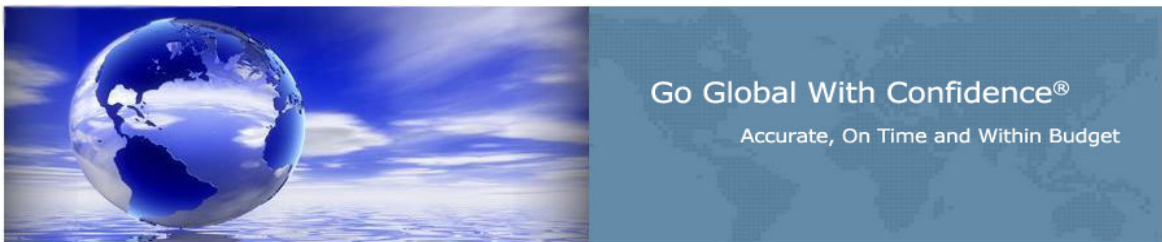


## The International Business Etiquette Guide





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**- Tanya Candia, Candia Communica-**

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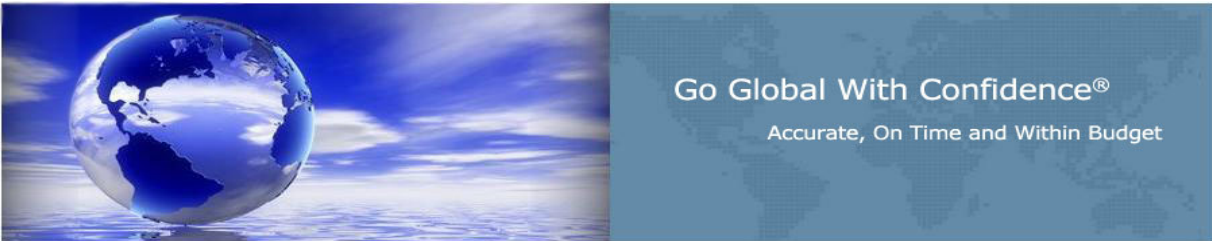
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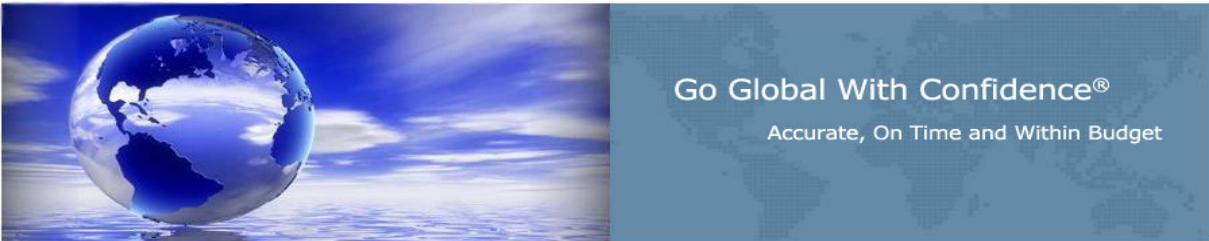
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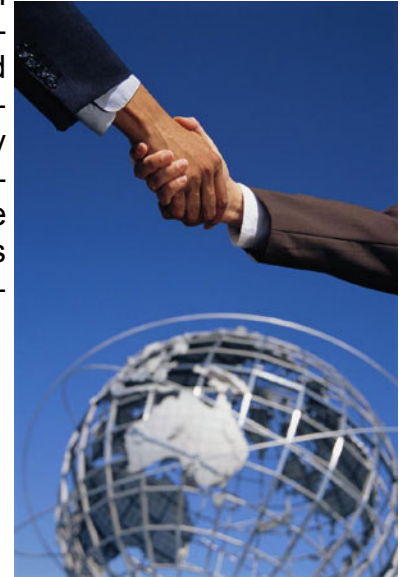
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## The Importance of Business Etiquette

While adhering to proper etiquette is always considered polite in social situations, when it comes to business transactions, displaying proper etiquette is vital, as a single mistake or impropriety can cost you money and destroy potential new business relationships. Knowing the proper business etiquette for the country of your potential client or partner is the key to success of your business transaction. By following respected and time-honored business etiquette traditions, you will effectively demonstrate your own intellect and class, proving to your foreign business partners that you are worthy and deserving of their attention, respect and business.



## General Business Etiquette Tips

- ◆ In order to show respect for your foreign colleagues and your eagerness to do business with them, be sure to include a translation of your business card on its flipside.
- ◆ Furnish a translation of all business documents. This extra step highlights your attention to detail and will establish clear lines of communication throughout your business dealings.
- ◆ While it may not be necessary for every business meeting, bring an interpreter when meeting with a foreign colleague for the first time. During your first meeting, assess the English-speaking abilities of your colleagues and ask if they would prefer to have an interpreter present during any subsequent meetings. Having an interpreter present will help avoid communication misunderstandings that could derail a business relationship before it has even started.

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# Arabic Business Etiquette

## Arab Business Meeting Etiquette

At the start of a meeting, rather than saying "hello" or "good morning," greet your Arab partner with the traditional Islamic greeting "Assalamo Alaikum," which translates to "May peace be upon you and may God's blessings be with you." When planning a meeting, keep in mind Islamic principles and culture value structure. By creating and staying with a set agenda, you will demonstrate not only your organization and business savvy, but also your knowledge of and respect for Arabic business etiquette. When choosing a restaurant, respect Islamic dietary restrictions. Your Islamic associates may not eat meat, pork, fish or fowl, so be sure there is an abundance of vegetarian options.

### Values Respected in Arab Countries

- ♦ Consistency (Rather than Change)
- ♦ Loyalty
- ♦ Predictability (Rather than Risk)
- ♦ Respect for Authority

## Country Specific Tips

### Bahrain:

- ♦ Smiling and direct eye contact are essential parts of proper business etiquette in Bahrain.
- ♦ Don't be surprised if your Bahrain partner gives and expects a kiss on the cheek upon greeting you!



### Saudi Arabia:

- ♦ Non-Saudis must obtain official government permission before entering and exiting the country.
- ♦ Westerners are subject to Saudi Islamic law, which bans alcohol, drugs, pornography and pork.

### Tips to Remember:

- ♦ Avoid serving foods that are forbidden by Islamic custom.
- ♦ Refrain from smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol and consuming caffeine during meetings.

### United Arab Emirates (including Dubai):

- ♦ The lobbies of large hotels are the preferred venue for business meetings in the UAE, as these rooms limit distraction and give attendants easy access to refreshments.



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# Japanese Business Etiquette

## Japanese Business Meeting Etiquette

Avoid using abrasive language, refrain from being confrontational and from openly disagreeing your Japanese colleagues. The Japanese value trustworthy business partners who represent themselves as humble and compromising. Also, be prepared to answer direct questions such as “How much money do you make?” or “How old are you?”. These questions are not considered offensive in Japan and are a way for your Japanese colleagues to get to know you. It is proper to exchange business cards at the beginning of the meeting and be sure to take time to read your colleagues’ cards before putting it away carefully and respectfully. It is also customary to bow slightly when handing out your card.



## Japanese Travel Tips

### Bus:

- ♦ Relatively inexpensive.
- ♦ Can be time consuming due to many stops.

### Taxi:

- ♦ Safest option when traveling at night.
- ♦ Reliable and quick, but can be expensive.

### Renting a car:

- ♦ Must obtain an international drivers license and comply with local driving regulations.

### Train:

- ♦ An inexpensive and convenient way to travel throughout Japan.
- ♦ Reaches a variety of destinations and offers different fares depending on the speed of travel.

### Did You Know?

- ♦ Japan has the second largest economy in the world.
- ♦ About 130 million people speak Japanese world-wide, making it the ninth most common language.
- ♦ Japanese speakers comprise the third largest group of internet users.

### Tips to Remember:

- ♦ Bring colleagues to business meetings who can help answer the many questions your Japanese associates will ask.
- ♦ Do not be surprised if your Japanese colleagues go silent and close their eyes. This is a sign they are thinking critically.

### Plane:

- ♦ When flying into Japan, the most common destinations are Narita Airport in Tokyo and Kansai Airport in Osaka.

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# German Business Etiquette

## When Attending a German Business Meeting

Keep in mind that German business etiquette is strict and distinct from that of the United States and of other European countries. Until you are personally invited to use a colleague's first name, address him or her by surname and title. Punctuality is paramount in a German business meeting so at all costs, avoid being late. Formally write up decisions and meeting notes and share them with your German colleagues. Always knock before entering a room and allow those in higher positions to enter first. When a man and woman are of equal status, the man will enter first. Also, wait to sit until being instructed. The most senior-ranking individual will most often direct you.

### Did You Know?

- ♦ German is the most widely spoken language in Europe.
- ♦ Two-Thirds of all international trade fairs take place in Germany.
- ♦ As of 2008, Germany was global leader in exports.

so at all costs, avoid being late. Formally write up decisions and meeting notes and share them with your German colleagues. Always knock before entering a room and allow those in higher positions to enter first. When a man and woman are of equal status, the man will enter first. Also, wait to sit until being instructed. The most senior-ranking individual will most often direct you.

## Tips by Country

### Germany:

- ♦ Shake hands before and after a business meeting.
- ♦ Be sure to give a firm, brief handshake to everyone in the room.

### Austria:

- ♦ Be prepared for a large amount of written communication.

### Liechtenstein:

- ♦ Avoid planning meetings during the vacation months of July and August, or during holidays, particularly Easter and the week after Christmas.

### Tips to Remember:

- ♦ Avoid exaggeration and high pressure talk.
- ♦ Dress conservatively with minimal accessories.
- ♦ Maintain eye contact when speaking and listening.
- ♦ Avoid extending meetings past their established schedules.

- ♦ Most business meetings are conducted over lunch.
- ♦ If invited to a meeting at a private residence, a small gift of flowers, chocolate, or non-German liquor is appropriate.



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# Chinese Business Etiquette

## In the Business Meeting

Introduce and address your Chinese colleagues by title and last name, never by first name. Also, exchange business cards at the beginning of the meeting during the introductions. Include gold embossing on your card because it represents wealth, status, and prestige in Chinese cultures. Upon receiving your colleagues' business cards, read them attentively before putting them away carefully and respectfully. Putting a business card directly into your pocket without reading it is highly insulting to Chinese businesspeople. The way you treat the business cards indicates the degree to which you value your relationship with them. Also, during introductions, avoid overly strong handshakes because they are considered offensive and inappropriate for business meetings. Following introductions, start with small talk before moving on to more serious business matters.



### Tips to Remember:

- Avoid direct eye contact.
- Do not offer gifts, as these are considered forms of bribery.
- Do not physically touch your Chinese colleagues.
- When possible, offer "I'll look into that," rather than the closed option of "No."

## When Traveling to...

### China:

- ♦ Wear conservative, dark, simple attire.
- ♦ Bright colors and/or ornate designs are considered flashy and inappropriate.
- ♦ It is customary to speak slowly and pause between your sentences when speaking during a business meeting.

### Hong Kong:

- ♦ Business interactions are viewed as a process of building a long-term relationship.
- ♦ Expect to engage in social activities with prospective business partners so they get to know you better and feel more comfortable with you.

### Taiwan:

- ♦ A well-articulated message is key to being persuasive to your Taiwanese colleagues.
- ♦ While brevity is generally frowned upon, use care in choosing your gestures and expressions.

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# Brazilian Business Etiquette

## Proper Brazilian Business Meeting Etiquette

An introduction by a mutual acquaintance will help Brazilians feel comfortable with you, easing the way for conducting business. Following introductions, socialize and engage in small talk before discussing work-related topics. Brazilian business meetings are relatively casual. It is acceptable to interrupt a speaker to add your opinion. However, avoid confrontation and criticism of your Brazilian colleagues as doing so is considered very offensive. Also, while you should always be punctual, do not be surprised if your Brazilian associates show up late. Dress conservatively for business meetings and keep in mind that Brazilians are very fashion conscience. Finally, expect your Brazilian colleagues to stand closer to you during conversation and do not be surprised by a touch on your arm or back.



### Communicating in Brazil:

- ♦ Good conversation topics: soccer, the beach, children and Brazil's growth as a country.
- ♦ Bad conversation topics: Argentina, religion, politics, poverty, Brazil's class system.
- ♦ The "okay" hand signal, with the thumb and first finger creating an "o" shape, is a rude gesture in Brazil.

## Tips for other Portuguese Speaking Countries

### Portugal:

- ♦ Arriving five minutes late for a meeting is considered normal, while arriving early is considered worrisome.
- ♦ The Portuguese take life much more casually than other cultures so do not be surprised or offended if deadlines are missed or verbal agreements are forgotten.

### Mozambique:

- ♦ Due to holidays, avoid scheduling meetings during the month of January.
- ♦ Lightweight suits are considered appropriate dress.
- ♦ Many people only speak Portuguese so an interpreter may be necessary.

### Angola:

- ♦ First meetings are usually only to decide if business will be conducted.
- ♦ Use direct eye contact with those at your own level, but use indirect eye contact to show respect to superiors.

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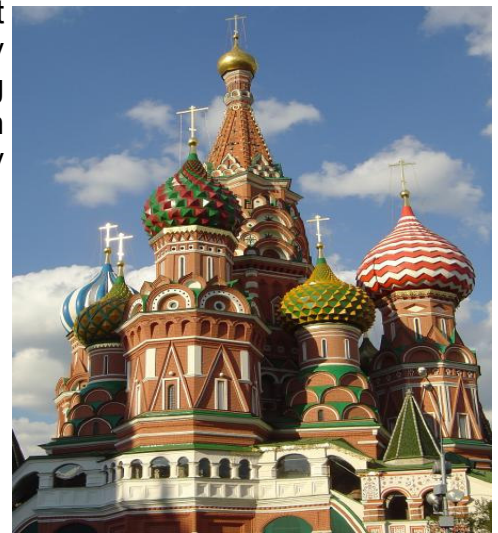
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# Russian Business Etiquette

## Business Meeting Etiquette

Russians value patience and appreciate the opportunity to debate and digest negotiations. Avoid pressuring your Russian colleagues into making decisions, as this is considered rude and unprofessional. While your Russian associates may not be on time for meetings, they expect that foreign counterparts will be punctual, if not early. Also, do not expect an apology from a tardy Russian colleague as they consider their behavior a test of your patience. If discussing technical issues during your meeting, bring an expert along with you. Russians expect a thorough presentation and want to fully understand the topic before making a decision.



### Tips to Remember:

- ♦ Avoid showing the soles of shoes as this is considered highly disrespectful.
- ♦ Expect your Russian colleagues to display emotion by becoming angry, storming out of meetings, or threatening to terminate your business in an attempt to gain the upper hand in negotiations.
- ♦ Shake hands firmly and maintain eye contact while doing so.
- ♦ Wear dark, conservative business suits. Women should wear knee length skirts rather than a pants-suit.

## Importance of the Russian Language and Market

- ♦ Russia has the seventh largest economy by GDP and has achieved at least 7% growth each year for the past decade.
- ♦ Russian was taught throughout the Soviet Union, making it the regional business language, and the primary means of communication throughout Eastern Europe and Central Asia.
- ♦ There are 38 million Russian-speaking internet users, making it the ninth most common language on the internet.
- ♦ Russian is the official language of Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan.

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# Korean Business Etiquette

## When Attending a Korean Business Meeting

Instead of directly saying “no”, show your disagreement by inhaling through closed teeth, tipping back your head, and saying “maybe”. Present your business card with both hands, and, as with Chinese or Japanese associates, be sure to attentively read your Korean colleague’s card before putting it away. Also, when speaking to your Korean associates, be sure to pause frequently to allow for questions and deliberations. Similarly, send proposals and meeting agendas prior to the meeting to allow your Korean colleagues some time to review them.

### Tips to Remember:

- ◆ Acknowledge those with highest status first, followed by the oldest.
- ◆ Expect your Korean colleagues to deliberate with each other before making a decision.
- ◆ Wear a dark-colored conservative business suit to meetings.



## About the South Korean Market

- ◆ With a GDP of over 1 trillion, South Korea has the 14th largest economy in the world.
- ◆ Seoul, the capital of South Korea, is the ninth best financial and commercial city in the world according to a 2008 MasterCard survey.
- ◆ Over 37 million Koreans search the web, making it the tenth most common language among internet users.

### Values Honored in Korea

- ◆ Certainty and Structure
- ◆ Collectivity and Team Work
- ◆ Conformity
- ◆ Loyalty
- ◆ Obedience and Respect for Authority

## Korean Language Facts

- ◆ Classified as a Category III language, it is exceptionally hard for English-speakers to learn.
- ◆ The meanings of verbs depend on their intonation.
- ◆ There are seven different speech levels in Korean, each expressing a different level of formality.
- ◆ There are two numeral sets: one native to Korea and one adopted from Chinese. Either one is acceptable, but they cannot be used together.

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# Italian Business Etiquette

## In the Meeting...

For Italians, business meetings are a time for each relevant party to discuss ideas and issues, but not to make decisions. Avoid high-pressure tactics and do not expect decisions to be made. Be sure to schedule meetings at least two weeks in advance. The most appropriate manner for scheduling a meeting is in writing. Show respect for your Italian colleagues by using Italian to request the meeting. Also, be sure to reconfirm any scheduled meeting with a call or fax. It is also very important to honor all agreed-upon verbal commitments in order to maintain credibility with your Italian business colleagues. In addition to a business card, it is important to have a social card, containing name, phone number, title, and academic degree, for non-business interactions.



## About the Italian Language

- ♦ Italian is very similar to other Romance languages. For instance, it is 89% similar to French and 82% similar to Spanish

### Tips to Remember:

- ♦ Expect your Italian colleagues to be descriptive, talkative and demonstrative.
- ♦ Italians value personal relationships, so third-party introductions are helpful.
- ♦ Wear a few elegant accessories, as this display of wealth translates to power in the business arena.
- ♦ Italian is the native language of 66 million people and is spoken as a second language by about 130 million.
- ♦ Translations from English into Italian generally increase by about 25%. This is especially important to keep in mind when formatting documents.

## The Italian Market

- ♦ With a GDP of \$2.4 trillion in 2008, Italy had the tenth largest economy in the world.
- ♦ Italy is the world's sixth largest exporter, specializing in engineering products, textiles and clothing, motor vehicles, chemicals and food.
- ♦ Over 40 million tourists visited Italy in 2007, making it the fifth most visited country in the world.

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# Spanish Business Etiquette

## Spanish Business Meeting Etiquette

Your Spanish colleagues will prefer to do business with people they know, so they may want to get to know you better through dinner or other social engagements before a business meeting takes place. It is important to accept these invitations to prove your willingness to do business. Also, it is preferable that you be introduced to prospective Spanish clients through a mutual acquaintance. Once a business meeting is scheduled, do not be surprised if your Spanish associates arrive 15 minutes late. As always, you should arrive on time despite your colleagues' expected tardiness. During meetings, expect Spanish colleagues to stray from the agenda, as agendas are considered just springboards for discussions.



## Country Specific Business Etiquette Tips

### Mexico:

- ◆ First impressions are highly valued. From the very beginning, be sure to dress well and understand proper business etiquette.
- ◆ Be sure to have executive-level business people at your first meeting to ensure a good first impression.

### South America:

- ◆ Personal relationships are valued, so name dropping and nepotism are appreciated when doing business.

### Tips to Remember:

- ◆ Communicate face-to-face whenever possible.
- ◆ Establish an oral agreement before drawing up a formal contract.
- ◆ Wear conservative business suits with a few accessories to indicate status and wealth, and to increase credibility.

- ◆ Once a personal relationship is established, your Spanish colleagues will be loyal to you, not to the company you work for.

### Spain:

- ◆ Expect your Spanish colleagues to deliberate after a meeting rather than making a decision in your presence during the meeting.

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# French Business Etiquette

## French Business Etiquette Tips

Businessmen and women in French-speaking countries value formality and respect in a business relationship. Also, exaggeration is interpreted as naïve, boasting, and even rude. Do not be afraid to debate with your French colleagues. Business partners who make logical arguments and have

### Tips to Remember:

- ♦ Apologize if you do not know how to speak French .
- ♦ Avoid overly friendly behavior.
- ♦ Dress conservatively.
- ♦ Maintain eye contact during discussions.
- ♦ Do not discuss business during meals.

well rounded views are valued by the French. While there is no set formality for the exchange of business cards, it most often occurs after initial introductions. Finally, precision and detail should be used when drawing up all types of business documents.

## Getting around in France

### Bus:

- ♦ Inexpensive travel within and between French cities and towns.
- ♦ Frequent stops can significantly increase travel times.

### Cab:

- ♦ Efficient way to travel within large French cities.
- ♦ Locate a designated taxi cab stand to catch a cab.
- ♦ Cabs rarely stop for people who wave them down.

### Train:

- ♦ Allows for affordable and efficient travel to most French cities and towns.
- ♦ Provides riders with picturesque views of the French countryside.

### Rental Car:

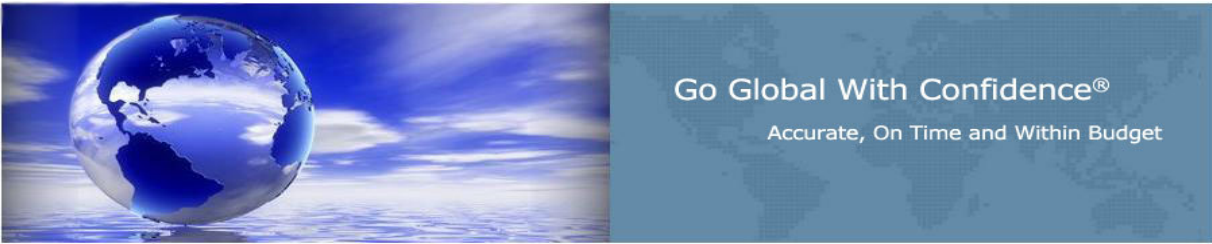
- ♦ Allows for travel on your own schedule.
- ♦ Often expensive.
- ♦ French roadways can be difficult to navigate.

### Plane:

- ♦ Orly Airport and Charles de Gaulle Airport in Paris are the most common destinations for those traveling to France by plane.



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# International Business Knows No Boundaries

## Additional Tips for the Most Well-Traveled Business People



### **Czech**

Czech business is very formal and it is considered respectful to allow the most important person in the room to set the tone.



### **Danish**

Danes like to get to business quickly. Do not expect small talk. Work from an agenda and do not deviate from the agenda during the meeting.



### **Dari (Afghanistan)**

Men and women do not shake hands with each other or speak to each other directly. If you are alone with a person of the opposite sex, keep the door open. This is very important so as to avoid any dishonor to your colleague.



### **Dutch**

Avoid small talk and use rational arguments. Dutch business people like to get to business soon after a meeting starts and use facts and rationality to support opinions.



### **Finnish**

When a Finn invites you to the sauna, do not refuse. Meetings can be continued in the sauna and invitations to the sauna are a sign of hospitality.



### **Greek**

Greek people conduct business slowly and like to do business with people they know. Build a personal relationship with Greek colleagues before getting down to business.



### **Hebrew**

Move to a first name basis quickly. This helps establish a comfortable business atmosphere. However, be sure to use titles and surnames upon initial meeting.



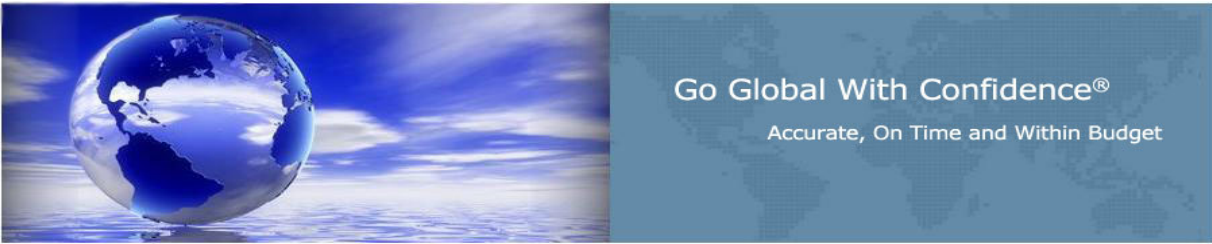
### **Norwegian**

Norwegians sometimes have two first names. It is proper to use both of them when addressing a Norwegian colleague by first name.



### **Polish**

Polish businesses are hierarchical. The most senior members of a company will often make the decisions and set a verbal agenda. Be sure to respect authority and the hierarchy of your Polish colleagues.



# International Business Knows No Boundaries

## Additional Tips for the Most Well-Traveled Business People



### **Swedish**

Swedes are comfortable with silence during conversation. Avoid trying to unnecessarily fill these silences .



### **Turkish**

Be prepared for slow decision making. You will meet with lower ranking members of a company first, to prove that you are trustworthy. Only then you will meet the senior members of the company that have the authority to make decisions.



### **Ukrainian**

Address your Ukrainian colleagues with title and surname upon initial meeting. If your Ukrainian colleague does not have a professional or academic title, please use the prefix of “Pan” (for men) and “Pani” (for women) and his or her surname.



### **Vietnamese**

Vietnamese men often feel uncomfortable socializing with foreign women. They also often assume that women are more comfortable in talking with other women and will often seat them accordingly at meals or sometimes in social meetings.

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