

Prepare to take your tasks global



“What do I most need to be prepared for as an admin who’s suddenly dealing with international cultures, people, and ways of doing things?”

That’s what Mary from Long Island, N.Y., asked recently on the [Admin Pro Forum](#): “I’ve just landed a job with a big international marketing firm, and even though I’ll be working from the states, I get a little nervous when they tell me about all the different clients and projects involving so many different countries.”

Pre-first-day jitters always seem to come with accepting a new job, but they’re amplified when your new position involves dealing with projects and clients around the world. How do you prepare to succeed?

Her fellow readers chimed to offer advice.

More than one advised that she should get busy learning about time zones since they will be key to her communication. “One easy thing to do is change the time zone on the boss’s Outlook calendar,” Julie wrote. “That lets you know when you could expect to talk with him without waking him up.”

“Answer all your emails and put in all your requests for information to Europe during the first half of the day because come lunchtime most of them are heading home,” Sherry advised.

“Get up to speed with the changes for daylight saving time as this one hour can mean the difference between all parties making it to the meeting at the same time.”

Sherry also recommended Mary read the book *Kiss, Bow or Shake Hands* by Terri Morrison and Wayne A. Conaway. “Understanding the culture the people you will be dealing with will make it much easier to form virtual relationships,” she wrote. “For instance, it is extremely important to be polite to the English and don’t be insulted if the Germans seem very blunt.”

“Having a better understanding of the different cultures you’ll be working with will go a long way in smoothing any bumps in the road that you may encounter,” Barbie M. wrote. “One informal way to do that would be to use a language site like [Live Mocha](#). Not only does it offer lessons on learning a language, it also has communities of people sharing their respective cultures. My husband’s family recently visited from Japan. Using Live Mocha helped me to understand some of the cultural norms.”

Learning a little bit of the languages she’s likely to encounter could help Mary learn to understand the accents she might hear over the phone, Sherry advised.

“I would say for me, the most difficult thing is the accents,” Kathy wrote. “Sometimes it is very hard to understand and I have to ask them to repeat several times (which I hate doing). Their English is far better than any language I could speak, so I am always apologizing for not understanding.”