



Taiwan



Country Overview:

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

Size: 35,980 sq. km.

Population: 23,299,716

Capital: Taipei

Export-commodities: electronics, flat panels, machinery; metals; textiles, plastics, chemicals; optical, photographic, measuring, and medical instruments

Import-commodities: electronics, machinery, crude petroleum, precision instruments, organic chemicals, metals

Currency: New Taiwan Dollars (TWD)

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

Ethnic groups: Taiwanese (including Hakka) 84%, mainland Chinese 14%, indigenous 2%

Language: Mandarin Chinese (official), Taiwanese (Min), Hakka dialects

Government type: multiparty democracy

Chief of State: President MA Ying-jeou (since May 2008)

Head of Government: Premier (President of the Executive Yuan) SEAN C. Chen (since 6 February 2012)



Taiwan / T'ai-wan

Meetings and Negotiations.

- Be **punctual** for all business appointments.
- Greet with a slight **nod** of the head and shaking hands (not too firm).
- **Wait** for introductions.
- Address your Taiwanese counterpart by stating their title or Mr./ Mrs. and their last name. Ex: General Manager Zhang or Mr. Zhang

- Taiwanese enforce **business hierarchy** when negotiating, within seating, and when entering a room. Acknowledge the most senior person first (the person leading or in the front, or the eldest).

Business Attire

- Business casual and conservative will suffice; long trousers, white shirt, and a tie. Also, limit your use of accessories.

Behavior

- **“Saving face”** is an important concept to understand. In Taiwanese

business culture, a person’s reputation and social standing rests on this concept. Causing embarrassment or loss of composure, even unintentionally, can be **disastrous** for business negotiations.

- Always **have** multiple business cards on hand (exchanged in business and non-business situations). Keep coloring and font **simple**.

- The traditional way of presenting your business card is to use two hands. When receiving others, take a **few moments** to read it and then **place** it on the table or in your card case (not in your pocket!). **NEVER** scribble on a business card.

- **Limit** your use of hand gestures while talking.

- **Avoid** touching or any physical contact between you and your Taiwanese business partner, as this may cause discomfort. Use your whole hand to point to something.

- **Avoid** winking, touching anyone’s head, pointing or touching of our feet (considered very dirty).

Gift Giving

- Within Taiwanese business culture, gift giving is widely accepted but be aware that a very large gift may be interpreted as **bribery**.

- Use discretion when giving a **gift**; select a gift that is **modest**.

- It is customary when giving the gift, to hand it over using two hands.

- A large gift should be presented to the entire group, whereas a small gift should be given to everyone present.

- The receiver may politely turn down the gift at first, but be persistent and they will eventually accept.

- The gift is **not** normally opened in the givers presence.

Appropriate Gifts:

- Something shared such as food, a gift specific to your own culture, amounts of 8, something with your company logo, red, pink, yellow considered to be auspicious colors

Gifts to Avoid:

- Clocks, fans, green hats, items in amounts of 4, sharp objects, a red-ink pen, handkerchiefs

Business Tips continued

Conversation

- Taiwanese international businessmen/women are likely to speak Chinese and English.

- You may be asked intrusive questions about your marital status, age, and income. Do not respond with irritation, just be **nonspecific**.

- In Taiwanese culture, ‘Have you eaten?’ is the equivalent to ‘How are you?’ Simply smile and answer ‘yes.’

- Taiwanese greatly value building personal relationships among the people they do business with.

- Speak in a quiet, gentle tone; moreover, remain **calm**. Candor is

not necessary .

- Mandarin Chinese: “Ni Hao” [nín hǎo]= Hello

Topics to Discuss: art, family, sports, and sightseeing

Topics to Avoid: race, religion, gossiping, their relationship with China, criticizing any aspect of Taiwan

