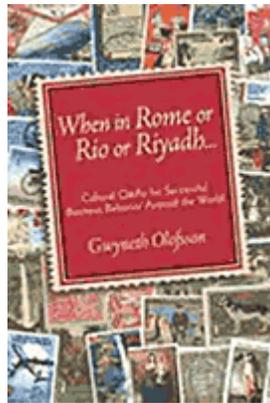


When in Rome, or Rio, or Riyadh... takes a fresh approach to building intercultural sensitivity and skills. Its author, Gwyneth Olofsson, is a language and intercultural consultant who was raised and educated in England and now lives in Sweden. Largely drawing from her regular column in Volvo's in-house magazine, *Global*, she shares answers to questions relating to the cultural peculiarities of 33 countries around the world.

Olofsson uses each question as a springboard to explore cultural patterns and differences. From ways to address people to exchanging business cards, from dress codes to gift giving, from body language to appropriate and inappropriate gestures, from gender-related aspects to business ethics, and from leadership styles to personal relationships, she addresses a wide range of topics globetrotters and business travelers alike will find helpful. Each section includes a by-country listing summarizing noteworthy differences. Olofsson also defines "Global Standards", describing behaviors that will be acceptable in most countries, and issues "Global Warnings" for topics of particular sensitivity. A country-specific index at the front of the book makes it easy to use as a comprehensive reference.



My biggest disappointment is that Olofsson failed to catch several mistakes. For instance, the author suggests to use "Doktor Professor" when addressing a person with that academic title in Germany (it should be "Professor Doktor"), that everyone stops for lunch and a nap in China between noon and 2pm (you won't see much of that in any of China's large and hectic cities), that some Japanese introduce themselves with their first names (very rare), or that India's standard time is five hours ahead of GMT (it's four and a half). None of these gotchas will ever be mission-critical, but such inaccuracies, of which there are many, indicate that one cannot fully depend on the information provided, which is annoying.

Nonetheless, this book has its merits. Many intercultural works tend to resemble either travel guides or unwieldy academic discourses. Olofsson's book does neither. Instead, she lures the reader away on an illuminating journey into the world of cross-cultural interactions. The author is at her best when discussing cross-cultural differences and giving advice about effective behaviors that will help bridging gaps.

Published in 2004, *When in Rome, or Rio, or Riyadh...* is still quite new, so there is hope that its flaws will get fixed in a future revision. That would make it into a truly useful cross-cultural resource.

Leadership Crossroads™ 10865-B Hazelhurst Dr. #11793, Houston, TX 77043
469-522-3389

info@leadershipcrossroads.com www.leadershipcrossroads.com

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Lothar Katz is the founder of Leadership Crossroads. He has a wealth of experience in achieving productive cooperation across cultures and driving business success on a global scale.

A seasoned former executive of a Fortune 500 company, he regularly interacted with employees, customers, outsourcing partners, and third parties in more than 25 countries around the world. These included many parts of Asia, e.g., China, India, and Japan. Originally from Germany, he has lived and worked both in the United States and in Europe.

