

## CONDUCTING BUSINESS WITH PEOPLE FROM



# BRAZIL



### Greetings



Introductions are loud and exciting events. Shake hands with everyone upon meeting and when you leave. Handshakes are extended and warm, and may be accompanied by hugs, shoulder pats, kisses, etc. Do not pull away and maintain steady eye contact. Greet the most senior person present first to show respect. Women kiss on the cheeks – married women receive 2 kisses and single women receive 3.

Address people using their titles such as Doctor, Engineer, President, if applicable, or use Señor and Señora. Don't use first names unless invited to do so or unless you ask what the person prefers to be called. It is an insult to mispronounce or misspell a person's name.

### Conversation



Brazilians enjoy enthusiastic, fast-paced conversation. They use hand motions, often touch the other person and stand in close physical proximity. Maintain steady eye contact – it is an insult if you look away. Don't be insulted if you are interrupted – it is an indication of interest. Appropriate topics may include sports like soccer, basketball, fishing, horse racing and volleyball; food; family; and vacations. Go with the flow. Personal questions about salary, religion, and marital status may be asked of you even though Brazilians hold family and home life to be very private. Avoid discussing politics and religion, ethnic and class differences, and Argentina, Brazil's traditional rival. Do not criticize Brazil's government, cities, sports, food, or history.

### Gestures



Physical contact like arm touching or shoulder patting are common since Brazilians communicate in close proximity. Snapping your fingers while whipping your hand up and down adds emphasis. Flicking the fingertips beneath the chin means that you do not know. The OK sign is a vulgar gesture in Brazil.

### Business Attire



High value is placed on conservative, high-quality clothing. For business, men wear conservative dark suits and well-polished shoes. Women wear fashionable dresses, suits, pantsuits, or skirts & blouses. Women should appear feminine and avoid masculine items. Nails must be manicured. Do not wear shorts or tennis shoes in public. Do not wear yellow and green, the colors of the Brazilian flag.

### Hierarchy/Family



Loyalty to one's extended family and even nepotism are of the utmost importance.

### Manners



Traditionally, a strong personal relationship must be created before business is transacted. Be on time for business meetings but don't be surprised if you are kept waiting. Coffee and social conversation will often precede any business discussions.

Use your knife -- never your fork -- to cut food. It is rude to touch your food with your fingers – eat everything with your silverware, even fruit and sandwiches. In Brazil, smoking is illegal in public places so is best avoided. Don't push and shove in lines or when waiting.

### Cognitive Styles



Brazilians deal with each individual situation in an analytical manner, but decisions may be influenced by emotional responses and personal relationships. Use good manners and cultural sensitivity.

In Brazil a person's word and handshake are considered sufficient to seal a deal. A signed contract may not be perceived as binding and the terms may be considered still subject to change.

Don't rush negotiations – be patient and allow the situation to develop.

### Currency **R\$**

Unit of currency is the real and the coin is the centavo. 100 centavos = 1 real.

### Ethnic Make-Up



Brazil is the fifth largest country in the world and has a vast cultural diversity. Over 50% are of European descent; the rest are mulattos, African Americans, mestizo (Spanish & Indian), Japanese and other nationalities. Don't refer to Brazilians as Latinos or Latin Americans. Brazilians may refer to themselves as Americans.

### Language



The official language is Portuguese. Spanish is understood by many but not commonly spoken. Some Brazilians may be offended if addressed in Spanish.

### Religion



72% Roman Catholic, 21% Protestant, 1% atheist.