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Bali White Paper

Life in Bali,
Business in Indonesia

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Living and working in Indonesia can be challenging, entertaining, frustrating, educational, healthy, dangerous, safe, fun, difficult but always interesting...

I came here to live about 2 years ago after many years in Hawaii, the surf here like Hawaii, is very good...The weather is similar to Hawaii & I lived in Puna on the Big Island which is a 3rd world kind of place to live anyway so I didn't get the culture shock like someone moving here from L.A. or N.Y would...I had 2 goals when I got here, learn to drive (should have rented a car the 1st year, would have a lot less dents in my car now) and & learn the language. Saya bisa bicara Bahasa Indonesia sedikit ...”I can speak Indonesian a little bit” and I do go to school once a week & study daily...I know enough to get around now...

What we consider “common sense” in America, as my friend Yanti pointed out, is actually learned behavior in many cases...All you need to do is drive here in Indo to experience a total lack of any sense, common or not!!! It's more like a dance & it's takes a while to understand & flow with the “method to the madness”...Indonesians very rarely look behind themselves, they just pull out and expect the guy behind them to not hit them...The unspoken rule here is, if a



motorbike & car get in an accident for any reason, it's the cars fault...If a car & a truck get in an accident, it's the trucks fault...If an Indonesian & a foreigner get in an accident, it's the foreigners fault...The Indonesians believe it's the foreigners fault as they wouldn't have had the wreck if we weren't here...I had a woman ride her bike right into me while I was driving straight

down the road in front of my house...She didn't look, made a right turn into the side of my car...She said "You pay me, I was turning?!?!". Dealing w/ Asian thinking is challenging to say the least...In America we are taught to look both ways before crossing the street...As adults we FORGET that when living here & think the Indonesians are just clueless (many are) but in reality, they are not taught to look before doing anything, they just GO...

Also, it's common to see at least 500 felonies daily here in Indo...I have seen MANY families on motorbikes, 4-5 on one bike is common...Children less than 3 years old just hanging on, no helmets nothing. In the states, CPS would be called immediately & the kids would be put in foster care...Here no one even looks...It is also common to see many people on the road (mostly motor bikes) with their lights off at night as they believe the lights use fuel!?



We're dealing with a culture that lives in the NOW all the time which has its pluses & minuses...Pluses are the people are smiling most of the time, kids always waving, a lot of happy people...Minuses are people live in the NOW so they have no idea what building relationships for the future are...

In business when you tell a furniture manufacturer that you want a long term relationship & want to order a container every 3 months & want to negotiate better prices so you can sell more, they politely smile and say "OK Mister, thank you very much" but they can not see past RIGHT NOW so it's basically a futile attempt & a waste of time...The price can be negotiated but if/when you go back next time it & deal with the same person the negotiations start all over again because they are talking about NOW!

Also, the fact remains that this is a racist country, smiles and all...White people pay more for EVERYTHING, that's just the way it is...I have become involved in a food project, very limited involvement...Basically just some "being of service" suggestions w/ limited financial investment on my part ...I am dealing with a few Indonesian business people I have met here...They are all good people but they ALL think foreigners are ATM machines, continually & endlessly asking for more money, if I have friends that want to invest etc...We are helping farmers in the outer islands sell their "yams" to the buyers in Java...It's such a, in many ways, poor country that \$1000 USD is considered a HUGE investment...It is also so corrupt that some of the old president is one of the wealthiest people in the world...His son has been convicted of murder etc but is living the life of a rock star while the average income here is less than \$200 USD per month!

All and all Indonesia is a great place to live, friendly people, good weather, great food & very inexpensive compared to the States...Business here can be challenging & I suggest learn how to drive & speak the language, get involved & enjoy the ride...

Paul B