



Thailand



Country Overview:

Location: Southeastern Asia, bordering the Andaman Sea and the Gulf of Thailand, southeast of Burma

Size: 513,120 sq km

Population: 66,404,688

Capital: Bangkok

Export-commodities: textiles and footwear, fishery products, rice, rubber, jewelry, automobiles, computers and electrical appliances

Import-commodities: capital goods, intermediate goods and raw materials, consumer goods, fuels

Ethnic groups: Thai 75%, Chinese 14%, other 11%

Religion: Buddhist 94.6%, Muslim 4.6%, Christian .7%

Language: Thai, English

Government type: constitutional monarchy

Chief of State: King Phumiphon (Since June 1946)

Head of Government: Prime Minister YINGLAK Chinnawat (Since August 2011)

Thailand is the 25th largest economy in the world.



Kingdom of Thailand / Ratcha Anachak Thai

Meetings and Negotiations

- Be **punctual** for all business appointments.

- Address your Thai counterpart by stating their title or Mr./Mrs. and their last name. Ex: General Manager Zhang or Mr. Zhang

- The customary greeting is to place your hands in the prayer position and then touch somewhere between the chest and top of the head ('wai') accompanied with a slight nod of the head. The higher the hands, the more respectful the wai. Do shake hands if you are not offered a wai.

- Thai 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 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 Thai 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 (or only your right hand). 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** write on or fold a business card.

- Relationships develop slowly; it may take several meetings.

- **Limit** your use of hand gestures

while talking. Also, **avoid** touching or any physical contact between you and your Thai business partner, as this may cause discomfort. Use your whole hand to point to something.

Gift Giving

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

- Use your **right hand** when passing over your gift. A large gift should be presented to the entire group, whereas a small gift should be given to everyone present.

-If you are receiving a gift, **thank** them with a 'wai' (prayer hand position with slight nod).

Appropriate Gifts:

Something shared such as food, a gift specific to your own culture

Gifts to Avoid:

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

Business Tips continued

Conversation

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

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

-In Thai culture, 'Have you eat-

en?' is the equivalent to 'How are you?' Simply smile and answer 'yes.'

-Thai will rarely answer a question with a blunt 'no.' Be aware that a 'yes' that sounds hesitant or weak usually means 'no.'

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

-Keep **smiling**; Thai smile at every

opportunity, even when they are embarrassed or annoyed.

Topics to Discuss:

food, weather, travel, arts, the state of the economy, family

Topics to Avoid:

race, religion, gossiping, criticizing any aspect of Thailand (especially the monarchy)