

When speaking to people who are not fluent in English, speak at a slower pace than you would normally, and avoid the use of jargon and slang. Showing interest in what your partner is trying to say and being patient will encourage your partner to communicate. Clarification and feedback help to establish mutual understanding in these situations.

Face-to-face interaction is the preferred mode of communicating in Indonesia. Phones and faxes are useful, but they should not replace person-to-person contact. You are unlikely to succeed without face-to-face communication.

Non-verbal communication can lead to misunderstanding across cultures. Westerners often use non-verbal gestures to augment their speech. In Indonesia, the non-verbal cues are not always easily read. Gestures can have different meanings, depending on the context. For instance, smiling can mean embarrassment or confusion, depending on the situation. You may also find that many Indonesians avoid eye contact. This should not be interpreted as a sign of dishonesty or reluctance. Indonesians consider eye contact impolite, especially when it involves young people communicating with elders and subordinates speaking to people of higher rank or status. Standing with your hands on your hips is another gesture that can be misinter-

preted. You may wish to communicate that you are relaxed, but Indonesians may perceive standing akimbo as a show of power or dominance.

Indonesians tend to hide negative emotions, such as anger and frustration. Withdrawal often signifies disagreement or resentment. Silence, which makes many Canadians uncomfortable, occurs frequently in the course of conversations and negotiations in Indonesia. Avoid frustration; when in doubt about your counterpart's non-verbal cues, don't hesitate to ask what he or she is thinking.

Indonesians prefer to communicate orally rather than in writing. Since less educated Indonesians have no training in written English, you may have to help your staff in developing their report-writing skills. Indonesians use the passive voice frequently when writing in English because of their tendency to be indirect. For the same reason, they often use several sentences to present an idea instead of one concise, straightforward sentence. Since some people shy away from lengthy documents, reports and manuals written in English, you should summarize and/or translate them to minimize misunderstanding.

Patience, understanding and clarification will help you communicate effectively with your Indonesian partners.