

# Business Communication for Romanian Millennials in Great Britain

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## Abstract

*The paper discusses the professional communication between the British and the Romanian Millennials working in the United Kingdom. The author conducts a survey aiming at proving that better communication requires awareness and adaptation to the local culture and that it also depends on the gender of the Millennials and on the period of time spent in the United Kingdom.*

**Keywords:** *business communication, intercultural communication, Millennials, migrants, Romanians, Great Britain*

## Introduction

This paper discusses the Romanians' professional interaction with the British, taking into consideration the cultural differences between the two cultures, the British one and the Romanian one. The fact that we noticed that in the recent years an increasing number of young Romanians are leaving the country to work (or to study) in Great Britain made us to choose this subject. Generally, the reason of their decision is represented by the financial opportunities a West European country such as Great Britain can offer them. Moreover, the UK represents a personal choice of a country to live in the next years, so this subject was also of personal interest.

The main point of the whole research is: Did Romanians adjust their cultural attitude in order to have a successful experience with the British employers and colleagues? Given the considerable number of cultural differences between these two cultures, our hypothesis is that the Romanian working in the UK must adapt to the British culture. This hypothesis was verified by means of an interview, but we also took the liberty to observe the interviewee's body language which can confirm or not what he/she is actually saying. We established that the interview's questions will be in Romanian as to avoid any misunderstandings that may occur. We will also explain the purpose of each question of the interview and the criterion used to better analyse the whole information obtained through this research method. We interviewed approximately 12 Romanian millennial, with the same educational background – Bachelor degree (aged 21-35 years), currently working in UK. We analysed their answers according to three criteria:

-domain of activity, and in this respect we distinguished 5 domains:

- Information Technology (IT);
- Marketing, Sales, Service;
- Manufacturing;
- Transport and Logistics;
- Constructions.

-gender and

-the period of time spent in the UK.

### **The interview**

The interview took place in the Romanian language and the questions were also expressed in this language. Thus and so, we avoided any misunderstanding that may occur. We translated below the questions of the interview in English:

1. How did you imagine the British people, before arriving in UK? Mention 5 traits you thought they have.
2. How did you find the British after arriving in UK? (5 traits)
3. What ethnicity do you think the British appreciate the most among immigrants?
4. What ethnicity do you think the British appreciate the least among immigrants?
5. Do you think the medium British appreciate the Romanian immigrant? Why yes? Why not?
6. What qualities you consider the British have at their job?
7. What imperfections you think the British have at their job?
8. What qualities you think the British have in society? (Name 5 qualities)
9. What imperfections you think the British have society? (Name 5 imperfections)
10. How should one behave in order to be in good relations with the British at the workplace?
11. Do you consider that the social system in UK is favorable to the immigrants?
12. Why not/Why yes?
13. What kind of relationship would you like to have with the British?
  - A. Good neighbourhood relations;
  - B. Good work relations;
  - C. Friendship;
  - D. Marriage;

E. No kind of relation.  
14. If you can, will you remain in UK?

The first two questions are meant to observe if there were any differences of perception about the British people. Questions 3, 4 and 5 are dedicated to the immigration concern and we desire to establish what the Romanians think are the most appreciated immigrants, less appreciated immigrants and about the medium British citizen's attitude towards the Romanian workers. By questioning Romanians through number 11 and 12, we want to know if they consider that the social system is favorable to the immigrants.

Questions 6, 7, 8 and 9 investigate the apprehension of the Romanians about the British: their qualities and imperfections. We want to find out what positive and negative traits Romanian have attributed to the British.

Question 10 refers to the perfect attitude that must be adopted by a Romanian who wants to have a good relationship with the British. The purpose of this question is to find out if the Romanian millennial consider they should adapt somehow their comportment at their job or they should act normal, without taking into consideration the different cultural milieu.

Question 13 has the purpose of establishing what kind of relationship the Romanians want to have with the British. The last question puts into discussion the definitive remaining of the Romanians in UK. We want to find out if they feel sufficiently good in UK as to inhabit there forever.

### **The respondents**

We have chosen 12 subjects who work in different fields of work, in order to observe if there are any kind of differences between them: Information Technology – IT (3 respondents); Marketing, Sales, Service (5 respondents); Manufacturing (1 respondent); Transport and logistics (1 respondent); Constructions (2 respondents). More precisely, the respondents were:

-Subject 1 is a 25 years old woman and has been working in a factory for 1 year, thus in Manufacturing field.

-The second respondent is a 21 years old woman and has been working in a store for almost 2 years, being framed in the Marketing, Sales, the Services field.

-Subject 3 is a 35 years old man and has been working as a warehouse manager for 5 years. We framed him in the Marketing, Sales, the Service field.

-The forth subject is a 30 years old woman, who has been working for 2 years in the Logistics field.

-Subject 5 is a 29 years old woman who has been working in the

Marketing, Sales, Service field for 3 years.

-Subject 6 is a 32 years old man and has been working in the Constructions field, as carpenter for 4 years.

-Subject 7 is a 32 years old man and has been working in the IT field for 5 years.

-Subject 8 is 31 years old man and has been working in the IT field for 7 years.

-Subject 9 is a 24 years old man and has been working works for almost 3 years in the Constructions field.

-Subject 10 is a 24 years old woman and has been working in the Marketing domain for about 1 year.

-Subject 11 is a 28 years old man and has been working in the IT field for about 2 years.

-Subject 12 is a 26 years old woman and has been working in the Marketing, Sales, Service field, at a store, for 1 year.

## **Interpretation**

### **The first criterion - the field of activity:**

#### ***Information Technology – IT***

Our 3 respondents, representative for this field, are subject 7, subject 8 and subject 11. There are similarities, as well as differences between the opinions of these three respondents.

After arriving in UK, subject 8 and 11 perceived better the British, whereas the expectations of subject 7 worsened. Subject 7 and 8 have in common the fact that both consider the Germans the most liked ethnicity, while subject 11 considers that the British do not use to label someone by his/her ethnicity, neither to like him/her, neither to dislike him/her.

Though subject 11 did not directly talk about “Romanians who come in UK for stealing or begging”, we consider that all the three subject have the same opinion regarding how the British perceive the Romanians: they appreciate the Romanians who came to UK to work, but cannot esteem the Romanians who came to UK to beg or to steal.

With reference to our supposition, subject 7 considered that one should simply respect the clothing rule and fulfill his/her duties in order to successfully interact with the British, subject 8 declared that one should simply do his/her job, while subject 11 sustained that a Romanian should be communicative, honest and dedicated at the workplace. All three have in common the dedication to the job one must have. We consider “doing your job” a cultural adaptation

because the Romanian culture is focused on people being concentrated not necessarily on the task fulfilled, but more on the relationship established between the employee and employer/superiors, while the British culture is focused on the tasks performed.

By and large, all subjects named different qualities and weaknesses of the British and though one of them, subject 7, sustained he does not desire to remain in UK – we interpret this attitude as a response to a strikingly different culture from the Romanian one – we believe that the Romanians working in UK in the IT field have at least a moderate attitude, if not positive towards the British and appreciate their culture and opportunities that country offers to a person that want to thrive in that domain, the majority longing to live there forever.

### ***Marketing, Sales, Service***

Our 5 respondents, representative for this field, are subjects 2, 3, 5, 10 and 12. There are also similarities, as well as differences between the opinions of the five respondents.

All of them had a certain image of the British which changed partially or in some cases totally after arriving in UK. All of them provided us with both qualities and weaknesses of the British, different in accordance to each subject experience: some of them sustained the British are cold (subjects 3, 5 and 12), others that they are untrustworthy (subjects 2, 3 and 5), superficial (subjects 2 and 5), punctual (subjects 2 and 5) and polite (subjects 2, 5 and 10).

Regarding the ethnicities liked/disliked by the British the opinions were diverse: subject subjects 2, 3, 5 and 12 considered the British did not appreciate the Romanians, confusing them often with the Gypsies, while subject 3 and 10 considered the most liked ethnicity are themselves. Subject 5 could not mention an ethnicity liked by the British, whereas subject 2 named the Chinese and the Japanese and subject 12 named the Italians.

All the subjects provided us with different cultural adaptation techniques for a Romanian working in UK. From subject 2 who considered that one should be superficial and attentive as the British, to subject 3 that believed one should avoid telling the truth to the British, by using sarcasm or subject 5/subject 10 who were convinced that one must be dedicated and must know the language. We could notice that comparing this field with the previous one, the cultural adaptation techniques are more precise and diverse. This might be correlated with the specificity of the Marketing, Sales and Service domain, which implies interacting a lot with people: customers, superiors, subordinates, colleagues, contractors.

Regarding the social system for the immigrants, the only subject that

thought it was unfavorable was subject 3, whereas all the other subjects sustained the system is advantageous for the immigrants. We observed that subject 3 is 35 years old, while the other subjects are aged under 30. We cannot affirm if this is a cause for that result, but it might worth being investigated.

With reference to the decision of staying forever in UK, two of the respondents had an affirmative answer, while three of them refused to live forever in UK. This may be correlated with the cultural differences and the specific of the field which may lead to cultural disagreements.

All in all, this field was the best represented having the most relevant results, because it was formed of 5 subjects. All the five subjects are aware of the need of adaptation to the British culture, but not all of them are willing to do that for the rest of their lives – as we mentioned before, it may be linked with the personality and family situation of each of them and with the specificity of the domain.

### ***Manufacturing***

We had just one respondent for this field. Although the respondent had an unfavorable representation of the British, this changed after she met them in reality, as she found out rather positive aspects of them, except for being slanderous – trait mentioned by her in other answers. It is interesting the fact that initially she could not name an ethnicity the British like which may be a suggestion of how the British are perceived by the others. It is worth mentioning that respondents working in other fields had the same view – Marketing, Sales, Service domain and Constructions sphere.

She considered that doing your job and being polite is the answer for successful interaction at your work, a sign of cultural adaptation. So a certain behavior is necessary and our subject from Manufacturing field is aware of the fact that one must adapt himself/herself to the British culture for a good professional interaction with the British.

Though the subject of Brexit was not mentioned directly in the interview, subject one – and all the other subjects were aware of it. The fact that she does not want to remain in UK might be a suggestion about her adaptation process to the British culture. A possible explanation is the fact that for this subject the cultural differences are too big to be overcome.

Considering the fact that we had just one respondent representative for this domain, we suggest a further research with more respondents working in this field for accurate results.

### ***Transport and logistics***

We had just one respondent for this field (subject 4), who, by the answers provided, could be characterized as disappointed by the British culture. Though she managed to name some qualities of the British – non-controversial, know how to motivate one, well-mannered – she has no intentions in trying to interact with them (she is the only one that want to have no type of relationship with the British) or remaining forever in UK. We interpret the fact that she does not want to have any kind of relationships with the British as a refusal to a truthful adaptation to that culture.

She admitted that in order to have a fruitful collaboration with the British, one must fulfill his/her tasks, must smile and has to communicate, answer interpreted as a cultural adaptation to the British culture, fact that proves our hypothesis.

Overall, considering the subject's 4 answers, we could say that she is reluctant towards the British culture. She is aware of the fact that one must adapt to that culture for effective interaction, but she has no intention in truly adapt to the British culture. Though, considering the fact that we had just one respondent representative for Logistics domain, we recommend a further research with more respondents working in this field for accurate results.

### ***Constructions***

We had two respondents for this field – subject 6 and subject 9. Comparing the answers of the two respondents we noticed similarities, but also differences.

Subject 9 declared that one ethnicity appreciated by the British is the Germans – having a similar view with subjects from IT field – whereas subject 6 sustained that the British like only themselves. According to subject 9 the least liked ethnicity is the Albanians, while subject 6 considered that the “Gypsy Romanians” are disliked by the British – from this point of view being similar with subjects working in Marketing, Sales, Service, IT and Logistics fields.

They both provided us with different qualities and sore points of the British at the workplace and in the society. In addition, both respondents had an equilibrate attitude towards the British, revealed through their non-verbal language and through their answers. The two intent to remain in UK forever, but while subject 9 wants to bind friendship, good neighborhood relationship and professional relationship with the British, subject 6 limits himself to good neighborhood relationship.

Regarding our hypothesis, both subjects declared that adaptation is needed in order to collaborate with the British – subject 9 considered that one must communicate with the British and render justice to them and subject 6 sustained that being polite and avoiding direct confrontations are the best way to adapt to the British culture. To our mind, these two are interconnected because giving

justice to the British implies avoiding a direct confrontation.

Largely, considering the answers and the attitude of these two subjects, representative for the Constructions field, we could affirm that the Romanians working Constructions are aware of the British' positive and negative traits and having an equilibrate judgment and a truthful adaptation to the British culture is possible.

Considering all the fields analyzed above, we could affirm that all of them suppose a certain adaptation to the British culture. While Marketing, Sales and Service domain has a more particular approach – as it is more obvious the need of adaptation – the IT field has a more general approach. Regarding the conclusions of each field, we think that the easiest adaptation process seems to be for the IT workers, followed by the Constructions and Marketing, Sales and Services employees whereas for Logistics and Manufacturing domains a larger number of respondents would be necessary in order to gain precise results.

As it was required, each of the subjects gave us some positive and negative traits of the British at the workplace, but also in the society. While some of them focused more on what they dislike at this culture, others had an equilibrate discourse, proved through their non-verbal language. One of the most mentioned traits of the British was politeness – almost every subject specified it in their answers. Other traits frequently stated in the subjects' answers are: punctuality (Manufacturing, IT and Marketing, Sales and Service fields), laziness (Marketing, Sales and Service sphere), slanderous (Manufacturing, Construction and IT domains), superficiality (Logistics, Marketing, Sales and Service and IT specialties).

A considerable number of subjects named the Romanians as being the least appreciated ethnicity by the British – they were from different fields: Constructions, Marketing, Sales, Service, Logistics, IT. Some of the respondents – mostly from the IT field – considered that a Romanian who comes in UK to work and does his job will be appreciated, but not one who comes there for begging.

### **Second criterion: gender**

With reference to the other criterion determined by us, the gender of the respondents, we consider that we obtained some interesting accurate results mostly because the 12 respondents were equally represented by each gender. Out of the 6 men who participated to our research, 5 declared that they would remain in UK (except for subject 7), while out of the 6 women who took part to our interviews, just 2 were willing to remain in Great Britain (subjects 5 and 10). By analyzing these figures, we consider that it may be more difficult for the



Romanian women to adapt to an individualistic culture. Coming from a collective culture, women may feel the need of protection more than the men, fact proved through the answers provided. Regarding the traits attributed to the British, we consider that gender is not relevant, as both women and men described the British using both positive and negative features.

### **Third criterion: time spent in the UK**

On the one side, subjects who spent over 2 years in UK desire to remain there: respondents 3 (5 years), 5 (3 years – depending on what kind of changes Brexit will bring), 6 (4 years), 8 (7 years), 9 (3 years). Exceptions are subjects 10 (has been living there for 1 year) and subject 11 (has been living there for 2 years). On the other side, subjects who spent up to 2 years in this country do not wish to live there forever: subjects 1 (1 year), 2 (2 years), 4 (2 years), 12 (1 year). The only exception who spent 5 years, but do not intends to remain in UK is subject 7. We consider that exceptions may be related with their family situation or with their personality. Our conclusion regarding this criterion, of the years spent in Great Britain, are that one cannot adapt instantly to a whole new culture such as the British one, extremely different from the Romanian culture – a period of years must pass for the adaptation to take place.

### **Conclusions**

Overall, almost all the subjects want good professional relationships with the British. Some of them want to bind friendships with the British or desire a good relationship with them as neighbors. Just one subject – subject 4 – declared that she does not want to have any type of relation with the British.

All in all, with reference to our hypothesis, every subject, regardless the field of work, gender or time spent in UK, declared direct or indirect that cultural adaptation is necessary for a successful professional interaction with the British. Thus, our hypothesis is proved.

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