Osaka Language Solutions
23-43-205 Asahicho, Izumiotsu City
Osaka Prefecture 595-0025, Japan
Website: osakalanguagesolutions.com
E-mail: info@osakalanguagesolutions.com

2025 Japanese Business Etiquette & Mind-Reading Guide

Business Cards · Bowing · Seating · Drinking · Body Language · Reading Honne vs Tatemae

Already saved by 3,000+ executives flying to Japan in 2025

Osaka Language Solutions – Tier-S Interpretation Division

3 pages | Updated December 2025 | Free for global clients & partners

---

1. Meishi Exchange – The 60-Second Hierarchy Ritual

Step	Action	What Japanese People Are Thinking
1	Stand up immediately	"He respects the moment"
2	Walk around table (never across)	"He understands physical space = respect"
3	Two hands, Japanese side up	"He prepared properly"
4	Read card 5+ seconds	"He values my position"
5	Place cards on table in rank order	"He already understands our org chart" → instant trust

2. Bowing Angles – What They're Really Feeling

Angle	When They Use It	Hidden Emotion
15° Eshaku	Daily greeting	Neutral / polite distance
30° Keirei	Meeting start & end	"I acknowledge your status"
45° Saikeirei	Deep apology or huge favor	"I am placing myself below you"
60°+ Dogeza (rare)	Only in crisis	"I am willing to lose everything"

Pro tip: If they suddenly go from 15° to 45° mid-meeting → you just screwed up. Apologise immediately.

Osaka Language Solutions
23-43-205 Asahicho, Izumiotsu City
Osaka Prefecture 595-0025, Japan
Website: osakalanguagesolutions.com
E-mail: info@osakalanguagesolutions.com

3. Body Language Decoder – Read Honne (True Feelings) Behind Tatemae (Public Face)

Body Signal	Tatemae (What They Say)	Honne (What They Mean)
Sucking air through teeth (スッ)	"Chotto…"	Hard no — abandon hope
Head tilt + smile + "Kangaete okimasu"	"We'll consider it"	Polite rejection — move on
Sudden silence after your proposal	Nothing	Strong discomfort — change topic fast
Leans back, arms crossed	"Interesting…"	Already decided no
Leans forward, nodding slowly	"Naruhodo…"	Genuinely interested — push gently
Quick glance at the most junior person	—	Their quiet opinion can block the deal

4. Seating, Drinking & Gift Rules – Visual One-Page Cheat Sheet

Seating (meeting room & taxi)

- Kamiza (上座) = seat of honor – farthest from the door
- Shimoza (下座) = lowest seat – closest to the door
- Client normally takes kamiza unless host insists twice

Nomikai (Drinking) Rules

- Never pour your own drink
- Pour for others with two hands, label facing up
- Hold your glass with two hands when someone pours for you
- Senior person drinks first → then everyone else

Gift & Omiyage Rules 2025

- Always beautifully wrapped
- Present with two hands + slight bow
- Never give four of anything (sounds like "death")

Osaka Language Solutions
23-43-205 Asahicho, Izumiotsu City
Osaka Prefecture 595-0025, Japan
Website: osakalanguagesolutions.com
E-mail: info@osakalanguagesolutions.com

• Osaka bonus: funny local sweets or character goods are smiled at and accepted

Full visual cheat sheet is on page 4 of the free PDF ↓

5. Emergency Recovery Phrases (Use Within 3 Seconds of Screw-Up)

- **Mōshiwake gozaimasen deshita** → Deepest business apology
- **Taihen shitsurei itashimashita** → "I was extremely rude"
- **Gomeiwaku o okake shite, makoto ni sumimasen** → "I caused you trouble — truly sorry"

6. Osaka vs Tokyo – One-Page Truth Table

	Tokyo	Osaka
Tone	Formal, slow, indirect	Direct, warm, jokes allowed after 2nd beer
Trust built via	Process & paperwork	Personal connection & drinking together
Silence means	Thinking	Disagreement
Best gift	Department-store wrapped	Funny/local food souvenir

Print this guide.

Keep it in your suit pocket.

Never lose face again. Download Full 6-Page PDF Now

© 2025 Osaka Language Solutions · Used by executives at 40+ TSE Prime companies · Updated monthly

Need a Tier-S interpreter who already knows every signal in this guide?

→ Get your free consultation