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83% of Small to Mid-Size U.S. Firms Say Expansion Overseas is #1 Priority **The Protocol School of Washington® Offers Cross-Cultural Tips During 8th** **Annual “National Protocol Officer Week” March 23 – March 29, 2014**

New York City, NY March 2014 – A 2013 CFO Research survey* found that (to achieve growth) eighty-three percent of small to mid-size U.S. businesses list overseas expansion as their top priority. Ninety-five percent of those polled report plans to have at least two international clients in the next three years. “Whether you work for a government or in the private sector, as more Americans work globally, learning the customs of other cultures is important because it shows respect,” says Pamela Eyring, owner & president of **The Protocol School of Washington®**, PSOW www.pslow.edu. Eyring adds: “respect is the universal common denominator - it’s the foundation of all good, lasting relationships.” PSOW, global leader in international protocol and business etiquette training since 1988, annually spotlights the work of business men and women, protocol officers, event and meeting planners, communications experts, and all those working cross-culturally by sponsoring **National Protocol Officers Week**, held annually the last week of March.

The role of a protocol officer is to foster understanding and cooperation between individuals, corporations, organizations and foreign bodies,” explains Eyring. “That requires understanding not only the principals under which other cultures operate, but also understanding how our own customs and culture might be perceived, or perhaps, misperceived.” Misperceptions, Eyring notes, have the potential to be professionally and, in some instances, financially damaging to the individual and the organization they represent.

By adhering to the rules of protocol, including those detailed below, protocol officers and others trained in cross-cultural awareness, ensure that a healthy and respectful environment for exchange is developed and maintained.

The Protocol of Cross-Cultural Awareness

As a general rule, those appointed by the President of the United States, and anyone elected to public office, are entitled to be addressed as *The Honorable* for life. Many nations address their officials as *The Honorable* while others use *Your Excellency*.

Avoid giving alcohol as an official gift until you know the culture: In most (Muslim) countries it's not acceptable while in some countries (like Argentina) it's appreciated because of alcohol's high tax.

Be formal when addressing someone: Use an honorific (such as Mr., Ms., Mrs., or Dr.) with a person's name when meeting them for the first time to show respect. Be observant for countries (like China) that use the surname first.

Watch your body language: Did you know a simple act, like using one's left hand instead of the right, is considered offensive in India? Avoid gestures like the "OK" signal, beckoning someone to come to you with your hand upward, and crossing legs, which show the bottom of your foot or shoe.

Know your communication style: In the USA and Germany, communication is formal, direct and at times blunt. In Japan and United Arab Emirates, communication styles are less direct and status oriented. Brazilians are *informal*. Don't be surprised if you're interrupted while speaking in a meeting or making a presentation. Be sure to gently word your feedback in order not to embarrass someone.

The British, on the other hand, are sticklers for protocol. Like in the U.S., socially you introduce a younger person to an older person and in business a person of lesser authority to a person of higher authority. British meetings are also very formal with a clearly defined purpose and agenda.

"Even celebrities and politicians make faux pas - and they have a team of expert advisors," says Eyring who suggests visiting <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html> for a quick guide to country information *before* interacting with internationals.

PSOW was founded in 1988 by Ms. Dorothea Johnson (former protocol advisor to The Joint Military Attaché School, Washington, D.C.) because she saw a need for business etiquette training based on an expanding global economy that required cultural and social skills for conducting business. **PSOW**, which has trained nearly 4,000 people in 68 countries, is the first

and only nationally-accredited business etiquette, image, and international protocol school in the country and is renowned for its expert trainers who hail from The White House, the Disney Institute, The Hague, the military, international academia, and corporate America. Students travel to **PSOW** courses in Washington, D.C. and the United Arab Emirates from countries as far away as Bulgaria, China, the United Kingdom, Ghana, India, Switzerland, and the Caribbean.

www.facebook.com/TheProtocolSchoolofWashington
info@psow.edu | www.psow.edu | Toll Free 877.766.3757

* CFO Research, a global research firm reaching over 600,000 corporate executives, has partnered with IBM, American Express, Google and Bloomberg among others.