

Press Release

THE FRENCH AND THE BRITISH - TOWARDS A BETTER UNDERSTANDING?

New bilingual booklet published by the French Chamber of Commerce in Great Britain offers practical and amusing insights to facilitate business relations between the French and the British

London, 27 February 2013 - The French Chamber of Commerce's Cross-Cultural Relations Forum has just published a handy and practical bilingual booklet to facilitate business dealings between the French and the British.

Based on the real life experiences of the Chamber's members, the booklet, entitled 'Light at the End of the Tunnel / Le Piège de la Ressemblance', sheds light on the way the two cultures relate - and sometime clash - in their daily business dealings.

For example:

- During negotiations, the English will speak with a calm and measured delivery whereas the French will tend to speak at a higher volume and with greater displays of emotion.
- For the English, lunch is often a sandwich eaten at the desk whereas the French tend to take longer breaks out of the office and use these as relationship-building opportunities.
- During a meeting, a British latecomer will slip in quietly, apologise and sit down very quickly whereas a French latecomer will enter and immediately shake hands with everyone present.

'Both the French and the British in their business relations can easily fall into the trap of similarity and assume sameness where there is in fact difference. What is natural and obvious in one country may be exotic and strange in another,' says Peter Alfandary, Head of the French Team at ReedSmith, Chair of the Cross-Cultural Relations Forum and Deputy President of the Chamber.

'This booklet provides a handy insight into our respective perceptions of each other. By facilitating better understanding, our aim is to facilitate better business,' he explains.

The booklet also provides useful tips for both the British and the French to enhance mutual understanding and smooth the way for successful and more cordial business dealings.

This bilingual edition follows on from the success of the first English edition of the booklet, which has been purchased by numerous corporates working internationally as well as by various official and government bodies.

'Light at the End of the Tunnel / Le Piège de la Ressemblance' is now for sale on [the French Chamber of Commerce's website](#) for £6.

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Notes to Editors

About the French Chamber of Commerce in Great Britain

The French Chamber of Commerce in Great Britain is part of a network of 115 French Chambers of Commerce and Industry Abroad (FCCIA), which is the largest private French network in the world with a combined membership base of more than 23,000 companies. It is the largest foreign Chamber in the UK in terms of both turnover and range of services offered as well as one of the top French Chambers worldwide.

Our main aims are to provide a platform of exchange and networking at the service of Franco-British firms in the UK, to promote our 600 members' interests to key decision makers and to help develop economic and commercial relations between France and the UK. Our Business Consultancy, Implantation and Recruitment departments provide both British and French companies with a large range of bespoke professional services.

The 50 events we organise every year, with personalities from the British and French political and business worlds, offer great opportunities for our members to develop their business and expand their network of contacts.

Additionally, the Forums and the Clubs we have launched over the past two years, focusing on issues or sectors such as Human Resources, Cross-Cultural Relations, Finance, Legal and the Luxury sector, offer our members dedicated platforms to exchange experiences at the highest level of management and to share best practices.

About the Cross-Cultural Relations Forum

Chaired by Peter Alfandary, Deputy President of the French Chamber and Head of the French team at ReedSmith, this Forum is aimed specifically at senior leaders from different backgrounds who share a passion and experience in cross-cultural management issues and bi-cultural business environments. Since its creation in May 2009, the Forum has been actively working as a 'think tank' of best practice towards its objectives: promoting a better understanding of business culture in France and in the UK, and disseminating cross-cultural know-how to Chamber members.

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