



Germany



Country Overview:

Location: Central Europe, bordering the Baltic Sea and the North Sea, between the Netherlands and Poland, south of Denmark

Size: 357,022 sq km

Population: 81,147,265 (July 2013 est.)

Capital: Berlin

Export-commodities: machinery, vehicles, chemicals, metals and manufactures, foodstuffs, textiles

Import-commodities: machinery, vehicles, chemicals, foodstuffs, textiles, metals

Currency: Euros (EUR)

Ethnic groups: German 91.5%, Turkish 2.4%, other 6.1% (made up largely of Greek, Italian, Polish, Russian, Serbo-Croatian, Spanish)

Religion: Protestant 34%, Roman Catholic 34%, Muslim 3.7%, unaffiliated or other 28.3%

Government type: federal republic

Chief of State: President Joachim GAUCK (since 28 March 2012)

Head of Government: Chancellor Angela MERKEL (since 22 November 2005)

Language: German



Federal Republic of Germany/Bundesrepublik

Meetings and Negotiations

- Being **punctual** is **crucial**, if you are going to be late contact someone and give a plausible reason. Also, **confirm** date and time prior to meeting.

- When addressing your German business partner, use the formal “**Herr**” for ‘Mr.’ and “**Frau**” for ‘Mrs.’ with their **surname** following.

- When **greeting**; shake hands firmly, maintain eye-contact, and give a head nod. These actions are **repeated** at the end of the meeting as well.

- Carry multiple **business cards** because they will be exchanged often. Include your title and any degrees you have received from a university.

- German business culture has a definite **hierarchical order**; normally the highest ranking person will enter a room first and you will be expected to defer to this most senior person.

- When hosting German guests, keep in mind that it is **not necessary** to arrange a full program for them. It is very likely that they will want time to themselves to pursue their own interests or just relax.

- Arrive at the meeting **well-informed** and organized. Also, be straightforward about your intentions on what is to be discussed in the first meeting.

Business Attire

- German’s normally dress formally in dark colored suits, thus ‘business casual’ attire (khakis, sports coat, casual shoes) will not do. **Avoid** bright or gaudy clothing and jewelry.

- Men: dark suit, solid colored tie, and white shirt.

- Women: Women should wear either business suits or conservative dresses.

Behavior

- Germans are efficient, agenda-based, and emphasize factual and rational reasoning to make

decisions during business negotiations.

- Try and avoid “selling” your idea to your German business partner, instead provide a lot of **logical argumentation** and concrete examples to back up your proposal.

- Chewing gum while talking to someone is considered **rude**.

Gift Giving

- A small gift given at a first meeting is considered polite within German business culture.

- **Do not** give expensive gifts in private; the larger the gift, the more public the gift giving should be.

- Gifts are usually opened when received.

Appropriate Gifts: quality pens, tasteful corporate items, scarves, imported liquor or wine, a gift/food item specific to your country, yellow roses or tea roses are always well received

Gifts to Avoid: - lilies, heather, carnations, chrysanthemums, perfumes, clothing, beer

Business Tips continued

Conversation

- The majority of Germans speak German and English in the business environment.

- **Avoid** giving compliments; it is unnecessary in German culture.

- It is wise to show **empathy** for others who are less fortunate.

- Humor is usually **not** appreciated within business

context.

- If you are interrupted during conversation do not take offense; this shows their **interest** on the topic.

-Guten Tag= Hello Danke= Thank you

- Germans do not need a personal relationship in order to do business.

- Germans will be direct to the point of bluntness.

Topics to Discuss: sports (soccer), travel, current events, work and professions, beer (for those who imbibe)

Topics to Avoid: personal questions (family, salary, etc.), WWII and the Holocaust (although some Germans may be open)