



International Business Communications

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Introduction to the Company and Context

Chosen Company: Unilever

- Unilever is a British global FMCG company
- It has products in different parts of the world
- It is known for making products of all kinds
- It was started in 1929
- Its main office is in London

Expansion Context:

- Investments in digital technology and digital services
- Developing products locally in important places
- Meet customer needs and follow trade rules



Understanding German Culture

Being on time is seen as a sign of respect and dependability, and it is highly valued.



Germany is known for putting a lot of value on organisation, order, and accuracy.



The school system is very strict, and academic and vocational training is given a lot of attention.



People in business situations usually act professionally and formally, and they use titles and last names to talk to each other.



Direct communication is desired; Germans are usually honest and clear when they talk to each other (Hall, 2022).



Comparison of UK and German Cultures

Punctuality and Time Management

- UK: Generally more flexible with time; lateness is more tolerated.
- Germany: Strict adherence to schedules; being late is frowned upon.

Formality in Business

- UK: More informal, with first names used quickly in business settings.
- Germany: More formal, with a preference for titles and surnames (Engammare, 2013).

Communication Style

- UK: Indirect and polite, often using understatement.
- Germany: Direct and clear, with a focus on facts and precision.

Work-Life Balance:

- UK: Work culture is diverse, with a balance between work and leisure.
- Germany: Clear separation between work and personal life, with a strong emphasis on efficiency during work hours.

Cultural Sensitivity in Germany

Punctuality

- Arrive on time for meetings and appointments; lateness is seen as disrespectful.

Formality

- Use titles and surnames unless invited to use first names.
- Dress conservatively and professionally in business settings.

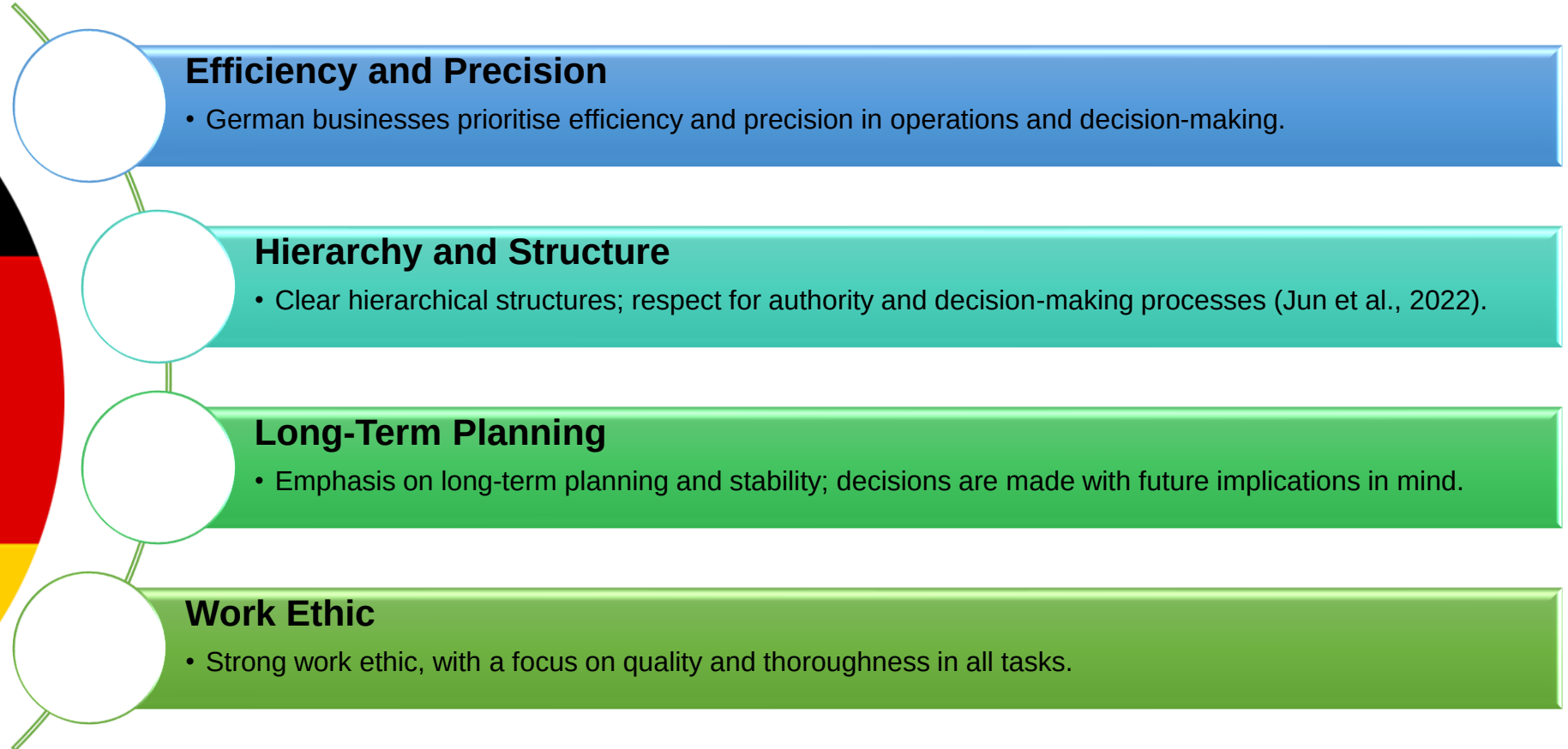
Communication

- Be direct and clear in communication; avoid ambiguity.
- Prepare thoroughly for meetings and discussions, as Germans value detail and accuracy.

Gift Giving

- Small, high-quality gifts are appreciated in business contexts; avoid ostentatious gifts.

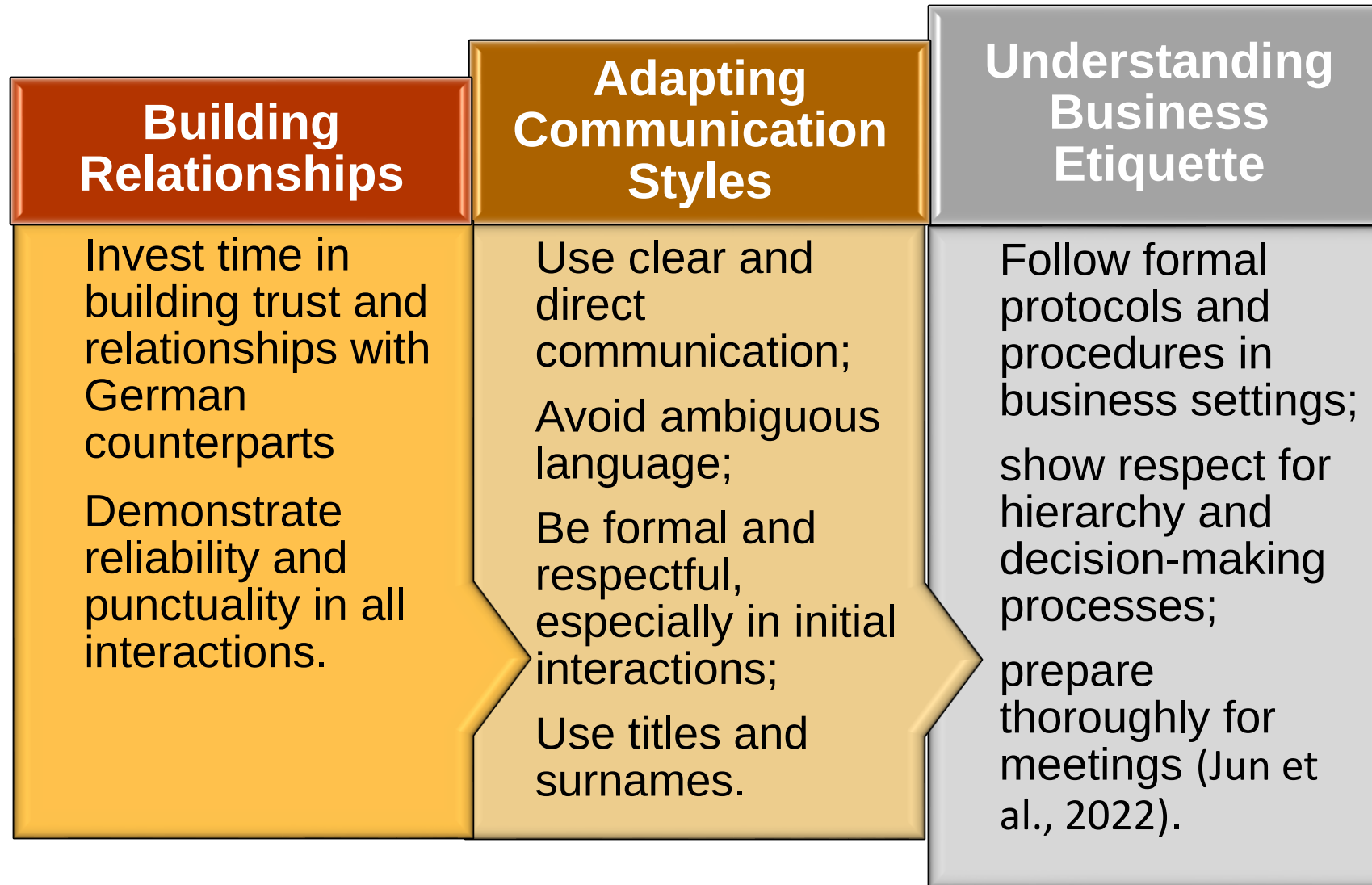
Business and Work-Related Attitudes



Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions: UK vs Germany

Power Distance	Individualism	Uncertainty Avoidance	Masculinity	Long Term orientation
• UK: Low power distance, with an egalitarian approach to management. • Germany: Power distance is medium, and there is a clear respect for authority and order.	• UK: High individualism, with a strong emphasis on personal achievements and autonomy. • Germany: Moderate individualism, balancing individual and collective interests.	• UK: Moderate avoidance of uncertainty, with rules and laws that are easier to follow. • Germany: Very good at avoiding doubt and liking structured settings with clear rules.	• UK: A moderate level of manhood, where competition and quality of life are both important. • Germany: High masculinity, emphasizing achievement, success, and performance.	• UK: Focus on getting results quickly; short-term thinking • Germany: Long-term thinking; keep your eye on the prizes that are coming and keep going.

Recommendations for Success in Germany



Conclusion

- To be successful in the German market, Unilever needs to understand and accept cultural differences.
- Turner (2024) says that adapting to local business methods can help relationships and boost business results.
- By knowing and incorporating these cultural differences, Unilever is a good example of a company that can work well in a variety of cultural settings.



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