

You will often come across people, such as this director, who have mastered the art of dealing with many matters at the same time.

Despite the casual nature of the work environment, there is a high level of professionalism in the Indian workforce. Many top Indian bureaucrats, professionals and business people are graduates of prestigious western universities and have good analytical minds. Don't expect instant decisions when negotiating with Indian officials in the public and private sectors. They will take time to critically analyze the situation before making a decision.

Indians prefer to avoid conflict. They place great value on harmony and saving face. As in other collectivist societies, group harmony is valued and respected. Indians prefer to have a

third person act as a go-between in order to resolve a conflict rather than "having it out" directly. Outsiders are not encouraged to mediate; Indians prefer to keep conflicts within the walls of their homes and organizations.

If your Indian partner is silent following a misunderstanding, it may signal only that he or she does not want more conflict or any further deterioration of the work environment. Your partner may be putting up a facade. Issues affecting dignity, respect, prestige and face-saving have a great influence on Indian behaviour.

Because Indians are class-conscious, they don't normally use polite expressions such as "please" and "thank you" when speaking to their peers or people of lower rank. They reserve them for people of senior rank.

Introductions ♦ ♦ ♦

When introducing you to his wife, your Indian host may simply say, "Meet my wife," without telling you her first name.

Indians show respect for seniors by introducing them as Miss, Mr. or Mrs. It is not unusual to hear a person say, "Meet Chief Executive, Mr. so-and-so." The person's position is stated before his or her name. Informal introductions, using only the first

name, are rare at official levels. Your partners may not address you by your first name until they know you well and have established a close relationship with you.

It is common for Indians to shake hands when they are introduced. Understand, however, that Indians are often more tactile than westerners. They may offer a friendly tap on the back or some other physical contact.