

Article 1

DOING BUSINESS IN INDIA

Population: 1.17 billion
Religion: Hindu 82%, Muslim 12%, Others 6%

Most East Midlands companies doing business in India will do so in cities such as Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bangalore and Hyderabad.

Different states within India each have different official languages, Central Government only recognises Hindi as the official language of India. But when doing business in India, English is the language of international commerce.

Of all the cultural influences that most impact on Indian business culture, hierarchy plays a key role. Status is determined by age, university degree, work experience and success in one's profession.. The boss is seen as the source of ultimate responsibility and decision-making in doing business.

When doing business in India, meeting etiquette requires a handshake. However, Indians themselves use the "Namaste". This is where the palms are brought together at chest level, with a slight bow of the head. Using the Namaste, is a sign of your understanding of Indian etiquette.

When addressing an Indian whom you know personally, always use the appropriate formal title, whether Professor, Doctor, Mr, Mrs or if you do not know their names then Sir or Madam will suffice. Wait to be invited before using someone's first name without the title.

When doing business in India, business cards should be exchanged at the first meeting. It is a good idea to have it translated on one side into Hindi, more as a sign of respect than linguistic necessity. Be sure to receive and give with your right hand. Make sure the card is put away respectfully, and not simply pushed into a trouser pocket.

Temple and Co Commercial Solicitors of Daventry www.templesols.com work with Global Law Offices in New Delhi (www.globallawoffices.com email info@globallawoffices.com). Who belong to a network of business lawyers in other cities in assisting East Midlands businesses break into Indian markets, by inward investment into India, as well as in employment, distribution, corporate acquisitions, and joint venture issues.

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Article 2

DOING BUSINESS IN INDIA

Doing business in India involves building relationships. Indians tend to deal favourably with those they know and trust.

This must take place on a business level (by demonstrating strong business acumen), and at a personal level (by building a relationship and exhibiting positive traits of trustworthiness and honour).

Meetings should be arranged well in advance. This should be done in writing and confirmed by phone. Avoid meetings near or on national holidays. Avoid the heat by scheduling between October and March, when the weather is temperate and dry.

Punctuality is expected, although being up to 10 minutes late may not have disastrous consequences. Family responsibilities take precedence over business so last minute cancellations are possible when doing business.

When entering a meeting room, you must always approach and greet the most senior figure first. Shaking hands is common, especially in the large cities among the more educated who are accustomed to deal with Westerners.

Meetings should always commence with some conversation. This is part of the "getting to know you" process. When leaving a group, each person must be bade farewell individually.

By tailoring your behaviour and approach to doing business in India, you maximise the potential of your visit.

Every prudent business carries out market research and evaluation before attempting to break into a market. Acquiring knowledge of local laws, regulations, trading practices and business etiquette is an important element in order to obviate potential risk.

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Article 3

DOING BUSINESS IN INDIA

If your business dealings in India involve negotiations, bear in mind that they can be slow, especially when dealing with the Government. If trust has not yet been established, then concentrate your efforts on building it. Decisions are always made at the highest level. If the boss of the company is not present, the chances are that these are only early stage negotiations.

Indians do not base their business decisions solely on statistics, empirical data and exciting PowerPoint presentations. They use intuition, feeling and faith to guide them. Always exercise patience, show good character and never exhibit frustration or anger.

When negotiating, avoid high pressure tactics. Criticisms and disagreements should be expressed on in the most diplomatic language. Indian society has an aversion to saying “no”. It is considered rude, as it may cause disappointment or offence.

Listen carefully to Indians’ responses to your questions. If terms such as “We’ll see”, “I will try” or “possibly” are employed, then the chances are that they are saying “No”. This can be difficult for Westerners to grasp correctly.

Once terms have been agreed, you will be expected to honour them. When negotiations end successfully, it is usual to continue the relationship-building process over dinner. Because of religious dietary issues, lamb, chicken and fish are the most commonly served non-vegetarian meals.

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Article 4

DOING BUSINESS IN INDIA

Indians prefer to do business with those they know and trust. In general, Indians prefer to have long-standing personal relationships, prior to doing business. If you don’t have that, then it may be a good idea to go through a third party introduction,

to help provide credibility. Punctuality is expected, although being up to 10 minutes late may not have disastrous consequences.

Indians are non-confrontational. It is rare for them to overtly disagree. Saying a bald "No" is considered rude. Hearing terms such as "We'll see" or "I will try" may imply a negative.

Decisions are reached by the person with the most authority. Decision making can be slow. If you lose your temper, you lose face and show you are unworthy of their respect and trust. Delays are to be expected, especially when dealing with the Government.

Most Indians expect to negotiate concessions in both price and terms. It is acceptable to expect concessions in return for those you grant.

Never appear overly 'legalistic' during negotiations, don't crawl over every dot and comma. In general, Indians prefer to take a person's word as sufficient basis for an agreement, which can then be recorded in writing.

Business houses in India are well versed in advanced technology, and are well equipped with email, web conferencing and conference calls in their daily business dealings.

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