

Intercultural Business Etiquette

The document includes a compilation of "basic" information for the Business Etiquette in several countries. The country files include all the necessary basic information from the main religion and language, to greeting habits and business behavior.

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Armenia

Fun Fact

Mount Ararat, geographically in Turkey, is one of the national symbols of Armenia.

Religion

Armenian Apostolic 94.7%, other Christian 4%, Yezidi 1.3%

Language

Armenian

Currency ([Currency Converter](#))

Dram (AMD)

Country Code

+374

Time

GMT +4

Appearance

- Men wear regular business attire, suit, jacket, trousers, etc.
- Women wear elegant business suits, or skirts down to the knee. Bright colors are usually not appropriate. Armenian women value being well-dressed. They are hardly ever underdressed for an occasion.

Greetings, titles, business cards

- Men greet men with a handshake. Women greet women with a kiss on the cheek. Women should wait for the man to present his hand for the handshake.
- "Barev" or "Barev dzez" means "Hello"
- It is common to address people by their first names followed by a title such as "Parin" for Mr., "Bjishk" for Dr., "Tikin" for Mrs., and "Oriord" for Miss.

Gift giving

- Gifts are expected.
- Personal gifts are inappropriate- office gifts are best.
- Gifts should be wrapped.
- When receiving a gift you should not open it in public.

Communication style

- People tend to be very direct and say exactly what they want to say. There is usually no holding back on what one says. A visitor must not take this to heart.
- In business interactions, an arm's length of space is acceptable.
- There is no touching during conversation.
- Direct eye contact is preferred.

Gestures

- Beckon someone by raising a hand, or stop someone with a side wave (like shooing away a cat).
- Do not make a fist with the thumb between the index and middle finger as it is obscene.

Business behavior

- For the most part, things start within a 15-20 after the designated time. However, if one is attending an Armenian event, "just five more minutes" may end up being hours.



- One should engage through listening and speaking.
- Small talk is expected, but allow the Armenian to start and end it.

Negotiations

- Business is business, but Armenians tend to be very friendly and communicative so it is best that you create a friendly atmosphere during your business meeting, make proper jokes and so on.
- It is best to not show overly strong emotions during negotiations and to expect the decisions not to be made right away.



Azerbaijan

Fun Fact

Azeri culture, due to its rural roots and culturally rich tapestry, has many superstitions. Examples include:

- Spilled salt means you are about to fight. Sprinkle sugar on the salt to counter this.
- Leaving scissors with opened blades brings misfortune and even death.
- If you meet a person with empty buckets, you are bound for misfortune.
- If you meet a person with bread and full bags, you will have good luck.
- If the first person you meet on your way to work is male, you will have good luck.
- Do not lend money or bread at night.
- Throwing a bowl of water after a person who sets off for a business trip or long journey brings the person luck and helps them to return home safe.

Religion

Muslim 93.4%, Russian Orthodox 2.5%, Armenian Orthodox 2.3%, other 1.8%

Language

Azerbaijani "Azeri"

Currency ([Currency Converter](#))

Manat (AZM)

Country Code

+994

Time

GMT +4

Appearance

- Men wear dark suits and ties. Women dress conservative yet stylish, usually in long skirts (at least to below the knees) with a nice top. Foreign or younger women can wear pants (but not always).
- Avoid wearing overly expensive accessories, dresses/skirts cut above the knee, and sleeveless attire to a first meeting.

Greetings, titles, business cards

- Men shake hands when greeting one another and maintain direct eye contact. Women shake hands or exchange a nod of acknowledgment.
- A man should allow a woman to offer her hand before trying to shake it.
- Note: It is frowned upon for religious men to touch women and vice-versa.
- It is common to address people by their first names followed by title. The title of "muellim/a" is often given for anyone with a degree.
- Always give and receive business cards with your right hand.

Gift giving

- Gifts are not usually brought to a first business meeting.
- Gifts should be offered three times; it is proper to refuse a gift twice and accept on the third offering.
- It is appropriate to bring fruit, pastries and/or flowers to an Azeri home. Always give an odd number of flowers; even numbers are reserved for funerals. Avoid bringing alcohol.
- It is best to wrap gifts nicely.
- Gifts are not opened when received.



Communication style

- Azeris tend to be direct and often use the command form.
- An arm's length of space is a good distance during conversation.
- There is a fair amount of touching between members of the same sex, but there is no touching between men and women.
- Always maintain eye contact while speaking, since Azeris take this as a sign of sincerity. If someone does not look them in the eye while speaking, they think the person has something to hide.

Gestures

- Do not point with one finger, but with the whole hand.
- Do not put your thumb and index finger together to make a circle (like the "ok" sign) as it is obscene.
- Do not slap the palm of one hand on a closed fist as it is obscene.
- Do not put your thumb between your index and middle finger in a fist, as it is obscene.
- Do not show the sole of your foot is considered rude.
- A hand held palm up and shaken back and forth asks (any) question.
- Take your shoes off before entering mosques and homes.
- Give and receive things with your right hand.

Business behavior

- To arrange a meeting, an introductory letter is needed outlining your company, history and the purpose of your visit. It is a good idea to have it translated to Azeri.
- Azeris are sensitive to status, title, who sits down first, who enters the room first, etc. Follow the lead.
- Be on time for meetings, even though you may be kept waiting.
- Discussions begin with small talk to establish a relationship, then the host begins the business discussion. Appropriate topics include: family, sports, food, and places of interest. Avoid: politics, drugs, sex, and religion.
- Meetings can go on for longer than scheduled. Be patient and polite.
- If you are offered tea, accept it.

Negotiations

- Decisions tend to be reached from the top down and take a while. Be prepared to have several meetings to reach a final decision.
- It is best not to appear impatient.
- Bargaining and haggling take on a large role in negotiations.



Belarus

Fun Fact

Belarus has the highest ratio of police to people, of any country in the world.

Religion

Russian Orthodox 80%, other (including Roman Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, and Muslim) 20%

Language

Belarusian, Russian

Currency ([Currency Converter](#))

Belarusian ruble (BYR)

Country Code

+375

Time

GMT +3

Appearance

- Men wear suits and ties. Black and grey are popular. Dark colors and even dark shirts with dark ties are acceptable.
- Women wear mid-length skirts and jackets. They can show color in their blouses, but very toned down; conservative.

Greetings, titles, business cards

- Men greet each other with a handshake and direct eye contact. Women exchange a light handshake or nod. Men and women usually do not touch.
- When meeting for the first time, or to someone to whom it is necessary to show respect, you say "Zdrastvuichi".
- There is no specific protocol surrounding the giving and receiving of business cards.

Gift giving

- Gifts usually mean corruption so it is best to avoid any gifts at initial meetings.

Communication style

- Belarusians tend to say what they mean and what they are thinking, but never directly to the person they are thinking about.
- Touching during conversations is not common.
- Direct eye contact while speaking is common.

Gestures

- Belarusians point to things with one finger.

Business behavior

- On time means on time. However, inconveniences happen and mishaps are understood. These inconveniences are expected to be understood without explanation or apology.

Negotiations

- Business meetings tend to be quite structured. The leader speaks and runs the meeting. The plan is presented for the meeting and it is usually followed to the last line and then the meeting is adjourned.



- Avoid hard selling tactics and any sort of conflict or confrontation.
- Important decisions can take a while but simple decisions are made on the spot.



China

Fun Fact

- The tradition of digging up "dragon bones" (tortoise and cattle bones) has long been a part of Chinese culture. These bones are often used to predict the future. The bones were inscribed with questions then heated to reveal the answers. The tradition dates back as far as the Bronze Age (around 2100 BC during the Xia dynasty).

Religion

China's religion is officially designated as Atheist by the State, although the concepts and teachings of the ancient Chinese philosopher Confucius (500BC) are woven into the society at large. Some religious practice is acceptable in China; however, the government sets rigid limits.

93% Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism; 7% Christian, Protestant, Catholic, Mormon, Muslim and Jewish

Language

Mandarin Chinese

Currency ([Currency Converter](#))

Yuan

Country Code

+86

Time

GMT +8

Appearance

- Men wear dark to medium colored conservative suits with shirts and ties.
- Women wear conservative business suits or dresses and blouses. Avoid low necklines, high heels, and tight fitting or sleeveless attire.
- Jeans and business casual attire are not recommended at a first meeting.
- In warmer months, slacks and a collared shirt are usually acceptable.

Greetings, titles, business cards

- Handshake when greeting and departing, sometimes accompanied by a nod of the head.
- Titles are very important and it is best to address people directly by using their professional title, or Mr., Mrs., or Miss.
- It is a good idea to translate one side of your business card into Chinese.
- Present your business card with both hands, with the Chinese side facing the recipient.
- When receiving business cards, examine them carefully to show interest. Never write on or fold a business card you are given.
- Never put a card in your wallet or pocket. Carry a small card case.

Gift giving

- Gifts are not usually exchanged at a first meeting.
- Quality writing pens are considered favored gifts.
- Do not give: knives, scissors, letter openers, clocks, straw sandals, a stork or crane, handkerchiefs, anything white, blue or black, and anything in groups of four
- Gifts should always be nicely wrapped.
- Gifts are not to be opened right away unless prompted to do so.
- Receive and give gifts with two hands. It is polite to refuse a gift several times before accepting.



Communication style

- Most Chinese speak in an indirect manner. There is usually deeper meaning in their words and sometimes what they mean is quite opposite to what they say.
- Chinese tend to stand a little less than arm's length from one another.
- Chinese favor direct eye contact.

Gestures

- Do not beckon with the forefinger, but extend an arm and make a scratching motion with the fingers.
- Do not point using the index finger, but use an open palm.
- Do not use your feet to move something or put your feet on furniture.
- Do not stick your chopsticks upright in a bowl of rice as it is reserved for funerals. Avoid sucking and biting your chopsticks as well.
- Do not whistle or snap your fingers at anyone.
- Do not use large hand movements. The Chinese do not speak with their hands and your movements may be distracting to your host.
- Do not put your hand in your mouth.
- Avoid personal contact at all costs. It is highly inappropriate for a man to touch a woman in public.
- Do not drop the chopsticks it is considered bad luck.
- Do not rub your chopsticks together before dining. It implies that you have been given poor quality chopsticks that may have splinters.
- Never place your chopsticks straight up in your bowl. By placing your sticks upright in your bowl you will remind your host of joss sticks which connotes death.
- Do not blow your nose at the table or in public.
- Do not refuse to drink. Even if you do not drink, accept it.
- Women should not shake legs while sitting, snap fingers, or whistle.
- It is common in China to show one's surprise or dismay by sucking air in quickly and loudly through the lips and teeth.
- Spitting in public is very common

Business behavior

- It is rude to be late in business situations, but a boss, or one with a higher social or political status, may be late as a show of how busy they are.
- Appointments are a must for business.
- Contacts should be made prior to your trip.
- Bring several copies of all written documents for your meetings.
- Business discussions begin with small talk, then the host begins the business discussion.
- The most important member of your company should lead important meetings. Chinese value rank and status.
- Allow the Chinese to leave a meeting first.

Negotiations

- Chinese value relationship building and harmony so avoid hard selling, pressure tactics and any sort of conflict or confrontation.
- Decisions are made by the head of the group and can take a long time to be reached.
- Chinese use an indirect communication style and will avoid using "no."
- Many Chinese will want to consult with the stars or wait for a lucky day before they make a decision.

Other

- As a cultural courtesy, you should taste all the dishes you are offered.
- Do not eat all of your meal. If you eat all of your meal, the Chinese will assume you did not receive enough food and are still hungry.



- Do not discuss business at meals.
- Do not start to eat or drink prior to the host.



Costa Rica

Fun Fact

In recent years, Costa Rica has nearly become synonymous with the term "ecotourism." Its pristine rainforests are painstakingly protected, and an ever-increasing tide of people come to witness the astounding abundance of plant and animal species each year.

Religion

Roman Catholic 77%, various form of Christianity 16%, other 7% includes Buddhist, Muslim, Jewish, and Agnostic.

Language

Spanish

Currency ([Currency Converter](#))

Colón

Country Code

+506

Time

GMT -6

Appearance

- Men wear suit and tie. Conservative dark colored suits with shirt and conservative ties. It is best to keep the jacket on at all times.
- Women wear stylish business suits or dresses and matching shoes. Pants are fine.

Greetings, titles, business cards

- Men and women greet with a handshake with direct eye contact.
- Titles are important. You may speak directly to someone by using only his or her title, without including the last name.
 - A Ph.D or a physician = *Doctor (dok-TOR)*
 - Teacher = *Profesor (pro-fe-SOR)*
 - Lawyers are *Abogado/a (a-bo-GA-do/da)*
- Persons who do not have professional titles should be addressed as:
 - Mr. = *Señor (sen-YOR)*
 - Mrs. = *Señora (sen-YOR-a)*
 - Miss = *Señorita (sen-yor-I-ta)*
- Most Latinos have two surnames: one from their father, which is listed first, followed by one from their mother. Only the father's surname is used when addressing someone
- There is no specific ritual surrounding the giving of business cards. Treat the card with respect and interest.
- It is advisable to have one side of your business card translated into Spanish. Present your business card with the Spanish side facing the recipient.

Gift giving

- Gifts are usually not brought to a first meeting.
- If invited to a home, it is appropriate to bring flowers (avoid lilies), wine, spirits, or chocolates.
- Gifts should be nicely wrapped.
- Gifts are usually opened right away.

Communication style



- Costa Ricans tend to take a more indirect path when communicating, requiring creative speaking and listening techniques.
- Costa Ricans stand close to one another while talking.
- There is a fair amount of touching while conversing.
- Direct eye contact is necessary if you want to deliver a consistent message.

Gestures

- To point, using one finger is normal.
- A common gesture is to clap one hand with the backside of the other hand and then drag that second hand down. It means "let's leave" or "let's go".
- Do not make a fist with your thumb between your index and middle fingers.
- Do not put your feet on furniture.
- Being drunk in public is impolite and can make people think you are not a trustworthy person.

Business behavior

- Arriving on time is important. Costa Ricans are quite punctual.
- There is usually some form of small talk before discussing business. Appropriate topics include: local culture, family, history, politics, soccer.
- It is best to allow your host to begin the business discussion.

Negotiations

- Avoid hard selling, pressure tactics and any sort of conflict or confrontation.
- Costa Ricans use and respond best to indirect communication style over direct.
- Decisions are usually made through a group consensus and can be long before they are reached.



El Salvador

Fun Fact

El Salvador was involved in an infamous 100 hour war with neighboring Honduras in 1969, after a soccer game.

Religion

Roman Catholic 83%, other 17% includes a large Protestant evangelical population.

Language

Spanish

Currency ([Currency Converter](#))

US Dollar (USD)

Country Code

+503

Time

GMT -6

Appearance

- For men, a suit and tie are appropriate. Dark colors and somewhat conservative styles are the norm. For informal situations, khakis, nice jeans and a collared shirt is usually appropriate.
- For women, skirts or slacks, nice shoes and a nice shirt are acceptable. Stylish yet conservative is best. Most women wear high heels, nice accessories, and a fair amount of make-up.

Greetings, titles, business cards

- Men and women use handshakes.
- Titles are important. You may speak directly to someone by using only his or her title, without including the last name.
 - A Ph.D or a physician = *Doctor (dok-TOR)*
 - Teacher = *Profesor (pro-fe-SOR)*
 - Lawyers are *Abogado/a (a-bo-GA-do/da)*
- Persons who do not have professional titles should be addressed as:
 - Mr. = *Señor (sen-YOR)*
 - Mrs. = *Señora (sen-YOR-a)*
 - Miss = *Señorita (sen-yor-I-ta)*
- Most Latinos have two surnames: one from their father, which is listed first, followed by one from their mother. Only the father's surname is used when addressing someone
- There is no specific ritual surrounding the giving of business cards. Treat the card with respect and interest.
- It is advisable to have one side of your business card translated into Spanish. Present your business card with the Spanish side facing the recipient.

Gift giving

- Gifts are not expected at an initial meeting, but are appreciated.
- If invited to a Salvadoran home, it is appropriate to bring flowers, wine, or quality candy.

Communication style

- Indirect communication is very common.
- Most Salvadorans stand a little less than an arm's length apart during conversations.
- There is a decent amount of touching during conversations.



- Direct eye contact is expected and appreciated during conversations.
- Salvadorans are expressive with both hands and face.

Gestures

- Do not point with one finger. People point with their lips.
- Do not yawn in public.
- Do not put your feet up on a desk or chair.
- To beckon friends, extend the arm with the palm down and make a scratching motion with the fingers.
- To show how tall a person is you show the height with the palm facing to the side. Showing height with the palm facing down is used for animals and plants.

Business behavior

- It is best to show up on time for an initial meeting, although they will start ½-1 hour late.
- There is usually some form of small talk before discussing business. It is best to allow your host to begin and end the business discussion.
- Do not talk about: local politics, religion and the civil war.

Negotiations

- Avoid hard selling, pressure tactics and any sort of conflict or confrontation.
- Decisions are usually made from the top down and take a while to be reached.
- Expect several meetings before final decisions are made.



Georgia

Fun Fact

Georgians have a saying that "guests are gifts from God," and they act that way too. People will always be inviting you to eat and drink with them. They are undoubtedly some of the most hospitable people in the world.

Religion

Orthodox Christian 83.9%, Muslim 9.9%, Armenian-Gregorian 3.9%, Catholic, Other, None ~2%

Language

Georgian

Currency ([Currency Converter](#))

Lari

Country Code

+996

Time

GMT +4

Appearance

- For men, suit and ties are usually expected. Dark colors and somewhat conservative styles are the norm. Business women almost always appear fashionably dressed and generally wear long skirts. Nice pants are acceptable as well. Designer shoes are appreciated.
- Make sure shoes and boots are always cleaned and polished. People will most likely look down on you if you have worn looking shoes.
- Shorts are worn only by young children. No adults wear shorts.

Greetings, titles, business cards

- A firm handshake is acceptable in most situations, and a nod of acknowledgment tends to be acceptable as well.
- Men should wait for women to extend their hand first.
- Address people directly by using Mr., "Batano" or Mrs., "Qalbatano", followed by the surname.
- There is no specific protocol surrounding the giving and receiving of business cards. It is always best to treat the card with respect.

Gift giving

- Gifts are always well received, though not necessarily expected. They do not need to be much; i.e. a box of chocolates is always appreciated.
- If you are invited to someone's house it is always nice to bring something. Flowers (odd numbers only), chocolate, wine or spirits are acceptable.
- Gifts are not opened in front of the giver.

Communication style

- Most people tend to use indirect speaking.
- Georgians tend to be quite lively talkers. Public displays of emotion are common.
- Personal questions are very common. Georgians are not shy in asking how much money you make, whether you want to marry a Georgian, etc.
- When speaking, people are often a little less than arm's length apart.
- There isn't much touching between business associates.
- Direct eye contact is seen as a sign of respect and trustworthiness.

**Gestures**

- Pinching the front of the throat and pulling it toward someone is a way of soliciting, begging, or saying "please."
- Beckon someone with your palm downwards and make a scratching motion with the fingers. Do not beckon someone with the palm up.
- Do not make a circle with the thumb and forefinger (the "OK" sign).

Business behavior

- Georgians are notoriously unpunctual. Meetings rarely start on time, and it is not unusual for people to arrive as much as 45 minutes or an hour later.
- Punctuality is important if one is meeting with VIPs; otherwise lateness is overlooked.
- It is advisable to shake hands with everyone upon arriving and leaving. The person of higher status usually initiates the handshake.
- Interruptions are common and somewhat expected. It is not a sign of disrespect.

Negotiations

- There tends to be lots of emotion in negotiating and they can become quite loud and animated.
- Decisions tend to be made from the top down and may take a while to be reached.



Guatemala

Fun Fact

Military clothing is illegal; it can neither be worn nor brought into the country.

Religion

Roman Catholic 50%, Protestant 40%, other 10% includes various Mayan indigenous religion.

Language

Spanish

Currency ([Currency Converter](#))

Quetzal (GTQ)

Country Code

+502

Time

GMT -6

Appearance

- Men wear conservative suits with shirt and ties. Women wear stylish dresses or skirts and blouses or business suits.

Greetings, titles, business cards

- Men and women shake hands when greeting and maintain direct eye contact.
- Titles are important. You may speak directly to someone by using only his or her title, without including the last name.
 - A Ph.D or a physician = *Doctor (dok-TOR)*
 - Teacher = *Profesor (pro-fe-SOR)*
 - Lawyers are *Abogado/a (a-bo-GA-do/da)*
- Persons who do not have professional titles should be addressed as:
 - Mr. = *Señor (sen-YOR)*
 - Mrs. = *Señora (sen-YOR-a)*
 - Miss = *Señorita (sen-yor-I-ta)*
- Most Latinos have two surnames: one from their father, which is listed first, followed by one from their mother. Only the father's surname is used when addressing someone
- There is no specific ritual surrounding the giving of business cards. Treat the card with respect and interest.
- It is advisable to have one side of your business card translated into Spanish. Present your business card with the Spanish side facing the recipient.

Gift giving

- Gifts are usually not brought to a first meeting.
- If invited to a home, it is appropriate to bring flowers (avoid white ones), wine, spirits, or chocolates.

Communication style

- Guatemalans tend to be comfortable at an arm's length from one another.
- Direct eye contact is an important way of showing interest in what the speaker is saying.
- Loud voices in public are looked down upon; speaking softly considered the polite thing to do
- Small talk is common before beginning business discussions.
- Good conversation topics: Guatemalan geography, history, culture



- Bad conversation topics: politics or “the violence” since 1978, racism, Mayan vs. Guatemalan issues, poverty, and politics.

Gestures

- Guatemalans wave good-bye using a gesture that looks like someone fanning themselves: hand raised, palm toward the body, and a wave of the fingers back and forth
- To beckon someone, extend an arm and making a scratching motion with your fingers or sweep your whole arm toward your body.
- Do not make a fist with your thumb between your middle and index finger.

Business behavior

- Arriving on time for a meeting is important as Guatemalans tend to be quite punctual in business situations.
- There is usually some form of small talk before getting down to business. It is best to allow your host to begin the business discussion.

Negotiations

- Guatemalans value relationship building and harmony so it is important to avoid hard selling, pressure tactics and any sort of conflict or confrontation.
- Guatemalans use and respond best to indirect communication style over direct.
- Decisions are usually from the top down and can be lengthy before they are reached.



Honduras

Fun Fact

Hondurans love to talk, and they especially love to meet foreigners and ask them questions. Personal contact with Hondurans will make your experience there much more enjoyable and is sometimes the only decent way to get important information.

Religion

Roman Catholic 97%, Protestant 3%.

Language

Spanish

Currency ([Currency Converter](#))

Lempira

Country Code

+504

Time

GMT -6

Appearance

- For men, a suit and tie are appropriate. Dark colors and somewhat conservative styles are the norm. For informal situations, khakis, nice jeans and a collared shirt is usually appropriate.
- For women, skirts or slacks, nice shoes and a nice shirt are acceptable. Stylish yet conservative is best.
- Being well-groomed and having clothes nicely pressed is appreciated.

Greetings, titles, business cards

- A firm handshake is the norm in most all situations. It is best for men to wait for women to extend her hand first.
- Titles are important. You may speak directly to someone by using only his or her title, without including the last name.
 - A Ph.D or a physician = *Doctor (dok-TOR)*
 - Teacher = *Profesor (pro-fe-SOR)*
 - Lawyers are *Abogado/a (a-bo-GA-do/da)*
- Persons who do not have professional titles should be addressed as:
 - Mr. = *Señor (sen-YOR)*
 - Mrs. = *Señora (sen-YOR-a)*
 - Miss = *Señorita (sen-yor-I-ta)*
- Most Latinos have two surnames: one from their father, which is listed first, followed by one from their mother. Only the father's surname is used when addressing someone
- There is no specific ritual surrounding the giving of business cards. Treat the card with respect and interest.
- It is advisable to have one side of your business card translated into Spanish. Present your business card with the Spanish side facing the recipient.

Gift giving

- Gifts in business situations are tricky and it probably is best to avoid giving gifts at initial meetings as they might seem like a bribe.



- Gift giving is very common in social situations and one important way that people are friendly with each other. If invited to a Honduran home, it is appropriate to bring a nice bottle of wine or good quality candy.

Communication style

- Most people tend to communicate in an indirect manner.
- People will almost never say "I don't know" because they do not want to sound unhelpful, and people will usually tell you what they think you would like to hear.
- Most Hondurans stand a little less than an arm's length apart during conversations.
- There is a decent amount of touching during conversations.
- Eye contact depends a lot on social status. People from the poorer class tend to avoid eye contact and act humble in conversation, whereas people from the upper class are much more direct and self-asserted. Age and community leadership have much less to do with it than economic status and power.

Gestures

- Many people point by turning their head and pursing out their lips in the direction of the object they are pointing at.

Business behavior

- It is best to show up on time, even though most Hondurans do not.
- Discussion is usually done in an informal way, with the strongest personalities asserting themselves and speaking.
- Small talk is not necessarily expected, but it is always appreciated and strengthens a relationship.
- Meetings do not tend to follow strict agendas and can go on for longer than scheduled.

Negotiations

- Avoid hard selling, pressure tactics and any sort of conflict or confrontation.
- Decisions are usually made from the top down and take awhile to be reached.



India

Fun Fact

The current leadership of India is implementing sweeping changes to encourage international business in India, from privatization to the liberalization of trade.

Religion

Hindu 80.5%, Muslim 13.4%, Christian 2.3%, Sikh 1.9%, other 1.8%, unspecified 0.1%.

Language

Hindi, English

Currency ([Currency Converter](#))

Rupee (INR)

Country Code

+91

Time

GMT +5.5

Appearance

- Men are generally expected to wear a suit and tie for business, although the jacket may be removed in the summer. Women should wear conservative dresses or pantsuits.
- When dressing casual, short-sleeved shirts and long pants are preferred for men; shorts are acceptable only when exercising. Women must keep their upper arms, chest, back, and legs covered at all times.
- Women should wear long pants when exercising.
- The use of leather products including belts or handbags may be considered offensive, especially in temples. Hindus revere cows and do not use leather products.

Greetings, titles, business cards

- Most all meetings generally begin with palms pressed together at around chest level and saying, "Namaste" or "Namaskar."
- In formal and business situations it is usually best to let the women initiate contact, if any. Many Indian women will avoid contact with men in public situations.
- Hugs and kisses as a form of greeting should be avoided.
- Titles are very important. Always use professional titles.

Gift giving

- It is not necessary to bring a gift to a first meeting, although it will be accepted graciously.
- Wrapping presents in green, yellow and/or red is best. Avoid black and white.
- To be on the safe side, stay away from any leather, alcohol, pigskin, or dog related gifts.
- Safe gifts include chocolates or flowers (no frangipani or white flowers).
- If you give money to an Indian as a gift make sure it is an odd number.
- Gifts are not opened in the presence of the giver. If you receive a wrapped gift, set it aside until the giver leaves.

Communication style

- Indians will often tell you what you want to hear in order to be polite.
- The word "no" has harsh implications in India. Evasive refusals like "I'll try" are more common, and are considered more polite.



- One thing to be aware of is the “Head Bobble”. Most Indians will never tell you “No”. If they say “Yes” to a question while bobbling their head (a mixture between a shake and a nod), that “Yes” generally means “No”.
- Indians tend to stand about 3 feet apart.
- Indians do not generally touch as part of communication. Touching of any kind between men and women can be interpreted as flirting.
- Sustained eye contact is not generally the norm, especially for a woman looking at a man. If doing business, it is not uncommon to keep eye contact, but it may seem odd to hold it intently for a while. The best option is to look away or down once in a while.

Gestures

- Do not touch someone else’s head, not even to pat the hair of a child. The head is considered the seat of the soul.
- Do not beckon someone with one finger. Beckon by extending an arm palm down and making a scratching motion with the fingers.
- Do not wink, as it may be interpreted as an insult or a sexual proposition.
- Do not point your feet at a person. Feet are considered unclean. If your shoes or feet touch another person, apologize.
- Do not thank your hosts at the end of a meal. “Thank you” is considered a form of payment and therefore insulting.
- Standing with your hands on your hips is an angry, aggressive posture.
- Grasping the ears signifies sincerity or repentance, since ears are considered sacred, pulling or boxing ones ears is a grave insult.
- Always eat with the right hand, as the left hand is considered unclean.
- Pointing with one finger is common.

Business behavior

- Arrive at meetings on time even though you may be kept waiting
- It is best to send along a proposed agenda and/or supplemental materials in advance of the meeting.
- As India is a very hierarchical society, it is best to defer to the most senior person in the room.
- Meetings usually begin with a fair amount of small-talk and many times no business is discussed in the initial meeting.
- Good topics of conversation include marital status, family, your educational background, where you grew up, sports. Avoid: politics, religion, the caste system, the Kashmir region.

Negotiations

- Avoid hard selling, pressure tactics and any sort of conflict or confrontation.
- Decisions can take time and are usually made by the most senior person.
- Do not disagree publicly with members of your team, maintain harmony at all costs.

Other

- Hindus revere cows; they are often in the streets and products such as leather or beef are not acceptable.
- Hindus do not eat beef and Muslims do not eat pork.



Kazakhstan

Fun Fact

The word "Kazakh" means "independent" or "wanderer".

Religion

Muslim 47%, Russian Orthodox 44%, Protestant 2%, other 7%

Language

Kazakh

Currency ([Currency Converter](#))

Tenge

Country Code

+7

Time

GMT +6

Appearance

- Men wear conservative suits or tie and jacket. Women wear stylish, yet somewhat conservative, business suits, dresses, or skirts and blouses.
- Shoes are very important. Kazakh men tend to wear pointy shoes. Women wear heels, often stilettos. Whatever shoes you wear, it is best to make sure they're clean and polished.

Greetings, titles, business cards

- A handshake with both hands is the norm, along with a warm smile.
- Men greet women with a handshake. It is best to let the woman initiate.
- Note: It is frowned upon for religious men to touch women and vice-versa.
- It is best to spend a little time reading a counterparts business card before putting it away.

Gift giving

- If you are invited to a Kazakh home, bring flowers, quality alcohol (unless the host is Muslim), or chocolates.

Communication style

- An indirect style of communication tends to be more effective than being overly direct, although some bluntness still remains strong.
- Good topics of conversation: art, food, drink, and sports. Avoid: politics, religion, and ethnicity.
- Kazakh suggestions and imperatives do not translate well, and you may find someone giving you dog commands (Sit! Speak! Eat!)
- An arms length between people while speaking is the norm.
- Touching is best to be avoided between the sexes.
- Direct eye contact is the norm. Avoiding eye contact means you are ashamed of yourself.

Gestures

- Do not make a fist with your thumb between your middle and index finger.
- Do not hook two fingers together as it is obscene.

Business behavior

- Be on time for meetings even though you may be kept waiting.
- Appointments are rarely made; people tend to just show up during business hours.



- The more important person or the one who has something another wants will usually get right to the point and begin with "how can I help you?"

Negotiations

- It is best not to show a lot of emotion.
- Decisions are not made after just one meeting; they tend to take a long time.
- Avoid the take it or leave it option. Go with the idea of the long term benefits in working together.
- Leadership and decision making tends to be more authoritarian than democratic.



Mexico

Fun Fact

Mexico City was built on a lake.

Religion

Roman Catholic 76.5%, Protestant 6.3% (Pentecostal 1.4%, Jehovah's Witnesses 1.1%, other 3.8%), other 0.3%, unspecified 13.8%, none 3.1%

Language

Spanish

Currency ([Currency Converter](#))

Peso

Country Code

+52

Time

GMT -6 to -5

Appearance

- Men wear stylish yet classic dark colored suits with shirt and ties. Being well groomed is important. Nice accessories are good too. Women wear stylish yet classic business suits or dresses and matching shoes. Most women are always made-up and usually wear heels and hoes.
- Jeans and business casual attire is usually not appropriate.

Greetings, titles, business cards

- Men usually shake hands when greeting one another. Women shake hands or give a light touch on the forearm.
- Titles are important. You may speak directly to someone by using only his or her title, without including the last name.
 - A Ph.D or a physician = *Doctor (dok-TOR)*
 - Teacher = *Profesor (pro-fe-SOR)*
 - Lawyers are *Abogado/a (a-bo-GA-do/da)*
- Persons who do not have professional titles should be addressed as:
 - Mr. = *Señor (sen-YOR)*
 - Mrs. = *Señora (sen-YOR-a)*
 - Miss = *Señorita (sen-yor-I-ta)*
- Most Latinos have two surnames: one from their father, which is listed first, followed by one from their mother. Only the father's surname is used when addressing someone
- There is no specific ritual surrounding the giving of business cards. Treat the card with respect and interest.
- It is advisable to have one side of your business card translated into Spanish. Present your business card with the Spanish side facing the recipient.

Gift giving

- Giving gifts to business executives is not required. Simple gifts may be brought to a first meeting, usually something from one's company.
- If invited to a Mexican's house, it is appropriate to bring flowers, wine, spirits, or chocolates.
 - When giving flowers: yellow represent death, red cast spells, and white lift spells. Avoid marigolds.



- Do not give gifts made of silver, as it is associated with trinkets sold to tourists.
- Gifts should be nicely wrapped.
- Gifts are opened right away when received.

Communication style

- Mexicans favor an indirect style of communication.
- Mexicans stand close to one another while talking. It can be rude to back up or away from someone while they are speaking.
- There is a fair amount of touching while conversing.
- Mexicans may not make eye contact. This is a sign of respect and should not be taken as an affront.
- Good topics: Mexican culture, history, art, and museums. Avoid: the Mexican-American war, poverty, illegal aliens, or earthquakes.

Gestures

- Mexicans use a “psst-psst” or a kissing sound to catch another’s attention in public. This is usually not considered overly rude.
- Whistling is used to call someone or to get their attention.
- When demonstrating a person’s height, hold the palm sideways with the thumb on top. Holding the palm face down is reserved for animals.
- Standing with your hands on your hips; usually signifies anger. It is also considered rude to stand around with your hands in your pockets.
- Making a V sign with your fingers and then placing it on the outside of each nostril is an obscene gesture.
- Showing a closed fist with a raised arm at an almost 90 degree angle is a threatening gesture and very offensive.
- Burping out loud is considered very rude.

Business behavior

- Arriving on time for a meeting is important even though you may be kept waiting.
- There is usually small talk before discussing business. It is best to allow the host to begin the business discussion.
- If offered something to drink, do not refuse, as it may be seen as an insult.
- Do not use red ink anytime you are writing someone's name.

Negotiations

- Avoid hard selling, pressure tactics and any sort of conflict or confrontation.
- Mexicans can become animated when negotiating, be sure to not mistake this aggression.
- When negotiations are finished, be sure to return to the small talk for a bit before leaving and always say a good-bye.



Moldova

Fun Fact

In 2001, Moldova became the first former Soviet state to elect a Communist as its president.

Religion

Eastern Orthodox 98%, Jewish 1.5%, Baptist and other 0.5%

Language

Moldovan

Currency ([Currency Converter](#))

Moldovan Leu (MDL)

Country Code

+373

Time

GMT +2

Appearance

- Men wear pants, a button down shirt, suit jacket, tie, polished shoes.
- Women wear slacks or a skirt, dress shirt, polished shoes.
- Jeans and less casual attire are usually not appropriate in business settings.
- Make sure shoes are cleaned and polished. People will look down on you if you have worn looking shoes.

Greetings, titles, business cards

- Men greet men with a firm handshake. Women greet women with a "hi, how are you."
- Men do not typically acknowledge women when they are in mixed groups, however in a professional setting if the man is more "westernized" and views the woman he is presented with as an equal he will shake her hand.
- It is best to address people directly by using Mr., Mrs., or Miss, followed by the surname.
- There is no specific protocol surrounding the giving and receiving of business cards. It is always best to treat the card with respect.

Gift giving

- Gifts are generally left to social situations.
- Gifts generally are not wrapped.
- As a guest in a home, most people give flowers, wine, or a home décor item.
- Generally, if you are giving a gift other than flowers you probably know the person better.

Communication style

- People will tell you what they think you want to hear. They do not want you to be offended and be upset with them specifically. This way of talking around the subject happens in all forms of situations.
- In general, when conversing with a Moldovan, you need to be an active listener and really examine what you, and they, are saying. Sometimes the answer you get is based completely on how you asked the question. If you rephrase it even slightly, the answer may be completely different.
- Moldovans tend to avoid taking responsibility for their actions and admitting when they have done something wrong. Moldovans will tend to find someone or something else to blame, never taking responsibility for what they did.



- Moldovans tend to be close talkers. There is very little sense of personal space in any situation.
- There is very little to no touching when speaking. Moldovans may get a little animated in their speech but it won't involve touching the person they are speaking with.
- In a professional setting amongst colleagues, direct eye contact is expected.

Gestures

- People beckon one another by extending an arm palm down and making a scratching motion with their fingers.

Business behavior

- It is best to arrive on time but do not expect a meeting to start or end on time.
- If possible, greet the most important person first.
- A few minutes of small talk generally occurs but is not necessarily expected.
- Most meetings have a written agenda with predetermined speakers to begin and end the meeting.

Negotiations

- It is best to remain calm when trying to negotiate a price.
- Avoid hard selling and any sort of conflict or confrontation.



Nicaragua

Fun Fact

Nicaragua is famous in history as the birthplace of Ruben Dario, one of the best poets in the 20th century.

Religion

Roman Catholic 72.9%, Evangelical 15.1%, Moravian 1.5%, Episcopal 0.1%, other 1.9%, none 8.5%

Language

Spanish

Currency ([Currency Converter](#))

Gold Cordoba (NIO)

Country Code

+505

Time

GMT -6

Appearance

- Men wear khakis or slacks and a button down shirt. Everything should be clean and pressed. Suits and ties are common for the financial industries.
- Women wear slacks, pants, or skirts and a blouse or button down shirt. Everything should be cleaned and pressed.

Greetings, titles, business cards

- Handshakes are the norm for men and women.
- Titles are important. You may speak directly to someone by using only his or her title, without including the last name.
 - A Ph.D or a physician = *Doctor (dok-TOR)*
 - Teacher = *Profesor (pro-fe-SOR)*
 - Lawyers are *Abogado/a (a-bo-GA-do/da)*
- Persons who do not have professional titles should be addressed as:
 - Mr. = *Señor (sen-YOR)*
 - Mrs. = *Señora (sen-YOR-a)*
 - Miss = *Señorita (sen-yor-I-ta)*
- Most Latinos have two surnames: one from their father, which is listed first, followed by one from their mother. Only the father's surname is used when addressing someone
- There is no specific ritual surrounding the giving of business cards. Treat the card with respect and interest.
- It is advisable to have one side of your business card translated into Spanish. Present your business card with the Spanish side facing the recipient.

Gift giving

- Although not expected, gifts are always welcome and should always be wrapped in some way.
- Some people open them in public, others do not – both are fine.

Communication style

- Most Nicaraguans like to appear helpful and will try to tell you what you want to hear, even if it is stretching (or at times completely altering) the truth.



- Nicaraguans are very polite and they rarely say anything that would be offensive to anyone present.
- For a foreigner to try to understand something fully, it is usually best to “triangulate”: ask (at least) 3 different people the same question to see if you can arrive at an approximate answer.
- While many Nicaraguans are generally direct about asking about personal information, they are pretty indirect when answering the same questions.
- Nicaraguans stand at arm’s length apart during conversations.
- There is usually little to no touching during initial conversations or meetings.
- Direct eye contact is common.

Gestures

- Pointing is done by puckering the lips and raising the chin briefly in the direction of the thing.
- A finger wag is very common to say “no” (especially to taxis or passing buses wanting to know if you want a ride).
- Rubbing two index fingers together usually indicates that you want to pay for something.
- Nose Crinkle indicates “I do not understand” or “what are you saying?”
- To tell someone to come toward you, extend hand palm down, and sweep in.
- To tell someone to eat, extend hand palm up, and sweep in.
- Do not take your shoes off at a meeting nor put your feet up on a desk or chair.
- Do not refuse when someone offers you something to eat/drink.
- Burping out loud is considered very rude.

Business behavior

- It is best to show up on time for an initial meeting although they typically will start ½-1 hour late.
- There is usually some form of small talk before discussing business. It is best to allow your host to begin the business discussion.
- Topics to avoid: politics, class issues, and religion.

Negotiations

- Avoid hard selling, pressure tactics and any sort of conflict or confrontation.
- Decisions are usually made from the top down.



Panama

Fun Fact

Columbus reached Panama in 1502 on his fourth and final voyage to the New World. The country was first explored by Balboa in 1513.

Religion

Roman Catholic 85%, Protestant 15%

Language

Spanish

Currency ([Currency Converter](#))

Balboa (PAB); US Dollar (USD)

Country Code

+507

Time

GMT -5

Appearance

- Men wear dark colored suits with shirt and conservative ties. Business casual may be appropriate in some industries.
- Women wear stylish business suits or dresses and matching shoes. Pants are fine.

Greetings, titles, business cards

- At a first meeting a handshake will suffice and is sometimes combined with slight touches on the arms and/or elbows
- Titles are important. You may speak directly to someone by using only his or her title, without including the last name.
 - A Ph.D or a physician = *Doctor (dok-TOR)*
 - Teacher = *Profesor (pro-fe-SOR)*
 - Lawyers are *Abogado/a (a-bo-GA-do/da)*
- Persons who do not have professional titles should be addressed as:
 - Mr. = *Señor (sen-YOR)*
 - Mrs. = *Señora (sen-YOR-a)*
 - Miss = *Señorita (sen-yor-I-ta)*
- Most Latinos have two surnames: one from their father, which is listed first, followed by one from their mother. Only the father's surname is used when addressing someone
- There is no specific ritual surrounding the giving of business cards. Treat the card with respect and interest.
- It is advisable to have one side of your business card translated into Spanish. Present your business card with the Spanish side facing the recipient.

Gift giving

- Gifts are not normally exchanged when entertaining.

Communication style

- Panamanians stand at arm's length from one another while talking.
- There is little to no touching while conversing.
- Panamanians favor direct eye contact over indirect.
- During conversations sustained eye contact is commonplace rather than sporadic.

**Gestures**

- Pointing is done by puckering the lips and raising the chin briefly in the direction of the thing.
- To hail a cab you put your hand out, palm down, and pull your fingers in (sort of saying “come here” with your hands).
- Showing someone a raised middle finger is an obscene gesture.

Business behavior

- Arriving on time for a meeting is important even though you may be kept waiting.
- There is usually some form of small talk before discussing business. It is best to allow your host to begin the business discussion.
- Good conversation topics: local culture, family, hobbies, basketball, baseball. Avoid: former Canal Zone, race problems, politics



Russia

Fun Fact

There are 221 museums, 2,000 libraries, more than 80 theaters, 100 concert organizations, 45 galleries, 62 cinemas and 80 club establishments of culture in St Petersburg.

Religion

Russian Orthodox 15-20%, Muslim 10-15%, other Christian 2%

Language

Russian

Currency ([Currency Converter](#))

Ruble

Country Code

+7

Time

GMT +3

Appearance

- Russians value being well dressed and nicely groomed.
- Businessmen in Russia usually wear suits that are dark and well tailored along with good dress shoes. A businessman's wardrobe demonstrates the individual's image as a professional.
- Women dress rather conservatively, avoiding overly flashy or gaudy outfits, and skirts should be worn rather than pants.
- Jeans and business casual attire are usually not appropriate for initial meetings.
- When attending dinner in a person's home, casual dress of slacks and a nice shirt without a tie are appropriate.

Greetings, titles, business cards

- Titles are important and it is best to address people directly by using Mr., "Gaspodin" or Mrs./Miss, "Gaspazah", followed by the surname.
- Men and women shake hands when greeting and maintain direct eye contact. In some instances a slight nod of acknowledgment will usually suffice.
- Note: You must take your gloves off when greeting someone, no matter how cold it is out.
- Three alternating kisses on the cheeks is common between friends and family.
- Avoid shaking hands and giving things across a threshold of a house or room. It is best to cross the threshold completely before shaking a host's hand when arriving and leaving.
- Chivalry is still valued. Men are expected to hold the door, offer their seat, offer their coat, etc.
- There is no specific protocol surrounding business cards, although it is a good idea to have one side of your business card translated into Russian.

Gift giving

- Bringing a gift to an initial business meeting is common. Something with your company logo or representative of your country is always a good idea.
- If invited to Russian home, appropriate gifts include high quality chocolates/sweets or fine wine or liquor (avoid Vodka).

Communication style

- Russians tend to be somewhat guarded and closed until a relationship is formed. They usually prefer to take their time to get to know someone.



- In some instances you may find that Russians will dance around a subject, especially if it is a difficult or uncomfortable topic. In other instances they can be quite direct.
- During conversations, an arm's length of personal space tends to be the norm.
- There is not that much touching during conversations, especially at first meetings.
- Direct eye contact is expected and seen as a sign of respect and trustworthiness.
- Speaking or laughing loudly in public is considered rude, as Russians are generally reserved and somber.
- Good topics of conversation include peace, the current changes taking place in Russia, and their current economic situation.

Gestures

- Do not point with your finger. It is better to use the whole hand.
- Do not put your feet up on the furniture.
- Do not show the soles of your shoes, such as when crossing your legs.
- Do not stand with your hands in your pockets. This is considered rude.
- Do not make a circle with your thumb and forefinger.
- Do not make the "thumbs up" sign.
- Do not make a fist with your thumb between the index and middle fingers.
- When beckoning someone, extend your arm palm down and make a scratching motion with the fingers.
- It is common to take off your shoes when entering a home.
- Flicking the throat can mean, "I want a drink" or "he/she is drunk".
- It is common for someone to fill your glass halfway. When it is filled all the way, it is to give you a full glass to enjoy before leaving, and is a polite, nonverbal way of ending the meal.

Business behavior

- As a foreigner, you are expected to be on time to all business appointments. However, your Russian counterpart may be late. Do not expect an apology, and do not demonstrate any kind of attitude if your appointments begin one or two hours late. This may also be a test of your patience. Patience is an extremely important virtue among Russians; punctuality is not.
- Meetings usually begin and end with small talk.
- Men do not take off their jackets in negotiations.
- Initial meetings are usually used to establish credibility and to determine if a relationship is worth forging.
- Some meetings will end with your Russian counterpart asking you to sign off on a "protokol." It is usually read and, after everyone agrees to it, it is signed.

Negotiations

- Business meetings may have an agenda but frequent interruptions are common and expected.
- Avoid hard selling tactics and any sort of conflict or confrontation.
- Some 'hard-line' Russians still view compromise as a sign of weakness, and often refuse to back down.
- Contracts should be clear and to the point, and translated into both Russian and English.
- Going out for a drink together is highly recommended as it shows interest in strengthening the relationship and promoting good will. Be alert and open to taking a drink or having a toast, as refusing to do so is a serious breach of etiquette.
- It is extremely difficult to do business in Russia without help from a local "connection." To help with this, gifts, money or other items are often a good idea when doing business in Russia.



Saudi Arabia

Fun Fact

If you are not a Muslim, you may not enter Saudi Arabia without an invitation and you may not leave without an exit permit. Visitors to Saudi Arabia are subject to the same rigorous Islamic law as Saudis. It is not uncommon for Westerners to be imprisoned for possessing illegal substances such as alcohol, pornography, pork or narcotics. Thieves still have their hands amputated and capital crimes are punished by public beheadings.

Religion

100% Muslim

Language

Arabic

Currency ([Currency Converter](#))

Riyal

Country Code

+966

Time

GMT +3

Appearance

- Visitors are expected to abide by local standards of modesty. Never show bare shoulders, arms, stomach, calves or thighs.
- A suit and tie are required for men at business meetings. Men should wear long pants and a shirt, preferably long-sleeved, buttoned up to the collar. Men should also avoid wearing visible jewelry, particularly around the neck.
- Women should always wear modest clothing. High necklines and sleeves at least to the elbows are expected. Hemlines should be ankle length or at least well below the knee. A look of baggy concealment is the goal. Pants are not recommended. It is a good idea to keep a scarf handy.
 - According to Saudi law, when in public all women must wear a long cloak called an *abaya* which covers all clothing. In addition they must wear a head scarf which covers the hair completely. Foreign women are expected to obey this law.

Greetings, titles, business cards

- Men greet men and women greet women with a handshake (right hand only).
- There is no touching between men and women in public.
- Always give and receive business cards with the right hand.
- It is a good idea to have one side of your business card translated into Arabic.

Gift giving

- Gifts are not usually given at business meetings. It is best to avoid giving gifts until a very strong bond has been established.
- If invited to a Saudi home or someone's office, be aware that it is not polite to openly admire something which a Saudi owns or has on display as he/she will feel obliged (most likely unwillingly) to offer it to you as a gift and may be offended if you then do not accept it.
- Avoid bringing flowers, alcohol, or perfume as a gift to a Saudi host.
- Alcohol and pork are illegal.
- Gifts are not opened in the presence of the giver.



Communication style

- When Saudis are asking for a favor or in need of something, they tend to be indirect. However, if one is making a statement, they are more direct.
- It is important to include pleasantries; asking about a person's family, health, etc., before getting to the purpose of the conversation.
- Familial and business hierarchy plays a big role in communication and it is always best to defer to the oldest and most senior member of a group.
- Saudis stand a little less than an arm's length apart from one another. This space is much, much greater between men and women.
- There is a decent amount of touching between members of the same gender during conversations. There is no touching between men and women in public places.
- Direct eye contact is acceptable between men and between women. There is little to no eye contact between genders.
- Do not discuss the subject of women, not even to inquire about the health of a wife or daughter. The topic of Israel should also be avoided.

Gestures

- Use only the right hand when it comes to greetings and giving or receiving things.
- People beckon one another by extending an arm and making a scratching motion with their fingers, palm down. Avoid beckoning someone with an upright finger as it may be considered an insult.
- Showing the bottom of the shoe or sandal is very inconsiderate.
- Do not point the toe or heel or any part of the foot at any person.
- Do not use the foot to touch, point to, or move anything, as it is viewed as the lowliest body part.
- It is customary to remove your shoes before entering a carpeted room. This is often the case in business situations. When in doubt, follow a Saudi's lead.
- A chin flick, where the hand is placed under the chin and then flicked forward, is used when someone is annoyed or disgusted.
- Pointing the middle finger down with a hand extended out, palm flat, is an insulting gesture.
- The "thumbs up" gesture is offensive.

Business behavior

- It is always best to be on time for meetings, but do not necessarily expect all others to show up on time.
- Exchange greetings and pleasantries freely with everyone present, starting with the most senior person first then everyone else in turn.
- Meetings do not tend to follow set schedules. Frequent interruptions and cancellations are common.
- It is customary to remove your shoes before entering a carpeted room. When in doubt, follow a Saudi counterpart's lead.

Negotiations

- Always remain calm during negotiations. Saudis do not tend to be very expressive in public.
- Always expect to bargain. It is an integral part of the Saudi culture.
- Decisions are made from the top down and usually take time. It is important not to come across as impatient or over eager.
- The only way to conduct business in is typically to be sponsored by a local company (most often owned by a Saudi).
- The Saudi world is an enigma. A great deal of relationship building must be spent in advance of getting down to "business." Personal trust and respect will carry the day over productivity and profitability.

Other



- Women in Saudi Arabia are not permitted to drive vehicles.



South Africa

Fun Fact

South Africa is considered the industrial giant of Africa. It is a substantial resource for minerals including gold, silver, copper and diamonds.

South Africans love success stories and many admire Americans because they believe in what is known as the "American Dream."

Religion

Zion Christian 11.1%, Pentecostal/Charismatic 8.2%, Catholic 7.1%, Methodist 6.8%, Dutch Reformed 6.7%, Anglican 3.8%, Muslim 1.5%, other Christian 36%, other 2.3%, unspecified 1.4%, none 15.1%.

Language

IsiZulu 23.8%, IsiXhosa 17.6%, Afrikaans 13.3%, Sepedi 9.4%, English 8.2%, Setswana 8.2%, Sesotho 7.9%, Xitsonga 4.4%, other 7.2%.

Currency ([Currency Converter](#))

Rand

Country Code

+27

Time

GMT +2

Appearance

- Men wear suits or pants, tie and jacket are acceptable in most situations.
- Women wear business suits or skirts/dress with an appropriate top. Avoid clothes that are too revealing or tight fitting. Pants are acceptable. High heels are common.
- Make sure to shine your shoes and iron your clothes. Presentation is often times much more important than substance. And shoes are closely watched.
- Dress tends to be considerably less formal for foreigners when in rural areas. Traditional tribal outfits are common for the locals.

Greetings, titles, business cards

- A handshake is the most common form of greeting, though some women may give men just a nod of acknowledgment. It is best for men to wait for the woman to initiate the handshake.
- It is best to address people using their professional title or Mr./Mrs. and last name.
- There is no set protocol with the giving and receiving of business cards, but it is always advisable to treat the card with respect.

Gift giving

- Gift giving is not the norm in business.
- Use either both hands or the right hand when giving gifts.
- If invited over for dinner or a drink to a South African home, you should always bring the host/hostess a gift. Flowers, a bottle of high quality wine, or good chocolates are acceptable gifts.
- Gifts tend to be opened when received.

Communication style

- Most people do not want to argue or disagree with strangers, so they will either ignore your question or give you a non-committed answer.
- Business colleagues stand at arm's length from each other.



- There tends to be a decent amount of touching of arms, shoulders and hands when interacting with a South Africans. Especially when an exciting story is being told, there is more expression and imitation of sounds and facial movements.
- Direct eye contact is the norm, but not to the point of staring or it will seem like a challenge.

Gestures

- Beckon by extending the arm and waving towards you. Tell people to go away by waving away from your self.
- Thumbs up is very common for saying well done or saying everything is okay, it is a positive gesture.
- Placing both hands together with fingers pointing up means thank you.
- It is polite to say "bless you" when someone sneezes.

Business behavior

- It is best to show up on time for meetings as punctuality is valued in business settings.
- It is polite to greet everyone in the room, starting with the most senior.
- The most senior person (by title) or the named officiator will usually begin and end the meeting.

Negotiations

- It is important to remain calm during the negotiating process.
- Avoid interrupting your South African counterpart as it can be seen as rude or overly eager.
- Decisions tend to be made from the top down and can take awhile to be reached.
- South Africans prefer a "win-win" situation.



Ukraine

Fun Fact

Ukraine is the largest country in Europe among those with entire boundaries within the European continent.

Religion

Ukrainian Orthodox - Kyiv Patriarchate 19%, Orthodox (no particular jurisdiction) 16%, Ukrainian Orthodox - Moscow Patriarchate 9%, Ukrainian Greek Catholic 6%, Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox 1.7%, Protestant, Jewish, none 38%

Language

Ukrainian

Currency ([Currency Converter](#))

Hryvnia (UAH)

Country Code

+380

Time

GMT +2

Appearance

- For men, formal dark suits are the norm. Women wear stylish, yet conservative, standard business attire.
- Ukrainians value being well dressed and nicely groomed.
- Jeans and business casual attire are usually not appropriate.

Greetings, titles, business cards

- Men shake hands when greeting one another and maintain direct eye contact.
- Women do not usually shake hands with other women or men. A slight nod of acknowledgment will usually suffice.
- It is a good idea to have one side of your business card translated into Ukrainian. Be sure to highlight any advanced degrees you have received.

Gift giving

- Gifts are not usually exchanged at a first meeting.
- If invited to a home, it is appropriate to bring flowers (avoid yellow), a nice bottle of imported liquor, or chocolates/pastries.
- Gifts should be nicely wrapped.
- Gifts are not opened right away when received.

Communication style

- No rarely means no, and Ukrainians will usually assume that your “no” doesn’t mean no as well. For example, if they say no when you offer them food, they expect it to be offered again and again, and vice versa.
- Many Ukrainians will dance around a subject, especially if it is a difficult or uncomfortable topic. They may try not to tell you things if they’re afraid they will upset you – even things you think you should know.
- Ukrainians tend to stand a bit less than arm’s length apart during conversation.
- There is not much touching during conversations, especially at first meetings.
- Direct eye contact is the norm and is expected.



- People often yell at strangers freely if they feel it is necessary.

Gestures

- Flicking your neck with your finger means "I want a drink" or "he/she is drunk."
- Do not point with a single finger, but use your whole hand.
- Do not make a fist with your thumb in between your middle and index finger.

Business behavior

- It is best to be on time for meetings, even though you may be kept waiting.
- Business meetings tend to be structured, beginning and ending with a bit of small talk. It is best to wait for the host to begin and end the business talk.

Negotiations

- Decisions tend to be made from the top down and may take awhile to be reached.



United Arab Emirates

Fun Fact

There is almost no poverty in the UAE because its leadership has devoted a large part of Abu Dhabi's wealth to the welfare of the poorer emirates.

Religion

Muslim 96% (Shi'a 16%), other (includes Christian, Hindu) 4%.

Language

Arabic

Currency ([Currency Converter](#))

Emirati Dirham

Country Code

+971

Time

GMT +4

Appearance

- Local men may wear the traditional dishdasha or a suit or just formal pants and shirt. For foreigners, conservative suits and ties are common for initial meetings. Darker colors are best.
- Women should always wear modest clothing. High necklines, sleeves at least to the elbows, and hemlines at least well below the knees are needed. A look of baggy concealment should be the goal, pants or pant suits are not recommended. It is a good idea to keep a scarf handy.

Greetings, titles, business cards

- You should greet the person with the highest title first then greet the rest of the people in the room in a counter-clockwise direction.
- For men, a light handshake is common. Placing your right hand on your heart or chest after shaking hands is a show of great respect to the person you are greeting.
- There is little to no touching between men and women during greetings in public. Women may extend a sleeve-covered wrist or hand to be shaken. Always wait for the woman to initiate, if at all.
- When it comes to business cards it is always best to treat the card with respect.
- Always give and receive cards with the right hand.

Gift giving

- Gifts are not necessary, but appreciated.
- Gifts will be opened in private.
- Gifts to avoid giving include: alcohol, perfumes containing alcohol, pork, pigskin products, personal items such as underwear, knives, toy dogs or gifts that picture dogs, images of nude or partially clad women (even in paintings or sculptures with artistic merit)

Communication style

- Emiratis tend to favor an indirect style of communication. Avoiding confrontation is paramount.
- People stand a little more than arm's length apart while conversing.
- Touching members of the opposite sex is not allowed and is offensive.
- Emiratis favor direct eye contact in conversations. However, foreign men should avoid staring into the eyes of an Emirati woman.
- While talking to an elder, there usually is not much direct eye contact as a sign of respect.



- Do not discuss the subject of women, not even to inquire about the health of a wife or daughter.

Gestures

- Always give, pass, and receive objects (including food) with your right hand as the left is viewed as unclean.
- Do not point with your finger, use the whole hand.
- Do not cross your legs at the knee, but at the ankle.
- Beckon someone by extending an arm palm down and making a scratching motion with the fingers.
- Do not point the toe or heel or any part of the foot at any person.
- Do not show the sole of your foot or use the foot to move anything.
- Do not openly admire an item, as the host will feel obliged (most likely unwillingly) to offer it to you as a gift and may be offended if you then do not accept it.
- Often shoes are removed before entering a building. Follow the lead of your host.
- Alcohol and pork are not consumed by Muslims.

Business behavior

- You are expected to be on time for meetings but the key speaker or person with the highest position at the meeting can be late.
- It is normal for things not to start on time.
- Meetings do not tend to follow set schedules. Frequent interruptions and cancellations are common.
- Small talk is expected; inquiring about the person's health, family, etc., is common.
- It is customary to remove your shoes before entering a carpeted room. When in doubt, follow an Emirati's lead.

Negotiations

- It is best to remain calm during negotiations and avoid any hard selling or high-pressure tactics.
- Decisions are usually made from the top down and usually take time. It is important to not come across as impatient or overly eager.



Sources

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