

Material for the facilitation

(Note: all quotes are from Finnish talents and international talents residing in Finland)

“I have known many people who have come to Finland to work from the USA, and their first thought is...” “There is no fear here!” What they mean is, that Finns are much more likely to openly challenge and question their superiors than in other countries. This is not a bad thing, and it is not done in a negative way. If you are a leader in Finland, you better be ready to have people question your ideas and leadership style. This is much less likely to happen in the US and certain other countries.”

“Here in Finland, you cannot shout, or use bad words. Here, you have to be polite and I feel it works since it gives more motivation to one another because we respect each other. Equality is big in Finland. Even the manager does jobs that other people in the position would not do in other countries. “

“The good thing about working in Finland and having a Finnish manager is that you can just tell them what is wrong. They will not get offended. I like that, because then the issue is gone and the next day everything is normal.”

“Finns like to work in organizations with flat structure, where the chain of command is neither long nor complicated. This results in a non-bureaucratic, informal working and communication style. Work-life-balance is another vital aspect in Finnish working style, in which the private life is considered at least as important as work commitments. Even entrepreneurs would decline contracts if they interfered with their family life.”

“I believe that the Finnish working style exists. It is completely different than other working styles in Europe (e.g. Spain) and Latin America. I can say that it is straight and efficient but at the same time completely flexible and independent. It is based on trust and prioritizes the family life. However, in the beginning, it is not easy to assimilate/understand for foreign people. The social contact is limited and therefore, it might rise misunderstandings (e.g. feeling appreciated). Additionally, I can say that it is easy to implement (e.g. Finnish organizations abroad) and people appreciate it.”

“Finnish workers tend to be much more independent and autonomous than in some cultures. Meaning, that is less common here than in some places to have a superior who micro manages what you do, and employees in Finland are probably less likely to tolerate such a management approach.”

“I have been living in Finland for almost 10 years. My first impression about the Finnish working style was a serious and calm way of working but at the same time cold due to the uncertainty of creating empathy among colleagues. As a foreigner, I could not distinguish between arrogance and shyness while sometimes I perceived a lack of interest towards my work responsibilities and as a colleague. Today, I still see/feel that the FWS has not changed much towards foreign people due to the difficulties that foreigners face to access the Finnish labour market. Currently, I am working in an international and multicultural organization where the Finnish working style can be easily differentiated from other working styles. In my case, I have a bit of the Finnish working style. Hopefully, the best!”

“Finnish people have bubbles. It takes time to pop the bubble; once they break, you have a friend. Give it time!”

“Finnish working culture is at once similar and different to working cultures all over the world. Each office environment and industry is different and the type of work carried out heavily influences the overall feeling of working culture in a specific setting. However, there are some generalizations I've learned throughout my four years in Finland, even though most of my experience has been with more "internationally minded" organizations: be prepared to take your shoes off at the office (how cozy is that?), summer holidays are of the utmost importance and in some cases entire offices leave for the month of July, and communication is key albeit often more casual than in other countries where I've worked. The stereotype of the "cold and quiet Finn" is also sometimes found in working environments, but I've also found the opposite in those who work in sales or marketing, so be prepared to have preconceptions challenged, even in familiar environments!”

“Efficient use of work time: Finnish workers are much more interested in keeping a strict separation between personal time and work time, and tend to be more efficient in the time they spend at work. More work, less socializing and chatting. Get in, do your work, get out.”

“Work life vs. private life. Finnish workers tend to keep their work lives and private lives more separate than in other cultures. For example, in the US, it is more common for co-workers to meet and socialize with the families of their fellow co-workers and for spouses to come to business get-togethers and parties.”