



Vietnam



Country Overview:

Location: Southeastern Asia, bordering the Gulf of Thailand, Gulf of Tonkin, and South China Sea, alongside China, Laos, and Cambodia

Size: 331,210 sq km

Population: 89,571,130

Capital: Hanoi (Ha Noi)

Export-commodities: crude oil, marine products, rice, coffee, rubber, tea, garments, shoes

Import-commodities: machinery and equipment, petroleum products, fertilizer, steel products, raw cotton, grain, cement, motorcycles

Government Type: Communist state

Chief of State: President Truong Tan SANG (since 25 July 2011)

Head of Government: Prime Minister Nguyen Tan DUNG (since 27 June 2006)

Language: Vietnamese (official), English (increasingly favored as a second language), some French, Chinese, and Khmer; mountain area languages (Mon-Khmer and Malayo-Polynesian)

Vietnam is the 42nd largest economy in the world.



Socialist Republic of Vietnam / Cong Hoa Xa Hoi

Meetings and Negotiations

-The Vietnamese value punctuality.

-Strong emphasis is placed on **hierarchy** based on age and status; derived from Confucianism, which emphasizes social order.

-When greeting, say “**xin chao**” (**seen chow**), a very polite hello and good bye, then the given name with the appropriate title.

-Handshakes are used upon meeting and departing. Shake with both hands and bow your head slightly to show respect. Wait for a woman to **extend** her hand. If she does not, bow your head slightly.

-Business cards are exchanged on initial meetings, presented with **both** hands, and read. Translated cards are appreciated.

-Initial meeting should be solely

used as a "getting to know you" meeting.

-Few Vietnamese speak English well, an interpreter is usually necessary.

-Have your written materials translated into Vietnamese.

-Interest in the culture and customs is a great way to build a relationship.

-For the Vietnamese, there is no such thing as a win-win situation; there is only a winner and a loser. Pointing out Vietnamese advantages may assist in negotiating.

Business Attire

-Men: business suits in conservative colors like black, dark gray or navy blue, with ties and white shirts.

-Women: business suits as well, in pants or skirt form, in the same color schemes.

Behavior

-Concept of “**face**” in Asian cul-

tures is important; be aware of your words and actions as to not cause loss of face.

-Pass items with both hands.

-**Avoid** pointing, crossing your arms on your chest or pointing the bottoms of your feet at any person, it is considered very rude.

Gift Giving

-Business gift giving is fairly common at the **end** of a meeting. Gifts should be small, but not expensive. Wrap gifts in lucky green or red paper; **never** black and white. Gifts are **not** opened in public.

Appropriate Gifts:

-Something with your company logo or typical from your country. Whiskey is also popular.

Gifts to Avoid:

-**Never** present handkerchiefs or anything black as a gift, because it is considered ominous.

Business Tips continued

Conversation

-Money is discussed very openly in Vietnam.

-**Modesty** is considered a blessing; not overly promoting you or your associates success is often better received and can lead to smoother relations with your counterparts.

-Family is **central** in Vietnam-

ese culture, therefore, inquiring about your colleague’s family is encouraged.

-Vietnamese will avoid using “no” in answering questions. They tend to say, “maybe”, or “that would be difficult” even if the answer is really no.

Topics to Discuss:

-Vietnamese culture, food, mu-

sic, soccer, temples, great interest in Western poetry/ literature (Chinese contemporary and domestic)

Topics to Avoid:

-Vietnamese very much dislike talking about China.

-Vietnam War, negativity in regard to the government and Ho Chi Minh, communism