

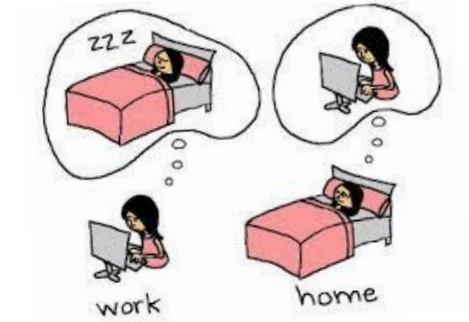
WELCOME at Anhalt University of Applied Sciences

German Work Culture

German Work Culture – Work-Life Balance

Work Needs to Have an End

- Neither the professional, nor the private life should exhaust personal resources one-sidedly, so that one of the two takes damage
- Germans **strictly separate work- and private-life**
- Strictly regulated working hours (definite rules) are important to ensure a sufficient period of regeneration
- Goal: **Only who is well-rested can deliver a 100% performance**



German Work Culture – Work-Life Balance

Uncommon in Germany are:

- Telephone calls & Emails after working hours

- Extended after-work drinks/parties with colleagues (Germans prefer to spend time with family)



- Voluntary overtime e.g. to impress the boss

- Interruptions during vacation (e.g. calls by manager)



German Work Culture

How Do Germans **Negotiate**?

- A business meeting for Germans is **simply an official appointment** that all participants should be as well prepared for as possible
- A **spontaneous/ unplanned course** of negotiations is undesired
- **Professionalism** and detailed **specialization** are central criteria in a German company
- **Germans expect the same attitude from their business partners**
- When negotiating with German business people **listen to the presenter very carefully** without trying to interrupt



German Work Culture

How Do Germans **Negotiate**?

- Write down possible questions to be asked at the end.
Exception: if you are encouraged to ask in between
- Germans **do not fear conflict**, they might even consider it necessary. **Conflict does however not mean war**, or the end of the relationship. They will search for a mutually beneficial solution



German Work Culture – Typical Characteristics

Most Important Virtue- **Punctuality/Pünktlichkeit**

- Due to the strive for highest efficiency, lost time for Germans is equal to a **waste of resources**
- That is why punctuality has the highest priority in all work-and company regards
- **“No time for bullshit!”**
- Being too early however, is also not always positive- If you are too early, there often is not yet something to do, as the business process only starts slowly. **Orientate yourself towards your colleagues**

*“Fünf Minuten
vor
der Zeit
ist des
Deutschen
Pünktlichkeit”*



German Work Culture – Typical Characteristics

Communication & Collegial Relationships

Reticence

Colleagues are not friends
right away



- Germans precisely **distinguish between work and leisure time, business vs. privacy, colleagues vs. friends**
- At work you are **supposed to work, not discuss pets or your grandmother's health** (which in other cultures is completely normal)
- Most Germans tend to find friendships in private life through their hobbies
- This however does not mean you should feel alone, or that nobody is interested in your personality
- **Work must be completed first!**

German Work Culture – Typical Characteristics

Germans and **Planning**

Coordination

Planen,planen und
nochmalsplanen



- Germans **plan everything ahead**, whether they like it or are forced to do it
- **Every detail** should be paid attention to and **bindingly confirmed**
- Keep an overview of important appointments. **Plan meetings** with colleagues **early enough**
- If you are invited for an appointment and **you do not cancel** e.g. via mail it is considered a confirmed appointment
- Following the „**No matter what**“-principle you have to keep your word

German Work Culture – Typical Characteristics

Self-Initiative



- In the workplace there usually is a clear distinction of tasks resulting in **your own area of responsibility**
- Meaning, even as a new employee you often **quickly take responsibility** for your own tasks
- You are free to prioritize, plan and fulfill. What counts is the result within the given time frame
- **But: Think actively! Do not keep waiting for orders or continuous control from higher hierarchy-levels**

German Work Culture – Typical Characteristics

Conflicts & Criticism

Diplomacy

How to criticise



- To say what you dislike is **not customary in every culture. It is however in Germany**
- Germans **display criticism openly and sincerely.** They directly address what they dislike
- It is **normal to ask questions** in Germany if you have not understood something. This shows your motivation to understand processes and contribute to the common goals
- **Do not ignore problems.** Address them right away instead of hoping everything will be fine

German Work Culture – Typical Characteristics

Conflicts & Criticism- What Are Common Reasons

Not sticking to
confirmed
plans/promises



Not following rules and
work discipline e.g.
through carelessness



The **lack of professionalism**
and qualifications

Insufficient **motivation**

**Not admitting your
mistakes** and trying to
hide them

Not opening your attitudes
towards others (**conflict
avoidance**)

German Work Culture – Typical Characteristics

How to **Solve Conflicts**

Its common to use a **3rd party mediator**

Describe problems **without denying/washy-washing** your own responsibility

Conflict management is based on the exchange of opinions and identification of mutually acceptable goals

Try **not to avoid** colleagues if there is an ongoing conflict

Do not postpone problems, directly face them

Still answer calls /Emails
Silence can lead to escalation



German Work Culture – Check List

Work and Company Culture- **Important Points**

Don't be overly optimistic. **Germans are realists** in the workplace.



Prepare to deliver empirical facts. Germans don't like to guess.



Plan **meetings in the long-term**. Short confirmation shortly before appointment.



Prepare for less small talk. "Right down to business!"



Communication in the office is formal (also among colleagues) "Sie"

