



**“Introduction in etiquettes
and customs of Mexican
business culture”**

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Interview the person next to you



1. Name
2. What are her/his expectations of this workshop?
3. What does she/he think about Mexican people?
Any Mexican stereotypes?
4. Interesting fact

Introduce him/her to the rest of the group:

Program

1. Mexico: Economy, Society & Culture (an Introduction)

- Facts and Statistics
- Important moments in history
- Religion
- Family Values
- Hierarchy
- Collectivist society
- 'Machismo'
- Corruption and Drugs

2. Business Etiquette & Customs in Mexico

- Introducing yourself
- Appearance (clothing and non verbal communication)
- Punctuality
- Meetings
- Business lunches and dinners
Watch your table manners!
- Communication
- Negotiations
- Business presents

- **To Identify practical concerns.**
- **To gain insight on how to manage effectively in Mexico**

- **We are discussing generalities**

MEXICO

Facts & Statistics



Officially **The United Mexican States**
Spanish: **Estados Unidos Mexicanos**

Capital and the largest city

Mexico City (Distrito Federal)
about 20 million people.

Population

119.5 million in 2015

Area

1,972,550 km² (> 47x The Netherlands)
761,606 sq. mi

**Location
Neighbour countries**

USA, Belize, Guatemala

Languages

68 native languages
-Spanish only 92.7%
-Spanish and indigenous languages 5.7%
-indigenous only 0.8%,

Currency

Mexican peso

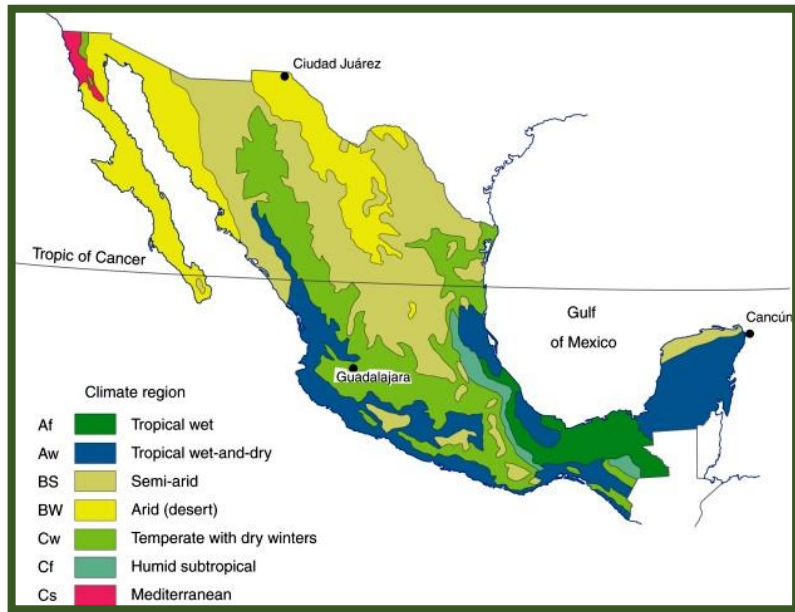
Government

Federal presidential constitutional republic

President

Enrique Peña Nieto

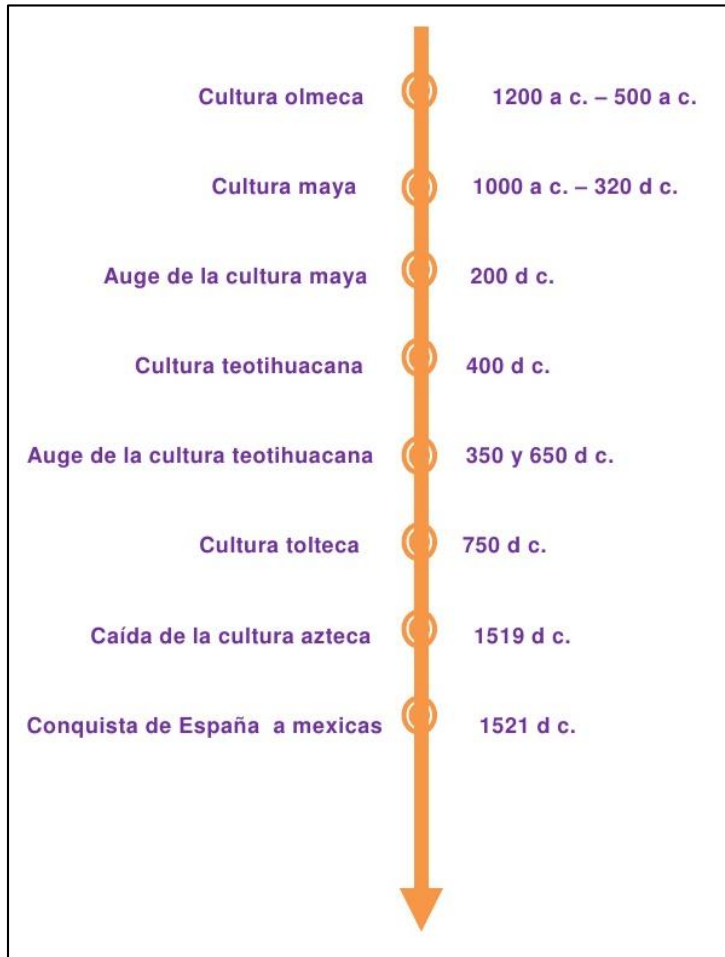
- The Tropic of Cancer effectively divides the country into temperate and tropical zones



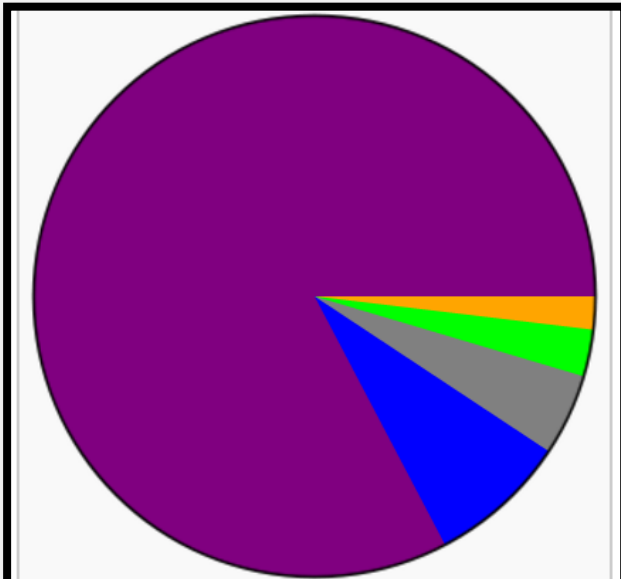
- Mexico is one of the 17 most diverse countries of the world








Mexico's history



Religion- Catholicism



Religion in Mexico (2010 est.) ^[1]

-  Roman Catholicism (82.7%)
-  Other Christian (Protestant, Pentecostal, Jehovah's witnesses, evangelical Christians, etc) (8%)
-  Irreligious (4.7%)
-  Unspecified (2.7%)
-  Others (Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, etc) (1.9%)

Belief in God and death



Day of the Dead



Day of the Virgin of Guadalupe



Catholics from across Mexico pay pilgrimage to see an image of Mary

Mexican Values

Family : Center of social structure
Sense of stability
Dependence & Loyalty



Traditional families:

Father: head of the family
the authority figure
the decision-maker

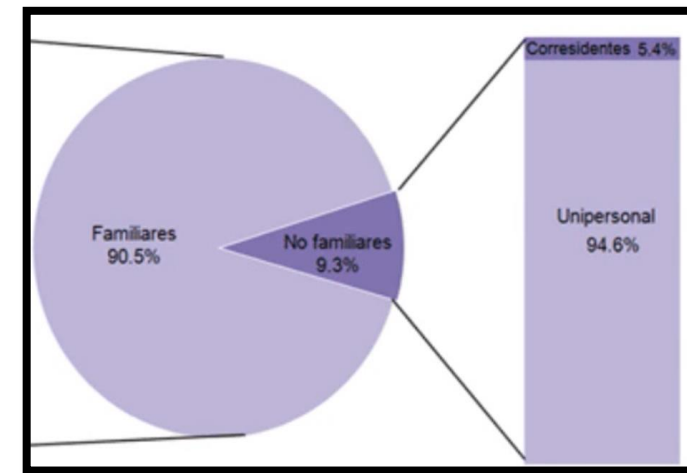
Mother: heart of the family
the one who cooked,
cleaned and cared for the
children on a full-time basis

Similar responsibilities were also
expected of daughters

Modern families:



Estimated distribution of mexican's home

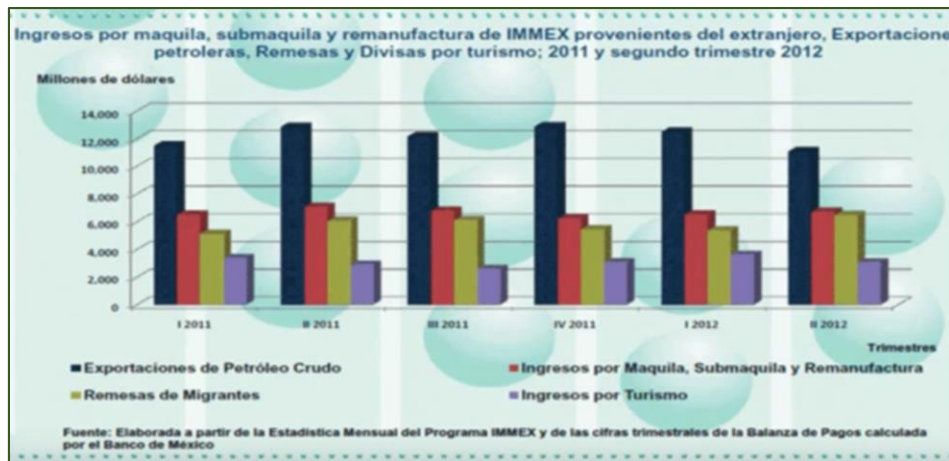


To help the family is their duty and responsibility:

- Finding work : family business
- Political positions
- Remittances or contributions sent by Mexicans living abroad.

Family reunions:

Hosting parties at their homes plays a large part of Mexican life



Remittances are a substantial and growing part of the Mexican economy; they comprised \$22.4 billion in 2012

MEXICO

- Family always comes first
- Dependence & Loyalty
- Traditions
- Family life & events are incredibly important

*¿Family or work?



Independence day



XV años

Do's -**“Accept all kind of invitations, it’s the perfect time to get to know each other”**

deepen relationships

promote understanding

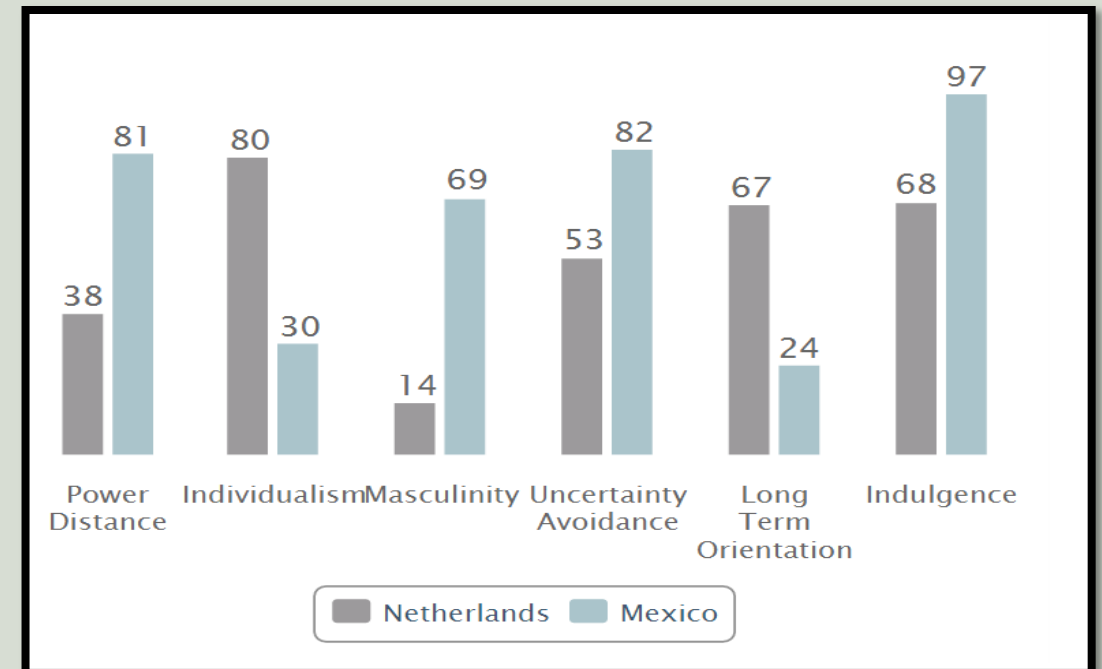
long term business in Mexico.

Are you aware of the cultural differences between The Netherlands and Mexico?

- Hierarchy
- Collectivist society
- 'Machismo'

Made by Prof. Emeritus Geert Hofstede

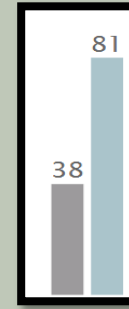
1. **Power distance:** the degree of acceptance of the unequal distribution of power within the society.
2. **Individualistic:** a social framework that is either loosely or tightly knit.
3. **Masculine:** the degree to which assertiveness among other characteristics, dominates social interaction.
4. **Uncertainty avoidance:** the ability of the inhabitants within a culture to tolerate uncertainty or ambiguity.
5. **Long Term Orientation:** how every society has to maintain some links with its own past while dealing with the challenges of the present and future, and societies prioritize these two existential goals differently.
6. **Indulgence:** the extent to which people try to control their desires and impulses, based on the way they were raised.



Power distance: Hierarchical Society



Power distance



-After the Spanish conquest, people were divided on the basis of monetary power & control, status and authority.

- Mexican society and business are highly stratified and vertically structured.
- Those in authority openly demonstrate their rank.
- People respect authority and look to those above them for guidance and decision-making.
- Mexicans emphasize hierarchical relationships.

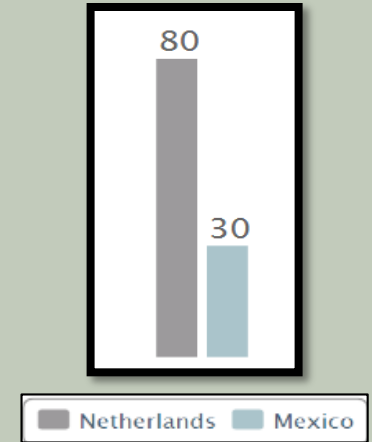
Workplace

- **Give clear and explicit directions to those working with you.**
- **Deadlines should be highlighted and stressed.**
- **Be more authoritarian in your management style.**
- **Show respect to those higher up the ladder.**
- **Expect more bureaucracy in organizations and government agencies.**

Collectivistic vs Individualistic society

Mexico : **collectivistic society**

The Netherlands: **Individualistic society**



Workplace

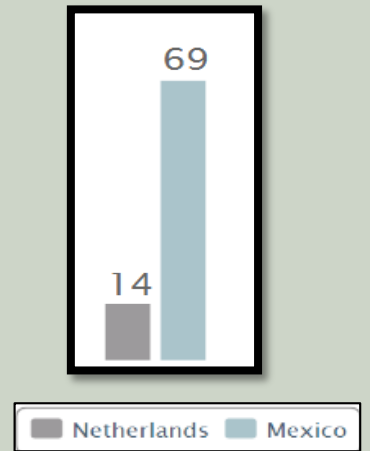
- As an individual you are expected to work on your own and use your initiative.
- Business and personal life may very well be kept separate.
- Employees or subordinates will expect the chance to work on projects or solve issues independently.
- Being too intrusive into their work may be interpreted negatively.
- A certain amount of individual expression is tolerated, i.e. people's appearance, behavior, etc.

- **Mexicans have a strong sense of responsibility for their family.**
- **Remember that a compliment should always be directed to a team.**
- **Decision making may be a slow process.**
- **Do not expect subordinates to take initiative.**
- **The right connections facilitate business success. Deal with the Right People.**



Machismo literally means 'masculinity'

- Life's priorities are achievement, wealth and expansion.
managers are expected to be decisive and assertive.
- Women and men have different roles in society.
- Competition and performance and conflicts are resolved by fighting them out.
- Professionals often "live to work", meaning longer work hours and short vacations.



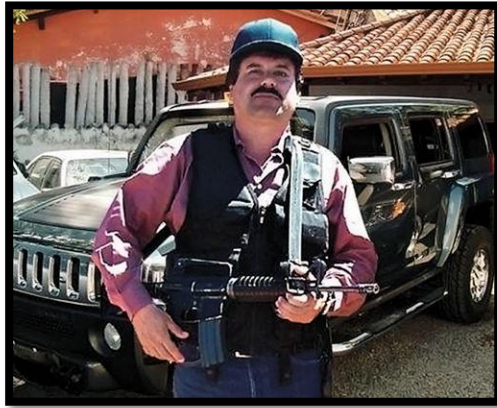
Workplace

- Expect to make sacrifices.
- Be aware that people will discuss business anytime.
- Women should prepare for some difficulty when doing business in Mexico.
- You should demonstrate your competence, skill and authority.

Machismo is a stereotype for Mexican males, so keep an open mind not to stereotype each person with this attitude.

Corruption and Drugs

“ La Mordida” literally, it means "bite" but figuratively and the way it is most frequently used, it means a bribe



“El que no transa no avanza”
he who does not yield does not
advance. (n.b.: a Mexican saying)



“For a lot of things you do in Mexico, especially if they involve a public official, you have to pay the "mordida", the bite.

-Want your tourist card stamped? You pay the mordida.

-Want the dates on your tourist card extended? You pay the mordida.

-Want your car registered? You pay the mordida”

“There are two additional topics that novices should be made aware of. First is the “bite” or mordida (read bribe) often required to facilitate your business. The second is outright fraud on the part of unscrupulous Mexican partners, buyers, sellers, etc...

... Please understand, I love Mexico and my wife and daughter are Mexican. Having been in the land development business in Mexico for 20 years; having paid a few hundred thousand to government officials; and finally, having being swindled out of \$10,000,00 in real estate by a “reputable” Mexican developer has taught me to be extremely careful in all negotiations. Merely start with the premise that everyone has a price: attorneys, judges, and public officials...

... It is a wonderful country with a wealth of dedicated, loyal workers. However, a move up to politicians and greedy business entrepreneurs is a totally different environment”

“do I want my organization to participate and be involved in corruption and bribery, and at what levels”?

Business Etiquette & Customs in Mexico



Introducing yourself

First time meeting with a business contact:



1. Handshake
2. Eye contact
3. Say your name
4. Presentation of your BC

- **Leaving the meeting** or event:
say goodbye individually.



*sometimes combined with
slight touches on the arms

If the **business relationship has developed** over time



You may find that upon arrival your
host will hug you (*un abrazo*),
giving 2 or 3 firm slaps on your back,
followed by a handshake.

*** Confidence and friendship.**

-It is used when saying goodbye



Men & Women

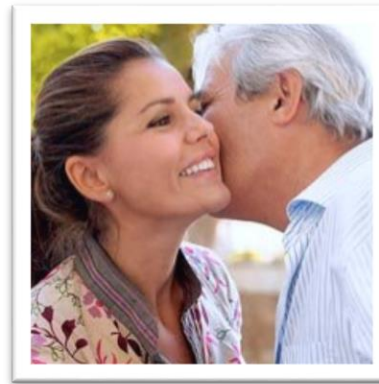
At a first meeting, regular handshake and a slight bow

Women & women

At a first meeting, women shake hands or give a light touch on the forearm.

Familiar/social situations

Friends and family usually share a light kiss on the cheek, sometimes with a brief hug.



When greeting in social situations, women pat each other on the right forearm or shoulder, rather than shake hands

*The kiss has no sexual connotations, it is a greeting of familiarity.
But until you feel comfortable with it, and understand it's use, best to be conservative and put your hand out.



*Mexican men are warm and friendly, and make a lot of physical contact

- ✓ Watch how other Mexicans greet one another. Learn to distinguish the differences in how business people, workers, friends, and family have different greetings.
- ✓ Learn some greeting words in Spanish

Titles

When addressing someone **you don't know well**, it is common practice to speak to that person using a polite title:

-**señor** for a man

-**señora** for a married or older woman

-**señorita** for a young woman.

When speaking **with a professional**, Mexicans may also use the person's professional title:

doctor or doctora (doctor)

arquitecto (architect)

ingeniero (engineer)

***Hispanics generally use two surnames.**

GUADALUPE TOLEDO ANTÚNEZ

The first surname listed is from the father, and the second surname listed is from the mother.

Business Cards



-Business cards are exchanged during introductions with everyone at a meeting.

It is advisable to have one side of your business card in Spanish. Present your business card with the Spanish side facing the recipient.

Business cards should contain both your professional and educational qualifications.

Appearance (clothing and non verbal communication)

Clothing

- Mexicans generally dress conservatively and both men and women will wear suits in a formal business setting.

X Jeans are generally not appropriate, and tight or low cut clothing is never appropriate



- Standing with your hands on your hips suggests aggressiveness, and keeping your hands in your pockets is impolite.
- Mexicans may not make eye contact, this is a sign of respect. Looking straight in the eye can be considered aggressive or flirtatious

Punctuality

What kind of work experiences have you had in a business environment regarding the following:

It is said that Mexicans can be considerably unpunctual (about 30 min)

- up to 1-2 houres
- 30 minutes late is pretty punctual. It means that you can come late as well within feeling awkward.
- Absolutely!!!
- Not in a business environment
- In formal/professional setting I have not experienced this, except for once when a meeting was exceeding the expected time limit, but this was not within the subjects control.
- Personal life definitely true, business not really



-Mexico has a well-earned reputation for running on a slower clock.

-Certainly, there is less urgency in Mexico, and it is not considered excessively rude to **arrive** too late to a **social engagement**.

“Mexicans know when they should be punctual and which things start punctually” Doctor’s appointments, business meetings, bus schedules, or any other official event...

-Expect others to arrive later

-There is not always an appropriate sense of urgency: Employees should be given deadlines and convinced that these deadlines are not negotiable.

“Time is flexible”

“**Ahorita**” a diminutive based on the word for “now.”

It can mean:

“right now”

five minutes from now,

15 minutes from now,

half an hour from now,

“**Al ratito**” is another diminutive that means “in a little while”

Don't start checking your watch.

If you are invited to a Mexican's home:

Arriving on time or early is considered inappropriate.

✓ Arrive 30 minutes late in most places.

*At a large party you may introduce yourself. At a smaller gathering the host usually handles the introductions.

Business appointments

- Reconfirm the appointment one week before the meeting.
- Reconfirm the meeting again once you arrive in Mexico and make sure that the secretary of the person you will be meeting knows how to contact you.
- Expect your Mexican business associates to arrive 15-30 minutes late
- Meetings may be postponed with little advance warning.

Agenda

- Scheduled items are used as more of a guide than a strict agenda.

If the Mexican writes **to confirm the meeting on**, for example 9/8/2016
The person is expecting to meet on August 9, 2016.
Day/month/year

*Remember, Mexicans consider family life and family events to be incredibly important, taking priority over work in almost all situations.

Don'ts - Arranging important meetings during:
Christmas vacations & national holidays (usually come with a long weekend)

Meetings

Language

“**Hablando se entiende la gente**” = “By talking, people understand each other.”

*Language has the power to maintain both a national and cultural identity

Do you speak Spanish?

“To really understand the Mexican business and social culture, I highly recommend you to learn how to carry on a conversation in Spanish. It shows your intention to learn and understand the Mexican culture... and Mexican business people see this as a big effort on your part, and it will be appreciated. If you do not speak Spanish, hire an interpreter.”

Try to have all written material available in both English and Spanish.

Even in big cities, Mexicans will often treat each other with **respect** and **courtesy**.

permiso
(with your permission) If you need to squeeze past someone on a bus or reach for a tomato over his shoulder at the market.

perdón (sorry) If you accidentally bump into someone (or do anything else that warrants a mild apology)

disculpe (excuse me) Commonly, Mexicans will say before asking a question of a stranger.

Try out your Spanish, Don't be shy even the most elementary attempt is appreciated because it shows your interest in the culture.

Little things count. Not saying good-bye, for example, may well offend and adversely affect your relationship to a much greater extent than it would in your home country.

Negotiations

Business lunches / dinners are an essential part of business to establish a personal relationship. It is important to attend lunches or dinners with your potential customers, major suppliers, distributors and agents. Including weddings or family events.

- They warm up to the actual topics and purpose of the meeting.
- Expect to answer questions about your personal background, family and life interests.

Things NOT to talk about

Religion
Politics
Abortion
Immigration

-If asked your personal opinion about a “difficult” theme, be honest, but remember to keep it light and brief.

Negotiations

Values & negotiating

Trust plays a very important role in establishing relationships, this sometimes may be even more important than professional competence or experience.

Win mexican
business friends!

-Mexico has a culture that **enjoys negotiations**.

-**Tough negotiations**

- They **spend the majority of time discussing general topics**, waiting the final moments of conversation to bring up the matter at hand.

-Mexicans can become **animated when negotiating**

-The negotiation process is helping to build trust and credibility

-Don't be in a hurry to end the negotiations. The Mexican culture is more "tolerant" about time and deadlines than you find in Europe.

-Write down your final agreement, and the results of your negotiations and have both sides sign and retain a copy.

What is the most common mistake made by foreign companies while doing business with Mexican companies?

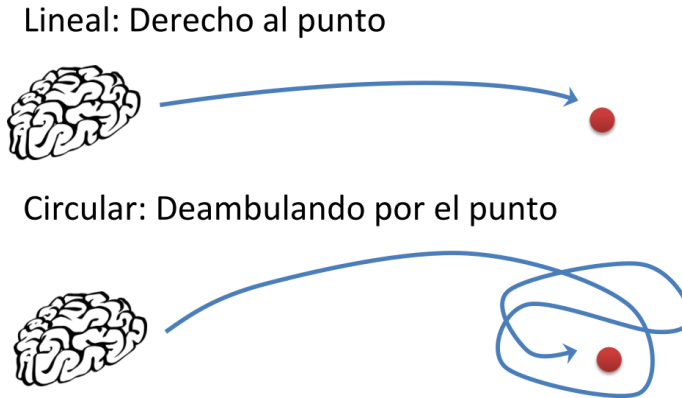
- Not recording agreements, working before making contractual obligations, expect that Mexicans work by themselves, while the business culture dictates to tell them to do so first.
- Not understanding of complex processes in Mexico
- What I have seen is that Mexican people can be really innovating and making it work in a particular context or on a particular site, dealing with the power relations that are there. It will demand flexibility from foreign companies in order to be successful.
- Maybe the social/family/friends stuff that matters a lot to them.
- Not taking into account the culture

A Dutch company wants to do business in Mexico. What should the Dutch employers take into account when negotiating with a Mexican?

- Make contractual obligations
- Extra time
- Family is very important in communication.
- Have a lot of patience!!!
- They like to discuss
- Learn about the leadership culture and the culture that avoids taking big risks in business. Focus is on short term gains that are certain now
- Stay on your rules and condition
- Spend time eating together f.e. breakfast & lunch which are not like breakfast and lunch in the Netherlands
- Very annoying "trámites" and paying a lot to avoid it.
- The boss is the boss. no shared opinion

Communication

- Mexicans tend to use and respond best to an indirect communication style over direct.



Survey: What are the biggest differences in business culture between Mexico and your home country?

Mexico: indirect - the Netherlands: direct

Survey: It is said that Mexicans don't like to say "no".

-I have experience this many times. Mexicans prefer to postpone or to "forget" rather than to say no. This gives a certain uncertainty to working in Mexico, because one never knows if something will happen until it has already happened.

-Yes... We made flyers to promote a tourist tour by jeep and distributed them in restaurants and bars. We were allowed to place them but it was doubt full how long the owner of the place would let these flyers hang.

-Yes, and you can wait forever if you don't continue networking

-True. they say yes to everything, even if they no they can't



Mealtimes and typical foods

Breakfast (desayuno) From about 8:00 to 9:30 am

Coffee, rolls, butter, fruit, pan dulce "sweet bread", eggs, which may be Mexican style (rancheros, a la Mexicana), most restaurants offer pancakes and dry cereal



Lunches (comida) Usually between 14:00 pm and 16:00 pm. This is the major meal of the day.

Three courses, soup, meat or fish and rice, pasta or beans, plus a dessert and coffee.



“Light” dinner (cena) At about 9 or 10 pm- cheeses, meat, pan dulce.

*Meeting someone at a restaurant – expect a full meal.



Drinks

Aguas frescas "fresh waters" are a combination of fruits with sugar and water
Beers, tequila, cognac.

*Tea is not very popular

¡Buen provecho! It is usual to wish the other business-meal participants to have a nice meal before you start eating
-If you need to leave early, you should excuse yourself and again wish to the rest *¡buen provecho!*

La cuenta To request a check without speaking a word of Spanish, do as Mexicans
the check do, raise hand and make a motion as if you were signing the bill.
“La cuenta por favor” the check, please.

When dining out with friends or acquaintances, **Mexicans very rarely split the bill** Usually, one of the parties will treat the others.

Tipping In Mexico, not only is it customary, it is expected and appreciated in return for good service.
In a restaurant, a tip of 10–15 percent on the bill. In bars, a 10 percent tip is standard.

- Always keep both hands above the table.
- Always keep some loose change in your pocket
- Don't leave the table immediately after you are finished eating.
- Women don't invite a male counterpart for a business dinner unless other associates or spouses attend.
- Businesswoman should make it clear that no opportunity for romance exists.
- Mexican men/business colleagues, will pay foreign businesswomen many compliments and may even flirt.
- When negotiations are finished, be sure to return to the small talk for a bit before leaving.

Languages misunderstandings

“Our city is quite dirty, no?”
“It is delicious, no?”

Mexicans tend to attach **the word “NO”** to the end of a comment, seemingly turning each statement into a question (isn't it?)

“Our city is quite dirty, no?”

“ I find Mexico City very nice.”



Business presents

- Simple gifts may be brought to a first meeting.
- Secretaries do appreciate gifts.
- If invited to a Mexican's house: flowers, wine or chocolates.
- Make sure that gifts are nicely wrapped and they are usually to be opened right away.
- A man giving it to a businesswoman/female secretary, indicate the gift is from his wife.



- If you receive a gift, open it and react enthusiastically.

-Avoid yellow flowers
-Do not give gifts made of silver

¡Gracias!