GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF BUSINESS MEETINGS

• In a meeting, the participants will proceed with business usually after some brief, preliminary "small talk" about topics unrelated to the business at hand. This is generally practiced to ease tensions and create a comfortable environment before entering into business matters. Topics may range from sports, weather, or other smaller business topics. Personal matters should not be discussed during this time, or any time in the negotiation.

• Usually, business is conducted at a fast pace.

• People will take turns speaking.

• There are established rules for almost everything, and experts are relied upon at all levels.

• Focus is on following the items on the agenda and addressing each individual task on the list, rather than on interpersonal rapport and dynamics (such as creating a sense of comfort between individuals or supporting harmonious relationships among participants).

• Active participation by all members is expected and valued.

• Differences of opinions are openly discussed and disagreements on issues are seen as separate from personal opinions or judgments on the person.

• Americans regard negotiating as problem-solving through "give and take" based on respective strengths.

• In negotiations, points are made by the accumulation of objective facts. The subjective feelings of the participants are not as much of a factor. Therefore, they will not spend much time seeking consensus.

• Regardless, company policy is always followed.

• It is appropriate to abruptly end one business meeting in order to avoid being late to another appointment.