always in a better mood after finishing a successful project or after having closed a big deal.
3. Is the agenda for the meeting complete?
   You do not want to forget anything, so prepare a list of important points in the correct order for discussion. You should also prepare a list of your job accomplishments (including positive comments that others made on your work) in case you have to present them.
4. How easily can my boss replace me? How important is my job to the organization and its future? Does my boss value my work and my performance or does he just think that I belong to the group of “replaceable” employees? How am I adding value?
5. What kind of performance does my boss expect from me? How am I being evaluated? How can I make myself more useful?
6. Am I keeping my emotions from influencing my attitude?
   You should not build your own success strategy on your personal opinion of others! It is better to bring
attention to your own strengths and qualities and to focus on being positive. If you make comparisons, you should only refer to tasks and functions, not directly to individuals.

7. What alternative compensation am I prepared to accept? Would I settle for a project-based bonus, a performance based provision, on-the-job training, leadership training, crash language courses abroad, or a paid vacation? In Germany, on-the-job training and further education are especially popular salary compensations, because they offer an attractive way out of the salary pyramids and standard wage negotiations.

8. Should I consider making the threat, "Either I earn more, or I am leaving!"? If you consider making this threat, then you should definitely have a concrete job offer waiting for you. You should also know that after you make such a statement, your boss will probably start looking for your replacement anyway.

If the salary increase does not happen this time around, ask your boss what you should do to ensure success in the next round of salary negotiations.

If you get angry…

1. React quickly, but make sure you do so at the right moment:
Let your anger cool off until you feel able to lead an objective discussion. If you respond too quickly, you risk reacting too emotionally and expressing things that you will later regret. Although German bosses like to boast that "their office door is always open", you should always try to pick a moment when your boss is in the mood to discuss your personal concerns. Call him or her beforehand, or write an email and ask for an appointment. If you coincidentally run into each other, do not talk about the burning issue just then, but ask for an appointment, and mention how much time you will need for the discussion. However, when you finally do get down to the discussion, remember: the shorter, the better.

2. Ask, don't criticize or attack:
Do not criticize your boss's motivation, but ask for the reasons behind his or her decision, even if you think you already know them. It is always better to hear the truth "straight from the horse's mouth" rather than through the rumor mill. Do not place blame, but let your boss know what effect his or her decisions and behavior have on you. Express your criticism without making accusations; this works best if you describe how you feel about the action that your boss has taken.

3. Explain:
Tell your boss what you want. At the same time, indicate how you would judge the impact of your own work and that of your department. Present your argument objectively, calmly, and in single steps that you have thought out before the discussion. Also, weigh the different positions and alternatives. In this way, you create more room to react insightfully, and you also make way for other suggestions.

4. Don't take things personally:
If you don't accomplish much in the meeting, do not give up and go home frustrated. Instead, interpret a disregard for your argument as an incentive to think of a new strategy for persuading your boss.

5. Stay cool:
"Mrs. Jonas, that is ridiculous!" Do not let yourself lose composure if your boss starts shouting such statements. Stay cool and objective, and respond with: "Why is it ridiculous? The facts are right here." Any response to this statement will then provide you with enough material to continue your argument.

Win your boss over

1. Have a concept:
When you have a good idea, write down facts and collect arguments that support it. When you are finished, check again to make sure that your ideas and requests are actually realistic.

2. Start with an appetizer:
In order to capture your boss’s attention, you should start with a topic that is of interest to him or her. You might want to mention an instance in which your expertise or organizational skills proved valuable so that you can set yourself apart from the masses. However, be sure to get to your main point within five minutes, your boss probably doesn't have much time, and you don't want to risk losing his or her attention.
3. **Make the advantages clear:**
   Nothing will persuade your boss more than the promise of advantages close at hand. However, you must make them tangible and understandable. You should argue in accordance with your boss's personality. If he or she is more of the creative type, then make it clear how your suggestion supports new ideas and opens up new horizons. If he or she is more detail oriented, show how the suggestion will satisfy the need for exactness and reliability within the company.

4. **Think of alternatives:**
   Offer suggestions to create a basis from which future matters can more easily be solved. By doing this, you are helping your boss, and he or she will recognize that you are constructively working towards the future instead of giving up when your own needs are not met. However, it is important to keep your final goal in mind. Make your own concerns clear and distinct, but be sure to make the advantages clear for your boss as well. These are the best prerequisites for ensuring that your wishes will be recognized and accepted in the future.

By the way, these tips should also be used when dealing with other colleagues. Whereas the meeting with your boss should be based on respect, a meeting with colleagues should be based more on politeness, cooperation, and mutual esteem. When meeting with colleagues, only bring up issues on which you have some direct influence. Otherwise, you run the risk of starting a trivial rumor mill, and that would be counterproductive.
Dealing with Conflict

Just imagine that you get sent off to Germany as a manager with a few personnel management tasks to handle. In addition to the fact that you are still trying to improve your language abilities, you also get confronted from the start with situations in which you have to be highly sensitive to employees.

As we know, whenever people work together, there will always be misunderstandings, differences of opinion, tensions, and rivalries. These may not only be detrimental to your staff's success, but also to your own. In order to avoid the insurmountable conflicts that these differences could create when dealing with German employees and business partners, keep these eight tips in mind:

1. **Be present**: You should personally take part in any meeting in which you are expecting problems to arise or team cooperation to be endangered. As a supervisor, you should take over the role of mediator. If the discussion turns into a fighting match, ask those who are "fighting" to make a formal appointment to discuss the problems in a conference room at another time. In this way, conflicts that may be peripheral to the current discussion will not hinder the rest of the meeting.

2. **Confront the problem**: Keep the following in mind if you want to be successful in conflict mediations:
   - Keep problems and people separate from one other. In other words, do not make the conflicts personal.
   - Do not take sides and keep both parties' interests at a neutral level. Pay attention to which motives, fears, and needs are actually leading to the conflict.
   - Work out several options before deciding on a solution.
   - Base the problem's solution on objective, tenable, decisive principles and not on assumptions.

3. **Require the two parties to speak in clear terms about the problem**: The topic in dispute should not be exaggerated or under-appreciated. Establish an objective discussion and guide the emphasis away from feelings or emotions. Do not take part in the actual argument, and avoid making accusations or placing the blame. Make it clear that the problem can be seen from different angles and that there are always several alternative solutions.

4. **Make sure the two parties listen to each other's arguments**: Be sure to continuously stress your interest in a fair outcome and consider the argument from both sides. Make sure that the two parties allow each other to finish their arguments without interrupting one another. If you do not understand something being discussed, ask for a further explanation. In this way, you will make it clear that you, as a foreigner, have indeed understood everything. Ask each party to repeat the other party's argument. This will help you check if both parties are actually listening to each other and processing the information rather than just seeing everything from their own point of view. Periodically summarize the entire argument so that the steps leading up to the problem's solution are understandable.

5. **Pay attention to the body language**: In order to understand the effects of one party's statements on the other party, pay attention to body language. The Germans do not generally make extroverted, expressive
gestures like those of their southern European neighbors. However, negative facial gestures and the way one holds his or her hands can also send a clear message. For example, if someone reacts to a statement by turning down the corners of his mouth, this does not express agreement, rather extreme skepticism. You might also notice someone crossing his arms and leaning back in his chair. This usually means that the person has closed himself off from the argument as if to say, “That's not my problem!” On the other hand, open gestures and positive facial expressions help strengthen the persuasion of one’s argument.

6. Encourage feedback: Say honestly and openly how you feel about the conversation, then ask each party to give his or her own opinion about the discussion and about the other party’s actions. A constructive dialogue is only possible when trust can be built through input from both parties.

7. Implement the agreed-upon outcomes ASAP: Suggest a schedule for efficiently implementing the outcomes of the conflict mediations. Make it clear that you expect an acceptable outcome and acceptable behavior from both parties. Clarify the common goal and the positive results that each individual party can expect. Settle on a time schedule that allots time for each necessary step to be taken in approaching and solving the problem. Finally, set up appointments for future meetings to review progress.

8. Keep an eye on the future: Summarize the agreed-upon outcome. Is it fair? Is it a suitable solution for all parties that will prevent future conflict, or did one of the parties cave in a bit just to reach a solution, although he or she is inwardly steaming about the outcome? These are important questions; the importance of harmony and the establishment of common goals cannot be stressed enough if a group’s members are to work successfully together over the long-term.

In addition to all of this, remember that you are standing in the middle of the situation and that you will be expected to set a good example. When you carry out tasks in the German business arena, keep in mind that the more you practice what you preach, the more you will be respected in your leadership position.

Finally, do not collect "skeletons in your closet". Be sure not to act inappropriately, lose your temper, or talk badly about colleagues or employees. Your wise words will not be taken seriously if your employees do not observe you acting in the same way you expect them to act.
Building a Successful Network

When it comes to career changes in Germany, almost every second job seeker takes advantage of good old personal contacts to help him or her find a job. In comparison, ads in newspapers or on the Internet lead only a mere third of job seekers to success. For this reason, you should start creating and maintaining your own network of personal contacts as early as possible. Today, true networks are based less on family and friends and more on good experiences that others have had with you and the hard work that they have witnessed from you – both of which go hand in hand with them generally liking you.

At the same time, a formally established "network", such as a club or a society, can also help you search for others who share your values and interests. The following list gives you an overview of the most well-known circle of German companies', managers', and students' organizations that can help you get ahead in your career. We have arranged the list of groups and clubs based on their general target groups, interests, and goals:

1. Entrance "only by recommendation":

Atlantic – Brücke (The Atlantic Bridge)
Objective: "To strengthen German-American friendships"
Number of Members: Approximately 360
Entrance: Recommendation by the director
Costs: To be agreed upon
Website: www.atlantik-bruecke.org

Gesellschaft zur Förderung des Unternehmernachwuchses (Society for the Advancement of Young Managers)
Objective: "A discussion forum for qualified junior employees"
Number of Members: Approximately 100 major German companies
Entrance: Maximum age of 50, recommendation by employer
Costs: --
Website: www.bbug.de

Lions Club
Objective: "Good deeds"
Number of Members: Approximately 40,000 in Germany
Entrance: Recommendation by a member
Costs: Approximately €150 per year
Rotary Club
Objective: "Humanitarian aid and international understanding"
Number of Members: Approximately 38,000 in Germany
Entrance: Recommendation by 3 members
Costs: Approximately €425 per year
Website: www.rotary.org

Überseeclub Hamburg (Hamburg's Overseas Club)
Objective: "Supporting Hamburg's contacts with the world's markets"
Number of Members: 1,965 in Germany
Entrance: Recommendation by two members
Costs: €614 per year (on average)
Website: www.ueberseeclub.de

Wirtschaftsjunioren (Junior Economists)
Objective: "More democracy, free enterprise, privatization and fewer regulations"
Number of Members: Approximately 11,000 organized within regional clubs in Germany
Entrance: Maximum age of 40, recommendation by employer
Costs: €160 per year and €160 entrance fee
Website: www.wjd.de

World Economic Forum
Objective: "Contact among individuals active in business, politics and science"
Number of Members: 1000 business organizations
Entrance: Recommendation by members
Costs: €18,000 per year
Website: www.webforum.de

Young Presidents' Organization in Germany represented by the "Rhine Chapter"
Objective: "Exchange of ideas among young managers"
Number of Members: Approximately 9,000 worldwide
Entrance: Maximum age of 44, recommendation by members
Costs: Approximately €5,000 per year
Website: www.ypo.org

2. Organizations for Women

Bund der Akademikerinnen (Association of Academics)
Objective: "Exchange of know-how and community service"
Number of Members: Approximately 1,800 in Germany
Entrance: Dependent on higher degree
Business and Professional Women
Objective: “Dedicated women make contacts and offer career tips”
Number of Members: Approximately 1,300 in Germany in 33 regional clubs
Entrance: Based on education or career field
Costs: €75 - €150 per year
Website: www.bpw-germany.de

European Women's Management Development (EWMD)
Objective: “Support of women in management positions”
Number of Members: Approximately 300 in Germany
Entrance: Recommendations by managers who want to promote women
Costs: €250 per year
Website: www.ewmd.org

Frauen in Management (Women in Management)
Objective: “Idea sharing platform for female business professionals”
Number of Members: Approximately 170 in Germany
Entrance: Recommendation by a regional group
Costs: €150 per year
Website: www.fim.de

Webgrrls
Objective: “Employees and managers in the media branch exchange tips”
Number of Members: Approximately 550 in Germany
Entrance: Women in the media industry
Costs: €60 per year
Website: www.webgrrls.de

Zonta
Objective: “Strengthening women's position in society”
Number of Members: Approximately 2,500 in Germany
Entrance: Working women, recommendation
Costs: €150 per year
Website: www.zonta-international.de

3. Organizations for Entrepreneurs and Managers

Bund junger Unternehmer (Association for Young Entrepreneurs)
Objective: “Strengthening the idea of free enterprise”
Number of Members: Approximately 2,500, organized in 47 regional clubs in Germany
Entrance: Company directors under 40 with at least 10 employees or 1 million Euro annual sales
Costs: €450 per year
Website: www.bju.de

Kreis deutscher Führungskräfte in Spanien (Circle of German Managers in Spain)
Objective: “Contact between German managers in German organizations in Spain”
Number of Members: Approximately 220
Entrance: Decision of board members
Costs: €416 per year
Website: www.kdf-online.net

Manager Lounge
Objective: “Contacts between managers and top companies”
Number of Members: Approximately 2,000 in Germany
Entrance: Managers that earn more than €75,000 per year
Costs: €250 per year (average)
Website: www.manager-lounge.de

Young Entrepreneurs' Organization
Objective: “Discussion of enterprise questions”, the club also has its own databank for fast world-wide contacts
Number of Members: Approximately 20 in Germany, 4,200 world-wide
Entrance: Company directors under 40 with at least 1 million Euro annual sales
Costs: €1,000 per year
Website: www.yeo.de

4. For Recent Graduates and Students

Alumni Clubs
Objective: “To keep graduates in touch with colleges and universities”
Number of Members: Approximately 800 clubs in Germany
Entrance: Graduate of the respective university, often a donor
Costs: Varies
Website: www.alumni-clubs.de

Student Associations (Fraternities)
Objective: “A wide spectrum of student interests”
Number of Members: More than 1,100 clubs in Germany
Entrance: Students that identify with the individual club’s objective
Costs: Dependent on the different areas of study
Website: www.horlogia.de

Tönissteiner Kreis (The Circle of Tönissteiner)
Objective: "Career platform for young managers with international experience"
Number of Members: Approximately 600 in Germany
Entrance: Managers younger than 32 with at least two years of international experience in two different countries, and recommendation by a member of the group
Costs: €200 per year (average)
Website: www.toenissteinerkreis.de

Once you find a network branch that interests you, here are a few guidelines that can help you become a successful networker:

1. **Be active**: Networking is a job. Whoever leaves things up to chance has very little hope of meeting the right people. Pay attention when you talk to relatives and friends. Every contact that you make could be priceless. Remember, successful networkers are open-minded individuals who are also interested in the lives and the opinions of others. They initiate conversations with others, whether it be at private parties or at work. They also keep conversations balanced. For every bit of information that you offer about yourself, be sure that you show the same amount of interest when the other person talks about him or herself. It makes no sense to bore somebody to death with your own stories and to explain how wonderful you are, when you know absolutely nothing about the person to whom you are speaking.

2. **Give and take**: Let curiosity guide you through a conversation. Do not base your contacts on how much the other person can help you get ahead in life, and keep in mind that a relationship runs two ways; there is always a give and a take. The first 4 minutes of a dialogue will usually decide whether or not a conversation is going to develop into a useful contact. In this brief period of time, eye contact, body language, and reasoning will define whether trust can be built, or if only a limited or one-sided interest exists between two people. Start a conversation with a topic that is as neutral as possible. Then, develop the conversation into a positive experience, in which you look for what you have in common with the other person.

3. **Be reliable**: In the long run, those who best profit from networks are those who are also ready to return favors and support others. At the same time, you cannot expect to be able to calculate your contributions in a relationship. Remember that your contributions must be useful; otherwise, you could possibly destroy the "generally liked" factor mentioned earlier. You will not get far if you show interest in someone just to snag their business card in order to "drop their name" when the time comes. True professionals can collect information without taking advantage of others, and they also know how to handle confidential information discreetly.

4. **Manage your network**: Of course it is difficult to maintain 100, let alone 200, contacts if it is not your main priority in life. On the other hand, it is also not enough just to send a few birthday cards and holiday greetings. Remember, it is not how often you contact someone, but how positive and effective the quality of your contacts is. The key points here are dependability and relevance. There is no rule that says you have to have X number of useful contacts. The wealth of contacts will depend on your own career goals and your willingness to be available and helpful to others.

5. **Think long term**: Networking is not a strategy for short-term success. The deciding factor for a useful contact is that you are always ready to help others. A professional relationship may then eventually turn into a friendship – this will happen anyway when people find something they have in common and truly have a liking for each other.
30 Celebrating at Work

Showing recognition or carelessness?
It seems like there is always a reason to celebrate, even at work: the beginning or the end of one's job, anniversaries, birthdays, the birth of a baby, engagements, weddings, or promotions. Even the beginning of spring can be a reason to celebrate for those creative people who don't know when enough is enough. And if "team spirit" is suffering, then there is no better time to plan a round of "team building", as it is even referred to in German today.

However, if you are hoping to move away from simply planning a formal event to planning a sincere and heart-felt party, keep the following aspects in mind. These clarify some of the changes that are taking place in companies today:

1. **A changing work world:** High employee turnover, flexible work teams and work schedules, and shared positions – a few phrases to remind us that many individuals do not work in stable structures today, as may have been the case in the past. The result is fewer opportunities for building and maintaining strong business and social relationships with colleagues. The traditional relationships are seldom there which, in the past, led to colleagues inviting each other to private parties at home.

2. **Hierarchy:** The decision as to who will be invited to which events is often based on the corporate hierarchy which reflects position and salary. There are often formal guidelines that are used internally in an organization to decide who is invited to which events. It is essential for your success to find out what they are.

3. **Pressure to succeed and lack of time:** For many, it is quite time consuming and distracting to invite others and to be invited to many social events. That fact, coupled with long work hours and much time already spent with colleagues, often discourages employees from spending any additional time together outside of work.

As a general trend, it appears more appropriate to plan an event or celebration for individuals based on the length of time they have worked at a company or their relationship with a certain group of colleagues.

Rules and practices regarding consumption of alcohol during business hours and at the work site have become more prevalent. Many companies have rules that prohibit the consumption of alcohol unless an event takes place at the end of the work day after 5 PM.

Nevertheless, celebrations, acknowledgements, recognition and informal "get-togethers" can be an important part of building and maintaining good relationships in the work setting. They should be well considered and judiciously planned.
"Einstand" (Changing companies or departments within a company)
If you get a raise or have been promoted to a very sought after position, you will be expected to throw a small party, referred to in Germany as an "Einstand", to acknowledge the event. It is always expected that supervisors celebrate their coming or going with their employees. If the department is relatively small (less than 10 people), the boss may even invite everyone to dinner. If the department is larger, it is acceptable to bring breakfast or lunch to work for everybody. Such an event is also expected from non-supervisory employees whenever they start a new job, but under certain circumstances it is also acceptable if a celebration does not take place.

Starting a New Job: "Einstand"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>To introduce yourself and get to know your colleagues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who organizes the party?</td>
<td>Anyone who has just started a job and intends on being at a company or in a department for a longer period of time. Exceptions to the rule: those who are lower paid like students or interns. In these cases the boss could invite employees to a small party or to lunch to introduce the new team member.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is invited?</td>
<td>Colleagues who work together in the same department or work in the same office (max. 20 people).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How is the invitation sent?</td>
<td>By e-mail or with a memo that everyone receives at the same time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When?</td>
<td>During the second or third week of the new job, and the event should last about an hour. It is, however, also appropriate within the first several months if the work situation is difficult or stressful in the first few weeks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What should be served?</td>
<td>Most often, cake and coffee (and water) are served. If you are serving breakfast for a larger department, bring bread, rolls, and a variety of different meats and cheeses, butter and marmalade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tips</td>
<td>In general, if you are a non-managerial employee and you do not throw a small party to celebrate the start of your new job, nobody will think less of you. However, if you are the supervisor of a team or department, a party will be expected of you, and you will also be expected to honor employees' milestones such as a 25 year employment anniversary. Build the party into the break or at the end of a team meeting. If an agenda or invitation is being sent for the meeting, be sure to also mention the party. As a new employee, it is best to ask your supervisor's secretary if you are unsure as to the details of such an event and about what is acceptable in the department.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"Ausstand" (Changing companies or departments within a company)
- The guidelines just listed can also be referred to if you are changing or leaving a job. However, when leaving, you should extend the circle of invitations to include any colleagues that you enjoyed working with, even if they do not work in your department.
- The department head should use the opportunity to thank the departing employee and then present a small present like a book, a CD or DVD, or flowers.
- Such a party, which is called an "Ausstand" in German, should take place on an employee's last day.

**Birthdays**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Honor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who organizes the party?</td>
<td>The person celebrating a birthday. (40th, 50th, and 60th birthdays are most often celebrated).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is invited?</td>
<td>Colleagues in the same department or in the same office, as well as others with whom one enjoys working, max. 20 people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is served?</td>
<td>Cake and coffee (and water) are brought by the celebrant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tips</td>
<td>In the morning, the direct supervisor usually gives the person having the birthday a bouquet of flowers. This is a good gift for women and men. With the flowers on their desk, everyone knows who is having a birthday. If you are personal friends with a colleague, it is acceptable to give a small gift. Greeting cards, which everyone signs are becoming less customary. If you plan on opening a bottle of champagne, it is best to wait until after work.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Employment Anniversaries**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Honor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who organizes the party?</td>
<td>The one celebrating his or her anniversary at the company as agreed upon with the direct supervisor (companies sometimes sponsor such parties).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is invited?</td>
<td>Colleagues in the same department as well as those with whom one enjoys working or worked with in the past.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is served?</td>
<td>A small reception is held at lunch time or a buffet lunch or dinner is planned outside of the company.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tips</td>
<td>Be punctual if lunch is being served so that you can stand in line to congratulate the person of honor. Those on the same hierarchical level give individual gifts; employees purchase a gift together for their supervisor whenever he or she is the person of honor. Costs and gifts are often covered with company funds. Employment anniversaries are especially good opportunities for networking.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Specific Questions:

Starting or Leaving a Job

1. What is appropriate when it comes to a party to celebrate the beginning or the end of a job and what is excessive?
   There is no definite answer to this question because it varies from one company to another. Before planning a party, it is best to speak with a few people who have been with the company for a long time.

2. What is the best drink to choose when making a toast?
   If the party is after 5 PM, it is best to toast with champagne. However, orange juice is a good alcohol-free alternative. More often, a mixture of both is preferred.

Birthdays

1. Are there any rules to consider when giving a gift? Is it necessary to give a colleague a gift for his or her birthday or are congratulations enough?
   It is appropriate to simply say a few words and congratulate equal ranking colleagues on their birthday. The supervisor will usually give a gift on behalf of the department. Gifts up to € 40 are tax free.

2. Are there any guidelines for selecting a gift?
   There are no definite answers to this question. It is best to consider the hobbies of the person of honor to get some good gift ideas. Be careful not to make a gift selection too complicated. In Germany, a bouquet of fresh flowers is always appropriate, for both men and women.

3. What is the best way for an employee to congratulate a supervisor without making an insincere or "politically incorrect" impression?
   The best rule to remember in this case is that gifts should not be given from individuals of lower ranking to individuals of higher ranking – unless a gift is being given from all employees. Even this, however, is only appropriate for birthdays ending in "0".

4. What happens if an employee's birthday is forgotten or simply ignored?
   Employees' birthdays should not be forgotten by their supervisors. This makes an insensitive and cold impression. Besides, software programs like Outlook don't leave much room for excuses when it comes to forgotten birthdays ;-)

A last word on gift giving: In Germany, those who receive gifts often feel compelled to return the favor at a later time. In order to keep gift-giving from escalating into gift-frenzy, it is best to trust your heart's judgment and not your mind's. If you feel like giving a gift, do so, as long as the recipient is at the same hierarchical level as you. Also, do not expect gifts from others. Be sure not to give gifts to your boss or others who are higher up the corporate ladder. This may cause colleagues to become skeptical of your intentions. If a supervisor gives employees gifts, he or she should be sure that they are of equal value and he is being fair to everyone. A party should not turn into an event to start rumors or jealousy.

And finally, take advantage of the opportunity to attend work parties with colleagues, employees, or supervisors. You not only show the hosts that you are interested in being a part of the team, but you can use the opportunity to build and maintain networks with people that you may not see on a daily basis.
31 Saying Farewell

"OK, everyone, it's time for us to turn in for the night!"
If you hear this or a similar statement from your host or hostess, you can be sure that he or she wants the evening to come to an end as soon as possible.

To ensure that a party or a get-together ends as gracefully as it begins, pay attention to any mention of when the party ends. You might see the following in an invitation: "Aperitif um 19 Uhr" (Cocktail at 7:00 PM), "Essen 19:30" (Meal at 7:30 PM), "Ende gegen 23 Uhr" (To end around 11:00 PM). It is customary to list such times in both business and private invitations in Germany. The word "gegen" (around) in this case does not mean that the guests should jump up and leave as soon as the clock strikes 11:00 PM. However, it is expected that guests respect this time, and that when the time comes, they slowly bring their discussions to an end and say their good-byes. A visit rarely lasts longer than 23:30 during the work week.

Come together and leave together
It is not acceptable to arrive in the middle of a meal or to leave the table immediately after eating or before a guest of honor leaves. However, if you absolutely must leave early, you should always inform the host or organizer of the party beforehand, and offer a legitimate excuse for your having to leave; anything else would be seen as impolite, disrespectful, and arrogant.

Professional good-byes
If you plan to change jobs or resign from your company, you should inform both your colleagues and your clients of your leaving in writing. In this way, you can leave a tangible "thank you" behind. A written thank you is not only more sincere than a verbal one, but it also offers you the chance to list your new contact information (new company, new address, etc.).
Be sure to pick the right time to send a notice of your leaving. It is always better to let people know details from you personally rather than letting them hear it through the grapevine or coincidentally from others. In order to avoid unnecessary misunderstandings and questions, you can send your e-mails or letters on your last day of work. If you want to leave a possibility for others to contact you before your departure, send the notice a week in advance of your leaving.

It is also a good idea to start your letter with a meaningful quotation rather than with a polite, but meaningless phrase.
Here are a few suggestions:
• "Every new beginning starts when some other beginning ends."
• "I will never leave completely; a part of me will always remain here." (Song from Trude Herr)
• "An ending is always painful, even if you have been looking forward to it for a long time." (Arthur Schnitzler)
• "The greatest advantage of a profession is that it brings like people together." (Antoine de Saint-Exupéry)

A good source for more information on this topic can be found at: www.zitate.at.
The following is an example of a farewell letter:

Subject: Change of Job
Hamburg, November 30, 2005

Dear Mrs. Müller,

The news is now official, and I would personally like to inform my long time appreciated colleagues and clients that after four eventful and wonderful years at Bildungsinstitut Reimers, I will be moving abroad. Starting January 2, 2006 I will be working at the Bridge Training Firm in London.

I will soon face a new country with new challenges, but as Trude Herr once said, "I will never leave completely; a part of me will always remain here." Even though I will soon be in Great Britain, I will certainly not forget my homeland. And who knows, at some point maybe we will meet again?

I want to thank you, Mrs. Müller, for the trust that you have placed in me in the last several years. I wish you all the best for the future.

Sincerely,

Ines Priesterjahn

P.S. Starting December 1, 2005, feel free to contact Mrs. Jonas (Telephone: +49 40 9876543) if you have any questions or concerns. She will be taking over my position.

Personal farewells: What should I say?

- "Es hat mich sehr gefreut, Sie kennen gelernt zu haben. Ich wünsche Ihnen einen guten Nachhauseweg. Auf Wiedersehen und alles Gute!" ("I am happy to have met you. I wish you a good trip home. Good-bye and good luck!")
- This is definitely the most polite way to say good-bye. However, if you want to be a little less formal, you can say:

  "Schön, dass wir uns getroffen haben. Machen Sie es gut. Auf Wiedersehen!" ("It was nice to have met you. Take care and good-bye!") Or just, "Auf Wiedersehen!" ("Good-bye!")

- In a relaxed atmosphere, you will often hear a short "Tschüss!" or "Tschüss und mach's gut!" said as a good-bye.

Of course, the way one says good-bye also depends on the region, and even the Germans have problems deciding where to say what. For example, a true Bavarian would not say "Tschüss", but "Servus", or even "Pfeti" (which is the short form of "Pfletigott", which means "may God protect you"), or when said to several people, "Pflet Euch." In northern Bavaria you will often hear people calling "Ade!"

When confronted with such difficult language terrain, it is often not worth trying to keep up with all of the differences. It is better to stick to the standard "Auf Wiedersehen!" ("Goodbye!")

The Italian "Ciao!" is also popular in Germany. This is mostly due to the fact that many Germans admire the Italian lifestyle. This popular form of farewell offers a neutral and relaxed, but friendly, greeting.
And on that farewell note, we are finished with our etiquette tips. If you have comments on the existing tips or ideas for new tips, we would appreciate it if you would let us know. Send an email to: info@german-business-etiquette-com.
GLOSSARY – KEY WORDS FROM A TO Z

ADAC (Allgemeiner Deutscher Automobil-Club) – Public German Automobile Club - The largest automobile club in Germany which offers travel information, sells insurance and provides emergency roadside assistance. See Chapter 17.

Ade – good-bye – a form of good-bye that is heard in Northern Bavaria. See Chapter 31.

Allgemeinmedizin, Allgemeinmediziner – general medicine, general practitioner – a branch of medicine which focuses on basic medical care for physical and psychological ailments in emergency, acute, and long-term care situations as well as the areas of prevention and rehabilitation. See Chapter 17.

An: – To: – when composing an e-mail, this is the field in which the recipient's e-mail address is entered. For more details on e-mail fields see Chapter 12.

Annual reports – Geschäftsberichte – financial statements that are published by a company for its shareholders and that assess a company's performance in raising, handling, and using money. In general, a company's annual report consists of an operating statement, a balance sheet, and sometimes a statement of cash flow. See Chapter 21.

Apotheke – pharmacy, chemist – in Germany, these stores are indicated by a red stylized "A" and handle all medicines available on prescription and many over-the-counter remedies. See Chapter 17.

Aptitude test – Eignungstest – a standardized test, often administered during a first or second interview, which is designed to measure the ability of a potential employee to develop skills or acquire knowledge. See Chapter 22.

Arbeitsamt – German employment office – located in all larger cities and towns, these offices allow one to register for a job in the case of unemployment. These are also the offices where foreigners can receive work permits for working in Germany. See Chapter 18.

Arzthelfer(in) – doctor's assistant – term used to refer to assistants in doctors' practices in Germany. These individuals carry out receptionist work as well as basic lab and medical tasks. See Chapter 17.

Ärztlicher Notdienst – on-duty medical unit – number to call in case of medical emergency or when ambulance assistance is needed. In Germany: 19222. See Chapter 17.

Attachment – Anhang – a supplementary document that is attached to an e-mail. See Chapter 12.

Auf Wiedersehen – good-bye – a formal form of good-bye that can be used in almost all situations in Germany. See Chapter 31.

Ausstand – celebration of one's last day or going-away party – term used to describe the celebration that commonly takes place in German workplaces on the last day of an employee's job. See Chapter 30.

Automatic signature – automatisierte Signatur - a few lines of information at the end of and e-mail or news posting that that lists the sender's name and other personal details (e-mail address, homepage, address, company, position). See Chapter 12.

Behavior code – Verhaltenskodex – the appropriate way one should act and make decisions in order to uphold company values and meet an employer's approval. See Chapter 24.

Blind application – Blindbewerbung – or a speculative application, is an application for a job which has not been advertised, but for which one applies of his or her own initiative. See Chapter 18.
**Business arena** – *Geschäftswelt* or *geschäftliches Umfeld* – term used to refer to any or all situations that involve business activities.

**Cliché** – *Klischee* – an expression or idea that has been used so often that everybody takes it for granted; these expressions should be avoided in formal speech or presentations. See Chapter 11.

**Code of dress** – *Kleidervermerke* – a set of rules or formally imposed standards that indicate the approved manner of dress. For example, the company's white-shirt black-tie dress code. See Chapter 8.

**Commercial registries** – *Handelsregister* – a public registry administered by a country's government, which contains key information on legal entities engaging in economic activity. See Chapter 21.

**Compressor** – *Packer* – software utility used to compress and decompress (re-open) large files and directories in order to decrease their size before sending them via e-mail. See Chapter 12.

**Corporate ladder** – *Karriereleiter* – term used to describe the different levels within a company. Each ring on a ladder is analogous with an administrative level and its respective position, salary, and status. When one "climbs the corporate ladder", they are promoted within the company. See Chapter 24.

**Corporate hierarchy** – *Unternehmenshierarchie* – the organization of employees into different ranks, tasks, and salary levels, which is usually found in the upper levels of an organization. See Chapters 1 and 2.

**Corporate principles** – *Unternehmensleitbild* – a set of guidelines (mission, vision, code of conduct, etc.) within an organization that are expected to be upheld and promoted by all of an organization's employees. The corporate principles are often formulated by the employees, and serve as a basis for the definition of corporate goals and tasks. See Chapter 24.

**Denglish** – describes language based on the German grammar that includes a jumble of English and pseudo-English idioms, or vice versa. See Chapter 7.

**Disclaimer** – *Angaben zum Haftungsausschluss* – a statement that is appended to many e-mail messages or postings (sometimes automatically, by the posting software) reiterating the fact that the e-mail reflects its author's opinions and not necessarily those of the organization running the computer through which the e-mail entered the network. See Chapter 12.

**Distance zones** – *Distanzzonen* – the physical distance between individuals that defines their relationship and their interaction with each other. Different countries respect different distance zones in different ways. See Chapter 13 for definitions of several different distance zones and details about how to recognize the zones in Germany.

**Du** – informal "you" – used to address family members or close friends, and indicates a personal relationship between two people. If you address someone with "Du" you would also call him or her by their first name. See Chapter 4.

**E-mail application** – *E-Mail Programm* – a software program with a user interface designed for sending and receiving e-mail. See Chapter 12.

**Einen guten Appetit**. – *Enjoy your meal.* – compared to "Mahlzeit", this more-contemporary phrase is a polite way to wish somebody a good meal in Germany. See Chapter 6.

**Einstand** – *celebration of one's new job* – term used to describe the celebration that commonly takes place in German workplaces when an employee begins a new job or is promoted to a better position. See Chapter 30.

**Embassy** – *Botschaft* – a building containing the offices of an ambassador and staff for a foreign
government. Your home embassy can be contacted in case of a serious emergency (i.e. loss of money or passport) while traveling abroad. See Chapter 17.

**Floskel** – *flowery or set phrase* – polite filler phrases that are used in both written and spoken German, but which usually have no significant meaning. See Chapters 6, 22 and 31.

**Frau** – *Mrs.* – formal title used to refer to a married or unmarried woman in Germany, which is used in combination with the pronoun "Sie". See Chapter 4

**Fundgrube** – *lost and found* – usually found in a city's town hall, this is the office which should be contacted should you lose any valuables in a public place. See Chapter 17.

**Gegen** – *around* – used to describe an approximate, not an exact, time. See Chapter 31.

**Gleichfalls** – *The same to you.* – word used as a reply to a greeting or a congratulation in Germany. See Chapter 6.

**Grüss Gott** – *literally: Greet God* – the standard daily greeting that is used in the regions of Bavaria, Baden Wurttemberg, and also Switzerland and Austria. See Chapter 3.

**Guerilla marketing** – highly aggressive, unconventional marketing strategies intended to get maximum results from minimal resources. See Chapter 10.

**Guten Tag** – *Good Day* – the standard daily greeting that is used in Northern Germany (not in Bavaria or Baden Wurttemberg). See Chapter 3.

**Hamburger Sie** – addressing someone with "Sie" and his or her first name. In comparison, when addressing a colleague or client on a professional basis, "Sie" (formal "you") is normally used in combination with one’s last name. See Chapter 4.

**Hand shake initiative** – *Handreichrecht* – depending on the situation, the initiative an individual should take in extending his or her hand for handshaking. The right to this initiative is dictated by etiquette tips found in Chapter 2.

**Handelskammer** – *Board of Trade, Chamber of Commerce* – group of business owners who promote and represent commercial and industrial interests within a certain area. These organizations can be helpful to job-seekers who are looking for information on certain companies. See Chapter 18.

**Handwerkskammer** – *Trade Corporation, Chamber of Crafts* – organization which represents all craftsmen and skilled manual workers and those companies who employ them. These organizations can be helpful to job-seekers who are looking for information on certain companies. See Chapter 18.

**Handy** – *cellular phone or mobile* – the word used to describe a cell phone or mobile in Germany. Several etiquette tips should be followed when using a handy, see Chapter 10.

**Hauptbahnhof** – *main train station* – See Chapter 16.

**Hausarzt (Allgemeinmediziner)** – *family doctor, general practitioner* – term used to refer to doctors specializing in general medicine. These are usually the first doctors who are contacted by patients, and who then, depending on the ailments, refer patients to specialists. See Chapter 17.
Headhunter – *head hunter* – a personnel recruiter who tries to persuade someone to leave their job by offering them another job with more pay and a higher position. See Chapter 18.

**Herr** – *Mr.* – formal title used to refer to a man in German, which is used in combination with the pronoun "Sie". See Chapter 4.

**House wine** – *Hauswein* – a wine that a restaurant produces itself or the favorite wine of the restaurant’s owner. The quality of a house wine is usually comparable to the quality of the restaurant. See Chapter 9.

**ICE (Inter City Express)** – the most modern and fastest train in the German railroad system that connects large metropolitan areas within Germany. See Chapter 16.

**IC/EC (Inter City and Euro City)** – trains in the German railroad system that connect the major city centers of Germany and its neighboring countries in a matter of hours. See Chapter 16.

**IR (Inter Regio)** – trains in the German railroad system that connect larger and middle-sized German cities within short time spans. See Chapter 16.

**Industrial fair** – *Industriemesse* – a large show or public event at which manufactures, sellers and buyers of a particular industry meet, sell, and advertise their products. See Chapter 16.

**Industry reports** – *Branchenbericht* – a report on a particular industry (ex: furniture, auto, computer) that describes the industry, the major participants, the market characteristics, and the respective current industry conditions, industry performance, and key figures. See Chapter 21.

**Interim certificate** – *Zwischenzeugnis* – a job reference certificate that is requested during (not after) one's employment in a department or at a company. See Chapter 23.

**Job code** – *Chiffre* – a code that indicates the job title for a position or appointment being advertised. These are often found in job advertisements that are not posted directly by a company, but by an employment agency or consultant. See Chapter 19.

**Job fair** – *Bewerbermesse* or *Jobmesse* – an exhibition intended to inform people about the jobs or business opportunities available at different companies. See Chapter 18.

**Job profile** – *Stellenbeschreibung* – a written definition of primary job duties, key responsibilities, and reporting relationships of the position, as well as the education, experience, and personal characteristics sought in a candidate. See Chapter 21.

**Jubiläum** – *jubilee or special anniversary* – term used to describe the celebration that commonly takes place in German workplaces when an employee celebrates a special employment anniversary (usually 20, 30 or 40 years at a company). See Chapter 30.

**Kein Problem** – *No problem* – a problematic phrase that should be avoided in Germany because it can be interpreted in so many different ways. See Chapter 6.

**Kriminalpolizei** – *criminal police* – the branch of the German police which enforces the prevention of crime and is responsible for handling criminal offences. See Chapter 17.

**Liegeplätze** – *couch* – second class sleeping compartments that usually contain four or six beds that can be booked for overnight train rides. See Chapter 16.
Mahlzeit – *Enjoy your meal.* – an old-fashioned phrase that is often used at lunchtime at a business or a factory in Germany. See Chapter 6.

Mediator – *Unterhändler* – a negotiator who, by talking to two separate people or groups involved in a disagreement, helps them come to a mutual agreement. See Chapter 28.

Meeting minutes – *Protokoll* – an official written record of the proceedings of a meeting. See Chapter 25.

Mentor – *Betreuer* – a person responsible for teaching a newcomer how to do their job when they first start at a company. See Chapter 1.

MfG (Mit freundlichen Grüßen) – *With friendly greetings* – an impolite abbreviation that should not be used in letters or e-mails in Germany. See Chapter 6.

Negotiations – *Verhandlungen* – formal preliminary discussions that lead up to the adoption of an agreement between two parties. For example, you negotiate a pay increase with your boss. See Chapter 26.

Netiquette – the etiquette rules that govern one's activities, including the writing of e-mail, while working on the Internet. See Chapter 12.

Nichtraucher – *non-smoking* – used to describe the non-smoking wagons that can be reserved on a German train. See Chapter 16.

Notdienst Kalender – *on-duty medical calendar* – calendar listing on-duty emergency doctors and pharmacies in a certain area for weekend, holiday, and after-hours emergencies. See Chapter 17.

Personal network – *persönliches Netzwerk* – your involvement in an extended group of people with similar interests and concerns who interact and remain in informal contact for mutual assistance or support. See Chapter 7.

Pfietigott – *May God protect you.* – a form of good-bye that is heard in Bavaria. See Chapter 31.

Rathaus – *town hall* – building in which the local city government is housed. See Chapter 17.

Raucher – *smoking* – used to describe the smoking wagons that can be reserved on a German train. See Chapter 16.

RB (Regional Bahn) – standard, economical trains in the German railroad system that stop at all train stations along their way. See Chapter 16.

RE (Regional Express) – similar to RB trains, these trains stop at most, but not all, train stations along their way. See Chapter 16.

Reference certificate – *Arbeitszeugnis* – an official certificate that is required by most employers as a form of reference from previous employers when applying for a job in Germany. These certificates should be requested from all employers to ensure that you can show proof of your tasks and your performance. See Chapter 23.

Resume gap – *Lücke im Lebenslauf* – a gap in employment or schooling that usually leaves an unaccounted for period of time in one's resume and could be viewed negatively by potential employers. See Chapter 20.

Rhetorical methods – *Rhetorische Methoden* – a persuasive way of speech in which one relates a theme or idea in an effort to convince others of an argument. These methods are often used in presentations. See Chapter 11.
**Salary pyramid** – *Gehaltspyramide* – refers to the different salary levels within a company. The many positions at the lower pay levels form the basis of the pyramid. The salaries increase as one moves up the pyramid, but the number of positions decreases. At the tip of the pyramid sit the top administrative positions (ex: CEO or President). In a salary pyramid, commissioned work usually plays a minimal role. See Chapter 27.

**Salary report** – *Gehaltsspiegel* or *Vergütungsstudie* – a report containing varied statistical averages for a defined job in a specific industry. Besides salary averages, the reports usually contain statements about individual companies with respect to turnover, company size, company locations, personnel contacts, and other job incentives such as company cars, pension plans, bonuses, and paid overtime. See Chapter 22.

**S-Bahn** – trains in the German railroad system that connect the centers of Germany's big cities with the city's surrounding areas quickly and at frequent intervals. See Chapter 16.

**Seniority** – *Dienstalter* – a status attained by working for a company for a long period of time. In some institutions, individuals with more seniority are given priority for promotion and salary increases. See Chapter 1.

**Schlafplätze** – *sleeping cot* – first class sleeping compartments that only contain two beds and can be booked for overnight train rides. See Chapter 16.

**Schönen Abend** – *Have a good evening.* – phrase used to say good-bye in the late afternoon or evening. To simply greet someone in the late afternoon or evening say, "Guten Abend!" See Chapter 6.

**Schwierigkeit** – *difficulty* – the German word used to describe problems. See Chapter 26.

**Servus** – *hello or good-bye* – a form of hello and good-bye in Southern Bavaria or Austria. See Chapter 31.

**Sie** – *formal "you"* – used in German to address someone who is not a close friend or family member. If you address someone with "Sie", you would also address him or her with their title and last name. See Chapter 4.

**Sitzung** – *meeting* – a formal word used to describe a meeting, discussion or conference in German. See Chapter 25.

**Small talk** – *small talk* – informal or unimportant conversation that can be used in a business atmosphere to lighten-up awkward situations or lend a personal tone to a situation. See Chapter 7.

**Snail mail** – *die normale Post* – an idiom used to describe mail delivered by a postal system as opposed to electronically. See Chapter 12.

**Social Network** – *Beziehungsnetzwerk* or *soziales Netz* – term used to describe the personal and/or professional contacts that one builds with others. See Chapter 29.

**Soft skills** – *softskills* - personal management skills such as attitudes and behaviors that are often sought in job applicants. See Chapter 19.

**SPAM** – unsolicited e-mail; usually a form of bulk mail, often to a list culled from subscribers to a Usenet discussion group or obtained by companies that specialize in creating e-mail distribution lists. In general, it's not considered good netiquette to send spam. See Chapter 12.

**Sperrvermerk** – *restriction notice, notice of non-negotiability* – a legal clause which can be incorporated into a job application to prevent the application form being sent to certain employers or other recipients. See Chapter 19.

**Stereotype** – *Vorurteil* or *Klischee (Klischeevorstellung)* – a fixed set of ideas that are generally held about the characteristics of a particular type of person, which are (wrongly) believed to be shared by all people of
that type. For example, a typical stereotype would be to claim that all Germans are stubborn. See Chapter 15.

**Subject** – *Betreffzeile* – when composing an e-mail, this is the field in which the principal idea or point of an e-mail is entered. For more details on e-mail fields see Chapter 12.

**Tratsch und Klatsch** – *gossip or rumors* – the term used to describe informal discussion about the private lives of other people (who are usually not present). See Chapter 7.

**Trinkgeld** – *tip* – the extra amount of money that is customarily left for the server to compliment the service at a restaurant. There are several rules on tip leaving that can be found in Chapter 9.

**Tschüss** – *good-bye* – a short form of good-bye that is frequently used in Germany on a personal or informal basis. See Chapter 31.

**U-Bahn** – trains in the German railroad system that make up the underground metro lines that run under most big German cities. See Chapter 16.

**Unwritten/hidden rules** – *ungeschriebene Gesetze* – the culture, or particular code of behavior and decision making that is expected of a company's employees. This is usually difficult to decipher for new employees. See Chapter 24.

**URL** (Uniform Resource Locator) – a formal term used to refer to Internet addresses. See Chapter 12.

**Verkehrspolizei** – *traffic police* – the branch of the German police which enforces safe travel and accident prevention on German's roadways and waterways. See Chapter 17.

**Vielen Dank** – *Thank you very much.* – formal phrase for thanking someone in German. See Chapter 6.

**Virus scanner** – *Virenscanner* – a software program capable of detecting those computer viruses which could cause great harm to files or other programs on the same computer. See Chapter 12.

**Vorstellungsgespräch** – *Job interview* – the step in the application process that involves introducing yourself at a company after they have reviewed your application and decide to further consider you for the position. See Chapter 21.
About the authors

Mr. Joachim Graff, German citizen
- MA in Engineering and Business Administration
- 20 years experience in different areas in German industry:
  - international strategic market research
  - marketing communications
  - knowledge management
  - reengineering
- Seminars and several publications in knowledge management, market research, and job application training
- Joint founder of TREFF@PUNKT Language Institute, a private language school offering intensive German language courses

Ms. Gretchen Schaupp, American citizen
- MBA in European Management
- BA in German as a Foreign Language
- 3 years experience in German industry:
  - logistics and transport
  - production and supply chain management
- Instructor of English as a second language
- Seminars on German business culture