

Many Danish companies hire groups of newcomers all at once, particularly when there is a major but defined project to be completed. Far from home and speaking mostly with each other, these highly-trained specialists can feel lost in a Danish working environment. Hiring me early in the process can help avoid cultural misunderstandings later on.

– KAY XANDER MELLISH

COACHING GROUPS

(SELECTED SLIDES)



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LAUGHING AT YOURSELF IS KEY

Your Danish team will test you to see if you can laugh at yourself. Jokes about your mishaps and failures are common - so are jokes about ethnicity, baldness, etc.

"When we can make fun of someone, that means we can trust them. They are part of our circle of trust."

THE FLAT HIERARCHY

Danes are very proud of their "flat hierarchy", which suits a small country with very high salaries.

- Matches the Danish passion for equality
- Suits the hands-off management style Danes prefer
- Promotions are often horizontal
- Watch out! People skip over layers to get answers

DANISH MANAGERS (OR "LEADERS")

- Danish bosses are usually called "managers" or "leaders" and don't show off their authority or power as bosses do elsewhere. They often dress casually.
- Instead of giving orders, they prefer to give you an assignment and let you get on with it. They do not want to approve everything you do; this takes too much time, and they prefer to trust you.
- Danish managers sometimes deliver instructions indirectly. They might say, "It could be a good idea to have it done Friday" - but that still means it **needs** to be done Friday.
- If you're not sure, ask, and ask if you should downprioritize other projects to get it done. Don't work extra hours - this is not expected in Denmark.

Small talk with Danes

Danes hate small talk; they prefer to get right to business in the office. At team lunches and parties, they may talk about family and their free time interests. The only topics generally avoided are personal finance and religion.