

An Idiot Abroad

10 Do's and Don'ts of International Co-pro

DO

1. **DO MAKE YOURSELF VISIBLE online.** Update your credits on IMDb.com and LinkedIn.
2. **DO CYBERSTALK** your copro partner(s). Know their channel brands, haunt their websites, and view their shows on Youtube.
3. **DO GET TO KNOW** the top five kids' things that everybody in your partner's culture knows, but other countries have never heard of. A book, a TV show, a movie... Then ask why they are important.
4. **DO GO TO WRITERS' MEETINGS** in a mood to share.
5. **DO BE A LITTLE MORE DIRECT** than you might be to a Brit.
6. **DO LEARN YOUR PARTNER'S GOLDEN RULES** of tone, style and standards. Nobody likes a re-shoot.
7. **DO DISCUSS YOUR PARTNERS' TABOO TOPICS** (e.g. French – death; Brits – religion, Canadians – toilet humour)
8. **DO LOVE YOUR SCRIPT EDITOR.** S/he does more than you think – including recommending writers.
9. **DO BUILD IN TIME** for overseas writers to do a pass on the scripts.
10. **DO REMEMBER** that in co-production, as in marriage, "My partner doesn't understand me" is no defence.



DON'T

1. **DON'T ASSUME** your target demographic matches your partner's. 'Pre-school' is different for some broadcasters.
2. **DON'T JUST COMMUNICATE BY E-MAIL.** Use Skype or pick up the phone: isolation breeds insecurity.
3. **DON'T WRITE** puns, slang, word gags or onscreen text in scripts.
4. **DON'T OVERESTIMATE** the power of Google Translate
5. **DON'T UNDERESTIMATE** the difficulties of working in a second language. Just be grateful you don't have to get by on yours!
6. **DON'T MUMBLE OR TALK FAST** on the phone.
7. **DON'T OVERCOMPLICATE E-MAILS.** Why write one long sentence when three short ones would do?
8. **DON'T CRITICISE.** Cultures are a bit like families. There are some things a family member is allowed to say that an outsider isn't.
9. **DON'T TAKE SILENCE AS CONSENSUS.** It's always worth picking up the phone to ensure everyone is on the same page.
10. **DON'T COMPARE** everything unfavourably to conditions at home. It's different. Get over it.