

Do you know your
team in Russia?



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Foreign companies in Russia



- ✓ Long-term stay
- ✓ Short-term stay
- ✓ Visits
- ✓ Virtual teams



Assumptions



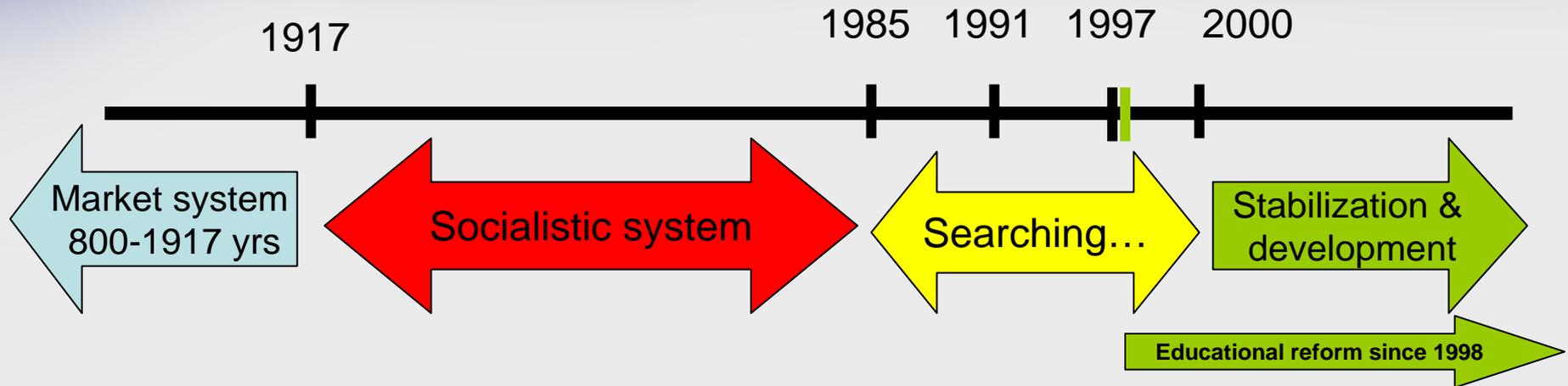
1. Russian workers are lazy.
2. They live together with their elderly parents and grown-up children all their life.
3. They never say 'please' or 'thank you'.
4. On every occasion they organize parties with food, drinks, etc.
5. Their conversations are weighty and lengthy.
6. The rational and pragmatic approach does not do for them. It is personal relations, feelings and traditional values that determine a course of action.
7. All Russians drink vodka for breakfast every morning.

Let's check...



Statement	True	False	Maybe
1. Russians do jobs not because they like it or want it.			
2. The working style depends mostly on age of your Russian team members.			
3. The Russians want to know you personally before do business.			
4. When properly motivated, the Russians are hard workers and have high work morals.			
5. The Russian teams usually don't meet deadlines, even those to which they have agreed.			
6. Russians find it difficult to admit a mistake.			

Russian business attitude



Age and managerial styles:

- 50-60 y.o. (born in 1953-1963)
- 40-50 y.o. (born in 1963-1973)
- 25-40 y.o. (born in 1973-1988)
- 20-25 y.o. (born in 1988-1993)

Management styles:

1. Authoritative
2. Democratic

Cultural incident



Your interpretation:

Large project.

Two teams: one – in USA, 2nd – in Russia.

Weekly “virtual” meetings (no video).

The project manager - the teams leader is in USA:

- “ OK, guys, how is everything in Russia?
We have a deadline approaching in two days.
I hope you will complete your part in time!
Would you? “

The Russians:

- didn't understand the question.
- are not aware of that deadline.
- don't have a team leader to answer.
- need a time to think before responding.
- didn't want to give bad news.
- know that silence means agreement in Russia.

There is a silence
on another side...



The “gurus” say...



- The team leader is expected to play a domineering role and to issue precise detailed instructions and then supervise ongoing progress.
- Those western managers who are more used to a 'hands off' approach will undoubtedly confuse local staff who will feel unsure of what is expected of them.
- An expatriate team leader needs to establish credibility through being decisive, clear and visibly in control.
- As different age groups display different attitudes and approaches (pre & post Soviet change generations), it is often thought best to keep teams quite aligned in ages.

Challenges working together



1. Assumptions.
2. Strong “local” mindset.
3. Lack of knowledge about cultures.
4. Lack of experience working with foreign team.
5. Low language proficiency.
6. Time difference.
- 7.
- 8.

What to do?



- **Build chemistry.** – Good work relationships require strong respect and trust, leading to open up the Russian hearts.
- **Focus your meetings.** – Invite only the “core team” who are directly involved in the agenda items. Some Russians even avoid attending team meetings when they don’t view them as productive.
- **Trust, but verify.** – Russians are used to excessive rules and procedures, and sometimes resent and even disregard them. A person’s own sense of what is “right” may prevail over “rules.” Offer detailed explanations of why Russians should carry out the instructions, rules or procedures; later verify if the procedures or deadlines are being followed or been modified.
- **Be realistic and direct.** – Giving a “rosy, optimistic” picture will not inspire trust among Russian colleagues. You can present a positive outlook but combined with any negative aspects or consequences that the team can incur. Answer questions directly. The Russians say: “Bitter truth is better than sweet lie”.
- **Time zones are challenging.** – Most Russians care deeply about family and friends, and when leaving work don’t expect to continue working at night on a regular basis (such as attending virtual meetings and checking email). **Be fair** and alternate early and late virtual meetings based on the time difference.

Good start



Be:

- ... strong and confident, but not aggressive, to gain respect of Russian people.
- ... friendly and warm, but initially more formal than you would be at home.
- ... persistent, but not pushy.
- ... patient – relationships develop slowly.
- ... flexible.
- ... sincere – it is required to build trust and relationship.
- ... ***willing to learn about the “Russian way” and to adopt parts of their operations.***

Q & A

