



5

*Cultural Factors*  
*that are Crucial for*  
*Your Sales Success*  
*in Asia-Pacific*



# 5 Cultural Factors that are Crucial for Your Sales Success in Asia-Pacific



Hardly any company today can afford to overlook the **Asia-Pacific region**.

It's no longer just about filling your own supply chain with cheaper components from the Far East, or even relocating production to countries with cheap labour.

Being cheap is no longer the goal in countries in the Far East. Established western brands - B2B as well as retail - are therefore making increasing efforts to open up **the region as a lucrative sales area**.

The economic data speak for themselves. With the associated growth of the so-called middle class, the hunger for **high-quality products, prestigious brands, intelligent functionality, reliability and attentive customer care** is now rapidly increasing.

In both **B2C and B2B**, high-quality products and services are in strong demand, but still often in short supply.



# 5 Cultural Factors that are Crucial for Your Sales Success in Asia-Pacific

That creates tremendous opportunities!

However, tapping into this “gold mine” is often **a thrilling roller-coaster ride** for Western companies. Due to the rapid economic development and modern conditions, especially in the big cities, the strong cultural differences that do exist are not always so obvious.

In this short presentation, I would like to address **5 cultural aspects** that I have observed many times in my more than 25 years of business development in Asia, and which, in many ways, can make a **huge difference in the sales success** of your products and services in the region.







*Availability and  
Speed of Delivery*



# Cultural Factor 1: Availability and Speed of Delivery



Asia moves fast and Asians, in general, are not great planners.

Of course, fast deliveries and permanent availability are not only a competitive advantage in Asia. And yet Asia takes this point to **a whole new level**, so that one can quite legitimately speak of a cultural aspect. Many things that are considered “not feasible” in e.g. Europe are lived in Asia on a daily basis.

Both in retail (online and offline) and in B2B, orders are often processed very quickly **via chat apps**. (Privacy? What’s that?) A contract is either a standardized attachment or a formality that is submitted later.

DIY pick-up is hardly known. **Almost everything is delivered**. Delivery is usually the same day, ideally within the next hour. Packing and handling of course free of charge.

Business hours, by the way: 7 days a week - open end (at least for regular customers).

Products or components with a delivery time of several weeks will only be accepted if there are no alternatives. Even support that comes exclusively from overseas is usually a deal breaker in B2B as well. Even importers and trading partners want a **local presence**.

Products and services that have sales and customer support locally available and accessible 24/7, even in an informal manner, have a **distinct competitive advantage**.



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***"Same Same, But Different"***



# Cultural Factor 2: "Same same, but different"

Hardly any Asian orders what is on the menu in a restaurant without asking for one or two changes. "I would like ... but with ..., but without ... and please ... instead of ... . Many Thanks!"

Rejection without a decent effort doesn't go down well.

It works the same way in the rest of business life. Both in retail and in B2B. It is usually expected that **individual adjustments are possible and also applied.**

To this end, sales staff not only go the famous extra mile, but often even go to (what appear to be) disproportionate lengths in order to satisfy the customer.

But the Asian knows that **this effort is worth it in the end.**

This aspect is a particular challenge for highly industrialized Western products or for highly systematized services.

Companies with very flat hierarchies and **ad hoc decision-making authority right at the front** naturally have an unbeatable advantage. This means not only training sales teams well, but also equipping them with **competence and trust** beyond all intercultural barriers.

Offering desired adjustments flexibly with the help of local workshops or service providers is the **icing on the cake.**







# *Social Rank and Status*



# Cultural Factor 3: Social Rank und Status



Whether you like that as a Westerner or not is irrelevant: **hierarchies and the personal social rank** associated with them are of enormous importance in Asia.

This is crucial for every company in several respects:

On the one hand, it is of course important to emphasize in marketing communications how your product or service potentially increases the **status of your customer**.

On the other hand, it is also a real business value to demonstrate a correspondingly high status **as a company**. This requires a certain cultural sensitivity and starts with the company address, the means of transport you use, up to when and on what occasion the "Big Boss" appears most effectively in person. (Tip: not for customer acquisition)

**Generosity** in dealing with money (business invitations, expenses, tips, donations,...) or in contractual clauses are also an expression of high status.

The third perspective of this aspect concerns one's **own internal corporate hierarchy**. Org charts that focus solely on skills but ignore culturally important factors such as age, length of service, formal education level, etc. could quickly become a boomerang.

It is not for nothing that there is an above-average number of companies in the region where there are eight managers for every two employees (or something on that scale).



# *The VIP-Factor*



# Cultural Factor 4: The VIP-Factor

As Westerners, it is usually very important to us not to be cheated, i.e. to be socially equal with others. Asians, on the other hand, even **spend good money to be socially favored**, that is, to be considered a VIP in a variety of circumstances.

Customers gravitate towards - and even promote - companies where they feel they receive preferential treatment. This applies to both B2B and B2C.

We're not talking about membership in the Supermarket Bonus Points Club.

It is about the **feeling of real, unique preference**. For example, getting a price that others don't get, access to staff in the upper hierarchical levels that others don't have, being able to bypass the queue, or having contacts outside of business hours. The emphasis is on “what others don't have”.

Of course, such favors are not rejected by western customers as well and are very welcome as a bonus. In Asia, however, the VIP game takes place on a completely different level and is an **integral part of Asian business culture**. Asian companies are masters at it.

Western companies that have tailored their sales and customer service processes to this have a decisive competitive advantage.





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*Family, Age and  
Other Traditional Values*



# Cultural Factor 5: Family, Age, and Other Traditional Values



One of the best employees in the company suddenly quits his well-paid and fulfilling job because his grandmother is ill and he is needed to support the family. Sacrificing one's career to the extended family is still a common duty in many communities in Asia.

Old age is highly respected and **older people have a high influence in society**. A circumstance that is often not immediately apparent to outsiders.

This also means that the older population has a high level of **(purchasing) decision-making power** and that companies would do well to take their needs into account when marketing products and services.

It is precisely this influence of older people that, despite all the progress and rapidly developing economies, allows **old traditions** to live on with great intensity.

Taking these traditional values, festivals and rituals seriously as an outsider, even if they sometimes seem very foreign to us, is of enormous importance both when **marketing products and services** and when **building successful teams**.



You have intentions to **enter the Asia-Pacific region** as a new market for your products and services?

You **already tried** but the results were disappointing?

You are not ready yet but see the time coming and you would like to be **properly prepared?**

Then we should definitely meet at one of my next **LIVE Online Basecamps**  
*"Sales Development in Asia-Pacific!"*

- ➔ What to look out for when selling in the APAC region?
- ➔ How are things over there? Are you already "too late"?
- ➔ Is really everything cheap in Asia? (What is, and what isn't- and what's really expensive?)
- ➔ What are the cultural challenges, particularly when it comes to sales?
- ➔ How do the individual Asian markets differ from each other?
- ➔ Where is the best place to start?
- ➔ ... with many "back-stage" field reports from **26 years!**

Learn more at <https://thomaszagler.com>





Consulting

Together we examine the APAC markets for your needs, analyze the **possibilities, risks** and **costs**, and develop the **best market entry strategy**.

Together we ensure that your ambitious plans are **quickly, efficiently** and **sustainably realized**.

Together we **analyze your current situation**, highlight expansion and optimization or turnaround scenarios and **quickly implement measures** according to the set goals.

Coaching

In **regular sessions**, I guide and support you in **analyzing** the APAC markets for your needs, creating an accurate basis for **your decisions**, and developing the **best market entry strategy**.

In **regular sessions**, I guide and support you and your team in the **quick and efficient implementation** of your plans and thus help you to successfully place your products in **the new markets**.

In **regular sessions**, I guide and support you and your team in your local expansion and optimization projects or turnarounds.

Management On Demand

I **actively lead** your new APAC projects to success and ensure that each building block fits seamlessly into your **global corporate concept** and - after a given time - also continues to **grow independently**.

I **lead** your expansion, optimization or turnaround projects where leadership and management experience is essential but perhaps **not immediately available**, or only needed on a **temporary basis**.



You already offer your products in the region, but **results could be better?**  
You are thinking about taking it to **the next level?**

Let's talk about **YOUR**  
**Revenues in Asia**

**Connect, text or call** me directly via the  
platform of your choice  
(Click respective link below)



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Your Expert  
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