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Bundesverband der Dolmetscher  
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*The professional association of interpreters  
and translators in Bavaria*

BDÜ is Germany's and Europe's largest professional association of translators and interpreters. Around 1,500 of its members are located in Bavaria. They cover more than 40 languages, ranging from Albanian to Vietnamese. BDÜ membership represents high quality, as all our members must prove their professional qualification in order to be accepted into the association. Our membership database helps you find interpreters and translators in Bavaria ([www.by.bdue.de](http://www.by.bdue.de)).

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## BusinessKnigge

*Your quick guide to business etiquette in*

**Germany**

# BusinessKnigge Germany



**1. Germans tend to be rather formal:** At business meetings, shake hands with everyone present when arriving and leaving. Address everyone by their last names unless you have been specifically invited to use their first names.

**2. Always arrive on time,** or even better, a few minutes early. If you are running late, call in with a reasonable excuse. Otherwise, you may be considered impolite and unreliable.



**3. Send friendly greetings:** Even when corresponding via email, do not forget to start and end your message with a friendly salutation.

**4. German is a very complicated language,** and it gets confusing when Germans use words that sound like English but are not. For example, if Germans talk about their "handy", they are referring to their mobile phone.



**5. Be prepared** to hear people greeting you with "Mahlzeit" (lunch time) on their way to or from the canteen. At work, you will hear this from about 11 a.m. till 2 p.m. Feel free to reply in kind.



For successful communication with German business partners, it is useful to have some knowledge of customs and etiquette in Germany. Here are **ten tips** for you:

**6. When socializing** with Germans you will often hear them say "Prost" or "zum Wohl" as they raise their glasses and touch them with everyone else's at the table. Be sure not to miss anyone, and look them in the eyes while doing it! And don't worry if everybody pays for their own drinks – paying separately is very common. On the other hand, if your companion says "I invite you", he/she means "This one's on me."



**7. Ever wondered** why there are at least three waste bins at train stations, offices, and of course in German households? Well, Germans love recycling. They separate paper, plastics, glass and organic waste.

**8. German buildings** are airtight fortresses. So in order not to die of suffocation and to allow fresh air to circulate in the offices, they put their windows on tilt or even worse, they rush air in every other hour ("Stoßlüften"). So be prepared for sudden cold breezes!



**9. Before Germans act,** they plan, schedule, and calculate. They love to manage projects, draw charts and diagrams, and optimise their processes.

**10. On Sundays,** however, Germans enjoy their leisure time. If they have work to do, they do it quietly inside their houses. They would never dare to wash their car in the driveway or mow the lawn. Beware – it's Sunday!

