



Finland



Country Overview:

Location: Northern Europe, bordering the Baltic Sea, Gulf of Bothnia, and Gulf of Finland, between Sweden and Russia

Size: 338,145 sq km

Population: 5,266,114 (July 2013 est.)

Capital: Helsinki

Exports-commodities: electrical and optical equipment, machinery, transport equipment, paper and pulp, chemicals, basic metals; timber

Imports-commodities: foodstuffs, petroleum and petroleum products, chemicals, transport equipment, iron and steel, machinery, textile yarn and fabrics, grains

Currency: Euro (EUR)

Ethnic groups: Finn 93.4%, Swede 5.6%, Russian 0.5%, Estonian 0.3%, Roma (Gypsy) 0.1%, Sami 0.1%

Religion: Lutheran Church of Finland 82.5%, Orthodox Church 1.1%

Government type: Republic

Chief of State: President Sauli NINISTO (since 1 March 2012)

Head of Government: Prime Minister Jyrki KATAINEN (since 22 June 2011)

Language: Finnish (official) 91.2%, Swedish (official) 5.5%

Finland is the 56th largest economy in the world.



Republic of Finland/ Suomen Tasavalta

Meetings and

Negotiations

-Finns do **not** require face-to-face contact and, in fact, are quite comfortable using e- mail.

-It is common practice to **repeat** your first and surname while shaking hands.

-Greetings are **formal**, with a firm handshake, direct eye contact, and a smile.

-Finns do not need long-standing personal relationships in order to conduct business.

-Expect a **bare minimum** of small talk, if any, before getting into the business discussion.

-Send an **agenda** before the meeting as well as the biographies of your team.

-Meetings in Finland normally begin and end **on time**.

-Treat someone's business card with **respect** as it symbolizes the

way you will treat them.

Business Attire

-**For men:** conservative, dark or medium colored suits with shirts and conservative ties.

-**For women:** stylish yet classic business suits or dresses/pants and blouses.

Behavior

-Personal space is respected. Keeping at least an arm length of space (generally more) between people is expected and they will usually feel uncomfortable or suspicious if others are too close.

-Finns are excellent time managers who prefer to organize their workday in order to accomplish as much as possible.

-When asking a Finn to pass you something at a table, they will **set it down** in front of you instead of handing it directly to you.

- Always cover your mouth when

yawning.

-**Avoid** unnecessary touching.

-Finns **seldom** ask questions. The presenter is expected to make his/her case with sufficient detail that their Finnish colleagues do not need to ask questions.

-Raising a single middle finger is an obscene gesture, but Finns will sometimes raise both middle fingers to emphasize a point

Gift Giving

-Gift are generally opened when received.

-If giving flowers, **avoid** yellow and white, and make sure there is an odd number.

Appropriate Gifts: fine wines, chocolate, and various items and gadgets with your company logo

Gifts to Avoid: anything overly expensive and luxurious (embarrasses the recipient and/or would be viewed as a bribe.)

Business Tips continued

Conversation

-Finns are known to be very **direct** in their communication style, and expect the same in return.

-When talking to a Finn, remember **not** to group Finns together with citizens of other Nordic countries, particularly not Sweden.

-Many foreigners find the Finns' tolerance of silence strange. Finns avoid small talk as they feel uncomfortable with it.

-Finns **never** interrupt when someone is speaking and tend to distrust those who talk too much.

-They are a very private people, and avoid displaying emotions publicly.

-Maintaining eye contact is very important as it is believed that people who avoid eye contact are hiding something.

Topics to Discuss: current events, sports, entertainment

Topics to Avoid: politics, religion, comparing Finns to other Scandinavians; Avoid giving too many compliments.