

Business Etiquette:

Doing Business Internationally

Expert knowledge means success

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Introduction

Business relationships are key to the success of any organisation. This is particularly true in foreign lands where the strength of personal relationships can outweigh the strength of company relationships. It is therefore important to recognise the value of working with your business counterparts in accordance with the unspoken rules of their race, religion or culture. Profitable business can be lost by unintentional breaches of manners: there aren't always second chances.

Within our multi-cultural, transportable work-force, it is now a normal occurrence to do business with people from other cultures outside of their native country. It is therefore just as important to be aware of the innate cultural and religious influences that make up the business ethics of all your business partners, within the UK as well as in foreign lands. For this reason, this publication covers some of the etiquette relating to Jewish, Muslim and Arabic culture as well as country-specific etiquette.

Jewish etiquette

Food

Most people will be aware of the prohibition against any form of pig meat. Any meat and poultry eaten has to be slaughtered and prepared under rabbinical supervision. Fish without fins and permanent scales, e.g. turbot, shellfish and crustaceans are forbidden. Fruit and vegetables must also be examined to ensure that there are no insects on them. Many foods and drinks contain additives, emulsifiers, gelling agents and colourings, which often contain prohibited ingredients. There is a time separation from eating meat and milk, which will range from between one hour (Jews of Dutch origin) and six hours (some orthodox sects). The prohibitions extend to pots, pans and ovens in which food is prepared and upon which food is offered. The Festival of Passover has even more stringent dietary laws associated with it.

It is prudent to ask the level of orthodoxy of your guest before their arrival. If religious, they are likely to have checked up details of where to buy permissible food and drink. Do not be offended if orthodox Jews bring their own food and drink or decline to go with you to a restaurant or pub.

The Sabbath

If you have guests staying over the weekend, you should be aware that the Jewish Sabbath runs from sunset on Friday to sunset on Saturday. During this time religious Jews do not work, drive, carry anything outside their residence, conduct business affairs, touch or spend money, answer telephones, watch television or use computers. They are also prohibited from asking a non-Jew to do so for them.

Other customs

Jews generally do not shake hands with persons of the opposite sex.

Muslim etiquette

Food

Muslim visitors may also require an understanding of dietary laws and religious practice. Halal or "lawful" applies to all aspects of life, but refers usually to food permissible under Muslim dietary laws, including meat from animals that have been slaughtered in the correct ritual fashion. Haram (unlawful) items include pig meat and alcohol. Food items with animal gelatine and cakes and fruit punch with alcohol added are also not allowed. Some Muslims will prefer not to use utensils or crockery used for non-halal products, even if halal food is prepared or served on them. The best way to serve food to Muslims is to buy the food from Muslim stalls or caterers and serve them, unopened, on disposable paper plates and cups. Muslims may eat at strictly vegetarian restaurants, where food will be free from haram (prohibited) items.

Ramadan

During the fast of Ramadan Muslims are forbidden to eat, drink, or smoke between dawn and sunset. It is therefore discourteous to eat, drink or smoke in front of Muslims in daylight hours at this time. During Ramadan expect a shorter working day and decisions to be postponed.

Other customs

Muslims pray five times a day, although shops and offices do not close during the prayer.

Muslim women must cover the whole body including the hair and neck; the shape must not be apparent. They should not wear jewellery and make. They should only shake hands with a Muslim if he offers his first.

Arab etiquette

Most Arabs are Muslims and therefore the etiquette relevant to Muslims applies to them. However some Arabs belong to the Christian or other faiths and although they may not be bound by Muslim beliefs, they share other sensitivities common to all Arabs.

Other customs

It is insulting to point the sole of your foot to an Arab. Take care when sitting; it may be safer not to cross your legs.

You should not offer anything with your left hand, nor receive anything from someone with your left hand. Giving and receiving with both hands is acceptable. All major gestures should be made with the right hand rather than the left.

Never beckon anyone with the forefinger of the right hand, this gesture is extremely offensive. The correct way to beckon someone is to wave hand down.

Never mention an Arab's wife; even when you know him well only ask about 'the family'. Similarly, you may compliment your host's household but not compliment his wife on her cooking.

Many names are Arabic names for God (such as Aziz or Rahman), preceded by Abdul (meaning 'slave of'). Anyone with such a name should always be referred to as Abdul Aziz, Abdul Rahman etc., never just Abdul.

Scope of this publication

The remainder of this publication is based on advice from the UK Trade and Investment service and is current on the date of publication. Crown Copyright of their source material is acknowledged.

If the country about which you require information is omitted, this is because no information was available from UK Trade and Investment at the time. You may wish to check for updates in the country pages at their website www.uktradeinvest.gov.uk or at The Foreign Office website www.fco.gov.uk.

If information for an included country is omitted, again this is because no specific guidance is offered. For example, where no behavioural guidance is offered, you should presume that normal business courtesies apply, and this has been written in the text.

Africa

North Africa

Algeria

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women, with light-weight suits required in summer. In the coastal belt a light raincoat may prove useful.
- Women should dress modestly.

Behaviour

- Entertaining usually takes place in hotels and restaurants.
- Muslims are forbidden by their religion to drink alcohol, although it is not against the law to do so in Algeria and many Algerians do.
- Muslim and Arab customs should be respected.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by their official or academic title or by their title followed by their surname.

Egypt

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women. Warmer wear may be required for evenings.
- Women should dress modestly and avoid eye contact with any males, unless they are business associates or are known. Wear a wedding ring if you have one.

Behaviour

- Muslim and Arab customs should be respected.
- Personal relationships are highly rated.
- Some knowledge of Egypt's history, culture and social structure, with perhaps a little knowledge of Arabic as well, will usually make a good impression.
- Most Egyptians are friendly and informal in their dealings with each other and with foreigners, subject to the existing structure of authority and class.
- Punctuality is relaxed and patience may be required.

Communications

- Although most people speak English or French, a basic knowledge of Arabic is useful. A common greeting is *ahlan wa sahlam* (peace be upon you); the standard reply is *ahlan beek* (and upon you be peace).
- Meetings are usually arranged at very short notice, and often visitors will encounter a very relaxed attitude to agreed meeting times. Therefore, the time required for visits to customers may be quite considerable, not least because of the severe traffic congestion particularly in Cairo, and to a lesser extent in Alexandria.
- Business cards are usually exchanged. Have them printed in English on one side and in Arabic on the other.
- Most Egyptians have three names: forename, the father's name and the family name as in, for example, Mohamed Amin Mostafa. It is best to use the final name and call a businessman Mr (Dr) Mostafa. His wife would normally be called Mrs Mostafa. Ministers should be addressed as "your Excellency" or "minister". Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.
- Handshaking is customary.

Libya

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women, and for women must be modest. Jackets and ties may be dispensed with in hot weather.

Behaviour

- Muslim and Arab customs should be respected.
- Libyans are very friendly and may invite you to their home.
- In general Libyans respond to open and frank negotiation.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by their official or academic title or by their title followed by their surname.
- Men and women do not embrace in public and not all women shake hands with men. Men shake hands, and if they know each other well may greet each other with an embrace or a long firm handshake. Once you have established a relationship a man may continue to hold your hand as he leads you into his office.
- Appointments should be made, although this can be difficult to do too far in advance. Appointments can also change at short notice and you may not

be seen promptly so be prepared for this. If you are doing well in a meeting it is common for your host to take you to meet his colleagues and to talk to other managers in the company. It is therefore important to make sure that you do not schedule too tightly.

Morocco

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women. In the winter a raincoat is required.

Behaviour

- The social customs and forms of address of the business community are mainly European (in particular French and Spanish) as much of the foreign trade is still conducted by firms with European connections.
- Food is generally eaten with the fingers of the right hand, and that, while a guest is expected to partake of some of each course, no offence will be taken if he eats frugally.
- Muslim and Arab customs should be respected.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by their official or academic title or by their title followed by their surname.
- A Minister may be addressed as *Monsieur le Ministre*, the director of a company would be addressed as *Monsieur le Directeur*.

Tunisia

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women. Light-weight suits are required for the summer; heavier suits for the winter.
- Women should dress modestly, and cover shoulders and legs in rural areas.
- A light-weight raincoat and umbrella are useful during the rainy season, particularly in the north of the country.

Behaviour

- Personal relationships are highly rated, and friendly small talk is expected prior to business. Regular visits may be necessary.
- Hospitality is important and courtesy is expected. It is appropriate, but not obligatory, to present a small gift in appreciation of hospitality.
- Male visitors may compliment or ask after the host's household, but not his wife.

- It is rare to find a Tunisian male who does not smoke, and equally rare to see a woman smoking in public.
- Muslim and Arab customs should be respected.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by their official or academic title or by their title followed by their surname.
- A Minister may be addressed as senior company officials as Monsieur.
- Handshaking is customary at the beginning and end of meetings.
- Business cards are usually exchanged.

West Africa

Burkina Faso

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women. Suits should be worn for government and official business. Otherwise, a shirt and tie should suffice. Fewer people wear European dress in Burkina Faso than in some African countries; most Ministers and officials prefer national dress or a "political suit".
- Women should dress modestly. For evening entertainment, lounge suits are required for men and formal wear for women.

Behaviour

- In Ghana there is a great degree of physical contact during social interaction between people. When engaged in conversation people tend to stand relatively close to each other.
- It is considered rude to point, or to summon a person with the palm up.

Communications

- Handshaking is customary with all members of a business group at every meeting.
- Address new business contacts by their official or academic title or by their title followed by their surname.
- A Minister may be addressed as Monsieur le Ministre, the director of a company would be addressed as Monsieur le Directeur.

Gambia

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is generally light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women with dark suits required for formal meetings. Casual clothing is worn outside of business hours.

Behaviour

- Presume normal business courtesies for the region apply.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by their official or academic title or by their title followed by their surname.
- Great importance is placed on greetings in the Gambia. Wolof and Mandinka people, for example, greet one another with a ritual that lasts up to half a minute, starting with the traditional Islamic greetings Salaam aleikum and Aleikum asalaam ('Peace be with you,' 'And peace be with you'). This is followed by several more questions about the other's family, home life, village and health. The answers – which are almost always that things are fine - are often followed with Al humdul'allah ('Thanks be to God'). In the larger cities, traditional greetings sometimes give way to shorter versions in French or English.

Ghana

Appearance

- Business meetings with members of the government, civil service, banks or heads of large organisations or international bodies are fairly formal and it is recommended that men wear western-style business suits. Light-weight suits are suitable for other business, social or ceremonial occasions which are generally less formal. Because of the climate light-weight suits are best. Cotton dresses are suitable for women.
- The wearing of any military apparel, such as camouflage jackets or trousers, or any clothing or items, which may appear military in nature, is strictly prohibited.

Behaviour

- Punctuality is appreciated, though not always reciprocated.

Communications

- Business appointments should be arranged in advance although calling without an appointment is generally acceptable.
- It is customary to shake (right) hands at the beginning and end of meetings, and to start from the right of the group (as you face them) irrespective of seniority/importance.
- Address new business contacts by their official or academic title or by their title followed by their surname.
- Business cards are usually exchanged.

Guinea

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women for formal meetings; more relaxed for other business situations.

Behaviour

- It is very important to greet Guineans well both in face to face meetings and over the telephone. You should ask how they and their families are. This ritual is very important even if you only wish to ask for simple information.
- Women are well accepted in business, and age is also treated with great respect.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by their official or academic title or by their title followed by their surname.

Guinea-Bissau

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women for formal meetings; smart-casual wear or safari suits are acceptable for other business situations. Local businessmen usually wear safari suits (bush jackets without a tie).
- Women should dress modestly in Muslim areas.

Behaviour

- Muslim customs should be respected.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.

Ivory Coast

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women for formal meetings; smart-casual wear or safari suits are acceptable for other business situations.
- Lounge suits are worn by men at formal evening receptions. Ladies in Abidjan often wear their finest clothes in the evening even when dress for the men is informal.

Behaviour

- Presume normal business courtesies for the region apply.

Communications

- Handshaking is customary with all members of a business group at every meeting.

- Address new business contacts by their official or academic title or by their title followed by their surname.
- A Minister may be addressed as Monsieur le Ministre, the director of a company would be addressed as Monsieur le Directeur.

Mali

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women for formal meetings; smart-casual wear including open neck shirts are acceptable for other business situations. In the winter, warmer clothing may be required.
- Women should dress modestly.
- Lounge suits are worn by men at formal evening receptions.

Behaviour

- Presume normal business courtesies for the region apply.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.

Niger

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women for formal meetings; smart-casual wear including open neck shirts is acceptable for other business situations. In the winter, warmer clothing may be required.
- Women are advised to wear dresses or polyester/cotton or skirts and blouses.
- Lounge suits are worn by men at formal evening receptions.

Behaviour

- Presume normal business courtesies for the region apply.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.

Nigeria

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women. Nigerian businessmen wear a suit and tie at work or national costume.
- A light-weight raincoat and umbrella are useful during the rainy season.

Behaviour

- In the towns, cocktail parties, dinners and dances are held, but generally, less formal buffet suppers are enjoyed.

Communications

- Nigerians are very formal where titles are concerned. Address new business contacts by their official or academic title or by their title followed by their surname. Where relevant, titles such as Chief, Prince and Alhaji should always be used.

Senegal Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight and casual. Most Senegalese Ministers and officials wear lounge suits. Some, and most businessmen, wear traditional dress (boubou).

Behaviour

- Presume normal business courtesies for the region apply.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by their official or academic title or by their title followed by their surname.
- A Minister may be addressed as Monsieur le Ministre, the director of a company would be addressed as Monsieur le Directeur.

Sierra Leone Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women for formal meetings; smart-casual wear or safari suits are acceptable for other business situations.
- Women are advised to wear dresses or polyester/cotton or skirts and blouses.

Behaviour

- Presume normal business courtesies for the region apply.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.

Togo Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women for formal meetings; smart-casual wear including open necked shirts is acceptable for other business situations.
- Women are advised to wear dresses or polyester/cotton or skirts and blouses.

Behaviour

- Presume normal business courtesies for the region apply.

Communications

- Handshaking is customary.
- French is the official and principal commercial language in use. Some English is spoken in Government and trade circles.

Central Africa

Cameroon Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women for formal meetings, casual for other business meetings. Most Cameroon Ministers and officials wear lounge suits. Some, and most businessmen, wear traditional dress (boubou).
- In the northern districts of West Cameroon, warmer clothing may be required.

Behaviour

- Punctuality is important.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.
- Handshaking is customary.

Eastern Africa

Ethiopia Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- Presume normal business courtesies for the region apply.

Communications

- The first name is the name of the individual, and it is followed by that of his father. There are no family names which are passed on to successive generations. The words Ato, Woizero and Woizerit are the Ethiopian equivalent of Mr, Mrs and Miss respectively, and these should be used when addressing people. A man would be addressed in writing, for example, as Ato Ayalew Degu (Degu being his father's name), but when spoken to would be addressed simply as Ato ayalew.

Kenya

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- Social customs vary according to race, tribe and religion.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.

Madagascar

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women and conservative.

Behaviour

- Presume normal business courtesies for the region apply.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by their official or academic title or by their title followed by their surname.
- A Minister may be addressed as Monsieur le Ministre, the director of a company would be addressed as Monsieur le Directeur.
- Business cards are usually exchanged. Have some printed in French.

Mauritius

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- Presume normal business courtesies for the region apply.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.
- Handshaking is customary.
- Business cards are usually exchanged.

Rwanda

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women for formal meetings; smart-casual wear including open neck shirts is acceptable for other business situations.

Behaviour

- Presume normal business courtesies for the region apply.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.

Seychelles

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight and smart-casual.

Behaviour

- Women enjoy the same socio-economic status as men and are very visible on the business scene.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.
- Being a former British colony, English is the main business language.

Somalia

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women for formal meetings; smart-casual wear or safari suits are acceptable for other business situations.

Behaviour

- Presume normal business courtesies for the region apply.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.

Sudan

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women, however because of the heat a jacket and tie may be dispensed with.
- Women should dress modestly.

Behaviour

- Meetings are less formal than in the UK.

Communications

- First names may be used. Sayed meaning Mr followed by the first name can also be used. Otherwise, address new business contacts by titles and surnames.
- Handshaking is customary with all those present at a meeting even if they arrive late.

Tanzania

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- Muslim customs should be respected.
- A large number of Indians are vegetarian and Sikhs should not be offered anything to smoke.
- Friendly small talk is expected prior to business.
- A basic understanding of Swahili culture can help you in business contacts.
- Mozambicans like to listen. If direct precise and direct responses are required, then direct and precise questions should be asked.
- If you are offered refreshments it is impolite to refuse: however no one is offended if the food remains uneaten.
- Visitors should exercise the utmost caution in using cameras away from tourist beaches and game.

Communications

- Ministers should be addressed as "Hon Minister", Principal Secretaries as such and former Ambassadors are always "Ambassador". Address new business contacts as Mr, Mrs, Ms, etc unless other titles are appropriate. The term Ndugu, is the nearest translation to the socialist Comrade in English and its use is mainly confined to the press.
- Handshaking is customary, but on the first and last handshake it is common to hold the hand longer than practised in UK, as a gesture of warmth.
- When calling on someone, you will usually hear the word "Karibu" (welcome) to which you can reply "Asante" (thank you). On departing it is customary to say "Kwa Heri" (good bye).

Southern Africa

Angola

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women for formal meetings.

Behaviour

- Presume normal business courtesies for the region apply.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by their official or academic title or by their title followed by their surname.

- Ministers are addressed as "Excellency/Excelência".
- Handshaking is customary at the beginning and end of meetings.
- English is the business language of the oil industry.
- Business cards are usually exchanged.

Botswana

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- Presume normal business courtesies for the region apply.

Communications

- Modes of address are generally informal but if in doubt address new business contacts by titles and surnames.
- All correspondence should be in English and initially addressed to the Managing Directors.
- Business cards are usually exchanged.

Mozambique

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- Mozambicans are a very friendly and polite people. Conducting business in Mozambique is generally relaxed, but punctuality is important. However, it is not uncommon for Mozambicans to cancel meetings at short notice, or to arrive at appointments late.
- The Mozambican private community is small, with most of the major players knowing each other.
- It is common to offer refreshments at the start of any business meeting.
- Small business gifts are appreciated.
- Lunch meetings are common.
- Mozambicans like to listen. If direct precise and direct responses are required, then direct and precise questions should be asked.

Communications

- Business cards are usually exchanged, though not always at senior government level.
- Meetings can be arranged at short notice, providing contacts are in country.
- Address new business contacts by their official or academic title or by their title followed by their surname.

- Although English is widely spoken throughout business and government circles, it would be advisable to enquire beforehand whether meetings can be conducted in English.

Swaziland **Appearance**

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women although Swazis may be more casually dressed.
- Some conservative Swazis consider it unacceptable for women to wear trousers.

Behaviour

- Presume normal business courtesies for the region apply.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.

South Africa **Appearance**

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women. Medium weight suits may be required in the winter. Dress well in public, it will be expected by your South African host.
- A suit is usual for evening wear; but for the occasional more formal function, a black dinner jacket may be necessary.
- African women wear a sari.

Behaviour

- Lunch and dinner meetings are common.
- Meals at the home of a white South African will include a barbecue by the pool-called a braai (Afrikaans for roasted meat) or braai.
- Do not rush deals. South Africans are very casual in their business dealings.
- South Africans prefer a "win-win" situation.
- Gift giving is not the normal practice in business but if you do give a gift, use either both hands or the right hand when presenting the gift. It will be opened upon receipt.

Communications

- Handshaking is customary and is the most common greeting. There are a variety of handshakes between ethnic groups.
- Address new business contacts by their official or academic title or by their title followed by their surname.

- Appointments should be made starting at 9 a.m.
- Business cards are usually exchanged.

Zimbabwe **Appearance**

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women. Trousers suits are acceptable for women. Many hotels and restaurants require smart-casual attire particularly in the evening, with some insisting on a jacket and tie.

Behaviour

- Punctuality is important.
- Hospitality, particularly for meals, may be offered and may be freely reciprocated.
- Tipping is common.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.
- Business cards are usually exchanged.

Americas

Caribbean

Antigua and Barbuda **Appearance**

- Business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- Business lunches and dinners are popular and usually informal.
- Business appointments are generally required, and punctuality in business affairs is appreciated.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.
- Handshaking is customary.

Bahamas **Appearance**

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women. Jackets are only worn on business visits, for dinner, and in certain restaurants for lunch.
- Bahamian businesswomen tend to wear dark suits. Dresses are usually worn for evening wear.

Behaviour

- Presume normal business courtesies for the region apply.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.

Barbados

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women. Jackets are only worn when meeting with Ministers of Government or attending a major conference.

Behaviour

- Presume normal business courtesies for the region apply.

Communications

- Business cards are usually exchanged.
- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.

Cuba

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- Presume normal business courtesies for the region apply.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by their official or academic title or by Senora/Senor followed by the first surname. (Cubans may address each other as Companero (Comrade)).

Dominican Republic

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women. Jackets are only required for business meetings.

Behaviour

- Business lunches and dinners are popular and usually informal. Business breakfasts are also relatively common.
- Both formal and informal social occasions are common.

Communications

- Courtesy is important in business correspondence.
- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.

Grenada

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- Business lunches and dinners are popular and usually informal.
- Punctuality is important.

Communications

- Handshaking is customary.
- Appointments should be made in advance.
- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.

Jamaica

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women. Jackets are only required for business meetings.
- Light-weight casual clothing is worn outside of business hours.

Behaviour

- Presume normal business courtesies for the region apply.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames. After a few meetings one or other of the two parties may suggest first names be used.

Puerto Rico

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women. Jackets are only required for business meetings, for dinner, and in certain restaurants for lunch.
- The guayabera (a light-weight shirt/jacket) is also fashionable.

Behaviour

- Personal relationships are highly rated.
- A basic knowledge of Hispanic culture and of the Spanish language is useful.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.

St Vincent

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- Presume normal business courtesies for the region apply.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.

Trinidad and Tobago

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women. Jackets are only required for business meetings.
- Light-weight casual clothing is worn outside of business hours.

Behaviour

- Presume normal business courtesies for the region apply.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by their titles and surnames. After a few meetings one or other of the two parties may suggest that first names be used.

Central America

Belize

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- Presume normal business courtesies for the region apply.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by their titles and surnames. After a few meetings one or other of the two parties may suggest that first names be used.

Costa Rica

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women, including trousers. Jackets are worn on business visits and formal occasions.
- Medium-weight clothing may be suitable for the evenings during the wet season.

Behaviour

- Punctuality is important for business appointments, but not social functions.
- The family is important, with mothers, grandparents and elders highly respected.

- Important national pastimes are football and politics; there is a strong sense of democracy.

Communications

- Address Ministers as *Senor Ministro*, *Senora Ministra*.
- Address new business contacts by their official or academic title or as *Senor/Senora* followed by the surname.
- Business cards are usually exchanged.

El Salvador

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- Breakfast meetings, lunches and dinners are common.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by their official or academic title or as *Senor/Senora* followed by the surname.
- Business cards are usually exchanged at the beginning of a meeting. Have some printed in Spanish.
- Handshaking is customary.

Guatemala

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- It is not uncommon for women to run businesses in Guatemala. They also have an almost total monopoly of receptionist, secretarial positions and personal assistant to decision-makers. These women will do most of the translation for non-English speaking decision-makers. Never under-estimate the influence of their opinion of you.

Communications

- Many Guatemalans use two surnames: the first being the father's family name; the second being the mother's maiden family name. In business, generally only the first surname is used. However, in father-son operations, the second surname may also be used.
- Address new business contacts by their official or academic title or by their title followed by the appropriate surname.
- In speech within familiar relationships, *Doña* and *Don* are used with the first name.
- Married women optionally change their maiden name by the addition of "de [husband's first surname]". This makes

their names very long. Use the name by which they are introduced, or that they use in correspondence to you.

Honduras **Appearance**

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women in Tegucigalpa. However, in San Pedro Sula suits and ties are rarely worn. An umbrella is essential in the wet season.

Behaviour

- Punctuality is relaxed.
- Friendly small talk is expected prior to business.

Communications

- Business appointments should be made in advance.
- Business cards are usually exchanged after introductions.
- Address new business contacts by their official or academic title or by their title followed by their surname.
- Handshaking is customary.

Nicaragua **Appearance**

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women. An umbrella is essential in the wet season.

Behaviour

- Punctuality is important for business appointments but not social functions.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by their official or academic title or their title followed by the first surname.
- Business cards are usually exchanged, showing academic and professional qualifications.

Panama **Appearance**

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women. An umbrella is essential in the wet season.

Behaviour

- Punctuality is important.

Communications

- Business cards are usually exchanged, showing academic and professional qualifications.

- Address new business contacts by their official or academic title or as *Senor*, *Senorita* and *Senora* followed by the surname.

North America

Canada **Appearance**

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women. Be prepared for cold weather, especially in the north.

Behaviour

- Punctuality is important. However in French areas, although you will be expected to be on time, your host may not.
- French Canadians stand closer and are more demonstrative when talking than English speaking Canadians.
- Good manners are expected. Do not eat on the street.
- Gifts are normally only given to celebrate the completion of a deal.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by their official or academic title or their title followed by the first surname.
- Handshaking is customary and should be firm with eye contact. Men will wait for women to extend their hands.
- French Canadians will shake hands more frequently and may use their first name on the phone.
- English is spoken in most of Canada. French is spoken in Quebec, and some area of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

Mexico **Appearance**

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- In view of the high altitudes (Mexico City is at approx 7,000 feet above sea level) of most places, the main meal is usually eaten in the early afternoon. Only a light meal is taken in the evening. Business people are therefore usually unavailable between 14.00 and 17.00. Senior government officials tend not to return to work until after 18.00.
- Friendly small talk is expected prior to business.
- Attitudes to women in business are old fashioned, however the vast majority of foreign women visiting Mexico are accorded suitable respect.

Communications

- Face to face contact is crucial.
- Address new business contacts by their official or academic title or as *Senor*, *Senorita* and *Senora* followed by the surname. Both paternal and maternal surnames are used in written correspondence i.e. Ing López Martínez.
- Mexicans attach great importance to titles and expect to be addressed, both orally and in writing by their respective title. If in doubt as to a particular degree held, it would be advisable to use *Licenciado* in place of *Senor*.
- Business cards are usually exchanged. Have some printed in Spanish.

United States of America

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women. In rural or very hot areas the dress code may be more relaxed.

Behaviour

- The culture and geographic location of an area influences how business is done. Traditionally, the East Coast is more conservative and formal in their dress and manners than the West Coast.
- The United States is very litigious and business dealings must meet the requirements mandated by both the Federal and State laws.
- Punctuality is important.
- You should ask permission before smoking.
- Breakfast, lunch and dinner meetings are common, although these will be more for social than business purposes.
- Gift giving is not expected and if the gift is significant could be regarded as a bribe.

Communications

- Business cards are usually exchanged, showing academic and professional qualifications.
- Address new business contacts by their official or academic title or by their title followed by the surname.
- Handshaking is customary and should be firm with eye contact. In rural areas, a verbal greeting may replace a handshake.

South America

Argentina

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women. Men should

wear blazers and long shirts for casual wear.

Behaviour

- Local standards on punctuality differ. Be punctual, but don't be surprised if you are kept waiting.
- Personal relationships can be more important than company relationships. If you change your negotiating team you may undermine the entire contract.
- Be aware that Argentines are sensitive to the use of "America" when referring to the United States. They regard "American" as a term that applies to the whole of North, Central and South America.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.
- Latin American Spanish is the official language of Argentina although English is understood by most staff working in a number of the larger organisations.
- Greetings can be effusive, starting with an extended handshake at the first encounter. Once a friendship has been established men will embrace and greet women with a kiss. Women exchange a kiss.
- Business cards are usually exchanged.

Bolivia

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women, within La Paz, and generally within the banking sector. Elsewhere open-necked shirt and trousers are often acceptable.

Behaviour

- Presume normal business courtesies for the region apply.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.

Brazil

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women, although your hosts may dress fairly casually at their office. In the South, suits are expected; in the North-East it is often too hot for suits but smart light-weight clothing is required. Few restaurants require a jacket and tie to be worn. Women wear light cotton dresses in summer.
- Brazilian women are very fashion conscious. Sunglasses are recommended for everyone.

Behaviour

- Local standards on punctuality differ. In Sao Paulo punctuality is important, in Rio and some other cities it is not unusual to be 15 minutes late.
- Brazilians are mostly very warm and friendly, and very tactile. Handshaking occurs at every meeting. After the first meeting, males may hug and males/females may kiss on the cheek, particularly in major cities. These are normal and socially acceptable signs of friendship.
- Expect a number of appointments to be cancelled or re-arranged at short notice; on the positive side, you may be able to arrange further meetings at very short notice.

Communications

- In Brazil the family surname (unlike the Spanish) is usually the last. Thus, Dr Paulo Lopes Pereira would normally be referred to as Dr Pereira. However, Brazilians are often known only by their first names, e.g. Dr Paulo. You should also bear in mind that the title Dr is used as a mark of respect and may have nothing to do with professional qualifications.
- Business cards are usually exchanged.
- Friendly small talk is expected prior to business. Do not expect to do much business on a first visit - Brazilians like to get to know a business partner first, so be prepared to come back regularly.

Chile

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women. A lined raincoat may be useful in the winter.

Behaviour

- Punctuality is important for business appointments, but it is acceptable to be 30 minutes late for social appointments.
- Chileans are very hospitable and may invite you to their home.
- Smoking is acceptable, but it is banned in cinemas, theatres, churches and public transport.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.

Colombia

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women. Contrasting

temperatures make dressing difficult: choose layers of different weights of clothing.

Behaviour

- Colombian business people are polite and helpful.
- If you are invited to dinner, this may be preceded by a long cocktail party, with a meal starting at around 2300.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.
- A basic knowledge of Spanish is useful and appreciated.
- Some Colombians are not very good at replying to faxes and letters.

Ecuador

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- Meetings often start late.
- Ecuadoreans are polite and well-mannered people and formal when engaged in business relations.
- Business meetings are often conducted in restaurants.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by their official or academic title or by their title followed by their surname.

Paraguay

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women. It should be light-weight in the summer and medium weight in the winter.

Behaviour

- Most business people are able to conduct a conversation in English, but a knowledge of Spanish will be useful.

Communications

- Appointments should be made in advance.
- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.

Peru

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women. It should be light-weight in the summer and medium weight in the winter. In the

Andean region, heavier clothing may be necessary.

- Peruvians rate appearance highly.

Behaviour

- Punctuality is important for business appointments but not social functions.
- Business entertainment mostly takes place at lunch time, but cocktails followed by buffet suppers after midnight are also common.
- Business women should make their status in the company known.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.
- Women may use their husband's name or their maiden name for business.
- The official languages of the country are Spanish, Quechua and Aimara, but many business people speak English.

Uruguay

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- Punctuality is important.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by their official or academic title or by their title followed by their surname.
- A basic knowledge of Spanish is useful.
- Appointments should be made in advance.
- Handshaking is customary.
- Business cards are essential. Have the reverse printed in Spanish.

Venezuela

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- Punctuality is relaxed and meeting times should take into account the local traffic conditions.
- Business women should make their status in the company known.
- Friendly small talk is expected prior to business. Many Venezuelans will want to know more about their potential partner or business acquaintance before expressing an interest in his or her products.
- Entertaining takes place in restaurants and visiting business people will rarely

be invited to the homes of Venezuelan business contacts. Few businessmen have working meals; lunches are more pleasure orientated.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by their official or academic title or by their title followed by their surname.
- A basic knowledge of Spanish is useful although many Venezuela executives speak English.

Asia

Asia is a diverse continent encompassing many cultures, races, languages and religions. Asians place a great deal of importance on building long lasting relationships and regard them as essential for business success.

The concept of "saving face" is inherent in this region. Asians will go to great lengths to avoid embarrassment and dishonour. If you cause an Asian to "lose face" they will not forgive or forget easily.

Central Asia

Kazakhstan

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women.
- Women should dress modestly and not walk alone at night.

Behaviour

- At a business and political level, the social customs still reflect their Soviet heritage including vodka toasts.
- Meetings tend to be a mix of formality and unpredictability.
- Personal relationships are highly rated.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by their official or academic title or by their title followed by their surname.
- Business cards are usually exchanged and should clearly state any formal titles and positions.

Turkmenistan

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women.
- Women should dress modestly and not walk alone at night.

Behaviour

- Tea, coffee and sweets are usually served to business visitors. It is polite to accept.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by their official or academic title or by their title followed by their surname.
- Business cards are usually exchanged and should be printed with English on one side and Russian in the other.
- In government, Russian is gradually being replaced by Turkmen.
- Appointments should be confirmed 12 hours in advance and in the case of senior officials a few hours before the appointment.
- A good working knowledge of Russian is appreciated.

Uzbekistan

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women.
- Women should dress modestly and not walk alone at night.

Behaviour

- Business customs are fairly formal.
- Elderly people are treated with great respect.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by their official or academic title or by their title followed by their surname.
- Business cards are usually exchanged and should be printed with English on one side and Russian in the other.
- All the documentation about a company's activity and areas of interest should preferably be in Russian.

Far East

China

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women. Cool, comfortable footwear and a light-weight hat may also be useful.
- Women should dress modestly as traditional Chinese gender concepts are still very influential in the workplace.

Behaviour

- Avoid Chinese politics, especially the issue of Taiwan. Safe topics are families, one's home town, the wonders of Chinese culture etc. Many Chinese have become keenly interested in

sports, especially football.

- The Chinese concept of "losing face" is much stronger than in Western cultures, so avoid contradicting anyone in public if at all possible.
- Small gifts will be appreciated, but in the light of recent regulations concerning bribery, care must be exercised in how such gifts are given.

Communications

- The correct designation of China is The People's Republic of China, which should be used in all formal communications. The term 'China' may be used informally, but no qualifying adjective which might in any way suggest there is another China should ever be employed.
- Address new business contacts by their official or academic title or by their title followed by their surname. Note that in China, the surname precedes the first name. Thus Mr Li Hongjun should be addressed as Mr Li.
- Although the term "comrade" is still used in official documents, it is no longer used in speech.
- Handshaking is customary. Your Chinese counterparts will usually be presented in order of seniority, and it will help to follow this procedure when introducing others in your group.
- Business cards are essential and should be presented with both hands. Have them printed with English on one side and Chinese on the other and present your card with the Chinese face up. Examine any business cards you receive for a few moments, as this shows good manners.

Hong Kong

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women.
- A light-weight raincoat and umbrella are useful during the rainy season.
- Air-conditioning is often extreme, so warmer clothing may be required in the evenings.

Behaviour

- Gifts are not expected, but, when given, items should be wrapped in colourful paper. The host may wait before opening the gift. Gifts considered to be unlucky are clocks, grey or black coloured objects, scissors, knives and other sharp instruments.
- Business lunches and dinners are common and usually informal. They are a useful way to establish personal relationships, which are important for business in Hong Kong, as they are

throughout Asia.

- At very formal annual celebrations, it is normal to drink a toast as each course is served, and it is appreciated if the guest of honour ends the banquet by thanking their host.

Communications

- Business cards are essential. It is not usually necessary for cards to have a Chinese translation unless you are also travelling to other parts of China. When giving and receiving business cards, use both hands.
- Handshaking is customary.
- Address new business contacts by their official or academic title or by their title followed by their surname. Note that in China, the surname precedes the first name. Thus Mr Li Hongjun should be addressed as Mr Li. In written form, some Chinese have adopted a European style, e.g. Mr H Li. Western first names are common but the full name in Chinese is often retained.

Japan

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- Shoes are removed before entering traditional-style Japanese houses and restaurants. In practice, many business meals are held in Western or Chinese restaurants.
- Most Japanese meals consist of a series of small dishes and it can be confusing to know how to eat them. Watch your host or ask about the correct way. Avoid leaving chopsticks upright in the rice as this is a symbol of death.
- Hospitality may be offered as well as received. The custom of giving gifts is common and it may be useful to take a number of souvenir items such as English bone china, company pens, whisky or silk ties to give away on suitable occasions. It is important that all gifts should be carefully wrapped in high-quality paper.
- Personal relationships are highly rated and frequent visits may be required. It can take a few years to build up a good business relationship, so patience and long-term commitment are very important.

Communications

- When meeting your Japanese hosts it is easier to follow what they do; this may be a bow or a handshake.
- Business cards are essential and their exchange is formal, so avoid doing it too casually. Have them printed in

English on one side and Japanese on the other.

- The suffix San to the family names equates to Mr Mrs or Miss, and should invariably be used when addressing a Japanese person, e.g. a Mr T Suzuki would be addressed as Suzuki-san. It is never used describing oneself or one's own colleagues, even if more senior. Avoid using first names.

Korea

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- Never cause a Korean to lose face by putting him in a difficult position.
- Personal relationships are highly rated and key to business success.
- Entertainment should always be accepted and in some way reciprocated in due time. Be aware that Korean parties are often like drinking competitions.
- Korean businessmen are good negotiators. Be patient, gentle but firm and do not try to push your position too hard. If necessary use a middle-man to discuss sensitive issues or financial negotiations.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.
- Koreans do not like cold-calling or unsolicited letters. Whenever possible obtain a formal introduction to a Korean businessman.
- Business cards are essential: their exchange is a formal affair and plays a very important role in introductions.
- If your meetings are conducted in English, exchange notes after meetings to help your Korean counterparts' comprehension.

Macao

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women. In the summer, a jacket may be dispensed with.

Behaviour

- Presume normal business courtesies for the region apply.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by their official or academic title or by their title followed by their surname. Note that in

China, the surname precedes the first name. Thus Mr Li Hongjun should be addressed as Mr Li. In written form, some Chinese have adopted a European style, e.g. Mr H Li. Western first names are common but the full name in Chinese is often retained.

- Business cards are essential.

Mongolia

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- Presume normal business courtesies for the region apply.

Communications

- Many people only use one name; if two are given address the person by their title followed by the second name.
- Business cards are usually exchanged.
- Handshaking is customary at the beginning and end of meetings.

Taiwan

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style dark suits. Taiwanese women dress smartly and the same would be expected of a visitor.

Behaviour

- Formal introductions are standard.
- Friendly small talk is expected prior to business and may take up a lot of time. The first meeting with a potential agent/customer may well be limited to introductions and social niceties.
- Business cards are essential and should be presented with both hands. Have them printed with English on one side and Chinese on the other and present your card with the Chinese face up. Examine any business cards you receive for a few moments, as this shows good manners.
- The custom of giving gifts is common and it may be useful to take a number of souvenir items such as English bone china, company pens, whisky or silk ties to give away on suitable occasions. It is important that all gifts should be carefully wrapped in high-quality paper.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.
- Handshaking is customary. Your Chinese counterparts will usually be presented in order of seniority, and it will help to follow this procedure when

introducing others in your group.

Middle East

Bahrain

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women. In the summer, a jacket may be dispensed with. Medium-weight clothing may be more suitable in the winter.
- It is not necessary for women to cover their heads (except inside a mosque) but they should dress modestly, particularly in village areas.

Behaviour

- Muslim and Arab customs should be respected.
- Punctuality is relaxed, although it is increasing in importance.
- Personal relationships are highly rated, and friendly small talk is expected prior to business. Embarking on business matters before an atmosphere of trust and friendship has been established may cause offence.
- Decisions are often taken by consensus, according to Arabian tradition, rather than exclusively on the advantages and disadvantages of the case submitted.
- In Bahrain the opinions of family and community are revered. However, many younger Bahrainis have been educated in the west and may not always apply traditional values and customs.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.

Iran

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women. Iranians themselves do not wear ties or short sleeved shirts.

Behaviour

- Muslim and Arab customs should be respected.
- Physical contact between members of the opposite sex is illegal, even shaking hands is very much frowned upon.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.

Oman

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women.
- Oman is one of the easiest countries in the Gulf for women to travel in but women should still dress modestly and avoid eye contact with any males, unless they are business associates or well known to you.

Behaviour

- Muslim and Arab customs should be respected.
- Presume normal business courtesies for the region apply.

Communications

- The Sultan should be addressed as His Majesty, members of the Royal family as His/Her Royal Highness, Senior Government Officials as His/Her Excellency and Heads and their wives of tribal families as Sheikh/Sheikha.

Qatar

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women. In the summer, a jacket may be dispensed with.
- Women should dress modestly.

Behaviour

- Muslim and Arab customs should be respected.
- Punctuality is important in that you must be on time, although your host may be late or may postpone your appointment. Patience may be required.
- Always accept coffee (or tea) when offered. Follow the example of your host in how many cups to accept – too little or too many can cause offence. When you do not want anymore gently shake the cup before handing it back to the pourer. If you fail to do this you will be given a further cup.
- Never use the term 'Persian Gulf', refer to 'the Gulf'.
- It is best to avoid politics and in particular do not discuss the Palestinian situation or hint at any admiration for Israel.
- Ignore someone praying in a public place (e.g. an airport lounge) and do not walk in front of them while they are praying.
- Do not express admiration for something belonging to your host, this is bad manners and can be taken as asking for it as a gift. Your host is quite likely to insist that you keep it.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by their official or academic title or by their title followed by their surname.
- Handshaking is customary at the beginning and end of meetings. If you have made a good impression the handshake on departure will be longer than that on arrival.

Saudi Arabia

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women. In the summer, a jacket may be dispensed with.
- Women should dress modestly.
- Saudi businessmen wear the traditional thobe. Saudi women wear an abayya, a loose black gown, over their clothes to avoid being harassed or affronted by the mutawwa, or religious police.

Behaviour

- Muslim and Arab customs should be respected.
- Presume normal business courtesies for the region apply.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.

United Arab Emirates

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear – including dresses - for women. Lounge suits are acceptable for evening business functions.
- Women should dress modestly for business, but sundresses and shorts are acceptable for home wear out of the city. Evening dress is worn only on more formal occasions.
- An umbrella is useful during the rainy season. Headwear is useful in very hot weather.

Behaviour

- Muslim and Arab customs should be respected.
- If refreshments are offered they should be accepted.
- Do not express admiration for something belonging to your host. This is bad manners and can be taken as asking for it as a gift. Your host is quite likely to insist that you keep it.

Communications

- Presidents and rulers should be

addressed as Your Highness, Sheikh followed by the full name. Other Sheikhs should be addressed as Your Excellency, Sheikh followed by the full name. Ministers who are not Sheikhs should be addressed as Your Excellency, Sayyed followed by the full name. Other contacts should be addressed by their title followed by their surname.

Yemen

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women. An umbrella is useful during the rainy season.
- Women should dress modestly.

Behaviour

- Muslim and Arab customs should be respected.
- If refreshments are offered they should be accepted. However, the chewing of oat is not obligatory.
- If invited to a meal with Yemenis avoid blowing your nose during the meal as this can be considered offensive.
- Remove your shoes before entering a Yemini home.

Communications

- Handshaking is customary at the beginning and end of meetings. The handshake may last longer than in the west but this is a sign of friendship.
- Address new business contacts by their official or academic title or by their title followed by their surname. The President and all government Ministers should be addressed as Your Excellency.

Near East

Israel

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women. Particular attention should be given to the quality of shirt worn. Jackets may be dispensed with in the summer.
- Israel is a society comprising many different cultures and levels of religious practices. Some men in Israel wear skullcaps (kipot), the style denotes the religious grouping. Crocheted, colourful kipot belong to the modern orthodox grouping whilst black represents the more traditionally orthodox groups.
- Because of the temperatures head covering may be required during the day; warm clothing may be required in the evening.

- Israeli men may not wear jackets and ties.
- In religious or orthodox areas, both sexes should dress modestly. Men and married women may be required to have their heads covered.

Behaviour

- Jewish customs should be respected.
- Small business gifts are acceptable. If you are invited into an Israeli's home and want to take a gift, flowers are always popular and will not offend your host's Kosher/Halal food requirements.
- Israelis arrive well-prepared for meetings, come straight to the point and are very direct.
- Be punctual, but don't be surprised if your host is less so.
- When entertaining Israeli business people it is prudent to be aware of any particular dietary requirements. Both Judaism and Islam have very precise rules on what may be eaten and drunk, and on what is prohibited.

Communications

- Appointments can be made at short notice.
- Israelis are generally informal and use first names. However, in higher management circles in large companies it is best to address new business contacts by titles and surnames.
- If dealing with a company, where staff are orthodox, you will find usually that the men will not shake hands with women, and vice versa, but will bow slightly when introduced. If women are in doubt, wait for the man to offer their hand rather than you extend yours to avoid embarrassment.
- Tipping is common although it is not necessary to tip taxi drivers.
- Business cards are usually exchanged and are normally in English.

Jordan

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women.
- Women should dress modestly.
- Muslim and Arab customs should be respected.

Behaviour

- Personal relationships are highly rated; visits by senior representatives of the exporting firm are crucial to delivering results in the Jordanian market.
- Friendly small talk is expected prior to business. As a consequence, meetings generally take longer than they do in Britain.

- Refreshments are usually offered; and should be accepted.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.
- English is spoken widely.

Lebanon

Appearance

- There are many different socio/economic/religious groups in Lebanon, each with their own customs, lifestyles and codes of dress. In Beirut, dress codes are more liberal than in the regions. If in doubt, choose western style business wear.
- Lebanese women generally dress more provocatively than most Europeans.
- Leisure wear is acceptable outside business hours, including shorts and tracksuits.

Behaviour

- Muslim and Arab customs should be respected.
- Punctuality is relaxed: meetings may be delayed and interrupted.
- Lebanese people are hospitable: great emphasis is placed on the family, hospitality and food.
- Avoid discussing politics or religion: tensions exist between Christians and Muslims.
- Friendly small talk is expected prior to business. As a consequence, meetings generally take longer than they do in Britain.

Communications

- Two hour lunches are standard, making it difficult to contact people around midday.
- Appointments should be made in advance although ad-hoc meetings are possible.
- Handshaking is customary.
- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.
- Although most people speak French or English, some knowledge of Arabic is useful.

Syria

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women. Jackets may be dispensed of in the summer.
- Women should dress modestly.

Behaviour

- Muslim and Arab customs should be respected.
- Alcohol is available but should not be consumed publically during Ramadan.
- Punctuality is relaxed: meetings may be delayed and interrupted.
- If you are invited for lunch or given a gift after a meeting, do not refuse.
- Avoid discussing politics.
- A basic knowledge of Arabic is useful.

Communications

- Handshaking is customary.
- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.

West Bank and Gaza

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women. Warmer clothing may be required for evenings and in the winter.
- Women should dress modestly.

Behaviour

- Muslim and Arab customs should be respected.
- Friendly small talk is expected prior to business. As a consequence, meetings generally take longer than they do in Britain.
- Civility is important.

Communications

- Handshaking is customary.
- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.

South Asia

Bangladesh

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women. Clothing should not expose bare arms or ankles.
- Women should dress modestly. A headscarf is essential when visiting holy places. Bangladeshi women tend to wear traditional dress and headscarves.

Behaviour

- Women should try not to walk alone; particularly at night. On buses, unaccompanied women, sit at or near the front. In general, women are not permitted to enter mosques, but if in doubt, ask.

Communications

- Handshaking is customary.

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames. Men may be greeted with bahadur. Married or otherwise 'respectable' women might be addressed as begum, which is the equivalent of "madam".

India

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women.
- Women should dress modestly.

Behaviour

- Entertainment tends to be outside the home.
- Women in the business community in India are greeted with a high degree of respect.

Communications

- Handshaking is customary between men. Women should generally be greeted with folded hands.
- The most common social courtesy is greeting with hands folded as in a prayer, which is known as namaste.
- Business cards are essential and should be offered and received with the right hand.
- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames. Business superiors and those senior in age are almost always addressed formally.

Pakistan

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women. Clothing should not expose bare arms or ankles.
- Women should dress modestly and act discreetly. A headscarf is essential when visiting holy places. Pakistani women tend to wear traditional dress and headscarves.

Behaviour

- Alcohol is officially banned, although it can be found in some hotels, to be consumed on the premises only.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.
- Appointments should be made in advance.
- Handshaking is customary at both the beginning and end of meetings. Some businessmen may prefer not to shake hands with female business visitors.
- Business cards are essential.

Sri Lanka

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women. Warmer clothing may be necessary in the winter in the hill districts.
- Women often wear full length dresses in the evening.

Behaviour

- Alcoholic drinks are not served in hotels or restaurants on Poya (full moon) days.
- Footwear and head-gear should be removed before entering Buddhist temples and shrines; photographing statues of the Buddha is acceptable, but not posing beside them. Yellow-robed Buddhist monks (bhikku) should not be asked to pose for photographs.
- Travel by (crowded) public service buses is not recommended for women.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.
- Presents should be given or received with both hands.

South East Asia

Cambodia

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women.
- Women should dress modestly.

Behaviour

- Punctuality is important and visitors should allow plenty of time for travelling.
- Sensitivity to political matters should be observed and criticism of the Royal Family and Buddhism should be avoided.
- Polite and respectful behaviour is expected at all times and particularly in public.
- Few Cambodian companies have experience of long term partnerships with foreign companies and ideas of good business practice may differ.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.
- Cambodians traditionally greet each other with the 'sompiah', where they press their hands together as in prayer and bow. However, in recent years it has become more acceptable to shake

hands in the western manner.

- Business cards are essential. Offer and receive them with both hands.

Indonesia

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women. Safari suits can be worn on formal occasions. Batik shirts are considered appropriate for formal occasions such as cocktail parties and eveningwear.
- Warmer clothes and an umbrella may be useful for the evenings and upland areas.
- Women should dress modestly.

Behaviour

- Polite and respectful behaviour is expected in public, particularly by the Javanese. Courtesies are important, and displays of rudeness, anger or impatience are frowned upon, and considered embarrassing. Backslapping is not appreciated.
- Deference towards elders and superiors is essential.
- When provided with refreshments, do not start your drink until the host starts to drink or invites you to do so.
- Personal relationships are highly rated, and friendly small talk is expected prior to business.
- Take care not to touch people's heads, and do not pass anything or talk over the head of anyone else.

Communications

- Handshaking is customary. Both men and women will extend their hands. Bowing from the waist is a sign of respect.
- Business cards are exchanged immediately after introductions and should be handed over with both hands or with the right hand.
- At the end of a meeting, saying thank you in Indonesian will help the relationship. (Terima kasih)
- Business dealings should be conducted through an agent and tend to be slow.

Malaysia

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women. Although jackets and ties are often removed in the office, they are normally worn at official meetings.
- Women should dress modestly.

Behaviour

- Malaysians expect polite and respectful behaviour in public.
- Do not criticise the Malaysian Monarchy or government or your own.
- Do not point with the index finger, point with the thumb and fingers folded into the palm.
- Take care not to touch people's heads, and do not pass anything or talk over the head of anyone else.
- When handling or receiving something, use either the right hand or both hands, never use the left.
- If you are invited to a Malay house, take off your shoes before entering.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.
- Business cards are essential. Treat cards you are given with respect.

Philippines

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- Personal relationships are highly rated.
- People are friendly and hospitable and access to senior government and company officials is relatively easy.
- Direct confrontation and criticism should be avoided.
- The giving and receiving of favours is a normal part of business.

Communications

- English is widely spoken.
- Business cards are essential.
- Address new business contacts by their official or academic title or by their title followed by their surname.

Singapore

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light-weight western style suits for men and western business wear for women. Some Singaporean business executives favour an open-necked white short-sleeved shirt and smart, light-weight trousers.
- Women should avoid high-heels because of the number of escalators.

Behaviour

- Punctuality is important. Be aware that many companies are located in tower blocks, and not all floors are served by lifts.

Communications

- English is widely spoken.
- When making initial contact with a firm, try to aim high. You may end up being passed down the line but if you start lower down the company structure, it is rare to be passed up.
- Appointments should be made in advance.
- Business cards are essential. They should be presented with both hands and with the name facing the recipient.
- When addressing a Chinese person note that the surname precedes the first name. Thus Mr Li Hongjun should be addressed as Mr Li. When addressing a Malay person use the first of their two family names. Singaporean Indians use a variety of conventions so it is advisable to use the family name.
- Handshaking is customary and firm. Bowing is not necessary.

Thailand

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is light and smart but casual. If in doubt, wear a western style suit.

Behaviour

- Polite and respectful behaviour is expected in public. In general, strong feelings should not be displayed and losing your temper will diminish your standing.
- Deference towards elders and superiors is essential.
- Take care not to touch people's heads, and do not pass anything or talk over the head of anyone else. Try to avoid walking between people who are holding a conversation or passing closely in front of or behind an older person who is seated. If you do either of these things, lower your own head slightly as you pass.
- It is considered impolite to use the foot to indicate something or to perform an action such as closing a door. Do not point, or slap people on the back. When beckoning anyone, such as a waiter, for example, keep your hand palm-downward.
- Shoes should be removed when entering certain temple buildings. A woman must not touch any part of a Buddhist monk's body or robes.
- Entertainment will usually be in a restaurant. If you are invited to a Thai

house be prepared to take off your shoes. Meals inside Thai houses are served placed in bowls in the middle of the table and guests are expected to help themselves, with the host or hostess usually leading the way.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.
- Thais do not shake hands with each other but bring their hands together in the form of a praying gesture known as the "wai", accompanied by a simple greeting with the word "Sa wut dee" or "Sa wut dee krup" (phonetic pronunciation). They do expect Westerners to shake hands and on the whole prefer to do so with them. Many Thai women, however, are still reluctant to shake hands and prefer simply to exchange smiles on being introduced.

Europe

Eastern Europe

Azerbaijan

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women. Outside of the capital dress should be conservative.

Behaviour

- Tea and sweets are invariably served to business visitors.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.
- Business cards are normally exchanged. Have one side printed in Azeri and the other in English or Russian.
- There is a reluctance to make appointments more than 24 hours in advance.

Belarus

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- Punctuality is important.
- In many positions you will find people who still favour the old Soviet administrative style and bureaucracy. Some are sceptical of new ideas and approaches.
- Face-to-face meetings work best.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.
- Business cards are normally exchanged. Have one side printed in Belrussian or Russian.
- Try to familiarise yourself with the Cyrillic alphabet and learn a few words/phrases in Russian.
- Appointments should be made in advance and confirmed the day before.

Bulgaria

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- Bulgarian business people tend to be less formal than in the UK.
- Business lunches or dinners are common and it is normal for business visitors to offer their contacts hospitality.
- Some potential partners may adopt a passive stance and wait for you to initiate or advance the relationship.
- Bulgarians are normally extremely hospitable to their guest and they welcome new business contacts and friendships. However, in some sectors of Bulgarian society there can be an ingrained distrust of foreigners and a lack-of co-operation from employees and officials.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.
- A nod of the head sometimes means No and a shake of the head Yes.

Czech Republic

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- Punctuality is important.
- Meetings can take longer than expected and be more formal than in the UK.
- The Czechs rightly resent being treated as if they are a developing country. Czechoslovakia was one of the leading manufacturing economies in the world during the inter-war years.
- Czech companies tend to start and finish work earlier than UK companies.
- Be open and expect directly expressed opinions.

Communications

- Czech business people increasingly use English, but misunderstandings can and do occur. Do not patronise.
- Address new business contacts by their official or academic title or by their title followed by their surname. It is also usual to address people according to their status in the organisation.
- Business cards are usually exchanged.

Georgia

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- Do not be surprised if your business contacts change meeting plans at the last minute.
- Georgian business contacts may host you over dinner (this is likely to be a feast).

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.
- Business cards are normally exchanged. Have one side printed in Georgian or Russian.
- Meetings are not usually arranged a long time in advance.

Hungary

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- Presume normal business courtesies for the region apply.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by their official or academic title or by their title followed by their surname.
- A basic knowledge of the Hungarian language and the country's history is useful. The Hungarian language is very different from the languages spoken in neighbouring countries (German, Romance and Slavic).
- Appointments should be made in advance.
- Handshaking is customary at the beginning and end of a meeting.
- Business cards are usually exchanged.
- English is the principal business language, particularly in the capital Budapest.

Poland

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women. Visitors are advised to invest in a warm top coat, gloves, hats and sturdy footwear for prolonged stays in the winter.

Behaviour

- Presume normal business courtesies for the region apply.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.
- A basic knowledge of Polish is useful.
- Handshaking is customary.
- Business cards are usually exchanged.

Romania

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- Romanians are very hospitable people. It is common to offer refreshments at the start of any business meeting.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.
- Appointments should be made in advance and checked again before the respective date. Appointments with public officials can be sometimes difficult to arrange.

Russia

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women. For prolonged winter stays visitors are advised to invest in a warm coat, gloves and hat.

Behaviour

- Punctuality is relaxed and meetings may start late.
- Friendly small talk is expected prior to business.
- Women business travellers should not travel alone, and should be accompanied by a local.

Communications

- Correspondence should ideally be in Russian; apart from courtesy, it is more likely that you will receive a response.
- Business cards are usually exchanged. Cards in Cyrillic script will be well

received.

- Address new business contacts by the first name and patronymic (the Father's name with the suffix 'ovich for a man, and 'ovna for a woman). This is the polite form of address, and is more acceptable than using the surname.

Slovakia

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women. For prolonged winter stays visitors are advised to invest in a warm coat, gloves and hat.

Behaviour

- It is common to offer refreshments at the start of any business meeting.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.
- The official language of Slovakia is Slovak, although Hungarian is also spoken. Many Slovaks have an understanding of German or Russian. English is becoming more popular but may not be spoken by telephonists. Initial contact may therefore be best by letter or fax.
- Business cards are usually exchanged.
- As a general rule, Slovak companies start and finish work earlier than in the UK.

Ukraine

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- Be punctual, but do not be surprised if your host is late.
- Do not refer to Ukraine as part of the Soviet Union, as part of Russia or as "the Ukraine".
- At the end of a meeting a vodka toast may be proposed.
- If you take flowers, ensure that it is an odd number.
- In many key positions there are still people who grew up with the old administrative style and bureaucracy. Older directors/administrators can be very sceptical of new ideas and approaches. Business questions are best discussed in face-to-face meetings.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.

- Meetings are not usually arranged a long time in advance – confirm meetings the day before.
- Ukrainians spend a lot of time on introductions. Hand shaking is customary but bear in mind that it is considered bad luck to shake hands across the threshold of a door, and you should not shake hands in gloves.
- Try to familiarise yourself with the Cyrillic alphabet, and learn a few words/phrases in Ukrainian.
- Business cards are usually exchanged: have them printed in Ukrainian on one side.

Northern Europe

Denmark

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- Punctuality is important.
- Danes are normally straightforward and easy to communicate with, even on money-related matters.
- The Lutheran ethic pervades much of Danish society. The people are industrious but not slaves to their employment, tolerant and on the whole law abiding. Privacy and individual rights are much respected.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.
- Most Danes read and speak English very well. Correspondence and telephone calls can usually be conducted in English without difficulty.
- In initial marketing stages, letters should be addressed to the company and not to named individuals. Once a business connection has been established, correspondence can then be addressed to named individuals.
- Handshaking is customary and firm at the beginning and end of meetings.

Estonia

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- Presume normal business courtesies for the region apply.

Communications

- Handshaking is customary at every meeting.

- Business cards are usually exchanged.
- Address new business contacts by their official or academic title or by their title followed by their surname.
- Estonian is the official language of the Republic of Estonia but most businessmen and Government officials will also have a working knowledge of English. Estonian is spoken in preference to Russian.

Finland

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- The Finns are a Lutheran people who value conscientious work, initiative and enterprise. They strongly respect private property, law and contracts.
- Punctuality is expected for business appointments and social functions.
- Icelanders are direct and expect their business counterparts to be precise. Do not make any promises that you cannot keep.
- Remember the Finns are very quality conscious people and expect punctual delivery.
- The working day in Finland starts and ends earlier than in the UK.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.
- Always confirm appointments in writing (E-mail or fax).
- Give a firm handshake on arrival and departure and make eye contact as soon as possible.

Iceland

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- Punctuality is expected for business appointments and social functions.
- Don't smoke in meetings or in non-smoking areas.
- Icelanders are direct and expect their business counterparts to be precise. Do not make any promises that you cannot keep.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.
- Appointments should be made in advance.

- A firm handshake with good eye contact is customary.
- Business cards are usually exchanged.

Ireland

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- Ireland is not called Eire in Ireland, it is called Ireland. Do not refer to Britain as "the mainland".
- Irish people are generally very generous with their time and may refer you on to another appropriate customer if your product or service is not suitable for them.

Communications

- The business culture is open and friendly and it is not uncommon to be on first name terms with customers at a very early stage.

Latvia

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- Introductions are formal.
- Refreshments are usually offered at the start of each meeting.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.
- Business cards are usually exchanged.

Lithuania

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- It is common to offer refreshments at the start of any business meeting.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.
- Handshaking is customary at the beginning and end of meetings.
- Business cards are usually exchanged.

Norway

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western

business wear for women.

Behaviour

- Punctuality is expected for business appointments and social functions.
- Don't smoke in meetings or in non-smoking areas.
- Norwegians are direct and expect their business counterparts to be precise. Do not make any promises that you cannot keep.
- Business lunches and dinners are common. Spouses are often invited to business dinners, but not to lunches.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.
- Appointments should be made in advance.
- A firm handshake with good eye contact is customary.
- Business cards are usually exchanged.

Sweden

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- Punctuality is expected for business appointments and social functions.
- Don't smoke in meetings or in non-smoking areas.
- Swedes are direct and expect their business counterparts to be precise. Do not make any promises that you cannot keep.
- Business lunches and dinners are common. Spouses are often invited to business dinners, but not to lunches.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.
- Appointments should be made in advance.
- A firm handshake with good eye contact is customary.
- Business cards are usually exchanged.

Southern Europe

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- Presume normal business courtesies for the region apply.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.
- Handshaking is customary.
- Business cards are usually exchanged.

Croatia

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- Be careful not to patronise. Croats are proud.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.
- Do not be put off by a Croatian company's failure to reply to a letter or fax, which is quite common and not always a sign of lack of interest. Follow up with a phone call and arrange a face to face meeting.

Cyprus

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- Punctuality is important.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames. Once a relationship is established first names are used in day to day business.
- Business cards are usually exchanged.

Greece

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- Personal relationships are highly rated, and friendly small talk is expected prior to business.
- Entertainment can be an important part of cementing a business relationship.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames. First names are not used until a relationship has been established.
- Meetings will often be conducted in English if a non-Greek speaker is participating, and correspondence will usually be in English.

- Company brochures are often produced in English as well as Greek.
- Business cards are very popular. Have them printed in Greek on one side.

Italy

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- Personal relationships are highly rated, and their importance cannot be overestimated.

Communications

- A basic knowledge of Italian is useful, particularly in the South.

Malta

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- Punctuality is important.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames. First names are used in day to day business.
- Business cards are usually exchanged.

Portugal

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- Presume normal business courtesies for the region apply.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by their official or academic title or by their title followed by the surname.

Serbia and Montenegro

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- The legacy of recent Balkan conflict means that issues of language can be sensitive in Serbia and Montenegro.

Communications

- Most business can be conducted in English or German. However business correspondence with Serbia and

Montenegro companies in Serbo-croat should be in the Serbian (ekavski) variant as opposed to the Croatian or Bosnian (ijekavski). Both Latin and Cyrillic script are acceptable in Serbia and Montenegro. Post war changes to standard Serbo-croat that have developed in republics now no longer part of Serbia and Montenegro should be avoided.

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.
- Business cards are usually exchanged.

Slovenia

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- Negotiations are as likely to be carried out over lunch or dinner as they are in the office.
- Slovenes love culture; they are the only nation who have a special cultural holiday.

Communications

- Initial contacts are normally made between people of a comparable standing.
- Titles are important. Address new business contacts by their official or academic title or by their title followed by the first surname.
- English is the second business language (after Slovene). German and Italian are also spoken. Almost all businessmen also speak Serbian and Croat which facilitates business negotiations in the republics of former Yugoslavia.

Spain

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- Personal relationships are highly rated, and friendly small talk is expected prior to business. Regular visits may be required.
- Spanish business hours and working practices differ markedly from those in the UK. Entertaining/eating out is an important aspect of Spanish business life. Restaurant hours are much later than in the UK.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.

- The main business language used throughout Spain is Castilian Spanish (although several of the autonomous regions throughout Spain have their own language). In general, English is not widely spoken.

Turkey

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women with short-sleeves being acceptable in very hot weather.
- For women in large conurbations, e.g. Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir and tourist destinations there is no restriction in dress, however, for travel outside these areas (especially to the South-East region) women should dress modestly.

Behaviour

- Turkish people are very hospitable. Every visitor will immediately be offered coffee or tea; it is impolite to refuse.
- Personal relationships are highly rated, and friendly small talk is expected prior to business.
- The first President and founder of the Modern Republic, Kemal Ataturk is revered and you should be careful not to say anything about him which might be construed as critical.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.
- Appointments should be made wherever possible. However most executives will receive visitors without an appointment if they are able to do so.
- Turks say yes by nodding their head forward and down and say no by nodding their head up and back while lifting their eyebrows. Wagging your head from side to side doesn't mean "no" in Turkish, it means "I don't understand".
- Turks answer the phone by saying Alo? a specific Turkish word for answering the phone. Turks may also say Buyurun, equivalent to saying at your service. Turks also tend to use the expression hah! as sign of agreement.
- Turks prefer direct communication or phone communication to written communication.
- Business cards are usually exchanged.

Western Europe

Austria

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- Punctuality is important.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by their official or academic title or by their title followed by their surname.
- Handshaking is customary at the beginning and end of meetings.
- Business cards are usually exchanged.

Belgium

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- Punctuality is important.
- Friendly small talk is expected prior to business. Belgians like to establish business friendships.

Communications

- Business cards are usually exchanged. Have them printed in the language local to the area of Belgium in which you are operating.
- Language is important. In Flanders, Dutch is the standard business language, although English is also widely established as a business language. However many Flemings would consider it as an insult to receive letters in French. While in Wallonia the ability to operate in French remains a great advantage.

France

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- The French appreciate the efforts of others to speak in French and it is worth learning some basic phrases before your visit.

Communications

- Always follow up introductory letters with a telephone call.
- First names are rarely used in French business relationships.
- Meetings are generally always more formal than in the UK.

- Handshaking is customary at the beginning and end of meetings.
- Always confirm points agreed at meetings in writing, and be prepared to chase correspondence if necessary.

Germany

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- Time is money in the eyes of German businessmen. Be punctual and keep small talk for out of business hours or when the contract has been signed.
- British understatement and humour can on occasions be misconstrued. Keep this for when you have got to know your German business partner better.
- Be patient but politely persistent in your negotiations.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.
- Although English is widely spoken in Germany, do not assume that this is the case, particularly in the former GDR where Russian was the second language, or in dealings with municipal and government authorities.

Liechtenstein

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- Punctuality is important.
- A knowledge of German is advantageous.
- Business entertainment is usually at lunch time in restaurants.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames. People in the Principality tend to be more formal than the British and do not, in normal business relationships, use first names.
- Allow plenty of time when seeking appointments; and always make clear the purpose of any meeting - appointments may be refused unless they promise some clear business advantage.

Luxembourg

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- Presume normal business courtesies for the region apply.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.
- Appointments should be made in advance.
- Business cards are usually exchanged.

Netherlands

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- Punctuality is important. The Dutch often arrive early for appointments.

Communications

- Appointments are necessary - the Dutch do not like cold callers.
- When approaching a Dutch company, first contact by telephone. Then, if they are interested, follow up. It is standard Dutch practice to announce your name and company when asking for people by telephone.
- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames.
- Business cards are usually exchanged.

Switzerland

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women.

Behaviour

- Punctuality is important.
- The Swiss are business opportunists, more open to new ideas than their cautious, conservative image suggests.
- Business lunches are common.

Communications

- Address new business contacts by titles and surnames. The Swiss tend to be formal and do not, in normal business relationships, use first names.
- A knowledge of German, French and Italian is advantageous, particularly outside the main commercial centres.
- Allow plenty of time when seeking appointments; and always make clear the purpose of any meeting - appointments may be refused unless they promise some clear business advantage.

Oceania

Australia

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women. Smart casual wear may also be acceptable.

Behaviour

- Punctuality is expected for business appointments and social functions.
- Australians are friendly by nature, polite and hospitable.

Communications

- Australians tend towards informality and visitors may soon find themselves being addressed by their first names.

New Zealand

Appearance

- For visitors, business wear is western style suits for men and western business wear for women, although in the very north, light-weight clothing and an umbrella will be required.
- Out of business hours, dress is informal with smart but casual clothes acceptable in restaurants.

Behaviour

- Presume normal business courtesies for the region apply.

Communications

- As in Australia, New Zealanders tend towards informality; visitors may soon find themselves addressed by their first names.

Further Information

Further information can be found on the country pages of the following websites:

UK Trade and Investment:
www.uktradeinvest.gov.uk

The Foreign Office:
www.fco.gov.uk

You can also find contact information for UK embassies abroad and foreign embassies in the UK on this website that may be able to help you further.

Executive Planet:
www.executiveplanet.com

This guide is for general interest - it is always essential to take advice on specific issues.

We believe that the facts are correct as at the date of publication, but there may be certain errors and omissions for which we cannot be responsible.

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If you would like to receive further information about this subject or other publications, please call us – see our contact details on the next page.

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