



Turkey



Country Overview:

Location: Southeastern Europe and southwestern Asia, bordering the Black Sea, between Bulgaria and Georgia, and bordering the Aegean Sea and the Mediterranean Sea, between Greece and Syria

Size: 783,562 sq km

Population: 78,785,548

Capital: Ankara

Export-commodities: semiconductors and electronic products, transport equipment, garments, copper products, petroleum products, coconut oil, fruits

Import-commodities: machinery, chemicals, semi-finished goods, fuels, transport equipment

Religion: Muslim 99.8% (mostly Sunni), other 0.02% (mostly Christians and Jews)

Ethnic groups: Turkish 70-75%, Kurdish 18%, other minorities 7-12% (2008 est.)

Language: Turkish (official), Kurdish, other minority languages.

Government Type: republican parliamentary democracy

Chief of State: President Abdullah GUL (since Aug. 2007)

Head of Government: Prime Minister Recep Tayyip ERDOGAN (since March 2003)

Turkey is the 17th largest economy in the world.



Republic of Turkey / *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti*

Meetings and Negotiations

- Be **punctual** for business appointments.
- Address your Turkish counterpart by stating their title or Mr. / Mrs. and their last name. Ex: Manager Mudur Bey or Mr. Mudur Bey
- The customary greeting is to extend a handshake (not too firm or prolonged) with a smile.
- Turks 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

- Dress formally and conservatively; well-tailored business suits are ideal but a long sleeved shirt paired with a necktie is fine. For men, favor dark colors and for women, light colors.

Behavior

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

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- Always **have** multiple business cards on hand (exchanged in business and non-business situations). Expect to see English on one side and Turkish on the other. 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.

- Limit** your use of hand gestures while talking. Avoid making the “Ok” sign with your fingers; this is considered very **vulgar** within Turkish culture.

- Maintaining eye-contact during conversation is fine but staring is considered **rude**.

- Standing with your hands placed on your hips or in your pockets indicates anger and displeasure.

- Keep your feet flat on the ground when sitting; showing the bottoms of your feet in Turkey is considered insulting.

- Be aware that your Turkish visitor is most likely Muslim, therefore, the left hand is seen as dirty, pork and alcohol are not generally consumed. Also, your visitor may need to step out of a meeting for prayer.

Gift Giving

- Gift giving in a business setting is not common etiquette. Although, will be accepted. 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.
- The receiver may politely turn down the gift at first but be persistent and they will eventually accept. The gift is **not** opened in the givers presence.

Appropriate Gifts:

- Items with your company logo, a gift specific to your own culture/ region such as food stuffs or craft items

Gifts to Avoid:

- Fruits, alcohol or alcohol products, personal items, perfume, any products containing pork

Business Tips continued

Conversation

- Relationships are fostered in the office, over extended lunches, dinners, and social outings.
- Begin with small talk to build a relationship before delving into business negotiations.

- Turks 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. Vital** that you maintain eye contact while speaking since Turks take this as a

sign of **sincerity**.

Topics to Discuss:

- Food, weather, travel, arts, soccer, family

Topics to Avoid:

- Race, politics, religion (Islam),