Doing Business with the Chinese

By David Fisher
Guānxi

• Means ‘relationships’ or ‘connections’

• Most important part of all

• Face-to-face contact

• Bad guanxi can cost you a contract
Etiquette

• Business usually conducted formally

• Be early – and then wait

• Write everything down

• Expect long speeches, and over-running presentations
Business Cards

• Both hands!

• Get double-sided cards

• Study their card, even if you cannot read it

• Choose a Chinese name – ask for help
Food

• Important part of building relationships

• Very different from your local takeaway!

• If you are not sure, tell your hosts that you are vegetarian in advance
Learn Mandarin!

• Learn at least a few words
• Make sure to use them
• Ask for advice
• Have all addresses written down in Chinese by colleagues before you go!
Everyday Business

• Know who is in charge and the hierarchical structure

• Keep everyone informed

• Try to avoid any personal statements, unless certain

• Be open, and learn!
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