



# South Africa



## Country Overview:

*Location: Southern Africa, at the southern tip of the continent of Africa*

*Size: 1,219,090 sq. km.*

*Population: 48,601,098 (July 2013 est.)*

*Capital: Pretoria*

*Export-commodities: gold, diamonds, platinum, other metals and minerals, machinery and equipment*

*Import-commodities: machinery and equipment, chemicals, petroleum products, scientific instruments, foodstuffs*

*Currency: Rand (ZAR)*

*Religion: Protestant 36.6% (Zionist Christian 11.1%, Pentecostal/Charismatic 8.2%, Methodist 6.8%, Dutch Reformed 6.7%, Anglican 3.8%), Catholic 7.1%, Muslim 1.5%, other Christian 36%, other 2.3%, unspecified 1.4%, none 15.1%*

*Ethnic groups: black African 79%, white 9.6%, colored 8.9%, Indian/Asian 2.5%*

*Government type: republic*

*Chief of State and the Head of Government: President Jacob ZUMA (since May 2009), Deputy President Kgalema MOTLANTHE*

*Language: IsiZulu 23.8%, IsiXhosa 17.6%, Afrikaans 13.3%, Sepedi 9.4%, English 8.2%, Setswana 8.2%, Sesotho 7.9%, Xitsonga 4.4%, other 7.2%*

*South Africa is the 26th largest economy in the world.*



## Republic of South Africa

### Meetings and Negotiations

- Be **punctual**, and **confirm** date and time prior to meeting.

- When addressing your South African business partner, use their professional **title** or Mr./Mrs. and **surname**.

- When greeting, **shake the hand** of the most senior person first and then continue on to everyone else. In Muslim culture the left hand is considered unclean, so do not shake hands using your left hand.

- Carry multiple **business cards** because they will be exchanged. South Africans do not have a set protocol regarding business cards but it is wise to treat the card with respect.

- Start negotiating with a realistic figure. South Africans do not like haggling over price.

### Business Attire

- South Africans are stylish yet

conservative. **Presentation is key**; have your clothing ironed and shoes shined.

- Men wear suits or pants, tie and jacket. Muslim men are likely to wear a fez, or a white skull cap.

- Women dress in business suits or skirts/dress, with an appropriate top. Heels are common. A Muslim woman would cover her head with a piece of fabric.

### Behavior

- South Africans tend to stand **close** to one another, sometimes even tapping another's shoulder or arm.

- Eye-contact is the norm but overly direct **eye-contact** may be interpreted as a challenge/or considered rude.

- The thumbs up hand gesture means "good" or "okay."

- Placing your hands together with the fingers pointed upwards, signals **'thank you.'**

- Placing your thumb between your forefinger and your second finger and pointing it at someone is an **obscene** gesture.

### Gift Giving

- When giving a gift use discretion and modesty; **avoid** overly lavish and expensive gifts or it may be viewed as bribery.

- Wrapping a gift nicely shows extra effort

- Expect the receiver to open the gift **in front** of you.

- Do not present or receive a gift using only your left hand, use your right hand or both hands.

### Appropriate Gifts:

Personalized gifts, desk accessory, quality pens, something specific of your own culture, cigars, whiskey, wine, flowers, good quality chocolates

### Gifts to Avoid:

- Carnations, pork related items or alcohol to a Muslim

## Business Tips continued

### Conversation

- English is a second language for most South Africans so it is unnecessary to translate business cards or hire an interpreter.

- You will need to gain a South African **trust** prior to making business deals. Being introduced by a mutual friend or having letters of introduction from other companies will assist this process.

- It is considered **rude** to

interrupt when someone else is speaking.

- Be **calm** during conversation and try to **avoid** loud volumes or exaggerated arm/hand movements.

- **Do** be aware of South Africa's racial terminology. Black is the preferred term for those of African ancestry and white is for those of Caucasian ancestry who speak English or Afrikaans.

- They often use metaphors and sports analogies to demonstrate a point.

### Topics to Discuss:

- South African culture and history, education, sports (soccer/FIFA World Cup 2010), current affairs

### Topics to Avoid:

- Calling Afrikaners "Dutchmen" and do not call Afrikaans "Kitchen Dutch." Afrikaners do not consider themselves Dutch

