

Grow Global: Using International Protocol to Expand Your Business Worldwide

Jan Yager

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Grow Global by Jan Yager, an author of numerous business books and a consultant on foreign rights, is a handy all-in-one resource for business people who need to know about protocols in countries around the world. It is a book that can likely save one much embarrassment. “Fifteen International Protocol Considerations,” for example, lays the groundwork for such basics as correctly pronouncing names, making proper greetings and introductions, proper dress, body language, and negotiating styles.

“Rules of the Road: Country by Country Etiquette” is a chapter that alone could be worth the price of the book. Here, Yager covers the most common business conventions for nineteen countries where the most international business is conducted. The author offers advice garnered both from personal experience and from other experts who have done business in these countries. Some advice may seem obvious but bears reinforcing: “The biggest faux pas you can make in Brazil is to assume that they speak Spanish. Portuguese is the official language and Spanish is not spoken at all.” Other advice borders on inside information that could be extremely valuable: “If you’re in a meeting [in China] and you’re presenting information and their heads are nodding, Americans take that to mean agreement. But to an Asian, that typically means ‘I hear you.’ ...Americans will think they had a deal but the Chinese will come back and say that they want to do the exact opposite.”

Yager discusses other important aspects of doing global business, including how to handle face-to-face meetings, attending trade shows, and phone and email etiquette as it relates to international communication. She includes a very useful chapter on “Gift-Giving, Legal Considerations, and Ethics” that could help the reader avoid, among other things, having gifts be misinterpreted as bribes. She even offers some helpful tips about traveling internationally—safety and security, packing, what to wear, and so on.

Grow Global is a bit of a misleading title. This is not a book about acquiring international business; rather it is about doing business internationally. But *Grow Global* is valuable nonetheless, because the wisdom it contains can help business executives with global growth goals to have a better understanding of cultural differences. Everyone who follows Jan Yager’s advice to connect with their counterparts in other countries “in a respectful and positive way” is likely to have a significantly easier time growing a global business.

BARRY SILVERSTEIN (September 26, 2011)

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