

Cultural diversity in business

Living between Croatia, Germany and Poland

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Croatia / demographic facts



Population: 4.1 million (2017)

Growth: - 4.0%

Death rate > Birth Rate (12.9/8.9)

Life expectancy: 78 Years

Age structure : < 15 years 15%, >65 years 17%

160.000 students enroll the university /40.000 graduates

Urbanization rate: 59%, University educated citizens 30%

Labor market in Croatia; Millennials on the Market

Croatia – a lot of persons go to university and take different diplomas /certificates (theoretical knowledge). They enter the labor market around the age of 23-24. Millennials don't have technical experience and struggle with self confidence in their 20-ies...

Germany – millennials after high school travel and experiment. They start with the studies round the age of 20, work parallel while studying and finish the university round 26-27. Many millennials decide to do technical education (“Ausbildung”). It is quite common that managers in Germany (especially in medium sized companies) did not go to university (practical know how is preferred to theory). Millennials are very assertive and self confident, knowing what they want and pursuing their dreams.



Labor market in Croatia / Business etiquette

Basic tips to follow when doing business in Croatia:

- Relaxed attitude to business, with high degree of professionalism
- Friendly and lively, but it need time to feel comfortable with you
- Greetings – with a firm handshake and direct eye contact

(weak handshake – signal of weakness, avoiding direct eye contact – signal of hiding something)

- Remain standing until you are invited to sit down
- Initial meetings seen as introductions with a middle manager, rather than the actual decision maker
- Punctuality is expected and taken extremely seriously
- Expect some small talk and getting-to-know-you conversation before business is discussed
- Business is conducted slowly. You will have to be patient and not appear ruffled by the strict adherence to protocol
- Companies tend to have a hierarchical structure, with decision-making power at the top

- Networking
- Foreign Languages /Openness towards other cultures
- Service orientation



How to apply for the Job in Germany

Strict RULES IN FORMALIZED application “Bewertungs Mappe”

Prescribed structure in set of documents:

- Application letter for specific position
- Motivation letter
- CV
- Cover letter with
- Profile photo and
- Competency profile
- Your successes / major wins
- Recommendation letters
- Mail / or Post (5 seconds rule)
- „Quersteiger“ vs „Specialist“

- Job hunters /consultants rule the market
- Average time to switch between managing positions is 7 months onwards
- Hidden labor market in Germany (reportedly there are still 2 million vacancies on German labor market)
- 80/20 percent rule applies // 80percent of candidates apply for the most visible job positions (20 percent), while the rest 80 percent of the job market remains undiscovered
- German labor market FOCUSES ON SPECIALIST: relative difficult to change between different career parts, especially in big corporations





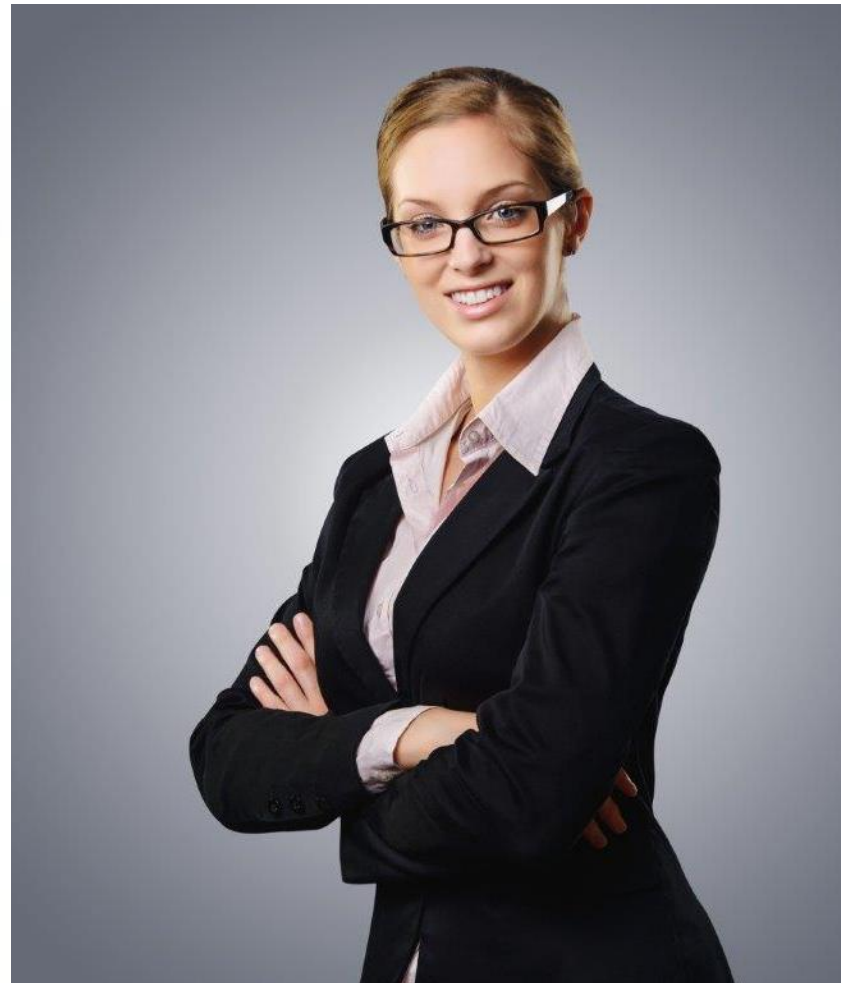
Preferred leadership style in Germany



German characteristics is the **MONOCHROME / LINEAR** understanding of time:

- Punctuality
- Keeping the deadlines
- Efficiency and linear execution of the tasks
- Orientation on the exact time **PLAN** and **STRUCTURES**
- Focus on **GOALS** and **TASKS**
- Keeping personal distance to enable Professionalism
- Strict separation business from private life
- Direct communication, including criticism
- You see, what you get
- Reliability and predictability
- Disadvantage: missing flexibility /especially in dealing with problems and unexpected events

Business woman in Poland and Germany

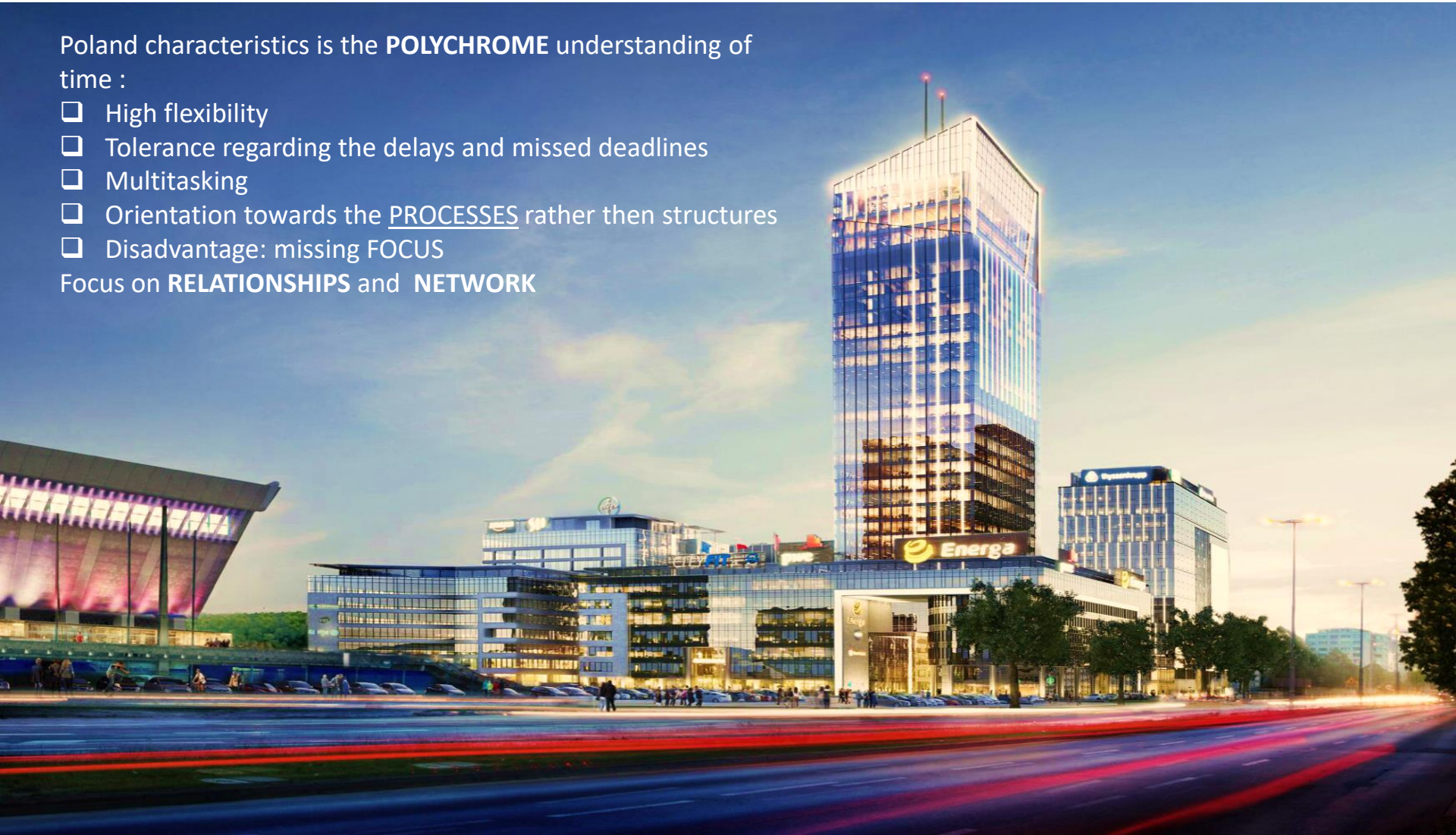


Leadership style in Poland

Poland characteristics is the **POLYCHROME** understanding of time :

- High flexibility
- Tolerance regarding the delays and missed deadlines
- Multitasking
- Orientation towards the PROCESSES rather than structures
- Disadvantage: missing FOCUS

Focus on **RELATIONSHIPS** and **NETWORK**



What I learned about the polish Business Etiquette?

MASTER THE IMPROVISATION INSTEAD OF TIMELY PLANNING

- General conviction that end result is difficult to foresee – so why plan?
- Multitask!
- Consequence / relative late addressing of main problems ?!

COMMUNICATE INDIRECTLY “READ BETWEEN THE LINES”

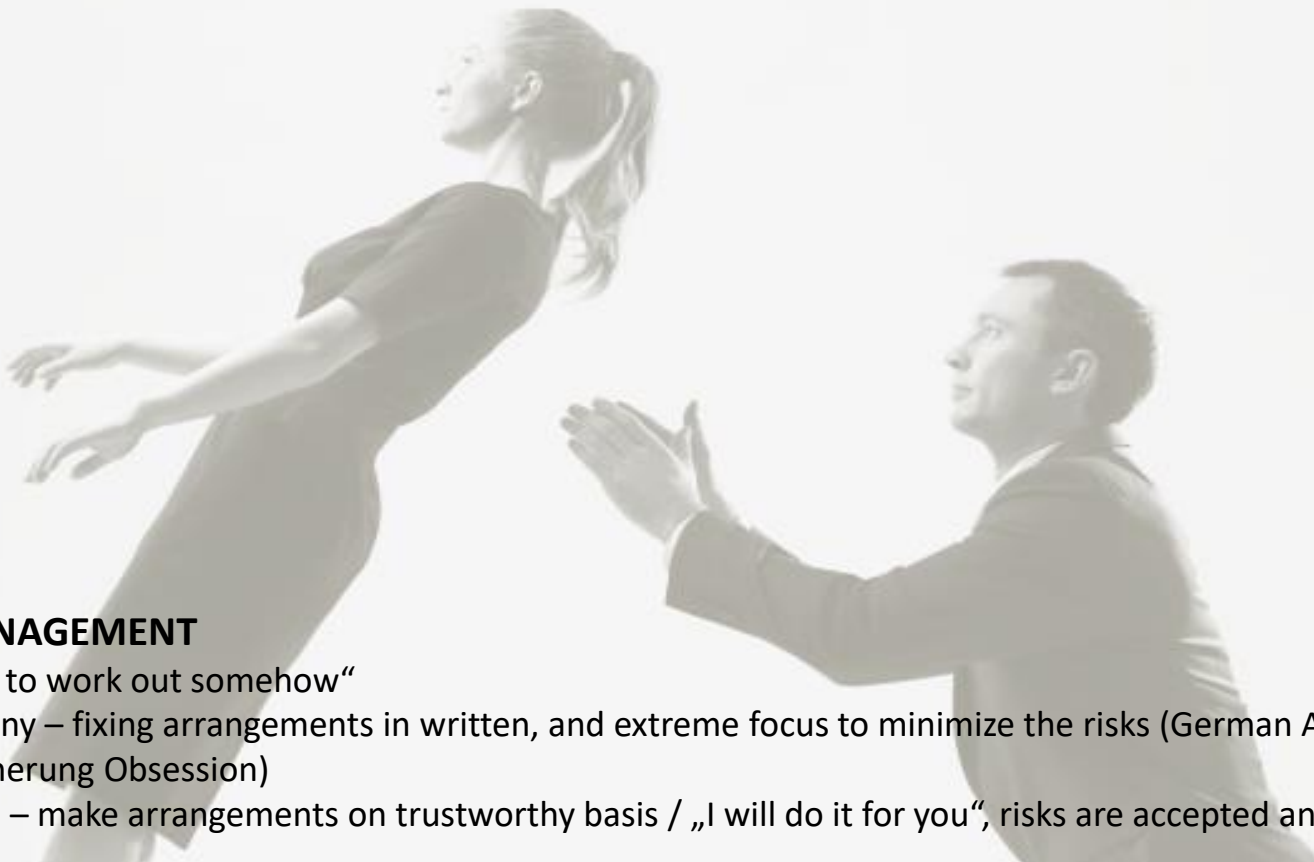
- I should avoid direct communication which is at times considered rude and offensive
- Criticism might jeopardize the good atmosphere and relationships (Feedback culture?)



What I learned about the polish Business Etiquette?

ORIENTATION ON SHORT TERM ACHIEVEMENTS

- ❑ Millennials Mindset: If the milestone can not be reached in SHORT TIME, I should immediate change the job – the „grasshoppers“ who often jump between jobs
- ❑ IMPROVISATION and creativity in just in time / vs. Equally appropriated working tempo over time



RISK MANAGEMENT

„it is going to work out somehow“

- ❑ Germany – fixing arrangements in written, and extreme focus to minimize the risks (German Angst and Versicherung Obsession)
- ❑ Poland – make arrangements on trustworthy basis / „I will do it for you“, risks are accepted and tolerated

What I learned about the polish Business Etiquette?

HIERARCHY and COMMULATION OF POWER ON THE “TOP”

- High power distance
- Employees in Poland not used to make decisions and take the responsibility
- No public disagreements with bosses/ no participation in open debates
- “Information brings Power” - missing transparency in daily comm. /working in silos
- Using INFORMAL CHANNELS to get the information – personal contact more important
- Germany / mail written communication is preferred to verbal – leaves time to plan and prepare better



What I learned about the polish Business Etiquette?

MIXING PRIVATE WITH BUSINESS / RELATIONSHIPS AND EMOTIONS

- Personally **loyalty** plays at most important role in building the business
- Criticism at work will be taken personally
- Management decisions need to be explained with much diplomacy not as hard facts
- Personal honor and values play important role
- Assertiveness which is highly appreciated in Germany / replaced with “modesty” and empathy in Poland
- Expression of feelings, even in written correspondence, is very welcomed in Poland
- Quite common is to make intuitive business moves instead of factual, ratio based decisions



ENJOYING MY TIME IN POLAND

FIRST IMPRESSIONS WHICH LAST...

- Young labor market / big potential of Creativity
- Positive energy and openness to change
- Connection to the Baltics see
- National diversity / expats community in Gdansk
- OBC with perfection in details, love for beauty and design
- Personal connection and hospitality
- Enthusiasm, hard work and ambition
- Focus on the family and social awareness
- Work life balance and well-being

