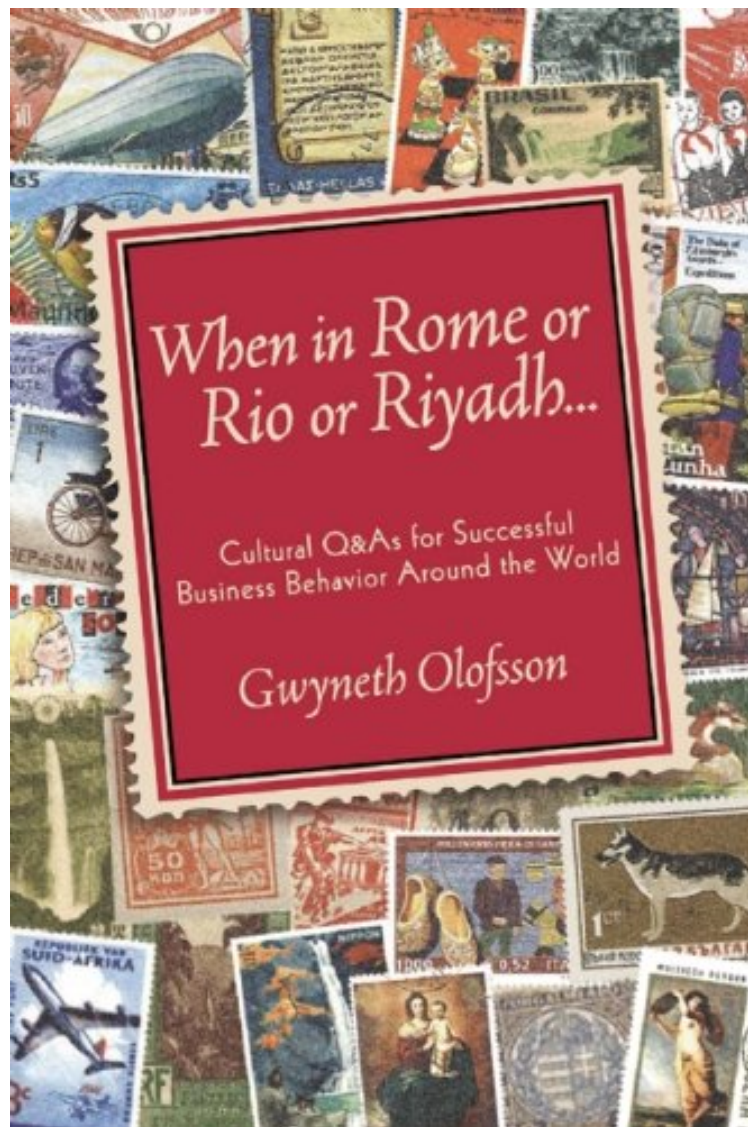


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## When in Rome or Rio or Riyadh...: Cultural Q As for Successful Business Behavior Around the World

Gwyneth Olofsson

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**Gwyneth Olofsson : When in Rome or Rio or Riyadh...: Cultural Q As for Successful Business Behavior Around the World** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised When in Rome or Rio or Riyadh...: Cultural Q As for Successful Business Behavior Around the World:

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anyone interested in working or otherwise functioning in a different culture or cultures.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Anayansigood working conditions. arrived as promised0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Ask GwynethBy George F. SimonsAs a Yank, I faced the rigors of my younger years with regular newspaper counsel from Anne Landers and Miss Manners, and later managed my bachelor household on advice from "Ask Heloise" (yes, those stubborn stains do come out!). Now Gwyneth Olofsson, a UK-born and Sweden-adopted consultant and writer has appropriated this advice columnist's medium for dishing out intercultural tips. When in Rome or Rio or Riyadh... collects close to two hundred of questions from and her responses to those who have sought her advice over the years. Like the columnists of renown, she writes with accuracy, economy, and pungency, including playful jabs at our ethnocentricity and, where merited and occasional twist of the blade.Olofsson also produces something that the columnists, even in their published collections, do not, a clear challenge to find out more for oneself. One of the chief risks in providing cultural specific information is how to inform without appearing to give pat answers or promote stereotypes. Of course, once information is set free, its use cannot be controlled. However, the author can, and Olofsson does provide both structure and encouragement that facilitate effective thoughtful application on the part of the end user. The Introduction gives a solid picture of how to use the book and apply intercultural information in general. The format of When in Rome or Rio or Riyadh... does this in three more ways:1. By using the letter/question and response format, cultural information is anchored in a context, e.g., a question is raised by a Mexican asking about Chinese manners. While non-Mexicans and even Chinese can learn from the response, it is clear that cultural information is always relative to the parties involved, and requires observation of both self and other if it is to be used judiciously.2. Olofsson assists the formation and use of good judgment by providing benchmarks that she calls "Global Standards" and "Global Warnings." Global Standards are the likely fall back positions for how to behave in the global business environment of the world's 33 largest economies. Global Warnings alert us to peoples, countries and areas where different and sometimes starkly conflicting standards are in force.3. No book of this sort can replace curiosity and inquiry as keys to successful intercultural behavior. What Olofsson does provide is targeted information and multiple sides of questions that both stimulate curiosity and urge us to ask the right questions.A few years ago I became aware that, when searching for information, I could generally find it quicker by Googling than by walking to my bookshelf across the room, even when I knew which book or even which pages contained what I was looking for. This possibility shifts my expectations, both as an author and as a reader, as to how information is organized and delivered in printed form. I and others like me now expect to have multiple points of entry into the issues we want to explore.Olofsson provides them. First, a general table of contents orders the book's material from the most basic manners, through more complex concepts surrounding communication and time, to higher levels of intercultural collaboration that require knowledge of social distinctions, organizational behavior, ethics and values.This is followed by a second table of contents, a listing of country-by-country and topic-by-topic index. It is the sort of thing one normally would expect as an afterthought at the volume's end. In When in Rome or Rio or Riyadh... it is an up front tool that guides the reader to exactly the information she or he is looking for.Finally, following each cluster of letters are the Global Standards and Global Warnings followed by a two to four line summary of how the issue, e.g., business dress, gift giving or trust building is handled in each of the countries dealt with in the book. This redundancy is for quick, convenient access, i.e., for "Googling," not for literary quality. The reader will find the true purple patch in the responses to the letters.Truly "equal time" is given to how cultural norms may apply to or differ for the businesswoman. Olofsson attends to women's issues more frequently and with greater consistency than most authors I have read in this field.

How does globalization directly affect you?More and more careers today involve interacting with other cultures. No longer limited to the ranks of top management, this cross-cultural contact is affecting workers of all levels. From the technician on the factory floor to the customer service representative to the CEO, all of us can be in direct daily contact with someone from another culture, and this could create conflict. Author Gwyneth Olofsson takes on these work-related intercultural issues and offers practical advice in her book, When in Rome or Rio or Riyadh.Cultural QAs for Successful Business Behavior Around the World.Drawing on sixteen years of cultural training and business consulting, Olofsson has collected the cultural questions her students and business trainees have asked most and compiled them in brief, to-the-point letters and answers. Largely drawn from her column in Volvo's magazine, Global, she shares answers to burning questions on topics best related to the thirty-three countries with the largest gross domestic product-those where businesspeople are most likely to be.Olofsson uses each specific cultural question as a springboard to explore cultural commonalities and differences. She also provides Global Warnings for topics that are particularly sensitive in certain cultures. After each section of the book, she provides the fundamental cultural characteristics of each of these countries and points out the similarities among them. When in Rome or Rio or Riyadh is a compelling, easy-to-use guide for anyone who wants to avoid being blindsided by a cultural misstep.As always, Gwyneth Olofsson gives her guidance on how to behave, dress, speak or write in a way everyone can understand. When in Rome or Rio or Riyadh. will come in handy every time you go on a business trip abroad, wherever your destination happens to be. Business people everywhere should have this book in their possession.-Christina Eide, Vice

President, Volvo Information Technology AB At last, a truly practical guide for the international business executive on how to survive and prosper in different cultures! This book should be in the 'essentials' kit of all who travel for work-or for pleasure.- Michael Pitfield, Director of International Business, Henley Management College When in Rome, or Rio, or Riyadh... takes a fresh new approach to the essential work of building intercultural awareness, sensitivity and skills. With her creative use of letters from thirty-three different countries, author Gwyneth Olofsson brings to the reader an astonishing array of cross-cultural conundrums, which she solves with clarity, insight and humor. Where intercultural works have in the past tended either to resemble travel guides or, at the other extreme, ponderous academic treatises, Ms. Olofsson's book promises the reader an illuminating, highly readable journey into the world of cross-cultural interactions that is at once informative and wonderfully entertaining. -Charles Bergman, Director, Asia-Pacific Meridian Resources Associates When in Rome or Rio or Riyadh. is a most useful book for business travelers in the 21st Century. It gives many useful tips, thanks to which I now understand (possibly too late) some of the mistakes I have made in the past. -Philippe Divry, Senior Vice-President Renault VI Powertrain Division When in Rome. is a winning combination of very useful practical advice and extremely valuable cultural insights. The letters format is very engaging. And Ms. Olofsson turns out to be a fine, amusing writer; you end up reading more than you meant to, just to linger in her company.-Craig Storti, Director, Communicating Across Cultures and author, Art of Crossing Cultures, Cross-Cultural Dialogues, Figuring Foreigners Out and Speaking of IndiaI read When in Rome or Rio or Riyadh with my daughter, and despite the fact that she is a university student and I'm a managing director, we both appreciated the true value of this book. As the number of people who work and travel internationally is increasing rapidly, we all need a book like this - well-structured, down-to-earth and helpful. -Pavel Baranov, Managing Director VSM Group, Moscow Ms Olofsson's experience as a language and intercultural consultant shines through the pages. With a combination of humor, honesty and an ability to understand some of the more idiosyncratic features of different national cultures, she has provided a text which should become essential reading for anyone hoping to do business abroad, and indeed anyone seeking to understand better people from other cultures. -Mel Read, MEP European Parliament, East Midlands, UK When in Rome or Rio or Riyadh. is a delightful book to read. It combines deep insights into common everyday cross-cultural experiences with an engaging-almost visceral-style of narration. Though it offers practical tips in QA format, it is not just another cultural etiquette book; reading this book is like taking a perceptive journey, flitting across more than thirty countries. Ms. Olofsson has succeeded in giving a new depth and meaning to those day-to-day points of contact to a new culture-e.g., names, making conversation, working day, table talk, relating, etc.-which form the crux of cross-cultural experience and interaction.-Dr. Madhukar Shukla Professor of OB Strategic Management Xavier Labour Relations Institute, Jamshedpur, IndiaContentsCountry-by-Country ContentsIntroductionPart I: The First Steps1 Getting Acquainted2 Making a Good Impression3 Eating and Drinking TogetherPart II: Understanding Each Other4 Communication and Language5 TimePart III: Working Together6 Personal Profiles7 Our Roles and Relationships8 Work in a Wider PerspectiveBibliography

This book is essentially an encyclopedia of cross-cultural management, probably the best of its type. Useful attention to detail. -- MT magazine, November 2004From the PublisherGlobalization has meant that more people than ever have contact with other cultures as part of their work. No longer limited to the ranks of top management, this cross-cultural contact is affecting workers of all levels. From the technician on the factory floor to customer service representative to the CEO, all of us can be in direct daily contact with someone from another culture.Once people from diverse cultures start to work together, unexpected and puzzling behavior patterns can crop up. Suddenly things can go wrong and no one knows why! Now author Gwyneth Olofsson takes on these work-related intercultural issues and offers practical advice in her new book, WHEN IN ROME OR RIO OR RIYADH....After sixteen years of cultural training and business consulting, Olofsson has collected the cultural questions her students and business trainees have asked her and compiled them in brief, to-the-point letters and answers. Largely drawn from her column in Volvo's magazine, Global, she shares answers to burning questions on topics best related to the 33 countries with the largest gross domestic product—those where businesspeople are most likely to be.Olofsson uses each specific cultural question as a springboard to explore cultural commonalities and differences. She also provides "Global Warnings" for topics that are particularly sensitive in certain cultures. And, she's made the book easy to navigate with a country-specific index at the front of the book. Whether searching for the answer to a specific cultural question (such as making a good impression) or understanding a specific area of the world (such as Belgium or Indonesia), the reader can locate the information quickly through this index.To make her book most useful to international businesspeople, Olofsson chose to cover cultural questions from 33 countries with largest economies. They include: Argentina Australia Austria Belgium Brazil Canada China Denmark Finland France Germany Hong Kong India Indonesia Italy Japan Mexico Netherlands Norway Poland Russia Saudi Arabia South Africa South Korea Spain Sweden Switzerland Taiwan Thailand Turkey United Kingdom United States Venezuela After each section of the book, she provides the fundamental cultural characteristics of each of these countries, sometimes referencing a specific letter or pointing out the similarities among different countries. All in all she provides a fascinating read for anyone who wants to avoid being blindsided by a cultural misstep and wants to communicate more effectively with their overseas

colleagues. About the Author Gwyneth Olofsson is owner of Communico, a Sweden-based intercultural training and consulting company. She began her career as a teacher of English and English as a second language in her native England and in Singapore. Ultimately, she came to Sweden, where her clients include the Volvo Group, Renault, and SchlumbergerSema. Author of a guide to English for Swedish-speakers, *Everyone Makes Mistakes*, Olofsson also writes a regular column for Volvo's in-house magazine, *Global*.