Business Scenario #1: China

You are meeting with a group of Chinese investors to discuss a new product you wish to market in Beijing. Prior to your visit, you have fielded hundreds of questions about the product, and discussed, in depth, the benefits and logistics of the deal. You are eager to settle on a plan as you must return to the U.S. in a week.

When the Chinese investors arrive they have many questions about your product that were addressed in the documentation you sent. The curtness of your responses offends them, and they leave without making a deal. What did you do wrong?
Business Scenario #2: China

You are a successful businesswoman in the U.S. and are excited at the prospect of managing your company’s branch operations in Shanghai. You are proud of your accomplishments but are offended at the constant questions about your marital status, your children (non-existent), your appearance, and your salary. Should you take this personally?
Business Scenario #3: China

You have been interning at a Chinese start-up tech company with a close-knit group of young people. You know how important relationship-building is to the Chinese, so you have gone to great lengths to befriend your colleagues. On your last evening in China, your host uses an English word inappropriately and you make a joke out of it, thinking your new friends will appreciate your humor. But the next day, they tell you that they won’t be inviting you back for a follow-up internship in the spring. What did you do wrong?
Business Scenario #4: United States

You’ve been promoted to a supervisory position at your job, and you have several new, extremely bright employees, who are recent immigrants from China and India. You enjoy the creativity engendered by working in self-managed teams and want to incorporate these ideas into your organization. You hate being a micromanager and resent intensive supervision. You anticipate that your employees share your feelings and will enjoy the freedom of the team environment. Instead, they are frustrated and confused. Why are they reacting this way?
You have been working for several months with a team of business partners in India and will soon close on the deal. As you read through the final contract, you feel that your partners are over-promising what they can realistically accomplish, (e.g.) shorter deadlines for construction, larger profit margins than expected. How do you question their ability to fulfill the terms of the contract without offending them?
Business Scenario #6: India

You have been coordinating a construction project with an Indian project manager. He is keen to hire a specific contractor to do the work, even though there is a competitor who has agreed to complete the project more cost-effectively and whose reliability is well-known. Why might your project manager be insisting on this contractor? How should you proceed?
Business Scenario #7: United States

Tom, a sophomore from Texas, and Haruto, a Japanese exchange student, are roommates. Tom finds Haruto to be quiet and somewhat boring, and it bothers him that Haruto’s Asian friends only speak Japanese when they are together. Tom’s friend, Steve, visits one day and while they are chatting, Haruto arrives, and begins having an animated chat, in Japanese, with a friend on the phone. Tom interrupts the call saying, “Hey! Could you take your call in the hallway, Steve and I are trying to talk!” “Sorry, sorry, I will try to be a better roommate,” says Haruto. Tom tells Steve, “All Haruto does is say he’s sorry, but then he goes and does whatever he wants anyway. Really annoys me.”

What can these roommates do to get along better? What’s getting in the way?

Adapted from Jennifer Beer www.culture-at-work.com
Jim Brown is an American applying for a job in Japan. Ever the salesman, Jim goes to great lengths to highlight his sales expertise during the job interview. He calls attention to his sales volume at his previous job, his 3-year running streak as “Salesperson of the Month.” He tells his potential boss, Mr. Matsumoto, “I intend to be THE BEST salesman at your firm. I’ll outsell any of your current employees, count on it!”

Does Jim’s confidence and self-promotion land him the job?

Adapted from Intercultural Communication in Organizations: http://www.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/42959_11_Intercultural_Communication_in_Organizations.pdf
Business Scenario #9: Japan

Sandra is in negotiations with business partners in Japan but she’s struggling to connect with them. During meetings they are very quiet, causing her to be overly talkative to fill in silences. Also, she wonders if they find her boring, since they often close their eyes while she is talking. Finally, it seems to take forever for them to come to agreement on business decisions, even when they have spent a lot of time discussing outcomes.

What is Sandra missing? What does she need to learn about Japanese culture?

Adapted from Intercultural Communication in Organizations: http://www.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/42959_11_Intercultural_Communication_in_Organizations.pdf
Business Scenario #10: Saudi Arabia

Mr. Smith is eager to meet Hashim Abdu Hashim, manager of the port in Al-Kabhor, Saudi Arabia. The computers Mr. Smith has ordered for his business are languishing on a ship stuck in the dock. When Hashim finally meets with Mr. Smith (after two postponements), he can’t tamp down his impatience, exclaiming, “At last! I’ve been waiting two days for this meeting!” He tries to make up for his outburst by inquiring about Hashim’s family and wife. When Hashim offers tea to his guest, Mr. Smith refuses, wanting to hurry along the conversation. The meeting ends on a sour note with Hashim remarking, “We survived without computers for thousands of years, what’s a few more days or weeks?” What did Mr. Smith do to offend Hashim?

Adapted from Intercultural Communication in Organizations:
Business Scenario #10: Saudi Arabia

Mr. Smith is eager to meet Hashim Abdu Hashim, manager of the port in Al-Kabhor, Saudi Arabia. The computers Mr. Smith has ordered for his business are stuck on a ship at dock. When Hashim meets with Mr. Smith (after two postponements), Smith can’t tamp down his impatience, exclaiming, “At last! I’ve been waiting two days for this meeting!” He tries to make up for his outburst by inquiring about Hashim’s family and wife. He declines Hashim’s offer of tea, wanting to hurry along the conversation. The meeting ends with Hashim remarking, “We survived without computers for thousands of years, what’s a few more days or weeks?” What did Mr. Smith do to offend Hashim?

Adapted from Intercultural Communication in Organizations:
Business Scenario #11: China/Germany

A large, state-owned company in China is excited at the prospect of a new business deal with a German company. The Chinese prepare extensively for the German’s visit to explore business investment, and arrange for a large welcome dinner, followed by a performance of a traditional Chinese play. The next day, they took the Germans on a one-day tour of Beijing, the day ended with another large dinner hosted by some government officials. On the third day of the visit, they presented their business project to the Germans and felt the presentation was a success. They were understandably shocked when the Germans left without negotiating a deal. What went wrong from the German perspective? What did the Germans misunderstand about Chinese culture?

Adapted from :http://zhengningcn.blogspot.com/2008/09/scenario-on-intercultural-communication.html
A large, state-owned company in China is excited at the prospect of a new business venture with a German company. They go all out to impress the Germans: fancy dinner and theatrical performance on the first day of the visit, a day-long tour of Beijing on day two, then on the third day they present their business project to the Germans. They think it was a tremendous success and are understandably shocked when the Germans leave without negotiating a deal. What went wrong from the German perspective? What did the Germans misunderstand about Chinese culture?

Adapted from :http://zhengningcn.blogspot.com/2008/09/scenario-on-intercultural-communication.html