

- ◆ Join in social activities and outings with your Pakistani work colleagues.
- ◆ Don't expect to change the system. Keep a sense of perspective as to what is really important.
- ◆ Drink lots of tea.

Managing Pakistani Staff ◆ ◆ ◆

Pakistani staff always regard foreign managers or advisors as authority figures. How you use your authority depends on your personality. But do not be afraid to use it; it is expected. Don't let the formalities and courtesies of the workplace get in your way of achieving your objectives. Be polite but firm.

Hiring, firing and remuneration

As in most other cultures, almost everyone in Pakistan plays power games as they jostle for position in the hierarchy. Associating with or working for foreigners carries a lot of status. There may be hundreds of applicants each time you advertise a vacant position. Be careful when selecting and recruiting people. Make sure that merit and professionalism are paramount in your choices. You may not wish to delegate the recruitment of key staff to your Pakistani colleagues because a host of other considerations, including family or tribal obligations, may dominate their selection criteria. Sometimes it is, however, expedient to give in to pressure. Use your judgment and be flexible.

It is very unusual for people to be fired, except in the private sector. Even then, it may be difficult. A disgruntled employee can make life difficult for you and everyone else. Wherever possible, look for a win-win solution. Reassign ineffective staff or encourage them to leave on their own accord in such a way that they do not lose face. Seek the advice of trusted colleagues and other foreign managers before you act.

If you are responsible for determining the salaries, benefits, working hours, per diems, medical allowances, and terms of employment for Pakistani staff, proceed carefully and do your homework. Find out what other projects and organizations do. Get some outside advice. Remember that your Pakistani staff are likely to run circles around you in any negotiating session. You can be sure that nothing will remain confidential; everyone will find out what each receives. Be fair, but firm. You are fortunate if you have a good administrative officer to handle most personnel matters. Regardless, you will need to exert your authority from time to time.