WORLD TRADE CENTER®
SAN DIEGO

Morocco

Kingdom of Morocco/ Al Mamlakah al Maghribiyah

Country Overview:

Location: Northern Africa, bordering the North Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea, between Algeria and Western Sahara

Size: 446,550 sq km

Population: 32,649,130 (July 2013 est.)

Capital: Rabat

Export-commodities: clothing and textiles, electric components, inorganic chemicals, transistors, crude minerals, fertilizers (including phosphates), petroleum products, citrus fruits, vegetables, fish

Import-commodities: crude petroleum, textile fabric, telecommunications equipment, wheat, gas and electricity, transistors, plastics

Currency: Moroccan Dirhams (MAD)

Ethnic groups: Arab-Berber 99%, other 1%

Religion: Muslim 99% (official), Christian 1%, Jewish about 6,000

Government type: republic

Chief of State: King MOHAMMED VI (since 30 July 1999)

Head of Government: Prime Minister Abdelilah BENKIRANE (since 29 November 2011)

Language: Arabic (official), Berber dialects, French often the language of business, government, and diplomacy.

Meetings and Negotiations

- Arrive to meetings **on time**, but be prepared to **wait**.

- **Handshakes** are the customary greeting between individuals of the same sex and may seem somewhat **less firm** compared to western standards.

- In any greeting that does take place between men and women, the woman must extend her hand first. If she does not, a man should **bow** his head in greeting.

- Appointments are necessary and should be made as far in advance as possible and confirmed a day or two before the meeting.

- **French** is generally the language of business, although some companies use English. Check which language your meeting will be conducted in, so you know if you should hire an interpreter.

- **Business cards** are given without formal ritual.

- Your final contract may be viewed as **negotiable**; Moroccans love to negotiate even after signing a deal.

- Decisions are deliberate and **slow** in Morocco. Do not try to push or play hard ball; this will be seen as very **rude**. Decisions are reached after great deliberation.

- Expect a fair amount of haggling.

Business Attire

- Since Moroccans judge people on **appearances**, dress and present yourself well. Business attire is **formal** and **conservative**.

- Women must be careful to **cover** themselves appropriately. Skirts and dresses should cover the knee and sleeves should cover most of the arm. Also, **avoid** wearing expensive accessories.

Behavior

- Serving mint tea, whenever meeting someone, demonstrates hospitality.

- Moroccans are known for being devoutly **religious**, with most holding to traditional Islamic norms of prayer and fasting, etc.

- It is best to **avoid** scheduling meetings during **Ramadan** (because Muslims cannot drink and eat all day) and on **Friday** between 11:15 a.m. and 3 p.m. since most companies are **closed** for prayers.

- **Never** eat with your left hand, use only the right hand (the left is used for washing and cleaning).

Gift Giving

- Gifts are usually not opened when received.

Appropriate Gifts:

- books or small items from your country, sweet pastries, nuts, figs, dates or flowers

Gifts to Avoid:

- alcohol, anything in colors of pink, violet, and yellow as these are associated with death

Business Tips continued

Conversation

-When Moroccans greet each other they take their time and converse about their families, friends, and other **general topics**.

-You may experience **frequent interruptions** during the conversation. Others may even wander into the room and start a different discussion. You may join in, but do not bring the topic back to the original discussion until the new person leaves.

-Try **not to embarrass** or catch your Moroccan client unaware of important issues.

-Say good-bye to **each** person individually when leaving.

-Do not use high-pressure tactics as they will work against you.

-They can be forceful negotiators.

Topics to Discuss: family, friends, general topics

Topics to Avoid: the monarchy (especially if one is critical towards it), the independence of the Sahara territories, homosexuality and religion