

CONDUCTING BUSINESS WITH PEOPLE FROM



PUERTO RICO



Greetings



People usually shake hands when greeting. When addressing others in formal situations, one may use titles of respect or profession along or in combination with a person's surname.

Conversation



People stand very close when talking, and females often touch each other with their hands. Moving away, even slightly, may be considered an insult. During conversation, Puerto Ricans might interrupt each other; this generally is not considered rude. Do not be offended if you are asked personal questions.

Gestures



One beckons by waving all fingers with the palm down; beckoning people with the palm facing up is improper. Wiggling the nose can mean, "What's going on?" To point, people often purse or pucker their lips in the direction indicated.

Business Attire



Puerto Ricans take great pride in what they wear in public. Business attire is strongly recommended. Sloppy, overly casual, or revealing dress is considered inappropriate. Due to the climate, people prefer lightweight fabrics.

Hierarchy/Family



Respect for family is critical in the Puerto Rican culture. Mothers and elders are adored, and duty to the family, including the extended family, is essential. Family ties are strong. Machismo is the critical element of the society.

Manners



Appointments are important. Puerto Ricans consider open criticism, aggressiveness, and greed offensive. Although peers will teach each other in informal situations, such joking is not appropriate in formal settings. A person can get another's attention by saying "psst." This is common and not rude, but if a man does it to a woman, she will likely ignore him. Men often smile and stare at women, but it is considered improper for a woman to smile indiscriminately at strangers. It is appropriate for a man to offer his seat to a woman on public transportation.

Cognitive Styles



Puerto Ricans are sensitive people, quick to express sympathy and equally quick to resent a slight. They admire people who are intelligent, hardworking, dedicated, and humble. The Puerto Rican concept of time is somewhat relaxed. People are considered more important than schedules.

Currency



The U.S. dollar is the official currency.

Ethnic Make-Up



More than 95% native Puerto Rican.

Language



Spanish and English share official status in Puerto Rico.

Religion



85% Roman Catholic, 15% belong to various Protestant and other Christian churches.