

**1. I would like to know if Chileans and Argentines are more oriented to be less indirect and circular in their interaction approach than other Latin American people, such as Brazilian and Mexican?**

Absolutely yes! Less indirect = more direct. Chileans are known for being the “British of South America,” witty, and with a dry sense of humor, but also more inclined to say things directly – yet not to the same degree as the Americans. Argentines have such a heavy influx of German immigrants that their communication style is also more direct and less circular.

**2. Is speaking English with other American colleagues in front of native Spanish speakers considered rude in most parts of Latin America?**

No, it is not considered rude, but it depends on the context. If you know that a person does not understand what you are saying, then he/she may think you are purposely excluding them or hiding information from them. Excuse yourself and apologize that while you are learning their language and understand that you are in their country, it is easier to speak your native language to another person w/ the same native language when you need to get a specific point across.

**3. What is the typical cultural view on holidays in Latin American countries? – (Most companies post-holiday requirements and I am interested in knowing what is the cultural perspective of taking those days off.)**

This is something they all share in common: Life is to be enjoyed. Americans don't have ENOUGH holidays. The view is: Go spend time w/ your family and friends.

**4. What is the difference between interacting with business executives and government officials in Mexico?**

Yes. In Mexico, government officials may not adhere to what the President wants, but set up a power structure within their own principalities. Think of mini-triangles within one large one. Business executives tend to focus on the CEO objectives. Think of a giant isosceles triangle to represent the organigram.

**5. Many authors say that Brazilian culture is collective, is this true?**

Yes, Brazilians are most definitively collectivistic /group-oriented. I mentioned on the Individualism dimension of the Cultural Orientations Indicator wheel in the presentation that a Brazilian wondered why her American boss would give her individual credit when she was expecting credit to be given to the entire marketing team, despite being made aware that the wonderful idea came from her.

## **6. How do you entice someone in Latin America to accept a job?**

Title is important, because you are dealing with a status-oriented culture. Explain in detail the benefits involved for him/her and his/her family. Be aware that most Latin Americans expect double the pay for December, as an EOY bonus, plus roughly 4 weeks of Personal Time Off (PTO).

## **7. How can you tell when a person is telling the truth, as opposed to telling you what they think you want to hear?**

This requires a lot of follow-up and first-hand supervision. I would ask a lot of “process” questions, such as, “Who will be involved? What is your projected timeline? What possible obstacles do you foresee?” etc.

## **8. Any highlights on body language idiosyncrasies.**

For Brazil, the okay hand signal that is used in the USA is considered the middle finger there. Brazilians are also extremely intense with their eye contact and proximity (known in the field as oculosics and proxemics), so non-Brazilians may think that the Brazilian is making a sexual overture, which is not the case.

For Argentina, the flicking of the fingers from under the chin forward is a signal for “I don’t know” – which in the USA, this may signal a vulgar kiss off.

## **9. Can you explain the relationship involving ethics in Brazil and Brazilian “jeitinho”?**

*Jeitinho* is so ingrained into the culture, that it is NOT considered an ethical issue. The Bribery Act has fined large corporations in the USA for participating in this practice. A *jeito* is granted by someone who is not a personal acquaintance and must include a tip or pay-off.

## **10. Some countries in Latin America have shown that they are progressive in sexual orientation issues. That is a bit surprising knowing the influence religion has in society. How are those issues reconciled?**

Yes, Argentina is the first Latin American country to pass same-sex marriage. Two variables are considered to be key: importance of religion and religious group participation. (Several scholars have found that disapproval of homosexual rights is highest among individuals with strong religious identities and who attend religious services frequently).

Yet same-sex civil unions, which give homosexual couples some of the rights enjoyed by heterosexual ones (including social security inheritance and joint ownership of property, but excluding adoption rights), are legal in Uruguay (2008), Ecuador (2008), Colombia (2009), Brazil (since 2004), and in a few Mexican (like the D.F, i.e. Mexico City) and Venezuelan states.

Here is an interesting chart:

Average Support for Same-Sex Marriage in the Americas, 2010

