



Online Free Resources

We develop people – they develop your business

Since 1991 Europe has been going through a huge transition with the integration of Eastern European culture into Western European business. Here are some key tips to help you have more successful relationship with Eastern European clients and suppliers.

The Eastern European culture – doing business

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The formation of one Europe is both inspiring and challenging. I remember I was working for The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development in the mid to late 1990's and the experience of being exposed to such a diversity of cultures was invigorating as well as somewhat confusing. Take simple language for example, back then Eastern European languages did not have words for 'Stocks and Shares', 'Profit and Loss', etc. as these were not needed in a Communist environment.

Take that simple difference and exaggerate it into behaviour styles and the potential for miss-understandings is huge. We are now a truly global business market and it is essential that as part of our Business Etiquette we are aware of how to behave when we visit Eastern European Countries as well as treating business clients from these Countries appropriately when they are in the UK.

Here are my top tips for making it work:

- Punctuality will be expected of you, but may not always be presented back – don't take offence
- Some Eastern European cultures will view compromise as a weakness
- Refusing drink or a toast is a serious breach of etiquette
- Cross gender – always allow a woman to extend her hand first when shaking hands
- Kissing only occurs between friends and family, so however familiar you may feel with your business clients/colleagues, the handshake will always be the acceptable form of greeting and leaving
- Conversations can contain long pauses, people may simply want to consider everything being said, do not attempt to fill in every lull in the conversation
- Evenings are reserved for families – so be aware of this when visiting Eastern European Countries and sensitive when entertaining Eastern European clients in the UK
- Eastern Europeans may appear very formal and might even appear stern. Do not assume that this is the 'real' demeanour of that particular person, as often it is just a 'front' whilst trust and loyalties are established



- Some Eastern Europeans are very direct in their questions about your personal life. Do not interpret this as bad manners, it is simply a way of for them to learn more about you and establish an open and honest relationship
- Patience is a highly regarded value in Eastern Europe – so slow down, measure the pace of your voice and don't expect answers immediately

The integration of Eastern and Western Europe makes us a force to be reckoned with globally, learn to embrace the differences and recognise that diversity of character makes a unit stronger not weaker.

If you are interested in a workshop on this subject then please call us on 0845 626 2244.