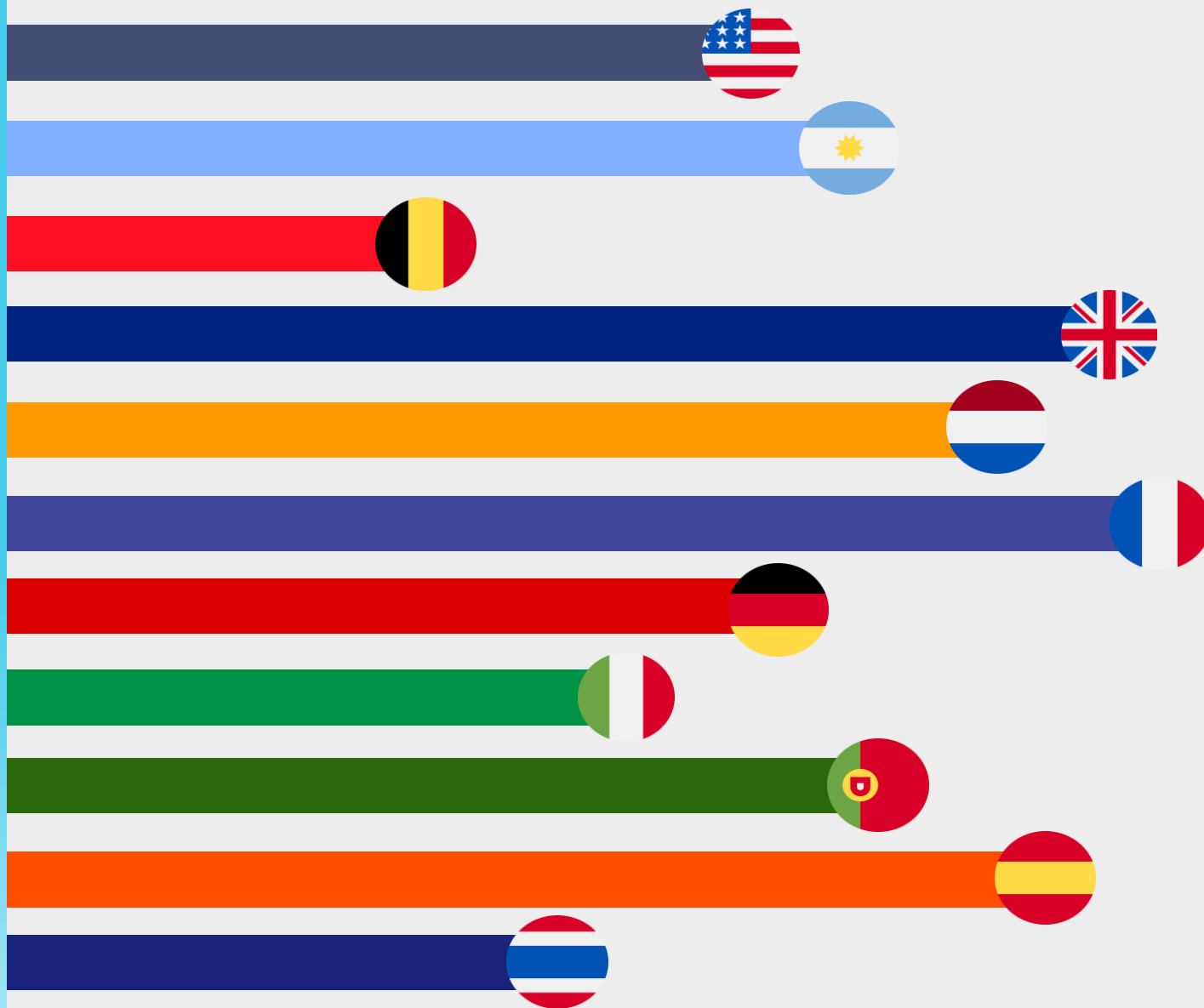


# CROSS CULTURAL BUSINESS GUIDE

Knowledge, practical how-to's and tips  
to lead cross-border business





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# INTRODUCTION

One of Nextcontinent's strengths resides in its **DIVERSITY**.

The diversity brought by each of our citizens around the world. We feel enriched having so many cultures and **ways of working** as we can **learn from each other**.

This guide will give you some insights into your colleagues' country and cultural norms – specifically at work.

*Are the stereotypes true? What should I expect? What should I be aware of to start with?*

With this guide you will discover what a typical day looks like, learn some of the does and don'ts, as well as the different communication styles.

This guide will take you through **11 countries** and has been made with our citizens insights from their own country. Be open minded, as this guide will walk you through different cultures with humour and simplicity.

We hope you enjoy it and learn as much as we did!

The Nextcontinent Team

# HOW TO READ THE 8 SCALES OF CULTURE (1/2)

## SCALE #1 – THE COMMUNICATION SCALE

Low-context

COMMUNICATING

High-context

- **Low-context cultures** use precise and clear styles of communication. What one says is what one means. There is no need to be aware the historical and/or social contexts to understand the conversations. It is common in countries with younger cultures (USA, Australia).
- **High-context cultures** use layered and subtle communication styles, where one requires employing a lot of reading between the lines. It is common in countries with older cultures, as they've had time to develop nuances.

## SCALE #2 – THE EVALUATING SCALE

Direct negative feedback

EVALUATING

Indirect negative feedback

- **Direct feedback cultures** include forthright language and tend to emphasize the point. Words such as 'totally', 'strongly', etc. are commonly used to give feedback. Direct feedback can be given in front of a group.
- **Indirect feedback cultures** are subtle, use gentle words, and mask negative feedback with positive words. Indirect feedback cultures mostly use words such as, 'maybe', 'kind of', etc. Criticisms in indirect cultures are given privately.

## SCALE #3 – THE LEADING SCALE

Egalitarian

LEADING

Hierarchical

- **Egalitarian styles** of leading reflect in flat organizational structures. With a narrow gap between employees and managers, the working relationship is egalitarian.
- **Hierarchical structures** lead to gaps between levels that are clearly visible. In such culture styles, communication and decision-making follow a clear hierarchical structure.

## SCALE #4 – THE DECIDING SCALE

Consensual

DECIDING

Top-Down

- Cultures with **consensual deciding** involve everyone in the decision-making process. The final decision is made after all concerned reach a consensus.
- Cultures with a **top-down deciding** approach follow a hierarchical structure where those on the top of the ladder – the top management, mostly make the decisions.

# HOW TO READ THE 8 SCALES OF CULTURE (2/2)

## SCALE #5 – THE TRUSTING SCALE

Task-based      TRUSTING      Relationship-based

- **High task-based cultures** build trust by achievements in business relations and profits. Such trust can be forged as well as dissolved easily.
- **High relationship-based** form trust on the basis of shared personal relations and experiences. Such cultures believe that a trusting partnership needs time and effort to be nurtured.

## SCALE #6 – THE DISAGREEING SCALE

Confrontational      DISAGREEING      Avoids confrontation

- **Confrontational cultures** are able to separate the person from their ideas that they do agree with. Relationships are not affected by divergence of points of view. They can agree to disagree.
- **Cultures that avoid confrontation** believe that open confrontation can disrupt the harmonious setting of a group. The idea a person puts forth is not separated from the person, therefore disagreeing with the idea is considered equal to disagreeing with the person.

## SCALE #7 – THE SCHEDULING SCALE

Linear-time      SCHEDULING      Flexible-time

- **Linear styles** focus on one task before they move to the next one and work with well-defined deadlines. They usually find it impolite to shift attention from one task to the other without finishing the first task.
- **Flexible styles** are flexible in timelines and believe in multi-tasking. Different topics can be addressed at the same time, and adaptability is a value that holds more weight.

## SCALE #8 – THE PERSUADING SCALE

Principles first      PERSUADING      Applications first

- The **principles-first reasoning** uses general principles and deduction to draw conclusions by questioning the ‘why’. They are more inclined to the reasoning behind the request.
- The **applications-first reasoning** is inductive in nature, where persuasion is driven by practice. They are more focused on the ‘how’ of a given task.

# SOME CLICHÉS ABOUT THE AMERICANS

Americans are very friendly at the office and like to sugar-coat everything

Americans are high individualist people which makes them not natural team players

Americans are very business-driven and appear as workaholic to foreigners

## ECONOMIC DATA

USA 1/3

**20 936 B USD**

Annual GDP – 2020

**66 k USD**

GDP Per Capita – 2020

**122 %**

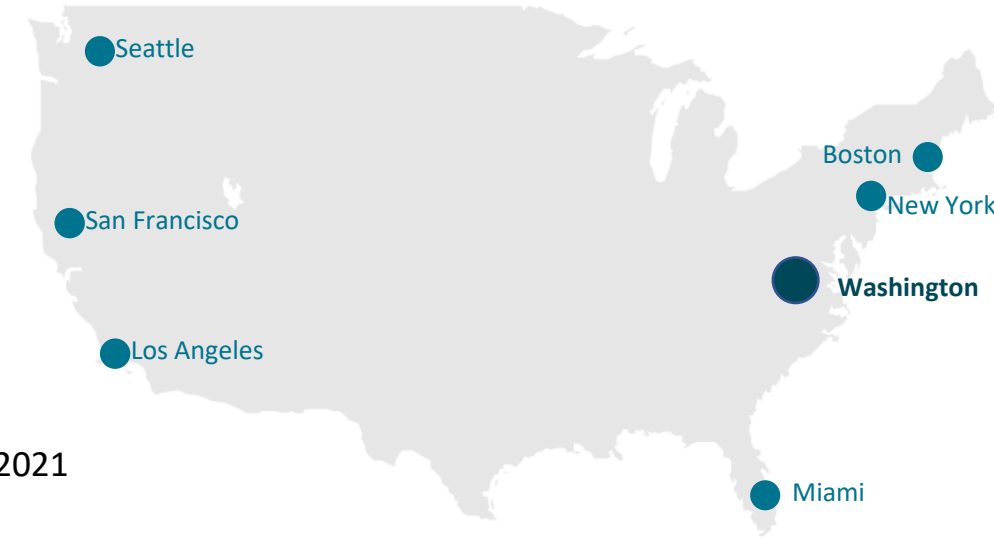
Debt (%GDP) – 2020

**4,6 %**

Unemployment rate – 2021

**35 k USD**

Average salary - 2021



## PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

**January 1<sup>st</sup>:** New Year's Day

**January 18<sup>th</sup>:** Martin Luther King Day

**February 15<sup>th</sup>:** Washington's Birthday

**May 30<sup>th</sup>:** Memorial Day

**June 19<sup>th</sup>:** Juneteenth

**July 4<sup>th</sup>:** Independence Day

**September 6<sup>th</sup>:** Labor Day

**October 11<sup>th</sup>:** Indigenous Peoples' Day

**November 11<sup>th</sup>:** Veterans' Day

**November 25<sup>th</sup>:** Thanksgiving Day

**December 24<sup>th</sup>:** Christmas Eve

**December 25<sup>th</sup>:** Christmas Day

# A TYPICAL WORDAY AT A AN AMERICAN OFFICE

USA 2/3



Americans arrive **between 8:00 & 9:00** at the office, and **directly start the day** without necessarily socializing with their co-workers

## Arrival at the office



8:30



Americans tend to eat **around midday**



They **eat at their desk** a snack or a take-away. **Some of them are even skipping lunch** to keep working

## Lunchbreak

12.00



Usually, Americans leave the office **between 18:00 & 19:00**. They **go directly back home** since they like to separate their private life from their professional life

## End-of-Day

18.30



## Meeting Preparation

Interactions with colleagues: Preferred communication channel

- Americans are used to communicating by **email**
- Or to engage with **Skype** or **conference calls**

*It is not necessary to develop a personal relationship to establish a lasting and successful business relationship*

## Meeting Etiquette

Greeting Protocol:

- Before Covid: handshake
- Now: Fist bump

Time Management

- Punctuality is a fundamental value in the US business culture. Tardiness may reflect disrespect.
- Meeting agendas are common, timed in advance, and steadfastly followed

*Discussions often start with small talk on a light subject before talking business and getting to the point*



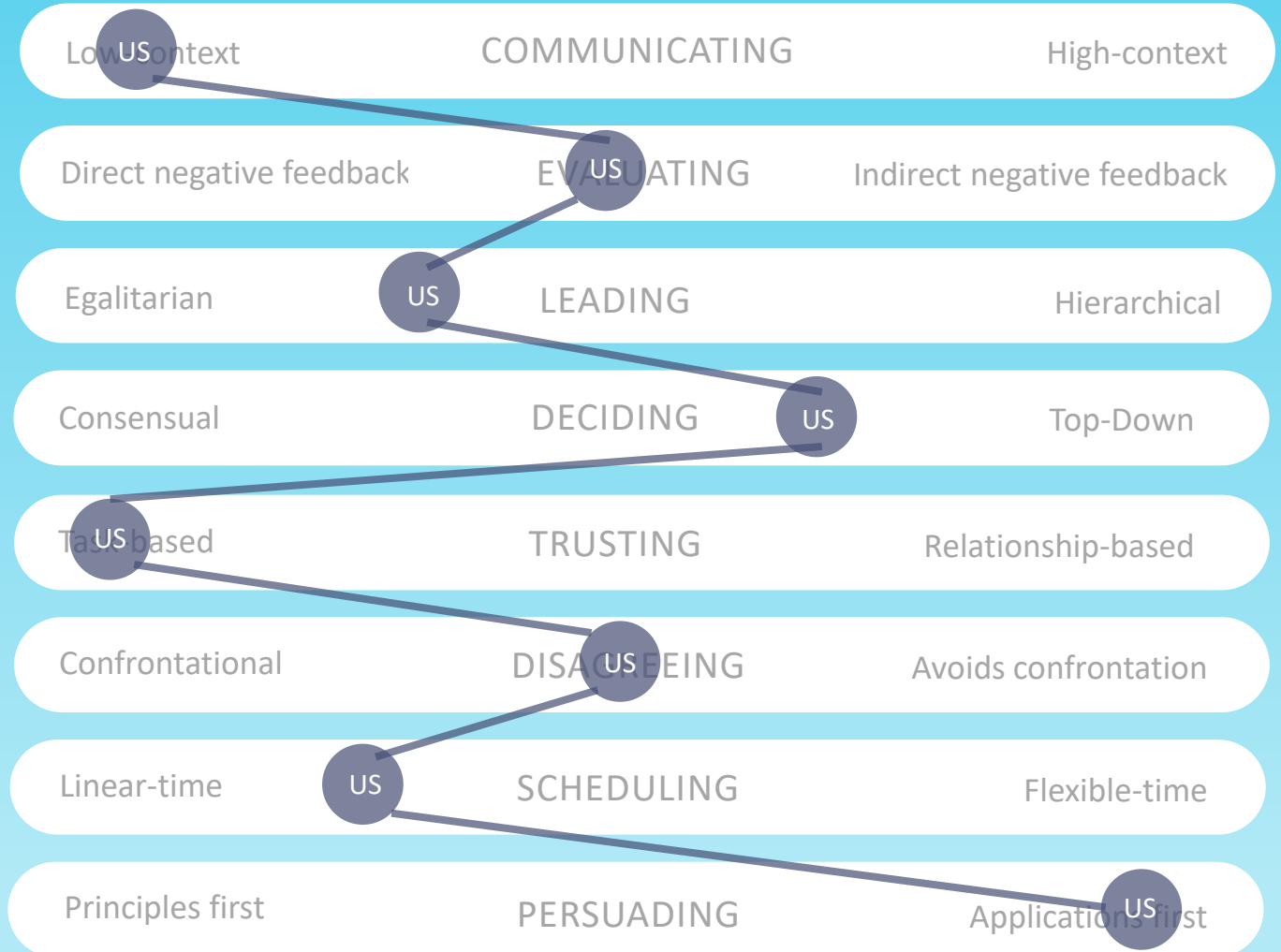
# HOW TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE AMERICANS

USA 3/3



## DO'S & DON'TS

- You can be open & proud about your success in America, as Americans like to focus on accomplishments & other positive things.
- Before & after giving advice or criticism, be sure to emphasise one's good points.
- Avoid mentioning sensitive & divisive topics such as gun control.
- Individuals may think aloud during meetings, imagine ideas on the spot and verbalize them without intending to seriously propose them.
- Many Americans are culturally uncomfortable with silence in meetings and may seek to fill it with conversation.



Source: *The Culture Map*, Erin Meyer  
See p.5/6 for the explanation of each category

# SOME CLICHÉS ABOUT THE ARGENTINIANS

If no one is answering,  
it probably means the  
national football team is  
playing

Hear a little hissing  
sound during a call? It  
must be someone  
drinking “mate”

Want to have a  
quick word with an  
Argentinian?  
Brace yourself for a  
longer conversation



## ECONOMIC DATA

**383,1 USD**

Annual GDP – 2020

**8.441 USD**

GDP Per Capita – 2020

**102,79%**

Debt (%GDP) – 2020

**8.2%**

Unemployment rate – Oct. 2021

**440 USD**

Average salary - 2020

ARGENTINA 1/3



## PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

*Please note these dates only feature the “fixed holidays” in 2022. See also the “transferable holidays” and those for “tourist purposes”.*

**January 1<sup>st</sup>:** New Year's Day

**February 28<sup>th</sup> & March 1<sup>st</sup>:** Carnival

**March 24<sup>th</sup>:** Day of Remembrance for Truth and Justice

**April 2<sup>nd</sup>:** Malvinas War Veterans Day

**April 15<sup>th</sup>:** Good Friday

**May 1<sup>st</sup>:** Labour Day

**May 25<sup>th</sup>:** Revolution Day


**June 20<sup>th</sup>:** General Belgrano Memorial Day


**July 9<sup>th</sup>:** Independence Day


**December 8<sup>th</sup>:** Day of the Immaculate Conception


**December 25<sup>th</sup>:** Christmas

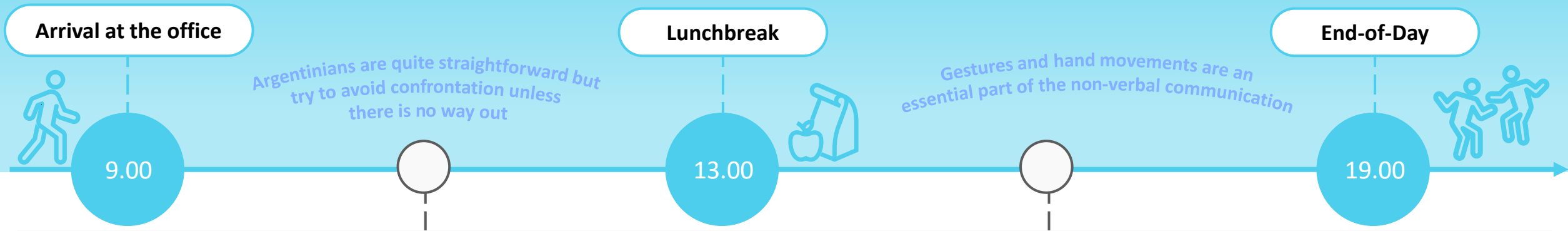
# A TYPICAL WORDAY AT A AN ARGENTINIAN OFFICE

 When arriving at the office, Argentines usually **start working directly** but still **exchange a few words when sharing the mate**. Someone is in charge of the preparation – boiling the water and pouring it for others. This is when the chit chat happens.

 Argentines **lunch between 13.00 and 14.00**.

 They generally go outside to **grab something to eat** and then lunch at the office with their colleagues.

 Argentines generally **leave the office between 18.00 and 19.00**.



## Meeting Preparation

- Interactions with colleagues: Preferred communication channel**
- If the matter is urgent, it is common to use the mobile phone, WhatsApp/instant messages or drop by the colleagues' desk. Generally, WhatsApp has a high level of usage for daily communication within the different teams. If it is not urgent, it is common to send e-mails.
  - If it is an important subject and the deadline is not short, the topic can be introduced by e-mail or during a meeting in order to talk through the details and plan how to address it during the following days/weeks.

## Meeting Etiquette

- Greeting Protocol:**
- **Before Covid:** kiss on the cheek or hug (informal or in case of close relation); handshake (formal)
  - **Now:** no physical contact or a gentle hit on the fists
- Time Management:**
- Meetings do not always start on time because the previous meetings tend to last longer than expected.
  - Meetings usually end when the objectives and topics are fully covered. Time is usually extended when the topic is not fully discussed and if arranging another meeting could be more difficult.
  - There is a socialization moment at the beginning of the meeting when waiting for the rest of the attendees to join, or at the end if there are some minutes left to interact.

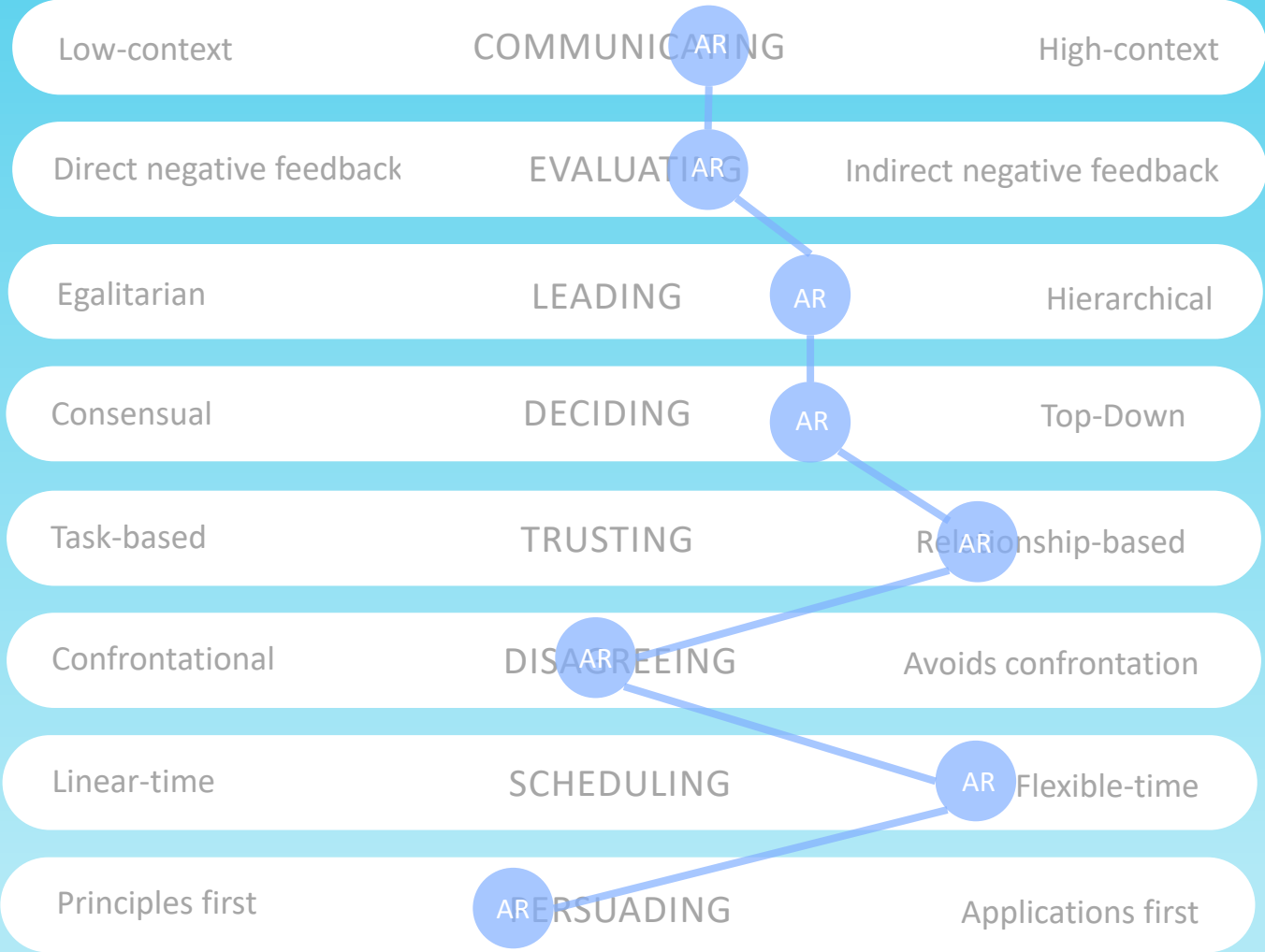
# HOW TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE ARGENTINIANS

ARGENTINA 3/3



## DO'S & DON'TS

- Engage in discussions on topics such as sports (particularly football), family, cuisine and natural landscapes of Argentina.
- When conversing with an Argentine, do not hesitate to inquire into the well-being of their family, spouse, children, etc.
- Try to tolerate a higher volume. Argentines are generally more open to loud speaking and conversation.
- Avoid raising topics relating to Argentina's past and present political issues. Topics such as Perón, Great Britain and the Falkland Islands are highly sensitive.
- Avoid referring to the United States as "America" or specify it as "North America".



Source: *The Culture Map*, Erin Meyer  
See p.5/6 for the explanation of each category

# SOME CLICHÉS ABOUT THE BELGIANS

Belgians have a very strong sense of humor...And they are experts at laughing at themselves!

They love French fries and beer...or should we say Belgian fries?

Belgians work to live and not the other way around: work-life balance is important!



## ECONOMIC DATA

456 Md €

Annual GDP – 2020

45 k €

GDP Per Capita – 2020

105 %

Debt (%GDP) – 2020

6,5 %

Unemployment rate – 2021

50 k €

Average salary - 2021

BELGIUM 1/3



## PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

January 1<sup>st</sup>: New Year's Day

April 5<sup>th</sup>: Easter Monday

May 1<sup>st</sup>: Labour Day

May 13<sup>th</sup>: Ascension Day

May 24<sup>th</sup>: Whit Monday

July 21<sup>st</sup>: National Day

August 15<sup>th</sup>: Assumption Day

November 1<sup>st</sup>: All Saints' Day

November 11<sup>th</sup>: Armistice Day

December 25<sup>th</sup>: Christmas Day

# A TYPICAL WORDAY AT A BELGIAN OFFICE

BELGIUM 2/3



Belgians arrive **around 9:00** at the office, and start the day by **drinking a coffee with colleagues**

## Arrival at the office



9:00



Belgians tend to eat **around midday**



They **eat a takeaway** most of the time **with their colleagues**

## Lunchbreak

12.00



Usually, Belgians leave the office **between 18:00 & 19:00**

They don't really spend time with their colleagues & go directly home

## End-of-Day

18.30



### Meeting Preparation

#### Interactions with colleagues: Preferred communication channel

- Belgians do not particularly enjoy conducting business over the phone and **personal contact is much more preferred**

### Meeting Etiquette

#### Greeting Protocol:

- Before Covid: handshake
- Now: handwave

#### Time Management

- **Punctuality is important:** arriving late might brand you as unreliable!
- Belgians like to have a **meeting well-structured & focused...**
- ... But meetings often start with a **15-minute small talk**

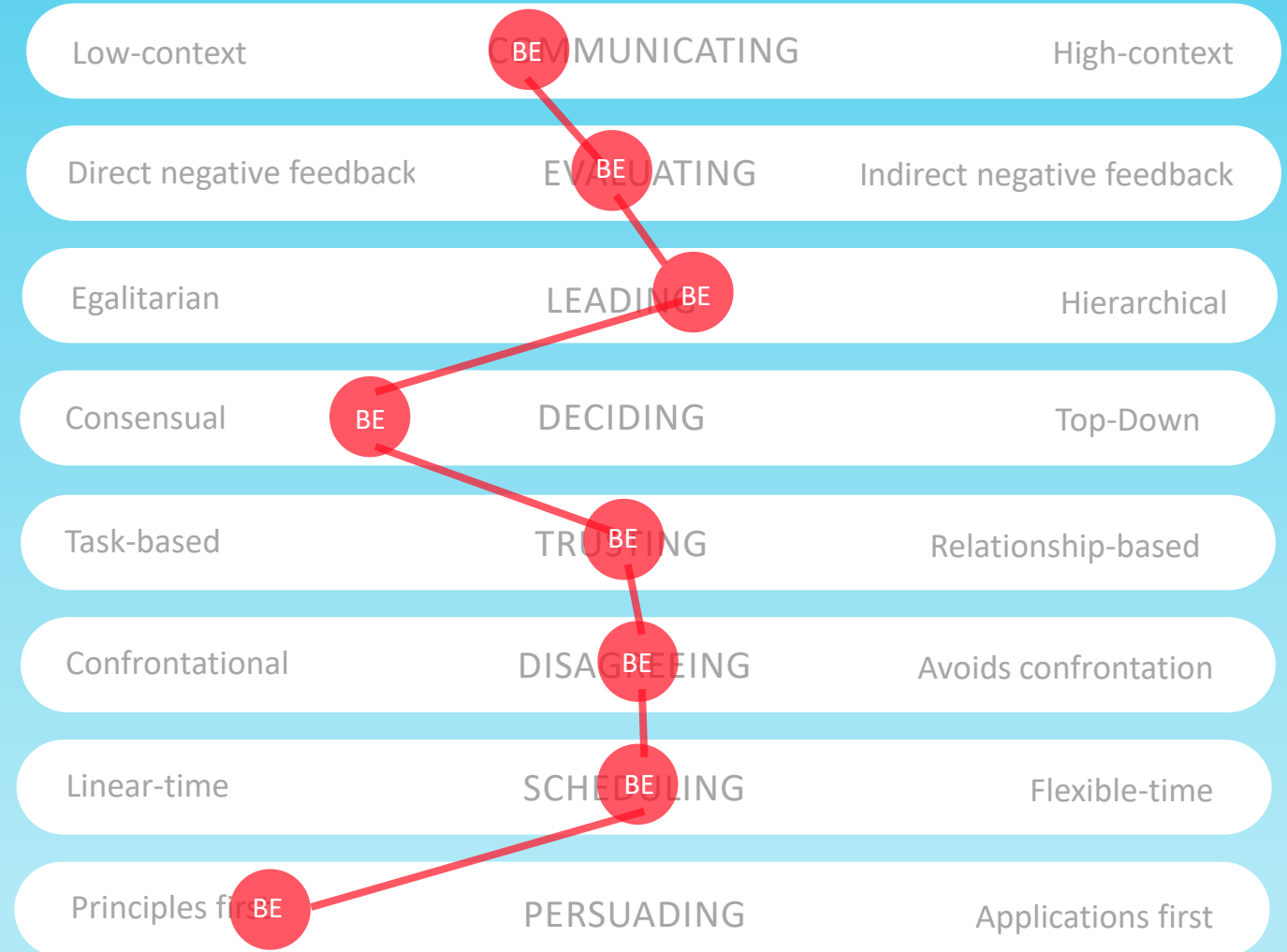
# HOW TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE BELGIANS



## DO'S & DON'TS

- Feel free to share your opinion on everything and even to complain if you want to: Belgians will happily join the conversation.
- Stay distant & tactful with Belgians: if you have feedback to give, try to be polite & formulate the criticism indirectly.

BELGIUM 3/3



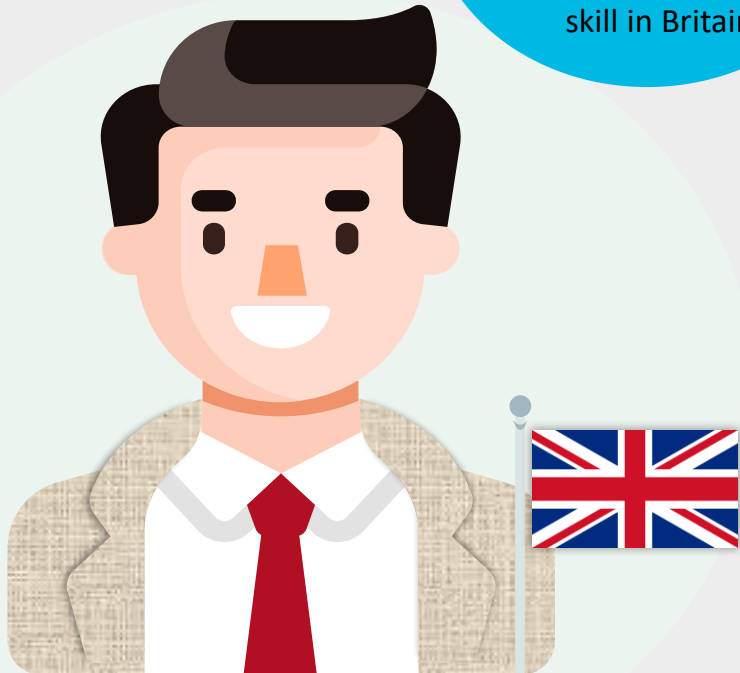
Source: *The Culture Map*, Erin Meyer  
See p.5/6 for the explanation of each category

# SOME CLICHÉS ABOUT THE BRITS

Don't know what to say to a Brit? You can get at least 10 minutes worth of quality conversation out of the current weather patterns

The Brits are always polite and reserved

The ability to brew the perfect cup of tea with just the right amount of water to milk ratio is a sought-after skill in Britain



## ECONOMIC DATA

1.96T GBP

Annual GDP – 2020

29.552 GBP

GDP Per Capita – 2020

96.1%

Debt (%GDP) – 2021

4.2%

Unemployment rate – 2021

31.487 GBP

Average salary - 2020



## PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

**March 17<sup>th</sup>:** St Patrick's Day (Northern Ireland)

**April 2<sup>nd</sup>:** Good Friday

**April 5<sup>th</sup>:** Easter Monday (Wales, England and Northern Ireland)

**May 3<sup>rd</sup>:** Early May Bank Holiday

**May 31<sup>st</sup>:** Spring Bank Holiday

**July 12<sup>th</sup>:** Orangeman's Day (Northern Ireland)

**August 2<sup>nd</sup>:** Summer Bank Holiday (Scotland)

**August 30<sup>th</sup>:** Summer Bank Holiday (Wales, England and Northern Ireland)

**November 30<sup>th</sup>:** St Andrew's Day (Scotland)

**December 25<sup>th</sup>:** Christmas

**December 26<sup>th</sup>:** Boxing Day

UK 1/3





# A TYPICAL WORDAY AT A BRITISH OFFICE



The British generally arrive at their office around **8.30 – 8.50**.



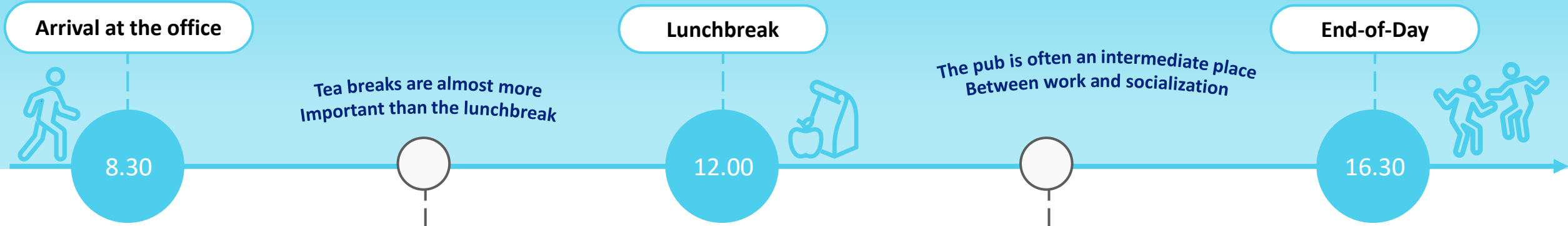
The British generally have a **short lunchbreak** of around **20 minutes**.



They usually **eat alone at their desk** after ordering in or grabbing something nearby.



The British tend to **leave the office** around **16.30 or 17.00**. They often then **accompany their colleagues to a pub** to socialize. Happy hour is a big thing in the UK.



## Meeting Preparation

### Interactions with colleagues: Preferred communication channel

- Make the appointment via e-mail for your meeting a few days in advance, and indicate what its objectives are beforehand. It is best to share a written agenda with all the attendees prior.

## Meeting Etiquette

### Greeting Protocol:

- **Before Covid:** firm handshake (formal), hug, kiss on the cheek or a nod (informal)
- **Now:** nod, fist bump

### Time Management:

- Lateness reflects badly: it is important to arrive on time or slightly early – especially if you are chairing the meeting
- There is generally a few minutes of social conversation at the beginning of a meeting. It is better to talk about impersonal topics (weather) to avoid intruding in the attendees' private life.
- It is unlikely to obtain a final decision in the first meetings, as the British do not like to rush, but everyone leaves with a specific task.

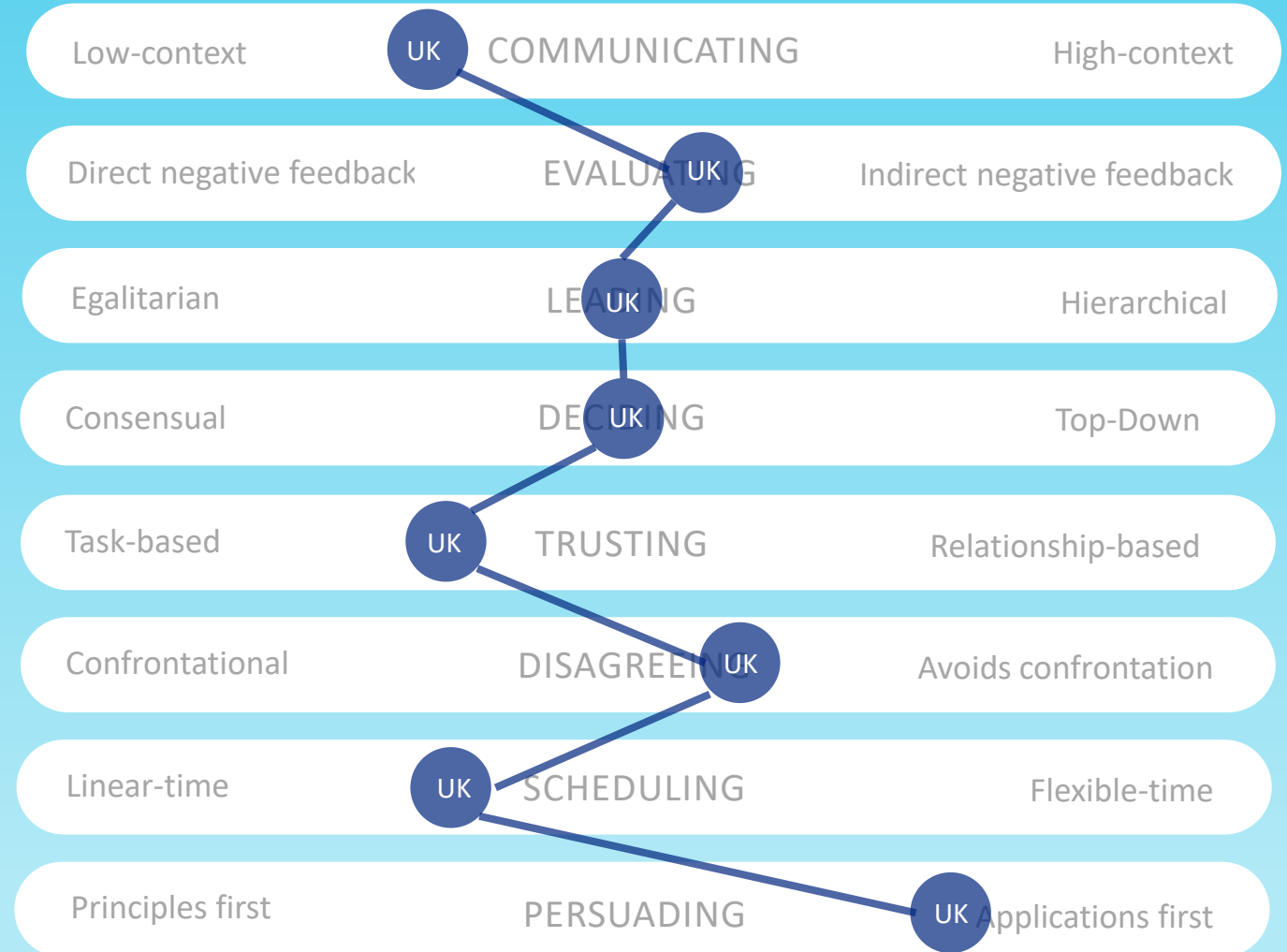
# HOW TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE BRITS

UK 3/3



## DO'S & DON'TS

- Keep conversations polite and friendly, balanced with directness, humour and humility.
- Keep a balance on how direct you are and be careful not to introduce difficult topics bluntly. Understatements are commonly used in the UK.
- Use humour if you want to criticize or ridicule something that is not a wholly serious matter.
- Do not boast or make ostentatious comments that give the impression that you see yourself as superior to others.
- Do not be overly critical in public. The British like to avoid confrontation, so complaining loudly while in their company will likely make them feel uncomfortable.



Source: *The Culture Map*, Erin Meyer  
See p.5/6 for the explanation of each category

# SOME CLICHÉS ABOUT THE DUTCH

“Going Dutch”:  
a well-known  
expression that the  
bill will be split, which  
shows how greedy the  
Dutch usually are

They are punctual and  
frank

The Dutch are  
pretty liberal and  
tolerant:  
euthanasia, legal  
drugs, anything goes

## ECONOMIC DATA

800.095 M€

Annual GDP – 2020

45.870€

GDP Per Capita – 2020

54%

Debt (%GDP) – 2020

4.5%

Unemployment rate – 2020

54.843€

Average salary - 2020

NETHERLANDS 1/3



## PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

January 1<sup>st</sup>: New Year's Day

April 2<sup>nd</sup>: Good Friday

April 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> : Easter Sunday & Easter  
Monday

April 27<sup>th</sup>: King's Day

May 5<sup>th</sup>: Liberation Day

May 13<sup>th</sup>: Ascension Day

May 23<sup>d</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> : Whit Sunday & Whit Monday

December 25<sup>th</sup>: Christmas

December 26<sup>th</sup>: Boxing Day

# A TYPICAL WORDAY AT A DUTCH OFFICE

NETHERLANDS 2/3



The Dutch tend to **arrive at the office between 8.30 and 9.00**. They greet their colleagues “Hi, good morning, how are you?”.



The Dutch tend to have **short lunch breaks – around 20 minutes** – so that they can end the working day earlier.



Most of the time, **they bring their own meal from home**: sandwiches with ham and cheese or cold dishes.



The Dutch usually **leave the office between 17.00 and 17.30**.

## Arrival at the office



8.30

## Lunchbreak



12.00

## End-of-Day



17.00

The Dutch love to debate about everything to find consensus so much that it has its own word: the “Poldermodel”

### Meeting Preparation

#### Interactions with colleagues: Preferred communication channel

- Preferably go and speak directly to your colleagues at the office. If not possible while working remotely, ask in an existing meeting or give them a call or send an email (1).
- To deal with confrontation, it is better to address the problem/proposal directly to the superior colleague, as well as with other colleagues. Non-corporate Dutchies value a good discussion and prefer hearing from someone immediately if they disagree or have other ideas.

(1) This may not be applicable to corporate organizations (less straightforward communication, tend to sugarcoat problems)

### Meeting Etiquette

#### Greeting Protocol:

- **Before Covid:** shaking the right hand, “good morning, how are you?”
- **Now:** hand wave while saying “hi”, elbow bump or fist bump which is called a “box”

#### Time Management:

- Punctuality is valued and appreciated. Online: Either right on time or maximum 5 minutes late. Offline: Best to be on time, but in case of a smaller group with colleagues, 5 minutes travel time may be fine. It’s often okay to start the meeting 5 minutes later so everyone can get a cup of coffee first.
- The first 1-5 minutes are usually dedicated to socialization: more if the meeting is with 1-2 close people, less with larger groups (socializing is then skipped or less personal).
- Extending a meeting is usually not possible because people have back-to-back meetings. Reducing it is usually welcomed: more time to work or get a coffee.

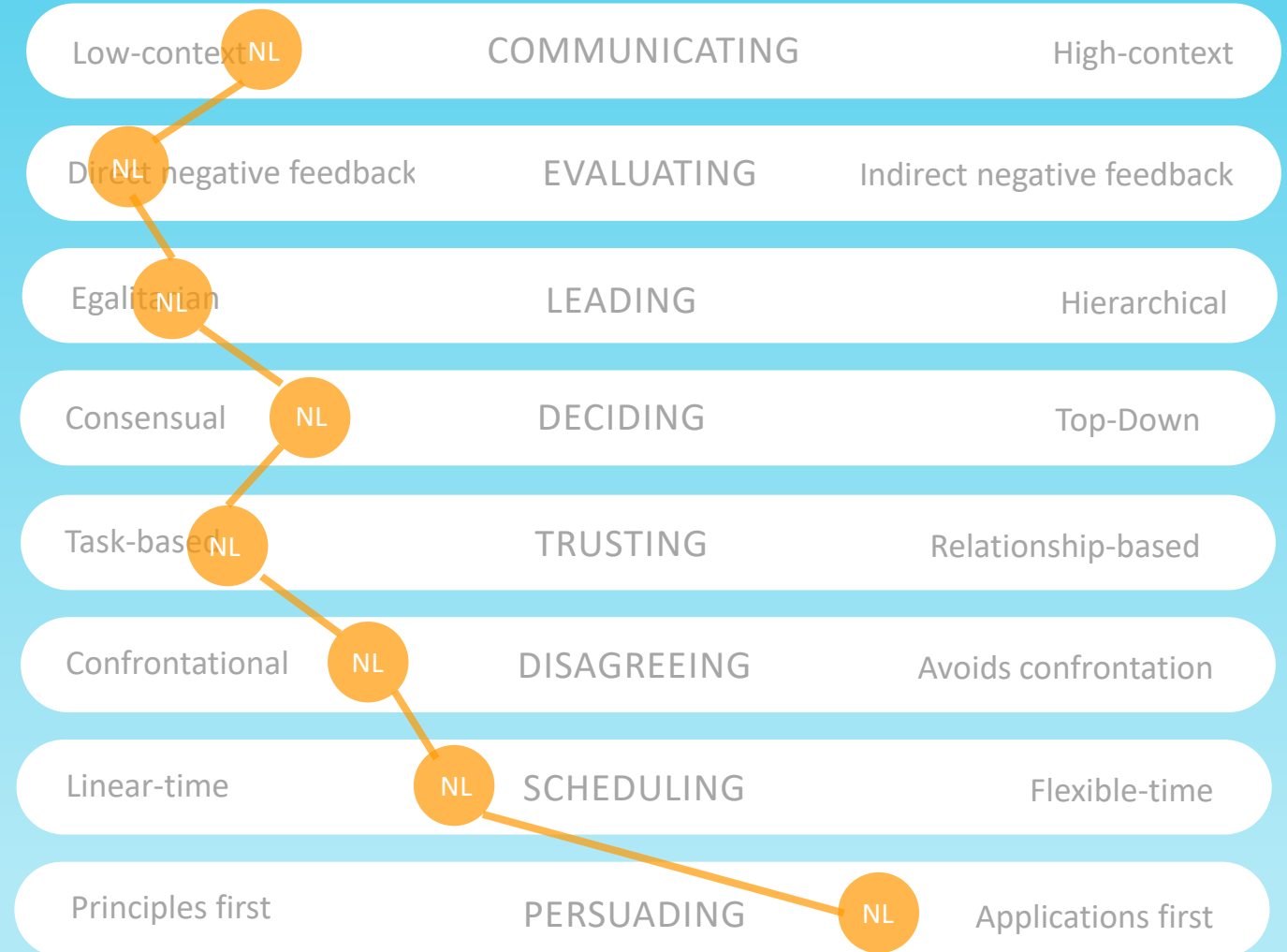
# HOW TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE DUTCH

NETHERLANDS 3/3



## DO'S & DON'TS

- Engage in deep conversations with your Dutch counterpart. The Dutch enjoy discussing and rationally debating topics, so feel free to share your opinion!
- The Dutch are direct, not hierarchical and enjoy a good joke, so feel free to use humour when appropriate. Sarcasm, teasing, challenging a person directly are acceptable kind of humor.
- Avoid displaying intolerance towards minorities or alternative lifestyles. It could irritate your Dutch counterpart as many have a strong sense of tolerance.
- 'Doe maar normaal, dan doe je al gek genoeg' is a Dutch saying literally translated as 'Act normal, you're crazy enough already', meaning: Don't exaggerate and be modest. The Dutch don't like show-offs and are not used to sharing successes or accomplishments openly.
- As a social meeting starter, it's always safe to talk about the weather.



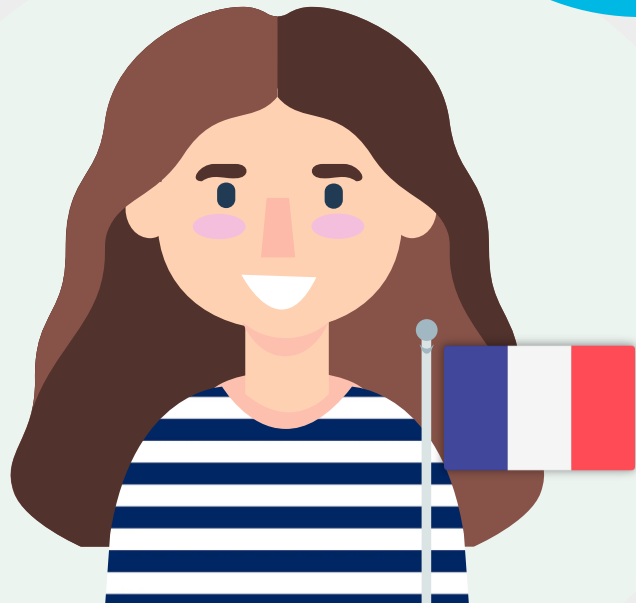
Source: *The Culture Map*, Erin Meyer  
See p.5/6 for the explanation of each category

# SOME CLICHÉS ABOUT THE FRENCH

French missing  
at the office?  
They must be either on  
strike or on vacation

French speak French  
and if you're lucky a bit  
of Frenghish

Complaining is  
probably the French's  
favorite activity



## ECONOMIC DATA

2.302.860 M€

Annual GDP – 2020

33.960€

GDP Per Capita – 2020

115%

Debt (%GDP) – 2020

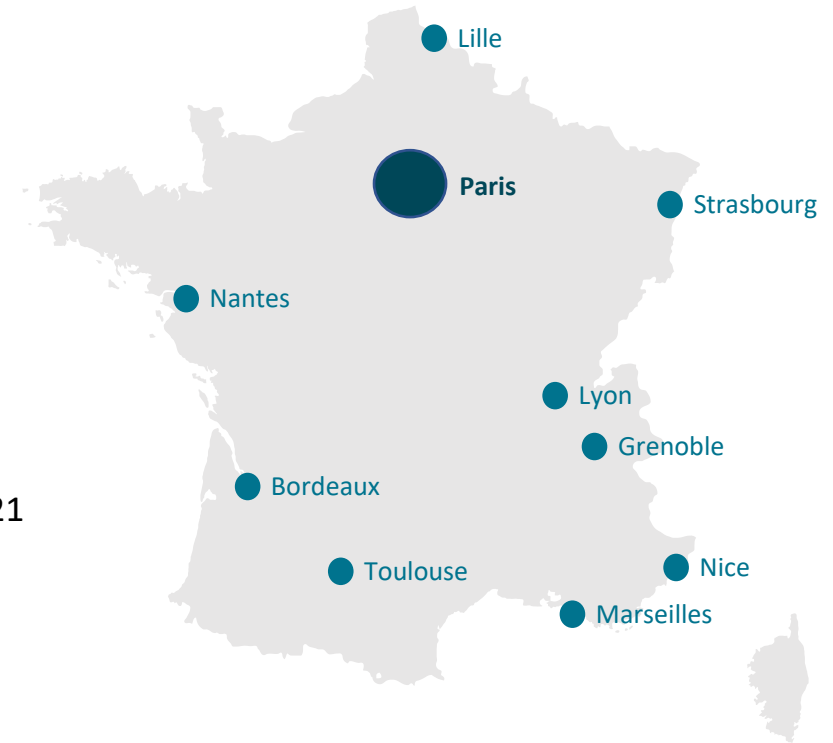
7.6%

Unemployment rate – Oct. 2021

38.118€

Average salary - 2020

FRANCE 1/3



## PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

January 1<sup>st</sup>: New Year's Day

April 18<sup>th</sup>: Easter Monday

May 1<sup>st</sup>: Labor Day

May 8<sup>th</sup>: Victory of the Allies 1945

May 26<sup>th</sup>: Ascension Thursday

June 6<sup>th</sup>: Whit Monday

July 14<sup>th</sup>: National Holiday

August 15<sup>th</sup>: Assumption Day

November 1<sup>st</sup>: All Saints' Day

November 11<sup>th</sup>: Armistice 1918

December 25<sup>th</sup>: Christmas

# A TYPICAL WORDAY AT A FRENCH OFFICE

FRANCE 2/3



Before starting to work, the French **meet at the coffee machine** for a 10-minute catch-up with the colleagues.



The French **lunch between at least one hour between 12.00 and 13.30.**

If they eat at the office, they usually buy a **sandwich at the nearest bakery** or bring their home-cooked tupper. If they eat outside, they go to a “**brasserie**” where the complete French menu can be served in less than one hour  
Later in the afternoon, it is common to do another coffee break.



There is still a **strong culture of presenteeism**: people tend to stay even if they are done with the work before the indicated hour.

In some companies, employees wait for their manager to leave to go home.

## Arrival at the office



9.00

“Un p’tit café?” A little coffee?

## Lunchbreak



12.00

Hard work is admired, but generally the French frown up workaholism

## End-of-Day



18.00

### Meeting Preparation

#### Interactions with colleagues: Preferred communication channel

- It depends on the hierarchical level of the person you are meeting. If they are high-ranked, the appointment scheduling is often handled by the secretary via e-mail or phone (mostly in the public sector, since the private one has become more flexible).
- Between colleagues, it is common to set up a meeting to talk about the project or to write a detailed e-mail about it (rather than spontaneous meetings).

### Meeting Etiquette

#### Greeting Protocol:

- **Before Covid:** shaking hands, “two kisses” - a cheek to cheek gesture in informal situations
- **Now:** hand wave, fist or elbow bump

#### Time Management:

- Punctuality is valued and appreciated in French business culture.
- Meetings typically follow an established format with a detailed agenda.
- Meetings tend to be longer than scheduled because the French love to exchange ideas. However, the online meetings tend to finish on time.
- The deliberation and decision-making processes are quite slow. However, they are usually done outside of the meeting by the top management.

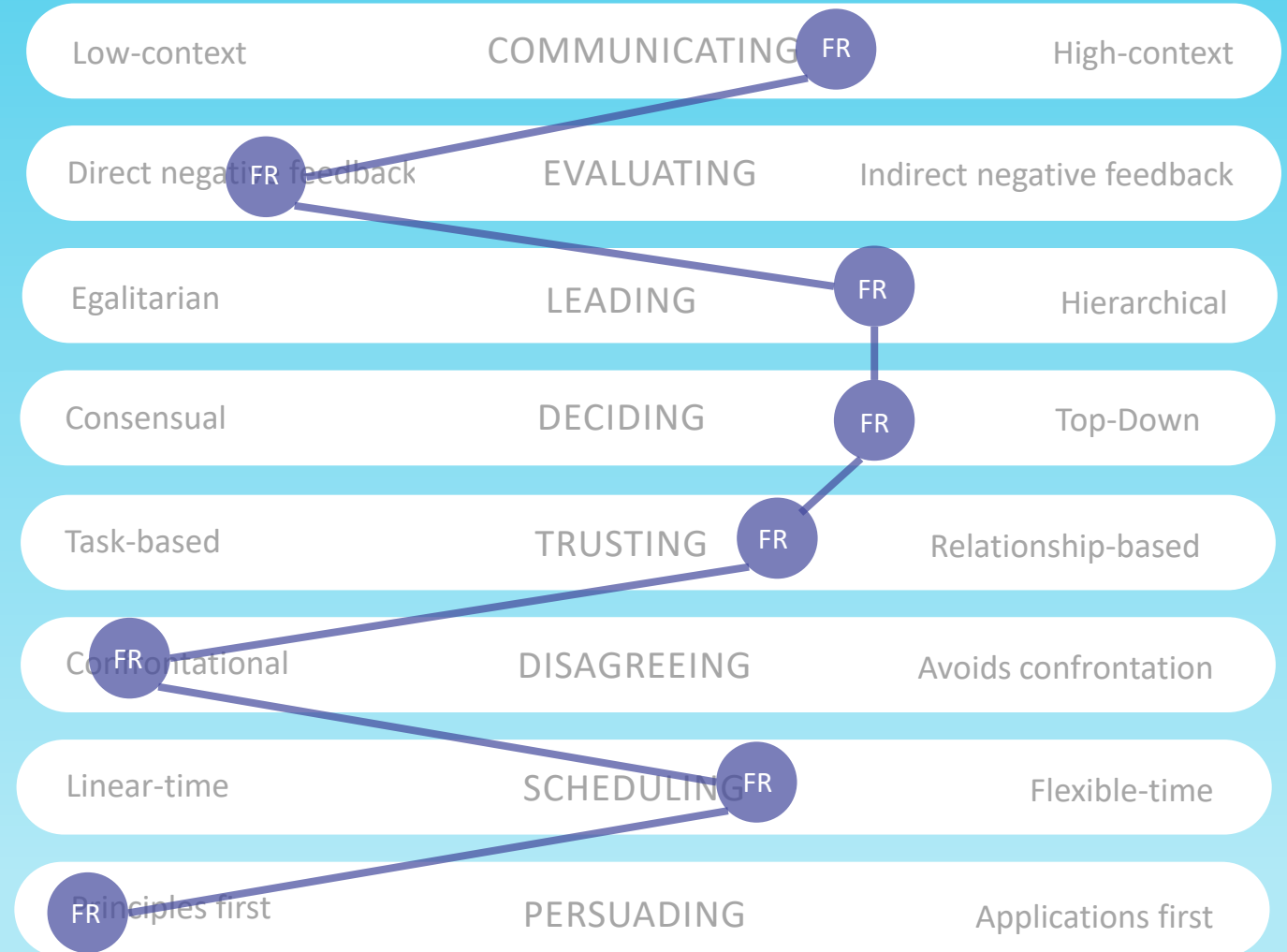
# HOW TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE FRENCH

FRANCE 3/3



## DO'S & DON'TS

- Start the conversation in French if you can – especially if you are in France.
- Observe social etiquette. Address people by their appropriate title and talk to them in a polite way.
- Expect discussion to be well thought out. French love to debate and exchange on different opinions when they are fully formed and refined.
- Avoid asking personal questions relating to one's age, sexual orientation, family or children unless you have a well-established friendship.
- Inquiring about one's salary and finances is taboo. To do so is considered inappropriate, even more in the workplace.



Source: *The Culture Map*, Erin Meyer  
See p.5/6 for the explanation of each category



# SOME CLICHÉS ABOUT THE GERMANS

Germans love to give direct & honest feedback... even if by doing so they seem rude to other nationalities

Punctuality is essential: to be on time is already to be late!

If a German offers you a beer at 16:00, he's not an alcoholic. Just German.



## ECONOMIC DATA

3 300 B€

Annual GDP – 2020

45 k €

GDP Per Capita – 2020

59,8 %

Debt (%GDP) – 2020

5,9%

Unemployment rate – 2021

63 k €

Average salary - 2021

GERMANY 1/3



## PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

January 1<sup>st</sup>: New Year's Day

April 15<sup>th</sup>: Easter Friday

April 18<sup>th</sup>: Easter Monday

May 1<sup>st</sup>: Labor Day

October 3<sup>rd</sup>: Day of Germany Unity

December 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>: Christmas

# A TYPICAL WORDAY AT A GERMAN OFFICE

GERMANY 2/3

*"Arbeit ist Arbeit"*

*"Work is Work"*



Once Germans arrive at the office, they tend to **start working directly without first having an informal moment** with colleagues around a cup of coffee



**Short lunchbreak:** less than an hour, very often at the desk between 12:00 and 1:00 pm



Most of the time Germans eat **takeaways** alone or with colleagues



Usually, Germans leave the office **between 18:00 & 19:00**, and they tend to **go directly home** to spend time with their friends or family

Arrival at the office

Lunchbreak

End-of-Day

8.00

12.00

18.00

Meeting Preparation

Meeting Etiquette

**Interactions with colleagues: Preferred communication channel**

- **Video call** for everything spontaneous
- For bigger topics: **planned video conferences**

**Greeting Protocol:**

- **Before Covid:** handshake & "Guten Tag"
- **Now:** fist bump or wave with the hand & "Guten Tag"

**Time Management:**

- Germans **are genetically encoded with punctuality**: to be on time is already to be late!
- **Germans do not socialize during meetings**. Meetings are structured along a precise topic & no time is made for socialization
- **Meetings end on time or even earlier if possible**: the faster the better

*Feierabend!*

# HOW TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE GERMANS

GERMANY 3/3



## DO'S & DON'TS

- Try to get straight to the point at hand. Germans generally do not need much small talk to warm up the conversation.
- Provide sincere answers to serious questions and avoid introducing humour to lighten a stern conversation.
- Expect a German to be open and honest when they disagree with you. Try not to take personal offence if a German informs you of a mistake you made. They see direct feedback as room for improvement.
- Avoid cancelling on a German at the last minute or being late.
- Avoid clouding what you mean out of modesty or shyness. Directness and clarity is highly valued in the German culture.



Source: *The Culture Map*, Erin Meyer  
See p.5/6 for the explanation of each category

# SOME CLICHÉS ABOUT THE ITALIANS

Italians are warm & welcoming people, very seducing, and they can appear a bit macho.

Your Italian is loud, speaks with his hands and interrupts you? He's not angry: just Italian.

Italians pay high attention to their lifestyle: how they dress and what & where they eat is important



## ECONOMIC DATA

1 650 B€

Annual GDP – 2020

35 k €

GDP Per Capita – 2020

154 %

Debt (%GDP) – 2020

9%

Unemployment rate – 2021

31 k €

Average salary - 2021



## PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

January 1<sup>st</sup>: New Year's Day

January 6<sup>th</sup>: Epiphany

April 4<sup>th</sup>: Easter Sunday

April 5<sup>th</sup>: Easter Monday

April 25<sup>th</sup>: Liberation Day

May 1<sup>st</sup>: Labor Day

June 2<sup>nd</sup>: Republic Day

August 15<sup>th</sup>: Assumption of Mary

November 1<sup>st</sup>: All Saints' Day

December 8<sup>th</sup>: Immaculate Conception

December 25<sup>th</sup>: Christmas Day

December 26<sup>th</sup>: St. Stephen's Day

ITALY 1/3



# A TYPICAL WORDAY AN ITALIAN OFFICE

ITALY 2/3



Italians arrive **between 9:00 and 9:30** at the office. They first share an informal moment with their colleagues around a **cup of (good!) coffee**

## Arrival at the office



9:30



Italians take their lunchbreak **between 13:00 and 14:30**



Italians **pay high attention to what they eat**. They will mostly eat in at a restaurant with their **colleagues**

## Lunchbreak

13.00



Usually, Italians leave the office **around 19:00**, and **they are used to spending time with their family after their workday**

## End-of-Day

19.00



### Meeting Preparation

**Interactions with colleagues: Preferred communication channel**

- **Phone call:** Italians prefer to call or speak directly with their colleagues

### Meeting Etiquette

**Greeting Protocol:**

- **Before Covid:** handshake
- **Now:** hand wave & bump fist

**Time Management**

- Meetings between colleagues **do not necessarily start on time** and can last longer than planned
- Italians like to ask **personal questions** to create a good atmosphere in the meeting and **strengthen the informal relationship**

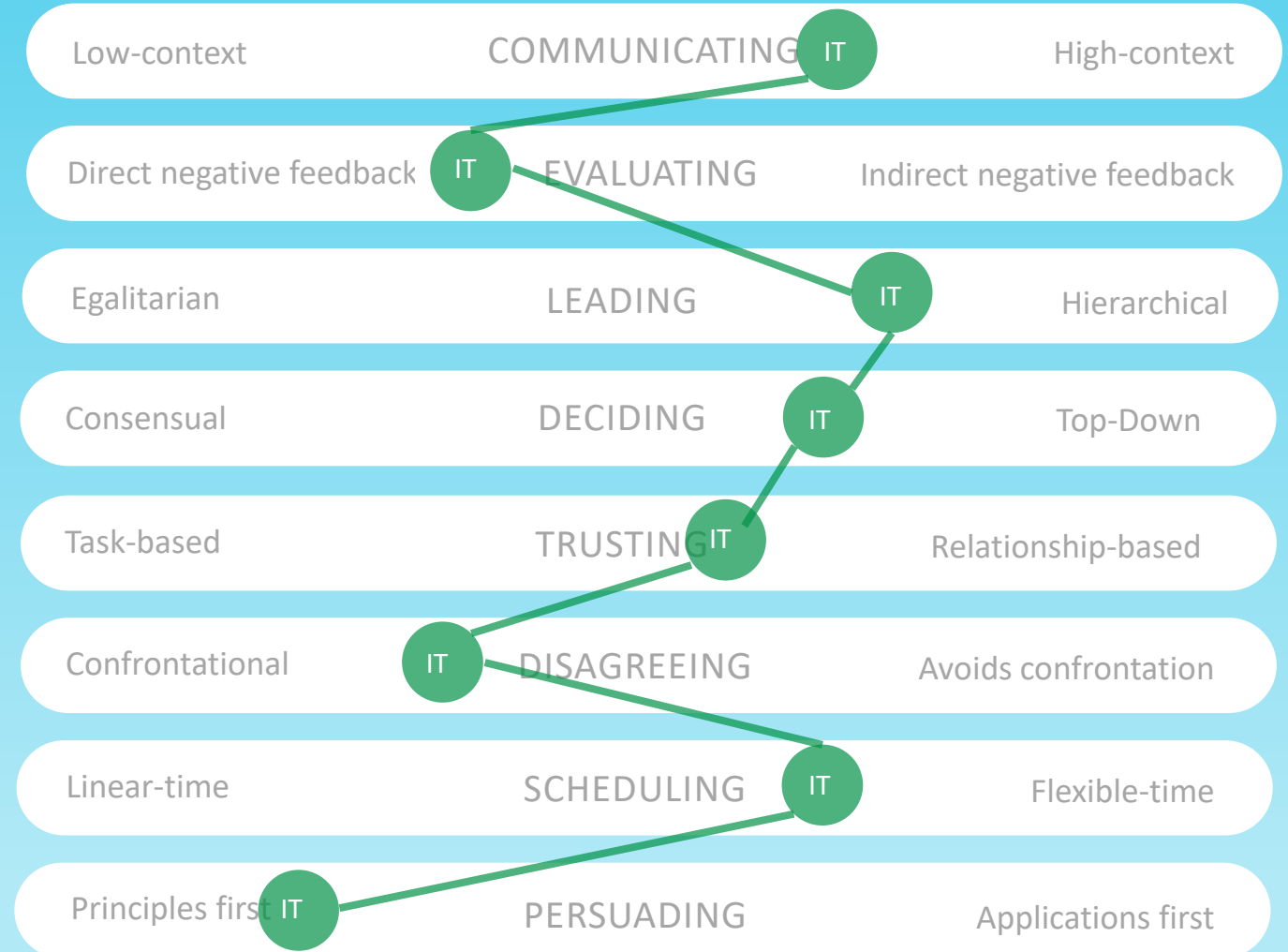
# HOW TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE ITALIANS

ITALY 3/3



## DO'S & DON'TS

- Take the time to enquire about people's lives and well-being before getting to any point at hand. This is essential to fostering good relationships.
- Dress smartly and make sure you present yourself neatly.
- If you need an Italian to perform a task for you, ask for their help on a personal basis rather than emphasising their duty to do it as something they 'owe' you.
- Deliver sensitive news, feedback or information tactfully.



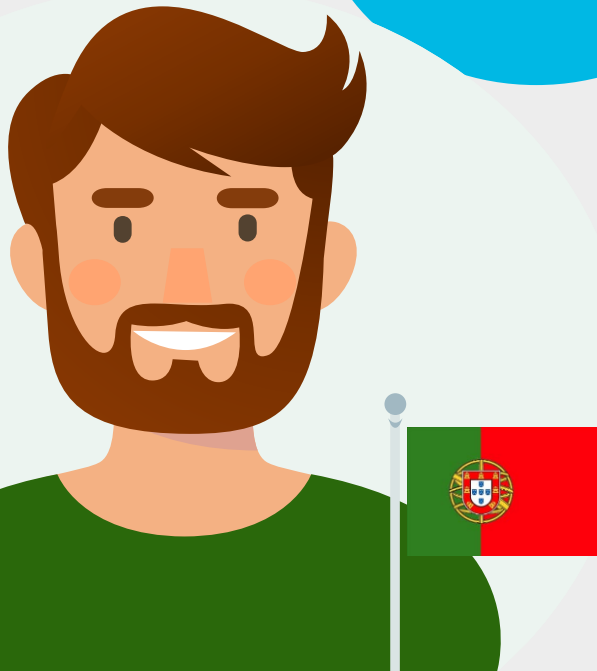
Source: *The Culture Map*, Erin Meyer  
See p.5/6 for the explanation of each category

# SOME CLICHÉS ABOUT THE PORTUGUESE

All negotiations are made at the lunch table... over one of their 365 dishes made of fish!

Portuguese people like to be melancholic & are seen as being averse to change.

Being 15 min late is being on time... This country is not made for German tourists!



## ECONOMIC DATA

200 B€

Annual GDP – 2020

20 k€

GDP Per Capita – 2020

127%

Debt (%GDP) – 2020

7,2%

Unemployment rate – 2021

31 k€

Average salary - 2021



## PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

January 1<sup>st</sup>: New Year's Day

February 28<sup>th</sup>: Carnival

April 25<sup>th</sup>: Liberation Day

May 1<sup>st</sup>: Labor Day

June 10<sup>th</sup>: Portugal Day

August 15<sup>th</sup>: Assumption Day

October 5<sup>th</sup>: Republic Day

November 1<sup>st</sup>: All Saints' Day

December 1<sup>st</sup>: Portuguese Independence

December 8<sup>th</sup>: Immaculate Conception

December 25<sup>th</sup>: Christmas Day

PORTUGAL 1/3



# A TYPICAL WORDAY AT A PORTUGUESE OFFICE

PORTUGAL 2/3



Portuguese arrive **around 9:00** at the office, and start the day with an **informal moment** with their colleagues. Coffee drinking is always a reason to have a break during the day.



Portuguese have their **lunchbreak** between **12:30 and 14:00**



Portuguese **eat mostly with colleagues**



Usually, Portuguese **leave the office** between **18:00 & 19:00**

Arrival at the office

Lunchbreak

End-of-Day

9.00

12.30

18.30

portuguese business culture focuses  
on building relationships

Meeting Preparation

Meeting Etiquette

**Interactions with colleagues: Preferred communication channel**

- **Face-to-face meetings:** Portuguese like to establish a personal relationship with business partners. Hence, face-to-face meetings are preferable over conference calls & emails

**Greeting Protocol:**

- **Before Covid:** firm handshake
- **Now:** hand wave or fist bump

**Time Management**

- **Punctuality is not seen as important.** Do not be offended if the meeting starts a bit late
- **Agendas** during meetings are merely used to introduce or raise a topic: they **do not** serve the purpose of a schedule.
- **Meetings are not about reaching a consensus:** it's a forum to voice one's opinion



# HOW TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE PORTUGUESE



## DO'S & DON'TS

- Consider how you dress & present yourself. Portuguese tend to dress modestly with a sense of quality & elegance.
- It is important to speak respectfully & politely.
- Do not boast about yourself or exaggerate your achievements, status or wealth. A sense of modesty is appreciated in Portugal.
- The Portuguese are conservative, so it is best to avoid very personal conversations unless you have a close relationship with the other person.



Source: *The Culture Map*, Erin Meyer  
See p.5/6 for the explanation of each category

# SOME CLICHÉS ABOUT THE SPANIARDS

They are bleary-eyed the days following a “El Clásico” football match or a final of Masterchef

The office is usually empty at 11 am: breakfast time at the nearest cafeteria!

The Spaniards are pretty noisy and raise their voices when talking on the phone or gossiping at the next desk



## ECONOMIC DATA

1.121.948 M€

Annual GDP – 2020

23.690€

GDP Per Capita – 2020

120%

Debt (%GDP) – 2020

14.6%

Unemployment rate – Sept. 2021

26.934€

Average salary - 2020

SPAIN 1/3



## PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

January 1<sup>st</sup>: New Year's Day

January 6<sup>th</sup>: Epiphany of the Lord

April 15<sup>th</sup>: Good Friday

August 15<sup>th</sup>: Assumption of the Virgin Mary

October 12<sup>th</sup>: Spanish National Holiday

November 1<sup>st</sup>: All Saints Day


December 6<sup>th</sup>: Day of the Spanish Constitution



December 8<sup>th</sup>: Immaculate Conception Day


+ 4 replaceable public holidays (dates vary depending on the Comunidades Autónomas)

# A TYPICAL WORDAY AT A SPANISH OFFICE

SPAIN 2/3

 Once Spaniards arrive to the office, they will say “Buenos días” and exchange a few words to the colleagues they meet on the way to their desk.  
They **get to work quickly** because the real morning break arrives around 11.00.

 Spaniards have the culture of **long and proper lunches**. They take at least **one hour between 14.00 to 16.00**.  
 At a restaurant, with clients or colleagues, they eat a “Menú del día”. At the office, **tuppers** filled with dishes – preferably home-cooked.

 After the office, Spaniards usually **go outside for their personal activities** (grab a drink with some friends, sport). They socialize until late in the evening.

## Arrival at the office

*Breakfast break at the nearest cafeteria for a coffee with a tostada or a bocadillo around 11.00*

## Lunchbreak

## End-of-Day

9.00

14.00

18.30

### Meeting Preparation

#### Interactions with colleagues: Preferred communication channel

- It depends a lot on the specific company culture: some companies only send formal emails, others discuss things in coffee workshops etc.
- However, Spaniards tend to solve issues faster and better over less formal communication channels such as phone calls, Whatsapp or videocalls.

### Meeting Etiquette

#### Greeting Protocol:

- **Before Covid:** shaking hands, “two kisses” - a cheek to cheek gesture in informal situations
- **Now:** fist or elbow bump

#### Time Management:

- Up to a 5-minute delay is acceptable. More would be considered unpolite, as well as arriving a lot earlier than scheduled (e.g. to a virtual meeting).
- A couple of minutes are dedicated to small talk – a more straight-forward approach may be perceived a bit aggressive.
- Now, Spaniards often have many booked virtual meetings and will not extend the duration of a call; instead, they will find another slot in order to resume what was being discussed. It is frequent not to reach all the objectives of a call or meeting in the first meeting.

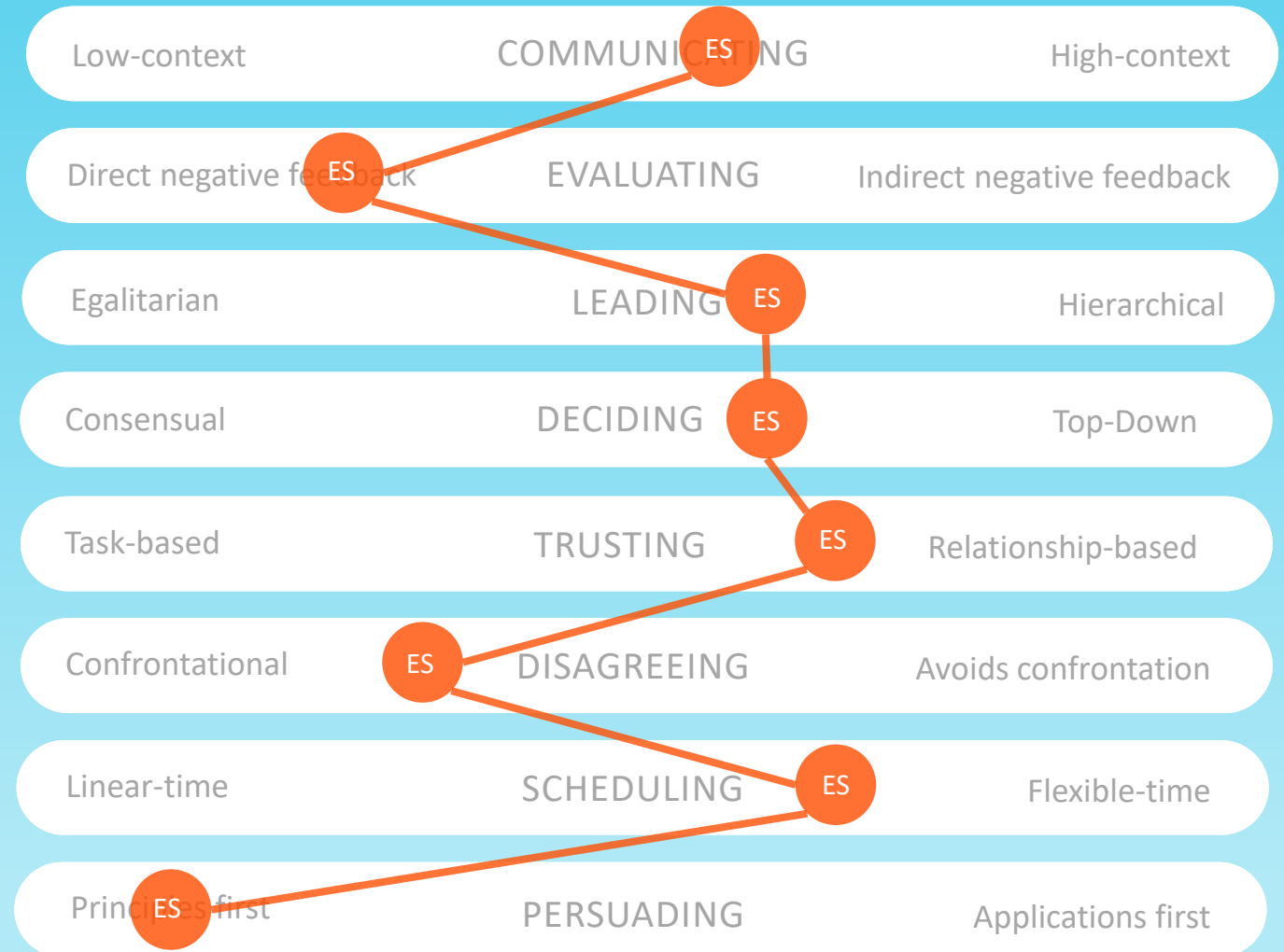
# HOW TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE SPANIARDS

SPAIN 3/3



## DO'S & DON'TS

- Take the time to engage in some small talk when meeting people (e.g. ask where in Spain your counterpart is from).
- Stay a bit longer to talk after a meal (la sobremesa) to form closer bonds.
- Speak up when you have something to say. Spaniards generally expect that people will take the initiative to interject.
- Keep in mind the variety of cultures in Spain. The northern areas (e.g. Basque country, Aragón, Cataluña) tend to be more blunt or direct (even the words used can be considered insulting by people from other regions), whereas the southern areas (Andalucía, Canary Islands...) are usually softer, more polite, more social, but also less straightforward.



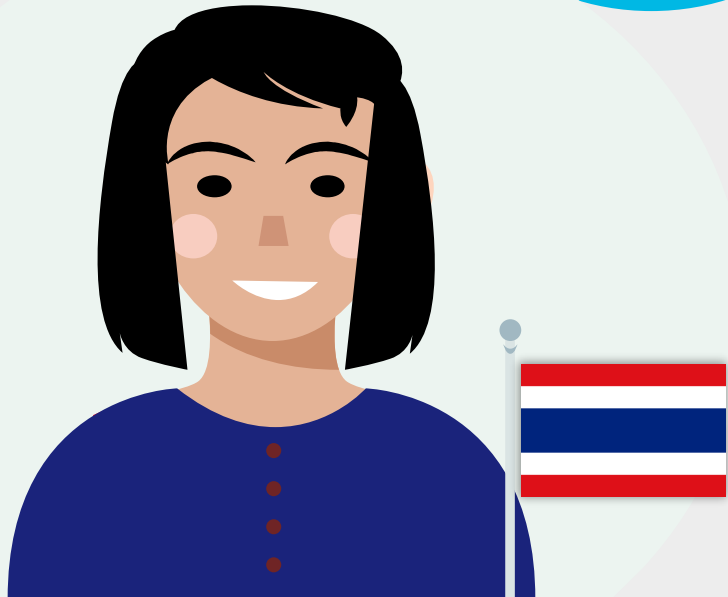
Source: *The Culture Map*, Erin Meyer  
See p.5/6 for the explanation of each category

# SOME CLICHÉS ABOUT THE THAIS

Thais smile all the time  
and will do everything to  
maintain harmony

Thai people love their  
food and can have it 6  
times a day, or more!

Thais call everybody  
aunt or uncle, even if  
you are not family  
related



## ECONOMIC DATA

501 B\$

Annual GDP – 2020

6 k \$

GDP Per Capita – 2020

90,5 %

Debt (%GDP) – 2020

1,96 %

Unemployment rate – 2021

8,5 k\$

Average salary - 2021



## PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

**January 1<sup>st</sup>:** New Year's Day

**February 12<sup>th</sup>:** Chinese New Year

**February 26<sup>th</sup>:** Makha Bucha

**April 6<sup>th</sup>:** Chakri Day

**April 12<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup>:** Songkran Holiday

**May 3<sup>rd</sup>:** Labour Day

**May 26<sup>th</sup>:** Visakha Bucha Day

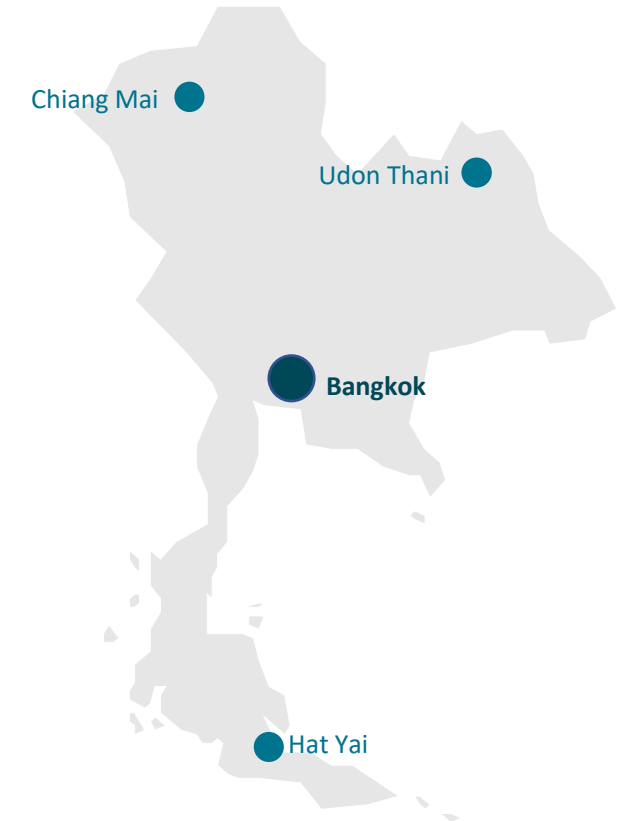
**July 28<sup>th</sup>:** H:M: King's Birthday

**October 13<sup>th</sup>:** The Passing of King Bhumibol

**December 10<sup>th</sup>:** Thailand Constitution Day

**December 31<sup>st</sup>:** New Year's Eve

THAI 1/3



# A TYPICAL WORDAY AT A THAI OFFICE

THAI 2/3



Thais arrive between **8:30 & 9:00** at the office

## Arrival at the office



9:00



Thais tend to eat **around midday**



They eat most of the time **takeaway** in the streets **with their colleagues**

## Lunchbreak

12.00



Usually, Thais leave the office between **18:00 & 19:00**

They like to **spend time with colleagues** since the company is seen as being the **second family of the employee**

## End-of-Day

19:00



### Meeting Preparation

#### Interactions with colleagues: Preferred communication channel

- Thais like small talks at the pantry around some snacks, it is a good way to pass along messages
- Other than this, emails and messaging app like Line are popular communication tools, all day long

*Business relations are based on trust.  
It is normal for Thais to spend time with  
their colleagues to create a trusted relationship*

### Meeting Etiquette

#### Greeting Protocol:

- **Before Covid & Now: wai**, where you press your hands together as if you're praying, & then slightly bow so that your thumbs touch your chin & your fingertips reach your forehead. This is a formal salutation and colleagues don't Wai each other, just greet casually, with no physical interactions

#### Time Management

- **Punctuality is valued**: it is expected to arrive on time at meetings
- But **meetings may not always start on time** and are rarely timed – they tend to run overtime, as **procedure is considered more important than content**

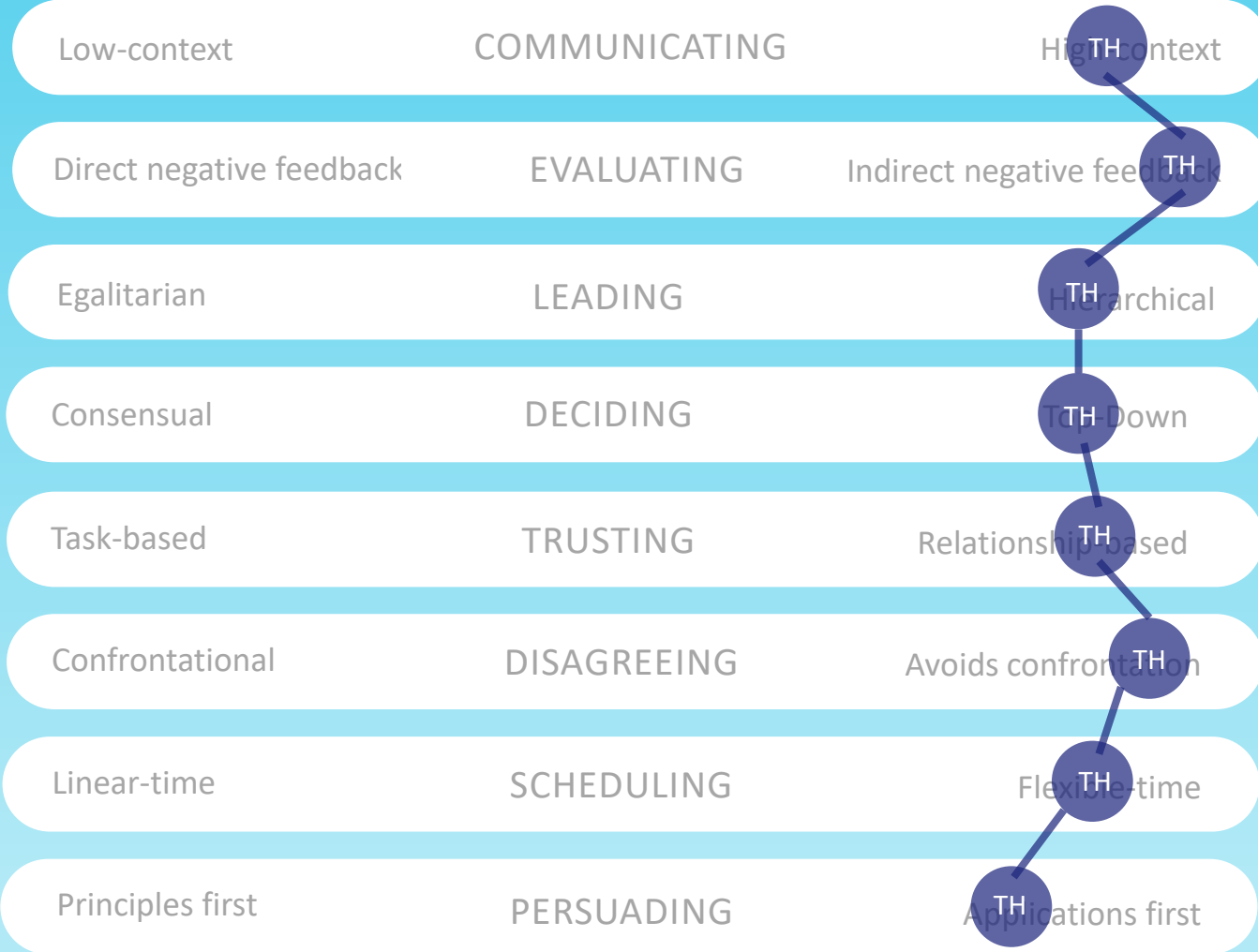
*Small talks are important in the Thais  
business culture*

# HOW TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE THAIS



## DO'S & DON'TS

- Avoid directly criticizing people.
- Show gratitude through favors and good deeds.
- Do not defame the King or Royal family: it may offend your Thai counterpart.
- Remain cool, calm and collected when interacting with Thais: over heated emotions and their expressions are thought to lead to a loss of face in Thailand.



Source: The Culture Map, Erin Meyer  
See p.5/6 for the explanation of each category



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