

TAIWAN - LANGUAGE, CULTURE, CUSTOMS AND ETIQUETTE



Facts and Statistics

Location: Eastern Asia, islands bordering the East China Sea, Philippine Sea, South China Sea, and Taiwan Strait, north of the Philippines, off the southeastern coast of China

Capital: Taipei

Climate: Taiwan cools down around Dec to Feb, temperature can range from low 50s - high 60s.

Population: 23,374,000 (2014 estimate)

Ethnic Make-up: Taiwanese (including Hakka) 84%, mainland Chinese 14%, indigenous 2%

Religions: mixture of Buddhist and Taoist 93%, Christian 4.5%, other 2.5%

Government: multiparty democracy

Language in Taiwan

The official language of Taiwan is Mandarin Chinese, but because many Taiwanese are of southern Fujianese descent, Min-nan (the Southern Min dialect or Holo) is also widely spoken. The smaller groups of Hakka people and aborigines have also preserved their own languages. Many elderly people can also speak some Japanese, as they were subjected to Japanese education before Taiwan was returned to Chinese rule in 1945 after the Japanese occupation which lasted for half a century. The most popular foreign language in Taiwan is English, which is part of the regular school curriculum.

Taiwanese People, Society and Culture

The People

Taiwan's population is mostly Han Chinese who were born on the mainland or have ancestors that were. They are divided into three groups based on the dialect of Chinese they speak: Taiwanese, Hakka, and Mandarin. Taiwan also has a small population of aborigines who comprise about 2 percent of the total population.

Most people in Taiwan have traditional values based on Confucian ethics; however, pressures from industrialization are now challenging these values. Still, some traditional values remain strong, including piety toward parents, ancestor worship, a strong emphasis on education and work, and the importance of "face." Since industrialization, women enjoy greater freedom and a higher social status, individual creativity is regarded as equally important as social conformity and acquiring material goods and recognition is increasingly important.

Some tensions exist between social groups. The majority of people in Taiwan came from or have ancestors who came from mainland China before 1949. They are known as Taiwanese and enjoy the highest standard of living in Taiwan. Because of their wealth and numbers, they also have the greatest influence on economic and political issues.

Mainlanders are people who arrived in Taiwan after mainland China fell to the Communists in 1949. Many Mainlanders work for the government. Tensions between Taiwanese and Mainlanders have eased substantially. The aborigines, who live mainly in rural villages, are the least privileged social group in Taiwan.

Confucianism

The teachings of Confucius describe the position of the individual in society. Confucianism is a system of behaviors and ethics that stress the obligations of people towards one another based upon their relationship. The basic tenets are based upon five different relationships:



- Ruler and subject
- Husband and wife
- Parents and children
- Brothers and sisters
- Friend and friend

Confucianism stresses duty, loyalty, honor, filial piety, respect for age and seniority, and sincerity.

Harmony / Group Relations

Due to the Confucian tenets, Taiwanese culture is a collective one. There is a need to belong to a group larger than themselves, be it their family, school, work group, or country. They treat people with respect and dignity regardless of their personal feelings. In order to maintain a sense of harmony, they will act with decorum at all times and not do anything to cause someone else public embarrassment. They are willing to subjugate their own feelings for the good of the group.

The Concept of Face / *Mien-tzu*

the concept of “face” is extremely important to the Taiwanese. Face is difficult to translate into words but essentially reflects a person’s reputation, dignity, and prestige. Face can be lost, saved or given to another person. Companies, as well as individuals, have face and this often provides the rationale behind business and personal interactions.

> Giving Face

Face can be given to people by complimenting them, showing them respect, or doing anything that increases their self-esteem. Specific examples include:

- Complimenting individuals (be careful not to single out individuals when the work was a corporate effort)
- Praising group (company, school, family, country)

> Losing Face

you can cause someone to lose face by causing someone embarrassment, and/or tarnishing their image and reputation. Examples include:

- Direct or indirect criticism of an individual or group
- Giving someone a gift that is beneath their status
- Turning down an invitation or a gesture of friendship
- Not keeping your word
- Demonstrations of anger or excessive emotionalism

> Saving Face

In the event that you cause someone to lose face, or someone is embarrassed by circumstances that arise, the best recourse is to appropriate blame for problems that arise. For example:

- Appropriating blame for problems that arise:
- "Perhaps I didn't explain myself clearly."
- "Oh that kind of thing happens in our country too."
- "I have done the same thing myself."

"Guanxi" – Connections/Relationships

Most Taiwanese business is conducted among friends, friends of friends, and family. Such connections or "guanxi" (pronounced gwan-she) are developed with people at your own level or of a higher status in both business and social situations. "Guanxi" opens doors, soothes out problems, and leads to even more connections.

Culture, Customs and Etiquette in Taiwan

Meeting and Greeting

- Greetings are formal and the oldest person in a group is always greeted first.
- Handshakes are common in all business meetings, regardless if you are Taiwanese and/or foreigners.
- Many Taiwanese look towards the ground as a sign of respect when greeting someone.

- You need not follow their example as they understand that westerners tend to smile warmly when introduced.
- Most greetings include the rhetorical question, "Have you eaten?"
- The Chinese name traditionally has 3 characters - The surname, or family name is first and is followed by one or two personal names.
- Chinese women do not change their last names when they marry other Chinese, and the children's last name will generally follow that of the father.
- Often their personal names have some poetic or otherwise significant meaning, so asking about the meaning is a good way to break the ice.
- When you are first meeting a person, address the person by their academic, professional, or honorific title and their surname.
- If those you are meeting want to move to a first name basis, they will advise you which name to use.
- Some Chinese adopt more western names in business and may ask you to call them by that name.

Gift Giving Etiquette

- Gifts are given at Chinese New Year, weddings, births and funerals.
- The Taiwanese like food and a nice food basket or a bottle of good quality alcohol are gifts.
- A gift may be refused the first time it is offered out of politeness. Attempt to offer the gift again; however, never force the issue.
- Do not give scissors, knives or other cutting utensils as they traditionally indicate that you want to sever the relationship.
- Do not give clocks, handkerchiefs or straw sandals as they are associated with funerals and death.
- Do not give white flowers or chrysanthemums as they signify death.
- Do not wrap gifts in white, blue or black paper.
- Red, pink and yellow are considered to be auspicious colors.
- Elaborate gift wrapping is imperative.
- Do not give an odd number of gifts, since odd numbers are considered unlucky.
- Four is also an unlucky number because it sounds like death in Mandarin. Do not give four of anything. Eight is considered a lucky number because it sounds like prosperity in Mandarin. Nine is also a lucky number because it sounds like longevity in Mandarin.
- Giving eight of something brings luck to the recipient.
- Avoid giving anything made in Taiwan.
- Present gifts using both hands.
- Gifts are not opened when received.
- Gifts are generally reciprocated. Do not give a lavish gift unless it is to reciprocate an expensive gift that you have received.

Dining Etiquette

Taiwanese prefer to entertain in public places rather than in their home, especially when entertaining foreigners. If you are invited to a Taiwanese home, it will happen once you have developed a relationship and should be considered a great honor.



Business Etiquette in Taiwan

Meeting people

- A handshake is the common greeting.
- Handshakes are not as firm as in many other countries.
- Men should wait for a woman to extend her hand.
- Many Taiwanese lower their eyes during the greeting as a sign of respect.
- Greet or introduce the most important person first.
- If you are in a group, try to assemble in rank order, with the most senior person first.
- People are usually addressed by their title and surname.
- If the person does not have a corporate or government title, use the honorific Mister, Miss, or Madame followed by the surname.
- Wait until invited before using someone's first name.
- Business cards are exchanged after the initial introductions.
- Have one side of your business card translated into Chinese using the traditional script not the simplified script as used in China.
- Business cards are exchanged using both hands.
- Present your card so the typeface faces the recipient.
- Examine a business card carefully before putting it on the table next to you or in a business card case.

- Treat business cards with respect. The way you handle someone's card is indicative of the value you place on the relationship.
- Never write on someone's card in their presence.

Communication Style

Taiwanese value a well-crafted message. They appreciate sharing a deep and broad contextual understanding in order for the core message to be delivered and understood. That context comes in the form of words, gestures and facial expressions. Brevity is not particularly valued, especially if it sacrifices something in the delivery.

It is important for people from direct cultures (USA, Germany, Scandinavia, etc.), where context is not as highly valued and brevity is crucial, to realize that messages might be misconstrued as rude and the information provided might be inadequate because of its lack of context. People from direct communications cultures should take care to patiently listen for the information needed. Furthermore, a tendency to have few gestures may make it more difficult for the message to be understood so be prepared for questions.

Business Meetings

Meeting schedules are not highly structured in Taiwan. There may be an agenda, but it serves as a guideline for the discussion and may act as a springboard to other related business ideas. As relationships are valued, there may be some time in the meeting devoted to non-business discussions. Time is not considered more important than completing a meeting satisfactorily, therefore meetings will continue until the discussion is completed and may extend well past a scheduled end time.

As stated above, people in Taiwan are very indirect in their communication and are as concerned with the effect of their words on others as they are with the content of their communication. They take great care to avoid communicating anything directly that would hurt or offend a colleague as it would cause a loss of "face". They will gently push their ideas forward and wait for others to respond. If they disagree with an idea, they will simply remain silent.

SOUTH KOREA - LANGUAGE, CULTURE, CUSTOMS AND ETIQUETTE



Welcome to our guide to South Korea. This is useful for anyone researching Korean culture, customs, manners, etiquette, values and wanting to understand the people better. You may be going to Korea on business, for a visit or even hosting Korean colleagues or clients in your own country. Remember this is only a very basic level introduction and is not meant to stereotype all Korean people you may meet!

Facts and Statistics

Location: Eastern Asia, southern half of the Korean Peninsula bordering the East Sea and the Yellow Sea

Capital: Seoul

Climate: temperate, with rainfall heavier in summer than winter

Population: 49,800,000 (2014 estimate)

Ethnic Make-up: homogeneous (except for about 20,000 Chinese)

Religions: no affiliation 46%, Christian 26%, [Buddhist](#) 26%, Confucianist 1%, other 1%

Government: republic

The Korean Language

The Koreans are one ethnic family speaking one language. They share certain distinct physical characteristics which differentiate them from other Asian people including the Chinese and the Japanese, and have a strong cultural identity as one ethnic family.

The [Korean](#) language is spoken by more than 65 million people living on the peninsula and its outlying islands as well as 5.5 million Koreans living in other parts of the world. The fact that all Koreans speak and write the same language has been a crucial factor in their strong national identity. Modern Korea has several different dialects including the standard one used in Seoul and central areas, but they are similar enough that speakers/listeners do not have trouble understanding each other.

Why not learn some useful [Korean phrases](#)?

Korean Society & Culture

Korean Family Values

- The family is the most important part of Korean life.
- In Confucian tradition, the father is the head of the family and it is his responsibility to provide food, clothing and shelter, and to approve the marriages of family members.
- The eldest son has special duties: first to his parents, then to his brothers from older to younger, then to his sons, then to his wife, and lastly to his daughters.
- Family welfare is much more important than the needs of the individual.
- Members of the family are tied to each other because the actions of one family member reflect on the rest of the family.
- In many cases the family register can trace a family's history, through male ancestors, for over 500 years.



Confucianism

- The teachings of Confucius describe the position of the individual in Korean society.
- It is a system of behaviours and ethics that stress the obligations of people towards one another based upon their relationship.
- The basic tenets are based upon five different relationships: 1) ruler and subject, 2) husband and wife, 3) parents and children, 4) brothers and sisters and 5) friend and friend
- Confucianism stresses duty, loyalty, honour, filial piety, respect for age and seniority, and sincerity.

Korean Ancestors

- Ancestors are based on the male family line.
- Children are raised to believe they can never repay their debt to their parents, hence the popularity of ancestor worship.
- They hold ancestral ceremonies for the previous three generations (parents, grandparents, and great grandparents) several times a year, particularly on Chusok and New Year's Day.
- On Chusok, people cook and set out food to celebrate their ancestors.

The Concept of Kibun

- Kibun is a word with no literal English translation; the closest terms are pride, face, mood, feelings, or state of mind.
- If you hurt someone's kibun you hurt their pride, cause them to lose dignity, and lose face. Korean interpersonal relationships operate on the principle of harmony.
- It is important to maintain a peaceful, comfortable atmosphere at all times, even if it means telling a "white lie".
- Kibun enters into every facet of Korean life.
- It is important to know how to judge the state of someone else's kibun, how to avoid hurting it, and how to keep your own kibun at the same time.
- In business, a manager's kibun is damaged if his subordinates do not show proper respect. A subordinate's kibun is damaged if his manager criticizes him in public.
- Nunchi is the ability to determine another person's kibun by using the eye.
- Since this is a culture where social harmony is crucial, being able to judge another person's state of mind is critical to maintain the person's kibun.
- Nunchi is accomplished by watching body language and listening to the tone of voice as well as what is said.

Etiquette & Customs in South Korea

Meeting Etiquette

- Greetings follow strict rules of protocol.
- Many South Koreans shake hands with expatriates after the bow, thereby blending both cultural styles.
- The person of lower status bows to the person of higher status, yet it is the most senior person who initiates the handshake.
- The person who initiates the bow says, "man-na-suh pan-gop-sumnida", which means "pleased to meet you."
- Information about the other person will be given to the person they are being introduced to in advance of the actual meeting.
- Wait to be introduced at a social gathering.
- When you leave a social gathering, say good-bye and bow to each person individually.

Gift Giving Etiquette



- Gifts express a great deal about a relationship and are always reciprocated.
- It is inconsiderate to give someone an expensive gift if you know that they cannot afford to reciprocate accordingly.
- Bring fruit or good quality chocolates or flowers if invited to a Korean's home.
- Gifts should be wrapped nicely.
- The number 4 is considered unlucky, so gifts should not be given in multiples of 4.
- Giving 7 of an item is considered lucky.
- Wrap gifts in red or yellow paper, since these are royal colours. Alternatively, use yellow or pink paper since they denote happiness.
- Do not wrap gifts in green, white, or black paper.
- Do not sign a card in red ink.
- Use both hands when offering a gift.
- Gifts are not opened when received.

Dining Etiquette

If you are invited to a South Korean's house:

- It is common for guests to meet at a common spot and travel together.
- You may arrive up to 30 minutes late without giving offence.
- Remove your shoes before entering the house.
- The hosts greet each guest individually.

- The host pours drinks for the guests in their presence. The hostess does not pour drinks.
- The hosts usually accompany guests to the gate or to their car because they believe that it is insulting to wish your guests farewell indoors.
- Send a thank you note the following day after being invited to dinner.

Table manners

- Wait to be told where to sit. There is often a strict protocol to be followed.
- The eldest are served first.
- The oldest or most senior person is the one who starts the eating process.
- Never point your chopsticks.
- Do not pierce your food with chopsticks.
- Chopsticks should be returned to the table after every few bites and when you drink or stop to speak.
- Do not cross your chopsticks when putting them on the chopstick rest.
- Do not pick up food with your hands. Fruit should be speared with a toothpick.
- Bones and shells should be put on the table or an extra plate.
- Try a little bit of everything. It is acceptable to ask what something is.
- Refuse the first offer of second helpings.
- Finish everything on your plate.
- Indicate you are finished eating by placing your chopsticks on the chopstick rest or on the table. Never place them parallel across your rice bowl.

Business Etiquette and Protocol

Relationships & Communication

- South Koreans prefer to do business with people with whom they have a personal connection.
- It is therefore crucial to be introduced by a third-party.
- Relationships are developed through informal social gatherings that often involve a considerable amount of drinking and eating.
- Individuals who have established mutual trust and respect will work hard to make each other successful.
- South Koreans treat legal documents as memorandums of understanding.

- They view contracts as loosely structured consensus statements that broadly define agreement and leave room for flexibility and adjustment as needed.
- Under no circumstances insult or to criticize in front of others.
- Sensitive matters may often be raised indirectly through the intermediary that first made the introductions.
- South Koreans are extremely direct communicators. They are not averse to asking questions if they do not understand what has been said or need additional clarification.
- This is a culture where "less is more" when communicating. Respond to questions directly and concisely.
- Since there is a tendency to say "yes" to questions so that you do not lose face, the way you phrase a question is crucial. It is better to ask, "When can we expect shipment?" than "Can we expect shipment in 3 weeks?", since this question requires a direct response.

Business Meeting Etiquette

- Appointments are required and should be made 3 to 4 weeks in advance.
- You should arrive on time for meetings as this demonstrates respect for the person you are meeting.
- The most senior South Korean generally enters the room first.
- It is a good idea to send both an agenda and back-up material including information about your company and client testimonials prior to the meeting.
- The main purpose of the first meeting is to get to know each other.
- Meetings are used to understand a client's needs and challenges. They lay the foundation for building the relationship.
- Do not remove your jacket unless the most senior South Korean does so.
- Have all written materials available in both English and Korean.

Dress Etiquette

- Business attire is conservative.
- Men should wear dark- coloured, conservative business suits with white shirts.
- Women should dress conservatively and wear subdued colours.
- Men should avoid wearing jewellery other than a watch or a wedding ring.

Business Cards

- Business cards are exchanged after the initial introductions in a highly ritualized manner.
- The way you treat someone's business card is indicative of the way you will treat the person.
- Have one side of your business card translated into Korean.
- Using both hands, present your business card with the Korean side facing up so that it is readable by the recipient.
- Examine any business card you receive carefully.
- Put the business cards in a business card case or a portfolio.
- Never write on someone's business card in their presence.

Doing business in South Korea?

CHINA - LANGUAGE, CULTURE, CUSTOMS AND ETIQUETTE



Welcome to our guide to China. This is useful for anyone researching Chinese culture, customs, manners, etiquette, values and wanting to understand the people better. You may be going to China on business, for a visit or even hosting Chinese colleagues or clients in your own country. Remember this is only a very basic level introduction and is not meant to stereotype all Chinese people you may meet!

Facts and Statistics

Location: Eastern Asia bordering Afghanistan 76 km, Bhutan 470 km, Burma 2,185 km, India 3,380 km, Kazakhstan 1,533 km, North Korea 1,416 km, Kyrgyzstan 858 km, Laos 423 km, Mongolia 4,677 km, Nepal 1,236 km, Pakistan 523 km, Russia (northeast) 3,605 km, Russia (northwest) 40 km, Tajikistan 414 km, Vietnam 1,281 km

Capital: Beijing

Climate: extremely diverse; tropical in south to subarctic in north

Population: 1,298,847,624 (July 2004 est.)

Ethnic Make-up: Han Chinese 91.9%, Zhuang, Uygur, Hui, Yi, Tibetan, Miao, Manchu, Mongol, Buyi, Korean, and other nationalities 8.1%

Religions: Daoist (Taoist), Buddhist, Muslim 1%-2%, Christian 3%-4%

Government: Communist state

The Chinese Language

Chinese is a family of closely-related but mutually unintelligible languages. These languages are known regional languages, dialects of Chinese or varieties of Chinese. In all over 1.2 billion people speak one or more varieties of Chinese.

All varieties of Chinese belong to the Sino-Tibetan family of languages and each one has its own dialects and sub-dialects, which are more or less mutually intelligible.

Why not learn some useful [Mandarin](#) or [Cantonese](#) phrases before your visit? Alternatively find out a bit more about the differences in the Chinese language and watch the video below.

Chinese Society & Culture

The Importance of "Face"

- The concept of 'face' roughly translates as 'honour', 'good reputation' or 'respect'.
- There are four types of 'face':
 - 1) *Diu-mian-zi*: this is when one's actions or deeds have been exposed to people.
 - 2) *Gei-mian-zi*: involves the giving of face to others through showing respect.
 - 3) *Liu-mian-zi*: this is developed by avoiding mistakes and showing wisdom in action.
 - 4) *Jiang-mian-zi*: this is when face is increased through others, i.e. someone complementing you to an associate.
- It is critical you avoid losing face or causing the loss of face at all times.

Confucianism

Confucianism is a system of behaviours and ethics that stress the obligations of people towards one another based upon their relationship. The basic tenets are based upon five different relationships:

- Ruler and subject
- Husband and wife
- Parents and children
- Brothers and sisters
- Friend and friend

Confucianism stresses duty, sincerity, loyalty, honour, filial piety, respect for age and seniority. Through maintaining harmonious relations as individuals, society itself becomes stable.

Collectivism vs. Individualism

- In general, the Chinese are a collective society with a need for group affiliation, whether to their family, school, work group, or country.
- In order to maintain a sense of harmony, they will act with decorum at all times and will not do anything to cause someone else public embarrassment.
- They are willing to subjugate their own feelings for the good of the group.
- This is often observed by the use of silence in very structured meetings. If someone disagrees with what another person says, rather than disagree publicly, the person will remain quiet. This gives face to the other person, while speaking up would make both parties lose face.

Non-Verbal Communication

- Chinese non-verbal communication speaks volumes.
- Since the Chinese strive for harmony and are group dependent, they rely on facial expression, tone of voice and posture to tell them what someone feels.
- Frowning while someone is speaking is interpreted as a sign of disagreement. Therefore, most Chinese maintain an impassive expression when speaking.
- It is considered disrespectful to stare into another person's eyes. In crowded situations the Chinese avoid eye contact to give themselves privacy.

Chinese Etiquette and Customs



Meeting Etiquette

- Greetings are formal and the oldest person is always greeted first.
- Handshakes are the most common form of greeting with foreigners.
- Many Chinese will look towards the ground when greeting someone.
- Address the person by an honorific title and their surname. If they want to move to a first-name basis, they will advise you which name to use.
- The Chinese have a terrific sense of humour. They can laugh at themselves most readily if they have a comfortable relationship with the other person. Be ready to laugh at yourself given the proper circumstances.

Gift Giving Etiquette

In general, gifts are given at Chinese New Year, weddings, births and more recently (because of marketing), birthdays.

- The Chinese like food and a nice food basket will make a great gift.
- Do not give scissors, knives or other cutting utensils as they indicate the severing of the relationship.
- Do not give clocks, handkerchiefs or straw sandals as they are associated with funerals and death.
- Do not give flowers, as many Chinese associate these with funerals.
- Do not wrap gifts in white, blue or black paper.
- Four is an unlucky number so do not give four of anything. Eight is the luckiest number, so giving eight of something brings luck to the recipient.
- Always present gifts with two hands.
- Gifts are not opened when received.

- Gifts may be refused three times before they are accepted.

Dining Etiquette

- The Chinese prefer to entertain in public places rather than in their homes, especially when entertaining foreigners.
- If you are invited to their house, consider it a great honour. If you must turn down such an honour, it is considered polite to explain the conflict in your schedule so that your actions are not taken as a slight.
- Arrive on time.
- Remove your shoes before entering the house.
- Bring a small gift to the hostess.
- Eat well to demonstrate that you are enjoying the food!
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- Table manners:
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 - Learn to use chopsticks.
 - Wait to be told where to sit. The guest of honour will be given a seat facing the door.
 - The host begins eating first.
 - You should try everything that is offered to you.
 - Never eat the last piece from the serving tray.
 - Be observant to other peoples' needs.
 - Chopsticks should be returned to the chopstick rest after every few bites and when you drink or stop to speak.
 - The host offers the first toast.
 - Do not put bones in your bowl. Place them on the table or in a special bowl for that purpose.
 - Hold the rice bowl close to your mouth while eating.
 - Do not be offended if a Chinese person makes slurping or belching sounds; it merely indicates that they are enjoying their food.
 - There are no strict rules about finishing all the food in your bowl.

Tipping Etiquette: Tipping is becoming more commonplace, especially with younger workers although older workers still consider it an insult. Leaving a few coins is usually sufficient.

Business Etiquette and Protocol in China

Relationships & Communication

- The Chinese don't like doing business with companies they don't know, so working through an intermediary is crucial. This could be an individual or an organization who can make a formal introduction and vouch for the reliability of your company.
- Before arriving in China send materials (written in Chinese) that describe your company, its history, and literature about your products and services. The Chinese often use intermediaries to ask questions that they would prefer not to make directly.
- Business relationships are built formally after the Chinese get to know you.
- Be very patient. It takes a considerable amount of time and is bound up with enormous bureaucracy.
- The Chinese see foreigners as representatives of their company rather than as individuals.
- Rank is extremely important in business relationships and you must keep rank differences in mind when communicating.
- Gender bias is nonexistent in business.
- Never lose sight of the fact that communication is official, especially in dealing with someone of higher rank. Treating them too informally, especially in front of their peers, may well ruin a potential deal.
- The Chinese prefer face-to-face meetings rather than written or telephonic communication.
- Meals and social events are not the place for business discussions. There is a demarcation between business and socializing in China, so try to be careful not to intertwine the two.

Business Meeting Etiquette

- Appointments are necessary and, if possible, should be made between one-to-two months in advance, preferably in writing.
- If you do not have a contact within the company, use an intermediary to arrange a formal introduction. Once the introduction has been made, you should provide the company with information about your company and what you want to accomplish at the meeting.
- You should arrive at meetings on time or slightly early. The Chinese view punctuality as a virtue. Arriving late is an insult and could negatively affect your relationship.
- Pay great attention to the agenda as each Chinese participant has his or her own agenda that they will attempt to introduce.
- Send an agenda before the meeting so your Chinese colleagues have the chance to meet with any technical experts prior to the meeting. Discuss the agenda with your translator/intermediary prior to submission.
- Each participant will take an opportunity to dominate the floor for lengthy periods without appearing to say very much of anything that actually contributes to the meeting. Be patient and listen. There could be subtle messages being transmitted that would assist you in allaying fears of on-going association.

- Meetings require patience. Mobile phones ring frequently and conversations tend to be boisterous. Never ask the Chinese to turn off their mobile phones as this causes you both to lose face.
- Guests are generally escorted to their seats, which are in descending order of rank. Senior people generally sit opposite senior people from the other side.
- It is imperative that you bring your own interpreter, especially if you plan to discuss legal or extremely technical concepts as you can brief the interpreter prior to the meeting.
- Written material should be available in both English and Chinese, using simplified characters. Be very careful about what is written. Make absolutely certain that written translations are accurate and cannot be misinterpreted.
- Visual aids are useful in large meetings and should only be done with black type on white background. Colours have special meanings and if you are not careful, your colour choice could work against you.
- Presentations should be detailed and factual and focus on long-term benefits. Be prepared for the presentation to be a challenge.

Business Negotiation

- Only senior members of the negotiating team will speak. Designate the most senior person in your group as your spokesman for the introductory functions.
- Business negotiations occur at a slow pace.
- Be prepared for the agenda to become a jumping off point for other discussions.
- Chinese are non-confrontational. They will not overtly say 'no', they will say 'they will think about it' or 'they will see'.
- Chinese negotiations are process oriented. They want to determine if relationships can develop to a stage where both parties are comfortable doing business with the other.
- Decisions may take a long time, as they require careful review and consideration.
- Under no circumstances should you lose your temper or you will lose face and irrevocably damage your relationship.
- Do not use high-pressure tactics. You might find yourself outmanoeuvred.
- Business is hierarchical. Decisions are unlikely to be made during the meetings you attend.
- The Chinese are shrewd negotiators.
- Your starting price should leave room for negotiation.

What to Wear?

- Business attire is conservative and unpretentious.
- Men should wear dark coloured, conservative business suits.
- Women should wear conservative business suits or dresses with a high neckline.
- Women should wear flat shoes or shoes with very low heels.

- Bright colours should be avoided.

Business Cards

- Business cards are exchanged after the initial introduction.
- Have one side of your business card translated into Chinese using simplified Chinese characters that are printed in gold ink since gold is an auspicious colour.
- Your business card should include your title. If your company is the oldest or largest in your country, that fact should be on your card as well.
- Hold the card in both hands when offering it, Chinese side facing the recipient.
- Examine a business card before putting it on the table next to you or in a business card case.
- Never write on someone's card unless so directed.

Doing business in China?

Did you know we can help you with [Chinese translation services](#), [Chinese interpreters](#) and [China cultural awareness training](#)?

VIETNAM - LANGUAGE, CULTURE, CUSTOMS AND ETIQUETTE



Welcome to our guide to Vietnam. This is useful for anyone researching Vietnamese culture, customs, manners, etiquette, values and wanting to understand the people better. You may be going to Vietnam on business, for a visit or even hosting Vietnamese colleagues or clients in your own country. Remember this is only a very basic level introduction and is not meant to stereotype all Vietnamese people you may meet!

Facts and Statistics

Location: Southeastern Asia, bordering the Gulf of Thailand, Gulf of Tonkin, and South China Sea, alongside China, Laos, and Cambodia

Capital: Hanoi

Climate: tropical in south; monsoonal in north with hot, rainy season (mid-May to mid-September) and warm, dry season (mid-October to mid-March)

Population: 82,689,518 (July 2004 est.)

Ethnic Make-up: Vietnamese 85%-90%, Chinese, Hmong, Thai, Khmer, Cham, various mountain groups

Religions: [Buddhist](#), Hoa Hao, Cao Dai, [Christian](#) (predominantly Roman Catholic, some Protestant), indigenous beliefs and Muslim

The Language

[Vietnamese](#), Vietnam's official language, is a tonal language that can be compared to Cambodia's official language, Khmer. With each syllable, there are six different tones that can be used, which change the definition and it often makes it difficult for foreigners to pick up the language.

There are other languages spoken as well such as Chinese, Khmer, Cham and other languages spoken by tribes inhabiting the mountainous regions. Although there are some similarities to Southeast Asian languages, such as Chinese, Vietnamese is thought to be a separate language group, although a member of the Austro-Asiatic language family.

In written form, Vietnamese uses the Roman alphabet and accent marks to show tones. This system of writing called quoc ngu, was created by Catholic missionaries in the 17th century to translate the scriptures. Eventually this system, particularly after World War I, replaced one using Chinese characters (chu nom), which had been the unofficial written form used for centuries.

Vietnamese Culture & Society

Confucianism

- The teachings of Confucius influence the Vietnamese describe the position of the individual in Vietnamese society.
- Confucianism is a system of behaviours and ethics that stress the obligations of people towards one another based upon their relationship.
- The basic tenets are based upon five different relationships:

- . Ruler and subject
- . Husband and wife
- . Parents and children
- . Brothers and sisters
- . Friend and friend



- Confucianism stresses duty, loyalty, honour, filial piety, respect for age and seniority, and sincerity.

The Family

- Vietnamese life revolves around the family.
- The Vietnamese family consists of the nuclear as well as the extended family.
- It is not uncommon for three generations to be living together under one roof.
- In Confucian tradition, the father is the head of the family and it is his responsibility to provide food, clothing and shelter and make important decisions.
- Within the same tradition it is believed that after someone dies their spirit lives on. Descendants will "worship" their ancestors to ensure their good favour. On the anniversary of a person's death, ceremonies are held in their memory. They are also remembered during certain lunar festivals and souls are consulted prior to important decisions or occasions such as a birth or a wedding.

Face

- As with many other Asian nations, the concept of face is extremely important to the Vietnamese.
- Face is a tricky concept to explain but can be roughly described a quality that reflects a person's reputation, dignity, and prestige.
- It is possible to lose face, save face or give face to another person.
- Companies as well as individuals can have face or lose face.
- For foreigners it is important to be aware that you may unintentionally cause a loss of face so it is important to be aware of your words and actions. Understanding how face is lost, saved or given is critical.
- Someone can be given face by complimenting them for their hospitality or business acumen. Accusing someone of poor performance or reprimanding them publicly will lead to a loss of face.

Collectivism

- In general, the Vietnamese are a collectivists.
- The individual is seen as secondary to the group - whether the family, school or company.
- As a result there are strict guidelines for social interaction that are designed to protect a group's face

Hierarchy

- As with most group-orientated societies there are also hierarchical structures.
- In Vietnam these are very much based upon age and status.
- This derives from Confucianism, which emphasizes social order. Everyone is seen as having a distinct place and role within the hierarchical structure, be it the family or workplace.

- An obvious example is seen in social situations where the oldest person in a group is greeted or served first.
- Within the family the head would be responsible for making decisions and approving marriages.

Etiquette and Customs in Vietnam

Vietnamese society has a fair amount of public etiquette. The following are some of the



more common points:

- Avoid public displays of affection with a member of the opposite sex.
- Do not touch someone's head.
- Pass items with both hands.
- Do not point with your finger - use your hand.
- Do not stand with your hands on your hips.
- Do not cross your arms on your chest.
- Do not pass anything over someone's head.
- Do not touch anyone on the shoulder.
- Do not touch a member of the opposite sex.
- Shorts should only be worn at the beach.

Dining Etiquette

If invited to a Vietnamese home:

- Bring fruit, sweets, flowers, fruit, or incense.
- Gifts should be wrapped in colourful paper.

- Do not give handkerchiefs, anything black, yellow flowers or chrysanthemums.

Table Manners

- Wait to be shown where to sit.
- The oldest person should sit first.
- Pass dishes with both hands.
- The most common utensils are chopsticks and a flat spoon.
- Chopsticks should be placed on the table or a chopstick rest after every few mouthfuls or when breaking to drink or speak.
- People hold bowls close to their faces.
- Hold the spoon in your left hand while eating soup.
- Meals are typically served family-style.
- Try to finish everything on your plate.
- When you are finished eating, rest your chopsticks on top of your rice bowl.
- Cover your mouth when using a toothpick.

Business Etiquette and Protocol

- Appointments are required and should be made several weeks in advance.
- The best means of doing so is through a local representative who can act as a reference and also translator/interpreter.
- The Vietnamese are punctual and expect others to be so to.
- Dress conservatively.
- Handshakes are used upon meeting and departing. Handshakes only usually take place between members of the same sex.
- Some Vietnamese use a two-handed shake, with the left hand on top of the right wrist.
- Always wait for a woman to extend her hand. If she does not, bow your head slightly.
- Business cards are exchanged on initial meetings and should be presented with both hands. When receiving business cards ensure you show proper respect to it and do not simply glance at it and put it on the table.
- Hierarchy and face manifest in different ways within business meetings. For example, the most senior person should always enter the room first.
- Silence is also common in meetings where someone disagrees with another but remains quiet so as to not cause a loss of face.
- Relationships are critical to successful business partnerships. Always invest time in building a good relationship based on both personal and business lines. Any initial meeting should be solely used as a "getting to know you" meeting.
- The spoken word is very important. Never make promises that you can not keep to as this will lead to a loss of face.

- Negotiations can be slow so it is important to bear in mind that decisions have to go through a lot of red tape and also group consultation. Be patient.
- Business gift giving is fairly common at the end of a meeting or during a meal in honour of your business associates. Gifts should be small but not expensive. Something with your company logo or something typical from your country both make excellent gifts.

Doing business in Vietnam?

INDIA - LANGUAGE, CULTURE, CUSTOMS AND ETIQUETTE

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Facts and Statistics

- **Location:** Southern Asia, bordering Bangladesh 4,053 km, Bhutan 605 km, Burma 1,463 km, China 3,380 km, Nepal 1,690 km, Pakistan 2,912 km

- **Capital:** New Delhi
- **Climate:** varies from tropical monsoon in south to temperate in north
- **Population:** 1,065,070,607 (July 2004 est.)
- **Ethnic Make-up:** Indo-Aryan 72%, Dravidian 25%, Mongoloid and other 3% (2000)
- **Religions:** [Hindu](#) 81.3%, Muslim 12%, Christian 2.3%, [Sikh](#) 1.9%, other groups including [Buddhist](#), Jain, [Parsi](#) 2.5% (2000)
- **Government:** Federal Republic

Languages in India



The different states of India have different official languages, some of them not recognized by the central government. Some states have more than one official language. Bihar in east India has three official languages - [Hindi](#), Urdu and [Bengali](#) - which are all recognized by the central government. But Sikkim, also in east India, has four official languages of which only Nepali is recognized by the central government. Besides the languages officially recognized by central or state governments, there are other languages which don't have this recognition and their speakers are running political struggles to get this recognition. Central government decided that Hindi was to be the official language of India and therefore it also has the status of official language in the states.

Travelling to India? Why not learn some useful [Hindi phrases](#)?

Indian Society & Culture

Hierarchy

- The influences of Hinduism and the tradition of the caste system have created a culture that emphasizes established hierarchical relationships.
- Indians are always conscious of social order and their status relative to other people, be they family, friends, or strangers.
- All relationships involve hierarchies. In schools, teachers are called gurus and are viewed as the source of all knowledge. The patriarch, usually the father, is considered the leader of the family. The boss is seen as the source of ultimate responsibility in business. Every relationship has a clear- cut hierarchy that must be observed for the social order to be maintained.

The Role of the Family

- People typically define themselves by the groups to which they belong rather than by their status as individuals. Someone is deemed to be affiliated to a specific state, region, city, family, career path, religion, etc.
- This group orientation stems from the close personal ties Indians maintain with their family, including the extended family.
- The extended family creates a myriad of interrelationships, rules, and structures. Along with these mutual obligations comes a deep-rooted trust among relatives.



Just Can't Say No

- Indians do not like to express 'no,' be it verbally or non-verbally.
- Rather than disappoint you, for example, by saying something isn't available, Indians will offer you the response that they think you want to hear.
- This behaviour should not be considered dishonest. An Indian would be considered terribly rude if he did not attempt to give a person what had been asked.
- Since they do not like to give negative answers, Indians may give an affirmative answer but be deliberately vague about any specific details. This will require you to look for non-verbal cues, such as a reluctance to commit to an actual time for a meeting or an enthusiastic response.

Etiquette and Customs in India



Meeting Etiquette

- Religion, education and social class all influence greetings in India.
- This is a hierarchical culture, so greet the eldest or most senior person first.
- When leaving a group, each person must be bid farewell individually.
- Shaking hands is common, especially in the large cities among the more educated who are accustomed to dealing with westerners.
- Men may shake hands with other men and women may shake hands with other women; however there are seldom handshakes between men and women because of religious beliefs. If you are uncertain, wait for them to extend their hand.

Naming Conventions

Indian names vary based upon religion, social class, and region of the country. The following are some basic guidelines to understanding the naming conventions, although you will always find exceptions to rules:

Hindus:

- In the north, many people have both a given name and a surname.
- In the south, surnames are less common and a person generally uses the initial of their father's name in front of their own name.
- The man's formal name is their name "s/o" (son of) and the father's name. Women use "d/o" to refer to themselves as the daughter of their father.

- At marriage, women drop their father's name and use their first name with their husband's first name as a sort of surname.

Muslims:

- Many Muslims do not have surnames. Instead, men add the father's name to their own name with the connector 'bin'. So, Abdullah bin Ahmed is Abdullah the son of Ahmad.
- Women use the connector 'binti'.
- The title Hajji (m) or Hajjah (f) before the name indicates the person has made their pilgrimage to Mecca.

Sikhs:

- Sikhs all use the name Singh. It is either adopted as a surname or as a connector name to the surname.

Gift Giving Etiquette

- Indians believe that giving gifts eases the transition into the next life.
- Gifts of cash are given to friends and members of the extended family to celebrate life events such as birth, death and marriage.
- It is not the value of the gift, but the sincerity with which it is given, that is important to the recipient.
- If invited to an Indian's home for a meal, it is not necessary to bring a gift, although one will not be turned down.
- Do not give frangipani or white flowers as they are used at funerals.
- Yellow, green and red are lucky colours, so try to use them to wrap gifts.
- A gift from a man should be said to come from both he and his wife/mother/sister or some other female relative.
- Hindus should not be given gifts made of leather.
- Muslims should not be given gifts made of pigskin or alcoholic products.
- Gifts are not opened when received.

Dining Etiquette

- Indians entertain in their homes, restaurants, private clubs, or other public venues, depending upon the occasion and circumstances.
- Although Indians are not always punctual themselves, they expect foreigners to arrive close to the appointed time.
- Take off your shoes before entering the house.
- Dress modestly and conservatively.

- Politely turn down the first offer of tea, coffee, or snacks. You will be asked again and again. Saying no to the first invitation is part of the protocol.

There are diverse dietary restrictions in India, and these may affect the foods that are served:

- Hindus do not eat beef and many are vegetarians.
- Muslims do not eat pork or drink alcohol.
- Sikhs do not eat beef.
- Lamb, chicken, and fish are the most commonly served main courses for non-vegetarian meals as they avoid the meat restrictions of the religious groups.



Table manners are somewhat formal, but this formality is tempered by the religious beliefs of the various groups.

- Much Indian food is eaten with the fingers.

- Wait to be told where to sit.
- If utensils are used, they are generally a tablespoon and a fork.
- Guests are often served in a particular order: the guest of honour is served first, followed by the men, and the children are served last. Women typically serve the men and eat later.
- You may be asked to wash your hands before and after sitting down to a meal.
- Always use your right hand to eat, whether you are using utensils or your fingers.
- In some situations food may be put on your plate for you, while in other situations you may be allowed to serve yourself from a communal bowl.
- Leaving a small amount of food on your plate indicates that you are satisfied. Finishing all your food means that you are still hungry.

Business Etiquette and Protocol in India

Relationships & Communication

- Indians prefer to do business with those they know.
- Relationships are built upon mutual trust and respect.
- In general, Indians prefer to have long-standing personal relationships prior to doing business.
- It may be a good idea to go through a third party introduction. This gives you immediate credibility.

Business Meeting Etiquette

- If you will be travelling to India from abroad, it is advisable to make appointments by letter, at least one month and preferably two months in advance.
- It is a good idea to confirm your appointment as they do get cancelled at short notice.
- The best time for a meeting is late morning or early afternoon. Reconfirm your meeting the week before and call again that morning, since it is common for meetings to be cancelled at the last minute.
- Keep your schedule flexible so that it can be adjusted for last minute rescheduling of meetings.
- You should arrive at meetings on time since Indians are impressed with punctuality.
- Meetings will start with a great deal of getting-to-know-you talk. In fact, it is quite possible that no business will be discussed at the first meeting.
- Always send a detailed agenda in advance. Send back-up materials and charts and other data as well. This allows everyone to review and become comfortable with the material prior to the meeting.

- Follow up a meeting with an overview of what was discussed and the next steps.

Business Negotiating

- Indians are non-confrontational. It is rare for them to overtly disagree, although this is beginning to change in the managerial ranks.
- Decisions are reached by the person with the most authority.
- Decision making is a slow process.
- If you lose your temper you lose face and prove you are unworthy of respect and trust.
- Delays are to be expected, especially when dealing with the government.
- Most Indians expect concessions in both price and terms. It is acceptable to expect concessions in return for those you grant.
- Never appear overly legalistic during negotiations. In general, Indians do not trust the legal system and someone's word is sufficient to reach an agreement.
- Do not disagree publicly with members of your negotiating team.
- Successful negotiations are often celebrated by a meal.

Dress Etiquette



- Business attire is conservative.
- Men should wear dark coloured conservative business suits.
- Women should dress conservatively in suits or dresses.
- The weather often determines clothing. In the hotter parts of the country, dress is less formal, although dressing as suggested above for the first meeting will indicate respect.

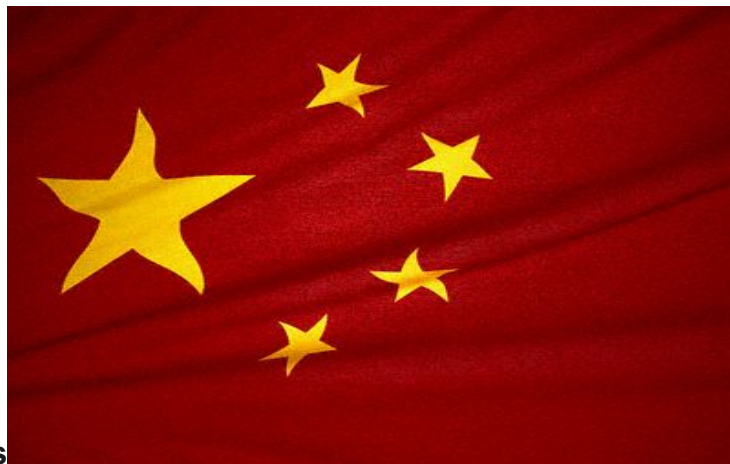
Titles

- Indians revere titles such as Professor, Doctor and Engineer.
- Status is determined by age, university degree, caste and profession.
- If someone does not have a professional title, use the honorific title "Sir" or "Madam".
- Titles are used with the person's name or the surname, depending upon the person's name. (See Social Etiquette for more information on Indian naming conventions.)
- Wait to be invited before using someone's first name without the title.

Business Cards

- Business cards are exchanged after the initial handshake and greeting.
- If you have a university degree or any honour, put it on your business card.
- Use the right hand to give and receive business cards.
- Business cards need not be translated into Hindi.
- Always present your business card so the recipient may read the card as it is handed to them.

HONG KONG - LANGUAGE, CULTURE, CUSTOMS AND ETIQUETTE



Facts and Statistics

Location: Eastern Asia, bordering the South China Sea and China

Population: 6,855,125 (July 2004 est.)

Ethnic Make-up: Chinese 95%, other 5%

Religions: eclectic mixture of local religions 90%, Christian 10%

Language in Hong Kong

English and Chinese are Hong Kong's two official languages. The [Cantonese](#) dialect is the most commonly spoken language in the territory, though English is the language of the business and service industries; hotel employees, many urban Hong Kong residents, most young people and shop and service personnel understand and speak it to some degree. Other Chinese dialects, such as Mandarin (Putonghua), Shanghainese, and Chiu-Chow can be heard as well.

Major hotels have employees with knowledge of other languages, such as French, German, Japanese and Mandarin. Translation services in many languages are also available from major hotels' business centres.

Hong Kong Society & Culture

The Concept of Face

.Face is an intangible quality that reflects a person's reputation, dignity, and prestige.

.You may lose face, save face, or give face to another person.

.Companies as well as individuals have face and this is often the rationale behind business transactions.

.You give someone face by complimenting them, showing them respect, or doing anything that increases their self-esteem.

.Such actions must be done with the utmost sincerity. Doing them in a patronizing manner causes both parties to lose face.

.Humiliating people by publicly reprimanding them, insulting them publicly, or contradicting them in front of someone else causes them to lose face.

Confucianism / Hierarchy / Family Values

.The teachings of Confucius describe the position of the individual in Hong Kong Chinese society.

.Confucianism is a system of behaviours and ethics that stress the obligations of people towards one another based upon their relationship. .Confucianism stresses duty, loyalty, honour, filial piety, respect for age and seniority, and sincerity.

.These traits are demonstrated by the Hong Kong Chinese in their respect for hierarchical relationships.

.Although not readily apparent to the casual observer, there are strict rules about

appropriate behaviour and the manner in which people must act in order to respect the hierarchy.

Etiquette and Customs in Hong Kong



Meeting and Greeting

- .The handshake is commonly used when greeting westerners.
- .The Hong Kong Chinese handshake is rather light.
- .During the greeting, many Hong Kong Chinese lower their eyes as a sign of respect.
- .There is no need for you to emulate this gesture, although prolonged eye contact should be avoided during the greeting.
- .If you are at a large function, you may introduce yourself to other guests.
- .At smaller functions, it is polite to wait for your host or hostess to introduce you.
- .The Chinese traditionally have 3 names: The surname, or family name is first and is followed by two personal names. The first personal name is their father's name and the second personal name is their own name.
- .Address the person by an honorific title and their surname.
- .If they want to move to a first name basis, they will advise you which name to use.
- .Some Chinese adopt more western names and may ask you to call them by that name.

Gift Giving Etiquette

- .A gift may be refused one or two times before it is accepted.

- .If you are invited to someone's home, bring good quality sweets, fruit, flowers, or imported spirits to the hostess.
- .Do not give red or white flowers.
- .Do not give scissors, knives or other cutting utensils, as they indicate that you want to sever the relationship.
- .Do not give clocks, handkerchiefs or straw sandals, as they are associated with funerals and death.
- .Do not wrap gifts in white, blue or black paper.
- .Gold and red are lucky colours, so they make excellent gift wrapping.
- .Elaborate gift wrapping is important.
- .Do not give odd numbers as many are considered unlucky.
- .Never give a quantity of four items.
- .Eight is a particularly auspicious number, so giving eight of something bestows good fortune on the recipient.
- .A small gift for the children is always appreciated; however, do not give green hats.
- .Always present gifts with two hands.
- .Gifts are not opened when received.

Dining Etiquette

- .Table manners are rather relaxed in Hong Kong, although there are certain rules of etiquette. When in doubt, watch what others do and emulate their behaviour.
- .Wait to be told where to sit. There is often a seating plan.
- .Wait for the host to tell you to start eating or for him to begin eating.
- .Food is served on a revolving tray.
- .You should try everything.
- .Never eat the last piece from the serving tray.
- .Burping is considered a compliment.
- .Chopsticks should be returned to the chopstick rest after every few bites and when you drink or stop to speak.
- .Always refuse a second serving at least once if you don't want to appear gluttonous.
- .Leave some food in your bowl when you have finished eating.
- .When you have finished eating, place your chopsticks in the chopstick rest or on the table. Do not place your chopsticks across the top of your bowl.
- .The host offers the first toast. You may reciprocate later in the meal.

Business Etiquette and Protocol in Hong Kong

Building Relationships & Communication

- .Although businesspeople in Hong Kong do not require long-standing personal relationships to do business, many businesses are family- owned, so personal relationships are an integral part of the enterprise.
- .Once you have begun to work with a Hong Kong businessperson, it is important to

maintain the relationship.

.When you first meet, expect a fair amount of small talk. Your Hong Kong colleagues will want to get to know you well enough that they are comfortable working with you.

.Do not be surprised if you are asked questions that might be considered extremely personal in your home country.

.The Hong Kong Chinese are generally sophisticated and cosmopolitan.

.They are quite familiar and comfortable with people from other countries.

.Although some businesspeople may overlook poor behaviour for the sake of the business deal, many will not.

.The Hong Kong Chinese take a long-term view of business relationships.

.Hong Kong Chinese are direct communicators, although they also make use of non-verbal communication.

.In general, businesspeople are non-confrontational and will never overtly say no, so that they do not embarrass the other person.

.If someone sucks air through his/her teeth while you are speaking, it means that they are unhappy with what you have just said. If at all possible, try to re-state your position or modify your request, since you have made the other person extremely unhappy.

.As in many Asian cultures, silence is a form of communication.

.Resist the urge to jump into the conversation if your Hong Kong business colleague remains silent for a minute.

Business Meetings & Negotiations

.Appointments are necessary and should be made between 1 and 2 months in advance if you are travelling to Hong Kong.

.Avoid trying to schedule meetings during Chinese New Year (late January or early February) as many businesses close for a week during that time.

.You should arrive at meetings on time.

.If you are detained, telephone and advise the person you are meeting.

.There will be a period of small talk before getting down to business discussions.

.When meeting your Hong Kong business associates, allow the most senior person in your delegation to lead the group and be introduced first.

.Business negotiations happen at a slow pace.

.Avoid losing your temper or you will lose face and damage your relationship.

.Do not use high-pressure tactics. You might be out-manoeuvred.

.Decisions are usually made at the top of the company. However, the pace of decision making is swifter than in other Asian countries.

.Your starting price should leave room for negotiation. Never offer your best price initially.

.Business is more price than quality driven.

.If you are signing a contract, the signing date may be determined by an astrologer or a feng shui practitioner.

Business Card Etiquette

- .Business cards are exchanged after the initial introductions.
- .Have one side of your business card translated into Chinese, with the Chinese characters printed in gold, since it is an auspicious color.
- .Business cards are exchanged using both hands.
- .Hand your card so the typeface faces the recipient.
- .Examine business cards carefully before putting them in a business card case.
- .It is important to treat business cards with respect - never write on someone's card unless directed to do so.
- .Your own business cards should be maintained in pristine condition.
- .Make certain your business card includes your job title. This helps your Hong Kong business colleagues understand where you fit in your company's hierarchy.