

## CULTURAL DIFFERENCES      Products that didn't sell well in foreign countries

What went wrong ?

1. Western companies had problems selling refrigerators in Japan until they changed the design to make them quieter.
2. In Saudi Arabia newspaper adverts for an airline showed an attractive hostess serving champagne to happy passengers. A lot of passengers cancelled their flight reservations.
3. An airline company called itself Emu after the Australian bird, but Australians didn't want to use the airline.
4. A TV commercial for a cleaning product showed a little girl cleaning up the mess her brother made. It was not successful in Canada.
5. Several European and American firms couldn't sell their products in Dubai when they ran their advertising campaign in Arabic.
6. A soap powder ad had a picture of dirty clothes on the left, a box of soap in the middle and clean clothes on the right. It didn't sell well in the Middle East.
7. A toothpaste manufacturer couldn't sell its product in parts of South East Asia.
8. An American golf ball manufacturer launched its products in Japan packed in boxes of 4. It had to change the pack size.

## Cultural differences : products that didn't sell well in foreign countries

objectives :

- knowledge on cultural differences, regarding each situation + elaboration on each country , and « belief/ stereotypes » (sexism or equality, unlucky numbers .....)
- language : expressions of suggestions , hypothesis, opinion
  - students can work in groups and write their own « guideline » for foreign visitors to France or other countries.

Students can work alone, or in pairs + debriefing / discussion in whole group.

### Key :

1.In Japan, walls inside the homes are very thin (sometimes made of paper), so silent appliances are important.

In traditional Japanese architecture, a *shōji* is a door, window or room divider consisting of translucent paper over a frame of wood which holds together a lattice of wood or bamboo. While *washi* is the traditional paper, *shōji* may be made of paper made by modern manufacturing processes; plastic is also in use .

2.In Saudi Arabia alcohol is forbidden + unveiled women can't mix with men.

3.Emu is a bird that can't fly ! Same family as the ostrich.

4.Sexist commercial ! Women 's movements are very active in Canada.

5.Although Arabic is the official language of the UAE, English is the most spoken language in Dubai. You will also find a lot of expatriates who speak Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, Tamil, Tagalog, Persian, Chinese, Malayalam, in addition to many other languages. Arabic is the official language for both written and verbal communication in Dubai. Government offices and affairs are conducted in Arabic, and rules and laws are published in Arabic. English is the most widely spoken language in Dubai, especially for business, trade and tourism. Around 75% of the population in Dubai are expatriates, most of whom speak English and/or their native language.

6.In the Middle East they read and write from left to right.

7.In some South East Asian country, they use plants and wood to clean their teeth and sometime to « blacken » them

In Vietnam :Tooth blackening was (and still is) a deliberate process but it was not uncommon for tour guides (even Vietnamese guides) to tell visitors that the black teeth of the older Vietnamese women were the unexpected result from the habit of chewing betel. Betel chewing is still a common custom throughout Southeast Asia and has the same geographic distribution as the custom of filing and blackening the teeth .There were cultural reasons for

tooth blackening. It was believed that only savages, wild animals and the demons of the underworld had long white teeth. Tooth blackening prevents tooth decay .In Japan tooth blackening was known as Ohagura\* and was believed to enhance sex appeal in addition to maintaining healthy teeth.

(could be interesting to discuss beauty standards in different countries)

8.The Japanese word for « four » sounds like the word for « death ». so it's an unlucky number over there.

(discuss other unlucky numbers or superstitions/ belief and make them try to find out the origin.

For ex number 13 : origin : Juda was the last disciple (#13 at the table

Black cats :The folklore surrounding black cats varies from culture to culture.

Scottish lore holds that a strange black cat's arrival to the home signifies prosperity. In Celtic mythology, a fairy known as the Cat sìth takes the form of a black cat. Black cats are also considered good luck in the rest of Britain and Japan. Furthermore, it is believed that a lady who owns a black cat will have many suitors. In Western history, black cats have typically been looked upon as a symbol of evil omens, specifically being suspected of being the familiars of witches, or actually shape-shifting witches themselves. Most of Europe considers the black cat a symbol of bad luck, particularly if one walks across the path in front of a person, which is believed to be an omen of misfortune and death. In Germany, some believe that black cats crossing a person's path from right to left, is a bad omen. But from left to right, the cat is granting favorable times. In the United Kingdom it is commonly considered that a black cat crossing a person's path is a good omen .(wikipedia)