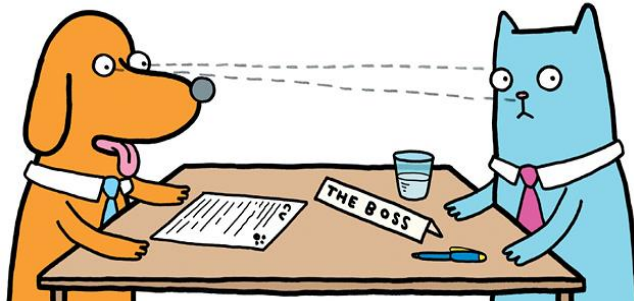




Eye Contact



The art of eye contact is important to wield when interacting with **Western businesspeople**, as direct eye contact may be perceived as a sign of **trustworthiness**, but prolonged one may be interpreted as a sign of **aggressiveness**. In order to avoid potentially aggressive messages, eye contact with a business associate should be as **'impersonal'** (so to speak) as possible; accordingly, it may be useful to imagine a line below your business associate's eyes which will serve as the base of a triangle whose vertex will be at their **mid-forehead** – the spot on which to focus during discussion. It's advisable to **avoid staring at the lower half of a person's face** (nose, mouth, chin, cheeks), as this may give off inappropriate nonverbal messages. Also, repeatedly or persistently staring at a person's hair, ears, and other **parts of the face far-away from the eyes** will make the other person **uncomfortable**: avoid doing so unless you purposely want to do so. Also, remember that **controlling your blinking frequency** is of paramount importance in order to make your message serious and credible, as the more you blink, the less reliable and self-confident you will look. Finally, consider that eye contact is not perceived positively worldwide: in many **Eastern cultures**, direct eye contact is interpreted as a **sign of disrespect or of erotic interest**, and is therefore to be avoided.