Navigating Culture, Politics, and Economics in a Global World

Haley Garcia

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NAVIGATING CULTURE, POLITICS, AND ECONOMICS IN A GLOBAL WORLD

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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA HONORS COLLEGE THESIS
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Summary

In an ever-changing world, information, people and technology are able to travel to the farthest corners of the globe quickly and efficiently. As globalization becomes a stronger factor in everyday life, multinational corporations and international businesspeople must prepare for new challenges and threats. Cultural, political and economic norms vary from country to country around the world. The effects of each of these factors has greater implications for the business plans and strategies of multinational corporations.

Culturally, companies must be aware of different negotiation techniques, communication styles and various customs that are standard in different countries. The misinterpretation of marketing messages, languages, and business structures could create issues at every level of a corporation. A lack of understanding can completely halt or ruin a business relationship before it even begins. By recognizing the norms and culture of a country, MNCs have an opportunity to navigate an unfamiliar environment through understanding.

Politically, changes in policy, leaders, and structure can have huge effects on a business strategy. In today’s world, the risk of doing business in a conflict zone, a region struck by terrorism, or an unstable political atmosphere is nearly unavoidable for multinational corporations. MNCs must be aware of different tax and trade policies as well as other government regulations and laws in order to avoid any legal trouble. The best way to avoid this risk is to research the government structure and rules before attempting to do business. This way, an MNC will know what to expect whether it be corrupt officials, a tax break, or a labor law unlike the ones in their host country.
Finally, economically, multinational corporations must understand the economic environment they are entering before they try to move forward. Different indicators can show the stability of the economy and whether an investment can be successful in a market. Different multinational corporations thrive in different levels of development with different resources. By being aware of what a company may face, they are able to determine if the economy is suitable for entry.

The country notebook acts as a reference guide for multinational corporations searching for new markets to enter. Each country has a page that outlines its cultural, political, and economic details. There are also sections explaining the market development, ease of doing business ratings and consumer preferences as well as a SWOT analysis describing business in the country. This is meant to allow a company to find some insight into whether a particular environment or market would fit into their current business strategy. By understanding the underlying characteristics of various countries, MNCs are somewhat able to determine whether they have a chance of succeeding. The best way to mitigate the risk of international business is to be well informed about every aspect of an economy being entered. The use of a country notebook is a step into understanding different regions of the world to facilitate international business.
Introduction

International business is the reason that a McDonald’s can be found in 119 countries while data chips made in South Korea are implemented in American technology. As companies operate across borders and goods and services are exchanged between countries, globalization reaches the farthest corners of the world. Globalization has facilitated a movement toward an integrated marketplace through the reduction of international barriers to competition and cooperation alike. Improvements in technology, infrastructure, and communications have allowed information, goods, humans and ideas to flow easily around the world, creating an interconnected global society. As trade becomes easier, companies are able to leave their domestic markets and expand throughout the world in search of resources, labor, and new consumers.

This rise of international business has paved the way for the creation of the Multinational corporation (MNC). While MNCs must be primarily concerned with day to day operations and transactions across borders, there are many factors to consider in addition to business. Each MNC must decide how to navigate the global marketplace, finding a niche within cultural, political, and economic realities that change depending on the market being entered. By considering and understanding these factors, MNCs will be able to successfully enter and compete in global markets integrating the economies of the world into one.
Culture

Culture impacts every decision an individual makes both in and outside of the realm of international business. Cultural beliefs, values and norms govern the choices that groups of people find acceptable in their daily lives through a form of social learning; people adopt the culture of those around them. While nationality and country norms are an important foundation within any culture, there are also distinct regional and organization specific cultures found around the world. An example of this can be found while traveling throughout Spain. The capital of Madrid has a busy New York City feel when compared to sleepy small towns in the south. While international business keeps Madrid active throughout the day, a city like Sevilla has a slower pace and will shut down for siesta. Businesses must be able to navigate a world of differing and conflicting cultures if they wish to be successful in the global market (1).

Business Practices

Negotiation

Research shows that negotiations that take place between parties of different cultures often have worse outcomes than those that involve homogeneous parties. There are often two main causes of cross-cultural negotiation conflict, the use of stereotypes and simple misunderstandings. Stereotypes often lead to expectations of various behaviors and decisions that could result in costly misinterpretations (2). For example, people often assume that the success of business relationships in the United States will ensure the success of relationships in Canada. While there are similarities between the two countries and cultures, this comparison can damage negotiation as it is seen as a rude topic of conversation by Canadians (3). Simple misunderstandings can occur in many different forms. Humans often interpret the actions of
others through the lens of their own worldview and culture causing the intent to be misconstrued (2). An example of this can be found in the use of silence in Japanese and Brazilian cultures. While silence during successful negotiation is commonplace in Japan, Brazilians rarely let a room become quiet (4). If a Brazilian businessman is not aware of this cultural norm, he may take the Japanese silence as a sign of disinterest or the failure of the negotiation. The consequences of cross cultural misunderstandings can be mitigated through the application of a global mindset; those engaged in international business must not view the world through the lens of their own culture, but rather as a whole entity. This involves a process of constant learning about the other cultures and environments of the world (2).

Negotiation can also be halted due to a difference in language. Much of the world’s international business is conducted in English but foreign executives often prefer to speak in their native and stronger language. The use of a translator or interpreter can solve some of the problems regarding language barriers but companies face risks of inaccurate or incomplete translations. In some circumstances, foreign executives will interrupt negotiation in order to have a conversation in their native language. Although these side conversations are often meant to clarify the information the executives have been given, American counterparts often interpret this as a plot to undermine the negotiation (5).

While different languages create barriers to negotiation, communication styles and norms also pose a threat. Low context cultures communicate using explicit verbal cues. This direct communication creates a codified and accessible knowledge for group members. This environment is easy for outsiders to enter and understand as the environment automatically contains most of the information that is needed for comprehension. Those who communicate
directly are focused on accomplishing a task rather than focused on relationships. High context cultures communicate using indirect phrases and actions. This environment is harder to enter than a direct environment as one cannot immediately create relationships and communicate effectively. Understanding is derived from years of interaction with other members of the group (6).

Although verbal communication is essential to negotiation, the understanding of nonverbal cues is equally important. Through his research, anthropologist Ray L. Birdwhistell demonstrated that up to 65% of a message is communicated nonverbally. Nonverbal behaviors are often hidden below the awareness levels of different cultures, meaning that most people are misinterpreting cues without realizing that they were given in the first place (5). One example of nonverbal communication is the use of touch; in some cultures, touching conveys closeness where as others find it inappropriate and offensive (4).

Differing cultural values may hinder negotiation as well. Western cultures are often more objective and make decisions linearly while others prefer to focus on relationship creation and discuss issues in no specific order. As culture varies, so does a corporation’s relationship with time. Those cultures that value monochronic time, such as those with European influences, often value punctuality, certainty and specific and detailed communication. Mediterranean and Latin cultures, on the other hand, value polychronic time. Polychronic cultures also value flexibility, talking over each other and a lack of emphasis on punctuality (4).

The physical structure and organization of the management of a company also has implications for negotiation. The power distance of different cultures shows the degree of acceptance of unequal power. Cultures with a high-power distance such as Arab countries,
Mexico, and India value hierarchical structures and clear authority. In these cultures, there are obvious distinctions between levels of people based on their status. As inequality of the wealth distribution increases, the acceptance of high power distance increases. Lower power distance cultures include those of Austria, Denmark and Israel, amongst others. In low power distance cultures equality is assumed and status is earned rather than ascribed (4).

Culture has many implications for negotiation between multinational corporations. The best way to navigate the global environment is to strive for an understanding and appreciation of cultural differences in order to strengthen transactions and relationships. In the long run, lasting relationships are the most significant goal to achieve in international business (5).

Greetings

The interaction of businesspeople of different cultures during their initial meeting gives an insight to the success of a long-term business relationship. First impressions often send a message to the other people in the room. A misunderstanding of a greeting can be seen as rude and can place a strain on the relationship before discussions of business even begin. In many circumstances, international business people will use the western handshake during an introduction, though the manner varies from culture to culture. For example, In Latin American cultures, there are often long lingering handshakes in order to signify a closeness between business partners. If one of the counterparts was to pull away, the Latin American member would take offense and feel rejected. In Europe, greetings can vary significantly throughout the continent. In France, handshakes are made with a brisk stroke upon arriving to and departing from a meeting, there is little other physical contact. In Spain on the other hand, while handshakes are common, so too are kisses on both cheeks regardless of how long you’ve known
each other. In Arab countries, male friends will often embrace and kiss each other on the cheeks while lingering with a light handshake. While this seems similar to customs in Spain, there is a distinct difference in the role of women. In Arab countries, physical contact with those of the opposite sex outside of the immediate family is often inappropriate. The safest option when meeting people from other cultures is to take the behavioral lead from those that you are meeting (8).

It is also important to consider the degree of formality of a culture. The emphasis on hierarchy in an organization is often an indicator of how formally a businessperson would need to present themselves initially (9). In many Asian cultures, formal titles and introductions are vital in forming a relationship. In India for example, it is most common and beneficial for business contacts to be introduced by a third party. This makes it easier to build a relationship based on trust. In other countries, such as Ireland, the use of titles is unnecessary in international business. While the norms change as business meetings move around the globe, the best practice is to start with the use of titles until told to do otherwise.

Dress

The way an international business professional dresses is often judged by the people they meet during their first meeting. In many cultures businessmen wear a suit and tie while business women wear conservative suits or dresses. In Japan, for example, it is very frowned upon to be underdressed for any occasion so it is best to dress to impress. In European countries, fashion and appearance play an important role in society and thus in business. Executives from fashion capitals such as Paris and Milan place value on designer brands and certain trends. In India, western clothing is becoming more common with the spread of globalization but men and
women are often found wearing traditional Indian dhotis and saris. Muslim countries such as Iran often have much stricter requirements for clothing. Men often maintain a full beard while women fully cover most of their bodies, including their hair.

Collectivism and Individualism

Different cultures have different views and understandings of the relationship between the individual and the group. Individualist cultures, such as those found in the United States and France, view individuals as distinct from others while connections between people are loose. These societies often appear self-centered as there is an emphasis on individual goals and achievements. Collectivist cultures, such as the one found in China, emphasize the relationship between individuals. Collectivism assumes that people are integrated into groups that will protect them in exchange for loyalty at birth. This is important to understand for business as collectivist companies often find companies with more individualistic values as cold and unsupportive and thus untrustworthy in business. Additionally, collectivist cultures usually communicate more indirectly and avoid confrontation. Confrontation and the use of the word no cause a “loss of face” and a destruction of harmony. This is disastrous to international business as many relationships are built on trust, harmony and moral values (7).
Marketing

Multinational corporations must keep culture in mind while developing marketing plans and materials. Cultural differences can take a message that is widely successful in one country and make it fail disastrously in another.

Marketers must be aware of the language, grammar and spelling decisions they are making and whether they are effective in the target market. Slight variations in vocabulary can change the reach of entire marketing messages. For example, though both the United Kingdom and the United States speak English, some words that are common in one are not used in the other. For example, marketers selling potato chips in the United States are offering chips while in the United Kingdom they offer crisps. This also applies to the spelling of different words; In the United States, we have “labor” while the United Kingdom has “labour.” It is also important to consider that various idiomatic expressions and slang words do not translate well. For example, a Spanish expression that is intended to mean “to be a little crazy”, “Estar como una cabra” means to be as a goat when literally translated. The intricacies of language create a challenge for multinational marketers (10).

Different types of advertisements affect cultures in different ways. For example, advertisements that are persuasive and intended to convince a consumer that they need a product are very successful in the United States. In Italy, on the other hand, consumers do not respond well to advertisements aimed at convincing them to enjoy life as Italians already feel entitled to enjoyment in life (10). Research shows that when groups of Asian Americans and Anglo Americans were asked to react immediately to an advertisement for grape juice, Asian Americans responded more favorably to preventative messages while Anglo Americans preferred
promotional messages. These results are based on the fact that Anglo Americans often value achievement, accomplishment and independent thinking and thus focus on positive consequences. Asian Americans, on the other hand, value security and protection in an interdependent world and thus focus on negative consequences. Interestingly, these disparities largely disappeared when the respondents were given more time to react to the advertisements they were shown (11).

Marketers must also ensure that they cater to the different belief systems and norms of different cultures. Advertisements that involve gay couples are still relatively taboo in the United States where as they pose no issue in much of Europe. Additionally, European advertisements use much more sex appeal and nudity where as those found in the United States do not involve any nudity and references to sex are more indirect (10).

While consumer preferences vary from region to region, for marketing messages to truly be effective in different cultures, marketers must understand what strategies can work globally versus how and when to tailor a message. By learning and understanding effective messages marketers are able to use the appropriate advertisement at an appropriate time and thus can reach consumers of all different backgrounds (11).
Politics

Political Risk

Any time a company decides to invest in a new country the executives must consider the implications that politics will have on business both globally and domestically. Political risk is the risk that a host country will make political decisions that could potentially have adverse effects on the profits or goals of a multinational corporation. These adverse effects can affect a variety of operations and present themselves in many forms from financial complications such as the movement of capital to physical problems such as widespread destruction due to war (12). Many developing countries are facing growing income disparities and geopolitical tensions while developing Anti US attitudes politically and in business. Today, a company that competes most successfully in a country isn’t necessarily one that has the best pitch or product for the best price. The most successful companies are the ones who understand their environment and can navigate the political uncertainty.

Political Stability

War causes a major problem for the productivity of companies on an individual level; it can also cause problems in the global economy as a whole. Working in volatile regions and war zones requires MNCs to have flexibility and a great deal of local knowledge and patience. The companies that understand the local environment have a better chance of avoiding being involved in conflict and navigating bureaucratic problems. Experts believe that MNCs must continuously innovate in order to survive in hostile environments. Successful businesses have an opportunity to restore order in damaged countries and regions after a war. Though they are able to enter a market with little competition in this scenario, they often face great risks. MNCs
operating in the global market today must be increasingly aware of the global implications of a refugee crisis in the Middle East. Companies that operate in Europe, for example, must deal with the pressures of the influx of people on the government and the economy even though they are not actually operating in a war zone (14). The war on terrorism also creates problems for MNCs as it has the potential to distort the global markets and thus add more uncertainty to decision making (17). The globalization of the world economy and of business has created an environment in which a political event in a single nation can affect the world to a much higher degree than it could in the past.

**Policies and Regulations**

As a company moves from country to country, it faces different laws, regulations and other policies that affect business operations.

**Tax Law**

Tax laws vary significantly depending on the country an MNC has entered. Changes in tax policies can directly affect the profitability of an international operation and thus MNCs must be aware of the appropriate laws that will be applied before market entry begins (15). American corporations often seek to operate in countries with lower corporate tax rates than the United States. Because of these tax havens, American corporations have avoided paying an estimated $90 million of taxes to the US government (16). Tax laws can also vary in a single country depending on the current administration. An example of this can be found in the cyclical nature of the United States government as Democrats and Republicans value very different ideals and policies when it comes to government spending, tax plans and the overall economy. When the
US leader changes via presidential election, the policies that affect business may change as well (15).

**Trade Policies**

Although globalizing forces attempt to penetrate borders today, governments still create various barriers to trade in order to manage and regulate trade. Protectionist policies not only hurt MNCs attempting to export to a country but also the economy as a whole. Usually, trade barriers come at the expense of the consumers while only benefiting those involved in a protected industry or product category. The following section describes the trade policies that are most likely to affect MNCs today.

**Tariffs**

A tariff is a tax imposed on certain imports. This raises the price of foreign goods making domestic products more affordable for the domestic consumer. This is predominately significant in developing and frontier economies as the consumers typically have a smaller disposable income (24). Some governments will also use tariffs as an import regulation and revenue raising tool (25). MNCs must be aware of tariffs before trying to export to a nation otherwise they risk becoming less competitive and potentially less successful (24).

**Subsidies**

Subsidies are government payments to a producer of a certain good or in a certain industry. Like tariffs, subsidies make domestic goods more affordable than foreign goods. Subsidies can come in many forms, the most common of which include tax breaks, low interest rates, and cash grants (25).
Import Quotas

Governments set import quotas in order to limit the physical number of imports into the country. By reducing imports, the government is able to help domestic suppliers in the industry. For example, the United States may set an import quota on Japanese cars to help American car manufacturers remain competitive in the market. Import quotas raise prices for consumers and thus are detrimental to the overall economy. When compared to tariffs, quotas cause more damage to the economy because they do not offer the government any tax revenue. Additionally, quotas are more difficult to enforce because it is difficult to physically count the number of items coming into a country (26).

Local Content Requirements

Some countries will implement local content requirements in which a certain percentage of a product must be manufactured within the country. These policies are becoming more common as they try to strengthen technological developments and reduce unemployment. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, local content requirements undermine long-term industrial competitiveness. Research has shown that while these requirements hurt the industry in which they apply but also cause total imports and exports to decline. The results also imply that local content requirements push countries into economic isolation causing MNCs to avoid investment (27).

Human Rights Standards

Multinational corporations must also consider the role of human rights in the countries in which they operate. It is important for companies to maintain the standards of the United Nations. Companies that ensure the existence of human rights, fair labor standards, codes of
conducted and ethics are able to avoid a questioning of ethics and thus a damaging of their reputation (18).

**Intellectual Property**

Each country has its own laws regarding the protection of intellectual property and property rights (23). Patent protection is essential for some multinational corporations to retain their sustainable competitive advantages. In many countries, property rights laws are largely ignored or less strict than those of the United States. In 2012, for example, 9 US companies had their rights to patents revoked or denied by the Indian government. This is common in developing countries as intellectual property laws limit the ability of domestic markets to compete against well developed markets. These countries would prefer to allow their industries to grow without the massive expenditures involved in developing products and technology from scratch (22). While the Madrid Protocol makes it easier for MNCs to file a patent in multiple countries, companies still need to be aware of the risks they face when entering markets without clear property rights.

**Corruption**

Corruption is illegal in every country thanks to the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (19). For MNCs, transparency is a key factor in being active in a certain environment and for creating sustainable markets (20). American corporations, specifically, must abide by the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act in order to operate without legal interference. In some cultures, bribery is more common than others. Executives of MNCs must establish a policy for facing this issue from the beginning of operations in order to avoid any complications. Many moral and
ethical issues get called into question when companies deal with corruption so it is best for the market and the company itself to steer clear of any implications (21).
Economics

Markets

Different multinational corporations invest depending on the level of development and risk found in a particular economy. The largest and most stable economies are the most developed. These economies are usually found in politically stable countries with conditions that are favorable for investment. While these countries typically offer the least risk, competition is often already developed in the markets. Examples of developed economies include the United States, Canada and France.

Emerging markets are found in countries that are rapidly industrializing with high levels of economic growth. These economies are riskier than developed economies but often offer a chance to earn higher returns overall. Political uncertainty is more common in these countries as they continue developing and strengthening their economies. Examples of emerging economies include China, India and Brazil.

The least developed of the markets are frontier markets. These markets are usually smaller than emerging and developed markets. The governments of frontier markets often place restrictions on foreign investment through protectionist policies in order to try to build their economy internally. Frontier markets can be incredibly risk for MNCs to enter due to low liquidity, changing political environments and inefficient financial systems and infrastructures. MNCs tend to invest in these risky environments to reap a higher return. Because frontier markets are often uncorrelated to more developed ones, MNCs will use these investments to diversify their portfolios. Examples of frontier markets can be found in Nigeria, Botswana, and Kuwait (28).
Economic Risk

When companies enter new markets, they face economic risk. This risk usually refers to the chance that macroeconomic conditions will affect an investment in a foreign country. Unpredictable changes in interest rates, government regulations, and other factors can alter the way MNCs operate in a certain environment. Countries with stable finances and strong economies are a more reliable investment than volatile countries.

One way to mitigate risk of entering a new economy is to know the credit rating of said country. Like companies, each country has a measure rating the quality of investments and their economy. Countries with higher credit scores are safer investment opportunities than ones with low scores.

It is also important to understand a country’s economic and fiscal institutions. By understanding how the economy works MNCs can navigate some of the uncertainty of a foreign market (28). A country’s infrastructure can show the foundation of a society. Countries with stronger infrastructure typically have positive government spending trying to strengthen the economy to facilitate international business and investment (29).

Measures of Economic Development

The level of development in an economy may dictate what companies attempt to enter the market. By understanding and knowing some measures of economic development for a country, MNCs are better able to prepare for what to expect. The most common indicators of economic development include the Gross domestic product, population growth, and various social conditions such as literacy rate, life expectancy, and infant mortality rate.
The GDP measures the health and size of a country’s economy. It is one of the main indicators economists use to measure the economic health and performance of a country. Firms have more confidence to invest in countries with strong economies that are beneficial for investment. The investment of MNCs also allows the country to continue growing as they hire more people and raise wages inducing higher consumer spending. This positive cycle encourages growth and investment and can begin with an MNC understanding the GDP of a country it wants to enter (31).

In general, countries with a higher population growth rate are poorer than those with low and stable rates. MNCs are more likely to be successful in countries with more people who can afford their products thus poorer countries pose a risk (30). Additionally, high population growth could be an indicator of economic insecurity. As the population grows, it often puts a strain on resources and governmental capabilities of support. As these conditions worsen, MNCs must be cognizant of risks they face while investing in these growing countries (32).

Finally, social conditions can show the level of development in fields such as health care and education in a country. These factors are important for the development of skilled and strong work forces, which can be a driving factor for investment. By understanding the figures and statistics that describe an economy, MNCs can develop the best plan for entering a market with less risk. A strong economy is an important factor in bringing foreign companies into a country (30).

Economic Dependence

Many international business experts question what exactly the role of the MNC is in today’s world. Some argue that the role is to spread growth through globalization while others
argue that the only concern of an MNC should be returning a profit to shareholders. Those that solely care about a profit and not about consequences can be described through the dependency theory. This theory maintains that the underdevelopment of some third world countries is caused by international business. Multinational corporations benefit when countries remain in the third world as it provides a cheap source of labor and resources that increase overall profits. International business can cause increasing inequality within nations as well as increasing the gap between the developed and developing nations that already exists. This process exploits the current world order in order to develop a profit while exacerbating global inequality and underdevelopment (33). Before entering a developing country, executives of MNCs must consider the effects business has on the environment. As consumer preferences are moving toward favoring corporate social responsibility, a company that exacerbates inequality is put at a disadvantage. By being aware of the environment and asking what role the company wishes to play in the international world, MNCs can remain profitable with a positive public relations outlook.
A Country Notebook

Based on the cultural, economic and political intricacies of the global market, multinational corporations must understand the environments they wish to invest in before they try to enter the country. In order to retain a comprehensive analysis of various countries, MNCs should create a Country Notebook to keep on file. This notebook would have cultural, economic and political facts ranging from the head of government and the GDP of a country to the SWOT analysis of market entry. Each country an MNC does or wishes to do business with should have its own page for reference.

The sample country notebook that follows consists of eighteen countries. The first fifteen are the top fifteen trading partners of the United States; these are China, Canada, Mexico, Japan, Germany, South Korea, United Kingdom, France, India, Taiwan, Italy, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Brazil, and Ireland. The other three were chosen due to their significance in the geopolitical world international business operates in today; these are Russia, Iran, and Saudi Arabia.

This notebook can help multinational firms navigate the ever-changing international environment. By understanding the cultural, economic and political aspects of various countries MNCs are able to eliminate a degree of uncertainty in market entry. An understanding of different environments can help strengthen negotiation, business and international relations to find success in a globalizing world.
A Country Notebook

A Guide for Multinational Corporations

C o r p o r a t i o n s

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China
中华人民共和国

Common Phrases
你好 / Hello
我的名字是 / My name is
乾杯 / Cheers
很高興見到你 / Pleased to meet you
我不明白 / I don’t understand
請 / Please
謝謝 / Thank you

Geography
Location: Eastern Asia
Area: 9,596,960 sq. km
Climate: Tropical in the South and subarctic in the North

Culture
Official Language: Standard Chinese or Mandarin
Other Languages:
- Cantonese
- Shanghainese
- Fuzhou
- Xiang
- Gan

High Context
Collectivist

Religion
- Buddhist: 18%
- Christian: 5%
- Muslim: 2%
- Folk Religion: 53%
- Unaffiliated: 22%

Government
Head of State: President Xi Jinping
Head of Government: Premier Li Keqiang
Type of Government: Communist State
Main political parties: Chinese Communist Party (CCP)
- 8 nominally independent small parties controlled by the CCP
Capitol: Beijing

Business Etiquette
• Bowing or nodding is a common greeting
• Applause is used when greeting a crowd
• Formal titles and introductions are vital
• Appointments are a necessity
• Punctuality is valued
• Business is not discussed at dinner
• It is uncustomary for women to drink at meals
• Tipping is insulting

• Business cards should be presented and received with both hands
• The Chinese counterpart should leave a negotiation first
• Men should wear conservative suits with subtle colors
• Women should avoid short sleeved blouses and high heels
• Revealing clothing on women is considered to be offensive to businessmen
Economic Profile

Currency: Yuan (renminbi)
Exchange Rate: 6.626
GDP: $21.27 trillion
GDP Real Growth Rate: 6.6%
GDP Per Capita: $15,400
Principal Industries: Industrial output, iron, steel, machines, textiles, consumer products
Exports: $2.011 trillion
Imports: $1,437 trillion

Population: 1.357 billion
Population Growth Rate: .43%
Unemployment Rate: 4.2%
Life Expectancy: 75.5%
Literacy Rate: 96.4%
Infant Mortality Rate: 12.2 deaths
Time Zone: UTC +8

Major Trading Partners
- United States
- South Korea
- Hong Kong
- United States
- Japan
- Japan

Doing Business

Strengths
- Cheaper than other markets
- Ample reserves
- Low Unemployment rate

Weaknesses
- Corrupt government bureaucracy
- Undercapitalized banks

Opportunities
- Rising consumer incomes

Threats
- East China Sea dispute
- Migration of affluent citizens

SWOT Analysis

Consumer Preferences
- Generally favor foreign brands
- “Keeping up face” matters for Chinese consumers
- Discounts are important
- Somewhat price sensitive but willing to pay more for quality
- Convenience foods, pet products and health foods are fast growing product categories
- Large portion of income is saved to take care of children and parents

Market Development
- Shifted from a centrally-planned to a market based economy after reforms in 1978
- Second largest economy
- Remains a developing country
- Market reforms are incomplete
- High inequality
- Rapid urbanization
- Challenges regarding environmental sustainability
- Aging population
- Recently approved the 13th five-year plan (2016-2020) to address the development of sustainability and other issues

Ease of Doing Business

Ease of doing Business: 78
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Dealing with construction permits: 177
Paying taxes: 131
Enforcing contracts: 5
Canada
Le Canada

Geography
Location: North America
Area: 9,984,670 sq. km
Climate: Temperate in the south, subarctic in the north

Culture
Official Language: English and French
Other languages:
- Punjabi
- Italian
- Spanish
- German
- Cantonese

Low Context
Individualist

Religion
- Catholic: 24%
- Protestant: 1%
- Other Christian: 21%
- Muslim: 6%
- Hindu: 6%
- Sikh: 6%

Government
Head of State: Queen Elizabeth II (represented by Governor General Johnston)
Head of Government: Prime Minister Justin Trudeau
Type of Government: Federal parliamentary democracy under a constitutional monarchy
Elections: Voter turnout:
Main political parties:
- Bloc Quebecois
- Conservative Party of Canada or CPC
- Green Party
- Liberal Party
- New Democratic Party
Capital: Ottawa

Business Etiquette
- Do not mention expectations of success based on success in the U.S.
- Business structures vary depending on region
- Direct and succinct communication
- Everyone’s opinion is valued, regardless of rank in the organization
- Avoid mentioning conflicts between French and English Canada
- Pointing is considered rude
- Decisions aren’t made until all the facts are heard
- Gifts are often given after a deal is closed
- Business cards should be written in both English and French
- At business meals, do not eat until everyone has been served
Economic Profile

Currency: Canadian Dollar (Loonie)
Exchange Rate: 1.331
GDP: $1.532 trillion
GDP real growth rate: 1.2%
GDP per capita: $46,200
Inflation rate: 1.6%
Principal industries: Chemicals, minerals, food products, wood and paper products, fish, petroleum
Exports: $402.4 billion
Imports: $419 billion

Population: 35,362,905
Population growth rate: .74%
Unemployment Rate: 7.1%
Literacy rate: 99%
Infant Mortality: 4.6 deaths
Life expectancy: 81.9 years
Time zone: UTC – 5

Major Trading Partners
- United States
- China
- Mexico
- United Kingdom

GDP Composition
- Agriculture: 1%
- Services: 28%
- Industry: 71%

Doing Business

Strengths
- Government support through tax reductions and breaks
- Close proximity to US

Weaknesses
- Dependence on the US
- Fluctuation of Canadian dollar
- Weak transportation infrastructure

Opportunities
- Emerging international markets
- Rising importance of e-commerce

Threats
- Loonie is connected to the oil industry
- High debt
- Climate Change

Consumer Preferences
- “Buy Local” movement
- Health conscious
- Income is stagnant and debt is high making consumers price sensitive
- Desire for customized goods
- Consumers research products before purchasing
- Online shopping is growing
- Product reviews are a critical decision factor

Market Development
- 15th largest economy
- developed economy
- Stable, prosperous and inclusive economy
- Dependent on the exports of the US
- The largest supplier of oil, gas, uranium, and electric power for America
Mexico
Estados Unidos Mexicanos

Common Phrases
- Hola/ Hello
- Adiós/ Goodbye
- Sí/ Yes
- Por Favor/ Please
- Gracias/ Thank you
- No me entiendo/ I don’t understand
- Perdón/ Excuse me
- ¿Qué hora es?/ What time is it?

Geography
Location: North America
Area: 1,964,375 sq. km
Climate: Varies from tropical to desert

Culture
Official Language: Spanish
Other Languages:
- Mayan
- Nahuatl
- Regional languages

High Context
Collectivist

Government
Head of State and Head of Government: President Enrique Pena Nieto
Type of Government: Federal presidential republic

Major Political Parties:
- Movimiento Ciudadano
- Partido Revolucionario Institucional
- Partido del Trabajo
- Partido Verde Ecologista de Mexico
- Movimiento Regeneracion Nacional
- Partido Accion Nacional
- Partido Nueva Alianza
- Partido de la Revolucion Democratica
- Partido Encuentro Social

Capital: Mexico City

Religion
- Roman Catholic 83%
- Pentecostal 3%
- Jehovah’s Witness 5%
- Other Evangelical 1%
- Other 1%
- None 1%
- Unspecified 2%

Business Etiquette
- Shake hands upon introduction but bow to a Mexican woman first
- Mexicans often stand close
- Signs of discomfort are considered rude
- Don’t stand with your hands on your hips
- Punctuality is expected
- Business is normally done in Spanish
- Hierarchy and respect are important
- Negotiations take time to complete
- Small talk happens before talking about business plans
- Personalization is important
- Deal making needs to be done in person
- Mexican counterparts judge others based on status within an organization
- A shirt and tie should be worn by men
- Women should dress conservatively
- Attempts at Spanish are appreciated
**Economic Profile**

**Currency:** Mexican Peso  
**Exchange Rate:** 18.34 pesos per US dollar  
**GDP:** $2.307 trillion  
**GDP Real Growth Rate:** 2.1%  
**GDP Per Capita:** $18,900  
**Principal Industries:** Food and beverages, tobacco, chemicals, textiles, consumer durables, tourism  
**Exports:** $359.3 billion  
**Imports:** $372.8 billion

**Population:** 123,166,749  
**Population Growth Rate:** 1.15%  
**Unemployment Rate:** 4.4%  
**Life Expectancy:** 75.9 years  
**Literacy Rate:** 95.1%  
**Infant Mortality Rate:** 11.9 deaths  
**Time Zone:** UTC - 6

**GDP Composition**
- Agriculture: 4%  
- Services: 33%  
- Industry: 63%

**Major Trading Partners**
- United States
- China
- Japan

**Doing Business**

**Strengths**
- Increase in manufacturing  
- Young workforce

**Weaknesses**
- Drug War  
- President Nieto

**Opportunities**
- Untapped Oil  
- Growing middle class

**Threats**
- Tension with the United States  
- Corruption

**SWOT Analysis**

**Consumer Preferences**
- Look for quality  
- Interested in time and money saving  
- Desire a relationship with a certain store or brand  
- Customer service is very important  
- Very brand loyal  
- Income is increasing  
- Strongly influenced by trends from the United States  
- Women make most shopping decisions

**Market Development**
- Economy has been expanding  
- 13th largest economy  
- Weak investment and export demand don’t contribute to growth  
- Declining oil revenue  
- Current stability is contributing to a decrease in inflation  
- Wealth gap is large and increasing  
- Infrastructure and systems need to be modernized  
- Rapidly developing  
- Competitive financial sector

**Ease of Doing Business**

**Ease of doing Business:** 47  
**Starting a business:** 93  
**Dealing with construction permits:** 83  
**Paying taxes:** 114  
**Enforcing contracts:** 40
Japan

Geography
Location: Eastern Asia
Area: 377,915 sq. km
Climate: Tropical in the south to cool temperate in north

Common Phrases
Yōkoso/ Welcome
Konnichiwa/ Hello
Hajimemashite/ Pleased to meet you
Wakarimasu/ I don’t understand
Gomen nasai/ Sorry
Arigato/ Thank you

Business Etiquette
• Dress formally, never be underdressed
• Conservative demeanors are preferred
• Brash and abrasive behavior can lead to a lack of trust
• It is important to recognize and respect Japanese cultural traditions
• Bow when meeting someone
• Wait for direction from host before sitting

Hierarchy is important
• It is important to seem interested in the conversation
• Acknowledge everyone’s presence and ideas
• Punctuality is important
• Do not refuse requests if you wish to continue the business partnership
• Don’t speak with too many hand gestures
Economic Profile

Currency: Yen
Exchange Rate: 107.1 Yen per US dollar
GDP: $4.932 trillion
GDP Real Growth Rate: .5%
GDP Per Capita: $38,900
Principal Industries: motor vehicles, electronic equipment, machinery, steel and metals, ships
Exports: $641.4 billion
Imports: $629.8 billion

Population: 126,702,133
Population Growth Rate: -.19%
Unemployment Rate: 3.2%
Life Expectancy: 85 years
Literacy Rate: 1%
Infant Mortality Rate: 2
Time Zone: UTC + 9

Major Trading Partners
- United States
- China
- South Korea

Swot Analysis
Strengths
- Technology capital
- Strong economy

Weaknesses
- Slow negotiation
- Communication misinterpretation

Opportunities
- Increase of Women in Business
- Openning up to foreign goods

Threats
- Isolated location
- Weak FDI infrastructure

Consumer Preferences
- Aging population
- Consumers care about brand name and quality
- Price is becoming increasingly important in decision making
- Emphasis on customer service
- Japanese consumers were reluctant to purchase foreign products but are now more open
- The product should be presented nicely
- Demanding consumers

Ease of Doing Business
- Ease of doing Business: 34
- Starting a business: 89
- Dealing with construction permits: 60
- Paying taxes: 70
- Enforcing contracts: 48

Market Development
- 3rd largest market
- 10% of the world’s economy
- Strong electronic devices industry
- Strong local companies
- Widely fluctuating currency
- Highest ratio of public debt to GDP of any developed nation
Germany
Bundesrepublik Deutschland

Common Phrases
Hallo/ Hello
Auf wiedersehen/ Goodbye
Bitte/ Please
Danke/ Thank you
Bitte schön/ You’re welcome
Sprechen Sie Englisch?/ Do you speak English?
Ich verstehen nicht/ I don’t understand

Geography
Location: Central Europe
Area: 357,022 sq. km
Climate: Temperate and marine

Culture
Official Language: German
Other Languages
- Danish
- Frisian
- Sorbian
- Romany
Low Context
Individualist

Religion
- 28% Protestant
- 34% Roman Catholic
- 4% Muslim
- 34% Unaffiliated or Other

Government
Head of State: President Joachim Gauck
Head of Government: Chancellor Angela Merkel
Type of Government: Federal Parliamentary Republic
Major Political Parties
- Alliance ’90/ Greens
- Alternative for Germany or AfD
- Christian Democratic Union
- Christian Social Union
- Free Democratic Party
- Left Party or Die Linke
- Social Democratic Party
Capital: Berlin

Business Etiquette
- Germans communicate directly
- Success based on merit and credentials
- Very formal in greetings
- Appointments are essential
- Decision making takes time and involves a lot of detail
- It is preferred to communicate in German
- Negotiations and meetings follow the agenda strictly
- Germans will avoid confrontation
- Relatively inflexible
  - Sudden changes are unwelcome
- Humor is not appreciated
- Work and personal life do not overlap
- Gift giving is not common
- Dress well, appearance is important
- Clothing is neat and conservative
**Economic Profile**

**Currency:** Euro  
**Exchange Rate:** 0.9214 euros per US dollar  
**GDP:** €3.979 trillion  
**GDP Real Growth Rate:** 1.7%  
**GDP Per Capita:** €48,200  
**Principal Industries:** iron, steel, coal, cement, chemicals, machinery, vehicles, electronics  
**Exports:** €1.283 trillion  
**Imports:** €987.6 billion

**Population:** 80,722,792  
**Population Growth Rate:** -0.16%  
**Unemployment Rate:** 4.3%  
**Life Expectancy:** 80.7 years  
**Literacy Rate:** 99%  
**Infant Mortality Rate:** 3.4 deaths  
**Time Zone:** UTC +1

**Major Trading Partners**  
- Netherlands  
- United States  
- France  
- United Kingdom  
- China

**GDP Composition**
- **Agriculture:** 0.06%  
- **Services:** 30.30%  
- **Industry:** 69.10%

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**Doing Business**

**Strengths**
- Accessible location  
- Strong Industry

**Weaknesses**
- High labor cost  
- Slow decision making

**Opportunities**
- Increasing demand for high-end products

**Threats**
- Uncertainty of the EuroZone

**SWOT analysis**

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**Consumer Preferences**
- Often use catalogs for purchases  
- Online sales are increasing  
- Price and quality are essential in decision making  
- Consumers will shop around for the best deal  
- Focus on safety features  
- Consumer credit remains low because of low economic growth and unemployment  
- Debt is not generally accepted in German culture

**Market Development**
- Europe’s most developed and populous country  
- Ranked 13th out of 176 on the corruption perceptions index  
- Consistent growth in technology  
- Brexit is causing uncertainty  
- Export dependent economy  
- Leading exporter of vehicles, machines and chemicals  
- Proponent of closer European integration

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**Ease of Doing Business**

- **Ease of doing Business:** 17  
- **Starting a business:** 114  
- **Dealing with construction permits:** 12  
- **Paying taxes:** 48  
- **Enforcing contracts:** 17
South Korea

Common Phrases

안녕하세요/ Hello
안녕/ Goodbye
고맙습니다/ Thank you
이해가 안돼./ I don’t understand
내 이름은/ My name is
 만나서 반갑습니다/ Nice to meet you

Geography

Location: Eastern Asia
Area: 99,720 sq. km
Climate: Temperate

Culture

Official Language: Korean
Other Languages:
• English
High Context
Collectivist

Religion

- Christian 43%
- Buddhist 31.6%
- Other 24.20%
- None 0.90%

Government

Head of State: Acting President Hwang Kyo-ahn (President Park Guen-hye was impeached in December 2016)
Head of Government: Prime Minister Hwang Kyo-ahn
Type of Government: Presidential republic
Major Political Parties:
• Democratic Party
• Justice Party
• New Conservative Party for Reform
• New Frontier Party
• People’s Party
Capital: Seoul

Business Etiquette

- Personal relationships are essential
- Personal questions will be asked to build trust
- Introduction by a third party is more effective than attempting to work alone
- Conflict is avoided
- Use more visuals than words in presentations
- Business happens quickly
- A lack of communication signifies a desire to end negotiation
- Punctuality is important
- The oldest/most qualified member of a team should enter a room first
- Show respect for hierarchy and authority
- Greetings involve a slight bow followed by handshake
- Dress conservatively
- Neutral colored suits are suggested
Economic Profile

Currency: South Korean won
Exchange Rate: 1,167.6 won per US dollar
GDP: $1.929 trillion
GDP Real Growth Rate: 2.7%
GDP Per Capita: $37,900
Principal Industries: electronics, telecommunications, automobile production, chemicals, shipbuilding, steel
Exports: $509 billion
Imports: $405.1 billion

Population: 50,924,172
Population Growth Rate: .53%
Unemployment Rate: 4%
Life Expectancy: 82.4 years
Literacy Rate: 96.6%
Infant Mortality Rate: 3
Time Zone: UTC +9

Major Trading Partners
- China
- Japan
- United States
- Hong Kong

Consumer Preferences
- Very brand loyal
  - Especially among the younger citizens
- Research products before purchase
- Social media is influential in purchasing decisions
- Increase in the acceptance of nondomestic products
- Consumers care about the health benefits of products
- Quality is more important than price

Market Development
- 4th largest Asian economy
- changed from one of the poorest countries to one of the richest in a generation
- few natural resources
- overpopulation
- technology is booming causing development to continue
- financial markets suffer due to hostile relationship with North Korea
- relatively resilient economy
The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

British Slang
- All right? / Hello, How are you?
- Cheerio/ Goodbye
- Give us a bell/ Call me
- Sorted/ Fixed a problem
- Ta/ Thanks

Geography
- Location: Western Europe
- Area: 243,610 sq. km
- Climate: temperate, more than half the days are overcast

Culture
- Official Language: English
- Other languages:
  - Scots
  - Scottish Gaelic
  - Welsh
  - Irish
  - Cornish

- Low Context
- Individualist

Religion
- Christian: 25.70%
- Muslim: 59.90%
- Hindu: 4.40%
- Other: 1.30%
- No Religion: 2%

Government
- Head of State: Queen Elizabeth II
- Head of Government: Prime Minister Theresa May
- Type of Government: Parliamentary constitutional monarchy
- Major Political Parties: (represented in House of Commons after 2015 election)
  - Conservative Party
  - Co-operative Party
  - Democratic Unionist Party
  - Green Party
  - Labour Party
  - Liberal Democrats
  - Plaid Cymru
  - Scottish National Party
  - Sinn Fein
  - Social Democratic and Labour Party
  - UK Independence Party
  - Ulster Unionist Party
- Capital: London

Business Etiquette
- It is best to be introduced by a third party
- Handshakes are used as a greeting
- Conversations need to develop organically
- Punctuality is important
- Gift giving is uncommon but reciprocity is a good practice
- Bring a bottle of wine to dinner parties
- Dress in classical conservative attire
- Dark colors are best for suits
- Denim is not usually acceptable and Scots don’t wear kilts
- It is better to be overdressed than underdressed
- Do not bring up politics or regional conflicts
Economic Profile

Currency: British Pound
Exchange Rate: .7391
GDP: $2.737 trillion
GDP Real Growth Rate: 1.8%
GDP Per Capita: $42,500
Principal Industries:
Exports: $412.1 billion
Imports: $581.6 billion

Population: 64,430,428
Population Growth Rate: .53%
Unemployment Rate: 5.1%
Life Expectancy: 80.7 years
Literacy Rate: 99%
Infant Mortality Rate: 4.3 deaths
Time Zone: UTC 0

GDP Composition
- Agriculture: 19%
- Services: 80%
- Industry: 1%

Major Trading Partners
- Germany
- United States
- China
- Switzerland

Doing Business

Strengths
- Strong industry
- High education standards
- Stable government

Weaknesses
- Poor transportation
- Wealth disparity

Opportunities
- Increasing technology
- Number of trade partners increasing

Threats
- Uncertainty caused by Brexit
- Competition from other developed economies

SWOT Analysis

Consumer Preferences
- Purchase if they perceive an advantage
- Customer service is important, especially after the sale
- Consumer income has risen in recent years but is slowing with the “credit crunch”
- Income gap is widening
- Will shop around for the best deals
- High personal debt

Ease of Doing Business
- Ease of doing Business: 7
- Starting a business: 16
- Dealing with construction permits: 17
- Paying taxes: 10
- Enforcing contracts: 31

Market Development
- Low levels of corruption
- Developed country
- 5th largest economy
- London is the largest financial center in the world
- The pound sterling is the 3rd largest reserve currency
- Current uncertainty due to Brexit
France
République Françoise

Geography
Location: Europe
Area: 551,500 sq. km
Climate: Cool winters and mild summers, warmer near the Mediterranean

Common Phrases
Bonjour/ Hello
Je m’appelle.../ my name is...
Je ne comprends pas/ I don’t understand
Merci/ Thank you
De rien/ You’re welcome
S’il vous plait/ Please
Parlez-vous anglais/ Do you speak English?

Culture
Official Language: French
Other languages:
- Rapidly declining regional dialects and languages
  - Provencal, Breton, Alsatian, Corsican, Catalan, Basque, Flemish

Low-medium Context
Individualist

Religion
- Christian 23%
- Muslim 7%
- None 7%
- Other 63%

Government
- Head of State: President Francois Hollande
- Head of Government: Prime minister Bernard Cazeneuve
- Type of Government: semi-presidential republic
- Main political parties:
  - Union pour un Mouvement Populaire
  - Parti Socialiste
  - Mouvement démocrate
- Capital: Paris

Doing Business
- Appointments are vital
- Punctuality is treated more casually as you move south
- Staying late in the office is common
- Gifts are uncommon
- Fashion and appearance are very important
- Print business cards in English and French
- Use the beginning of meetings to restate the purpose of the meeting/negotiation
- Meetings are used to discuss issues, not make decisions
- Take the time to build trust
- Be prepared for direct questions
- Women are treated with special respect in both business and social situations
- Decisions are often made centrally
- The decision-making process is often lengthy
- The use of logical reasoning is important
- Handshakes should be initiated by high-ranking individuals
  - If a woman is involved, the initiation is left to her
- Use formal titles unless invited to do otherwise
- The French prioritize formality and manners
Economic Profile

Currency: Euro
Exchange Rate: .9214
GDP: $2.737 trillion
GDP Real Growth Rate: 1.3%
GDP Per Capita: $42,000
Principal Industries: Machinery, chemicals, automobiles, metallurgy, aircrafts, electronics
Exports: $505.4 billion
Imports: $525.4 billion

Population: 62,814,233
Population Growth Rate: .41%
Unemployment Rate: 9.7%
Life Expectancy: 81.8 years
Literacy Rate: 99%
Infant Mortality Rate: 3.3 deaths
Time Zone: UTC +1

Major Trading Partners
- Germany
- Belgium
- Italy
- Spain
- United States

GDP Composition
- Agriculture: 2%
- Services: 19%
- Industry: 79%

Doing Business

Strengths
- Quality infrastructure
- Competitive companies
- High savings

Weaknesses
- Weakening product sophistication
- High public debt
- Tourism declining due to terrorist threat

Opportunities
- Uncertain political future
- Rise of Nationalism
- Terrorism

Threats
- Low corruption
- Legal environment is stable and relatively transparent
- 11th most attractive country for FDI (World Investment Report 2016)
- Paris is the home of the second most MNCs
- Europe's third power
- Highly skilled workforce
- Large industrial base
- One of the world's top 10 industrial powers

Consumer Preferences
- Growing sectors of computer services, travel and tourism
- Growing concerns about safety and security
- Price sensitive
- Brand and quality play a role in decision making
- Prefer neat tightly packaged products that are eye catching
- Affluent and impulsive
- More likely to buy domestic
- Increasingly aware of environment and health

Ease of Doing Business

Ease of doing Business: 29
Starting a business: 27
Dealing with construction permits: 20
Paying taxes: 63
Enforcing contracts: 18
India
Bharatiya Ganarajya

Common Phrases
Na-ma-ste/ Hello
Kripaya/ Please
Aap Se Mil Ke Khu-Shi Hui/ Nice to meet you
Mujhey samajh mein nahi aataa/ I don’t understand

Geography
Location: Southern Asia
Area: 3,287,263
Climate: tropical monsoon in the south, temperate in the north

Culture
Official Language: Hindi, English
Other Languages:
- Bengali
- Telugu
- Marathi
- Urdu
- Gujarati
- Punjabi
High Context
Collectivist

Religion
- Hindu: 80%
- Muslim: 14%
- Christian: 2%
- Sikh: 2%
- Other: 2%

Government
Head of State: President Pranab Mukherjee
Head of Government: Prime Minister Narendra Modi
Type of Government: Federal parliamentary republic
Major Political Parties:
- Bharatiya Janata Party
- Indian National Congress
- Communist Party of India (Marxist)
- Bahujan Samaj Party
- Nationalist Congress Party
- All India Trinamool Congress
Capital: New Delhi

Business Etiquette
- Traditional clothing varies from region to region
- Women often wear the sari
- Men wear the dhoti
- Western dress is becoming more common
- Mixture of Asian and British influence
- It is proper to eat with your hands
- Expect Indian counterpart to arrive late
- It is common to be introduced by a third party
- Avoid folding your arms or standing with your hands on your hips as it is seen as aggressive
- Negotiations often take a long time with many revisions
- The use of titles is important
Economic Profile

Currency: Indian rupee
Exchange Rate: 68.3 rupees per US dollar
GDP: $8.721 trillion
GDP Real Growth Rate: 7.6%
GDP Per Capita: $6,700
Principal Industries: Textiles, chemicals, food processing, steel, mining, cement, petroleum
Exports: $271.6 billion
Imports: $402.4 billion

Population: 1,266,883,598
Population Growth Rate: 1.19%
Unemployment Rate: 8.4%
Life Expectancy: 68.5 years
Literacy Rate: 74.04%
Infant Mortality Rate: 40.5
Time Zone: UTC +5.5

Major Trading Partners
- China
- United States
- United Arab Emirates
- United Arab Emirates
- Saudi Arabia
- Hong Kong

GDP Composition
- Agriculture: 29.8%
- Services: 45.4%
- Industry: 16.5%

Doing Business

Strengths
- Inflow of foreign investment
- Large workforce

Weaknesses
- Dependence on imports
- Poverty

Opportunities
- Large domestic market
- Growing competition of Indian industries

Threats
- Corruption
- Competition from China

SWOT Analysis

Consumer Preferences
- Purchase brands they recognize
- Marketing is important for recognition
- The value a product offers is the biggest consideration
- Diverse consumer base
- Credit financing is becoming more popular
- Luxury item purchases are growing for the richer consumers

Ease of Doing Business

Ease of doing Business: 130
Starting a business: 155
Dealing with construction permits: 185
Paying taxes: 172
Enforcing contracts: 172

Market Development

- Still a developing country in some respects
- 7th largest economy
- Economic growth through the expansion of services
- 1st in farming output
- Classified as a newly industrialized country
- The wealthiest state is Maharashtra
- Young population
- IT industry continues to boom
Taiwan

Common Phrases
你好 / Hello
再見 / Goodbye
我的名字是 / My name is
很高興見到你 / Nice to meet you
我不明白 / I don’t understand
請 / Please
謝謝 / Thank you

Geography
Location: Eastern Asia
Area: 35,980 sq. km
Climate: Tropical, marine

Culture
Official Language: Mandarin Chinese
Other Languages
• Taiwanese
• Hakka Dialects
High Context
Collectivist

Government
Head of State: President Tsai Ing-wen
Head of Government: Premier Lin Chuan
Type of Government: Semi-presidential republic
Major Political Parties
• Democratic Progressive Party
• Kuomintang
• New Power Party
• Non-Partisan Solidarity Union
• People First Party
• Taiwan Solidarity Union
Capital: Taipei

Religion
93%
4%
3%
Buddhist and Taoist
Christian
Other

Business Etiquette
• Trust and relationships are essential to successful business
  o Taiwanese prefer to do business with people they trust
• Punctuality is important
• Greetings typically involve a handshake and first name introductions
• Start negotiations with small talk to build the relationship
• Prices will need to be negotiated
  o Direct refusal is perceived as a loss of face
• Discussions can be direct and reasonable
• The first meeting is formal
• Women can wear pantsuits and men usually wear a suit and tie
  o Male dominated society but women in business are shown respect
• Avoid mentioning ties with China or using simplified characters
• Confucian values are still prominent in society
• A translator may help with negotiations in smaller firms
• Hierarchy exists but is less rigid than 45 other Asian countries
Economic Profile

Currency: New Taiwan dollars
Exchange Rate: 32.85 per US dollar
GDP: $1.125 trillion
GDP Real Growth Rate: 1%
GDP Per Capita: $47,800
Principal Industries: electronics, IT, petroleum refining, chemicals, textiles, consumer products
Exports: $314.8 billion
Imports: $248.7 billion

Population: 23,464,787
Population Growth Rate: .2%
Unemployment Rate: 3.9%
Life Expectancy: 80.1 years
Literacy Rate: 98.5%
Infant Mortality Rate: 4.4 deaths
Time Zone: UTC +8

Major Trading Partners
- Japan
- China
- Hong Kong
- United States
- United States
- China

Doing Business

GDP Composition
- Agriculture: 2%
- Services: 36%
- Industry: 62%

Strengths
- Low inflation & unemployment
- Up and coming technologies

Weaknesses
- Rising consumer debt

Opportunities
- Technologically savvy workforce

Threats
- Conflict with China over sovereignty

SWOT Analysis

Market Development
- 5th largest economy in Asia
- Developed country
- Growing exports
- Imports mainly raw materials, capital goods and energy resources
- Industry is decreasing with the advancement of technology

Consumer Preferences
- Brand loyal
  - Prefer domestic and Japanese brands
- Price sensitive
- Quality and customer service after the sale are important
- Responsive to and involved in global trends
- Value new and innovative products
- Number of households in debt is rising

Ease of Doing Business

Ease of doing Business: 11
Starting a business: 19
Dealing with construction permits: 3
Paying taxes: 30
Enforcing contracts: 14
Italy
Repubblica Italiana

Common Phrases
- Salve (Ciao)/ Hello
- Mi chiamo/ My name is
- Piacere di conoscerla/ Nice to meet you
- Non ho capito/ I don’t understand
- Per Favore/ Please
- Grazie/ Thank you

Geography
- Location: Southern Europe
- Area: 301,340 sq. km
- Climate: Mediterranean

Culture
- Official Language: Italian
- Other languages: English, French, Spanish, German, Regional languages
- High context
- Collectivist

Religion
- Christianity: 12%
- No Religion: 85%
- Islam: 3%

Government
- Head of State: President Sergio Mattarella
- Head of Government: Prime Minister Matteo Renzi
- Type of Government: Parliamentary Republic
- Elections: free and fair every 7 years for president, 5 for parliament
- Voter turnout: 75-82%
- Main political parties:
  - Center left Democratic Party (PD)
  - Center right People of Freedom Party (PdL)
  - Populist Five Star Movement (M5S)
- Capital: Rome

Business Etiquette
- Relationships are crucial to successful negotiations
- Meetings are meant to get a better understanding rather than to decide
- Written communication is preferred
- Formal wear is required to make a good impression
- Hierarchy and centralized decision making are important
- Italians place importance on verbal commitments
- Urgency is viewed as an attempt to weaken an agreement
- Meetings should begin with a firm handshake
- People hug and kiss on both cheeks if they are close friends or family
- Greetings are expected upon entrance
- Interruptions are tolerated
- Several people may speak simultaneously
Economic Profile

Currency: Euro
Exchange Rate: 1.12 US dollars
GDP: $2.171 trillion
GDP Real Growth Rate: 8%
GDP Per Capita: $35,700
Principal Industries: Machinery, chemicals, motor vehicles, clothing and footwear
Exports: $456.6 billion
Imports: $389.3 billion

Population: 62,007,540
Population Growth Rate: .25%
Unemployment Rate: 11.4%
Life Expectancy: 82.5
Literacy Rate: 99.2%
Infant Mortality Rate: 3
Time Zone: UTC+ 1

Major Trading Partners
- Germany
- France
- China
- United States

GDP Composition
- Agriculture: 1%
- Services: 34%
- Industry: 65%

Consumer Preferences
- High quality products
- Prefer products made domestically
- Environmental effects of products don’t influence purchase decisions
- Experiences are more important to Italians than possessions are

Ease of Doing Business
- Ease of doing Business: 45
- Starting a business: 50
- Dealing with construction permits: 86
- Paying taxes: 137
- Enforcing contracts: 111

Doing Business

Strengths
- Large economy
- Strong tourism

Weaknesses
- Limited natural resources
- High debt

Opportunities
- Modernization of the economy

Threats
- Active crime organizations
- Aging population

SWOT Analysis

Market Development
- 9th largest economy
- Regional differences
  - The North is highly industrialized and developed
  - The South is more agrarian and poor
- Unemployment rate results from labor weakness and competition
- High debt
- Dependent on oil imports
- Political uncertainty with upcoming referendums
- Consumer confidence weakening
Switzerland

Geography

Location: Central Europe
Area: 41,277 sq. km
Climate: Temperate, varied depending on altitude

Culture

Official Languages: German, French, Italian, Romansch
Other Languages:
- English
- Portuguese
- Albanian
- Serbo-Croatian
- Spanish

Low Context
Individualist

Government

Head of State and Government: President of the Swiss Confederation Doris Leuthard
Type of Government: Federal Republic
Major Political Parties
- Christian Democratic People’s Party
- Conservative Democratic Party
- Free Democratic Party
- Green Liberal Party
- Green Party
- Social Democratic Party
- Swiss People’s Party
Capital: Bern

Business Etiquette

- Businessmen are often seen as formal and conservative
- Punctuality is essential to success
  - Arrive early to appointments
- Avoid asking personal questions
- Don’t interrupt Swiss counterparts while they speak, listen to everything they say
- Introduction by a third party will help get a business relationship started
- Handshake is the standard greeting
- Use formal titles unless invited otherwise

- Business meetings vary depending on the ethnicity of your counterpart
  - German Swiss – straight to business
  - French and Italian Swiss – small talk
- Formal clothing is subdued and conservative but casual dress is becoming more common
- Rank and hierarchy in a company are more important than academic qualifications
Economic Profile

- **Currency:** Swiss francs
- **Exchange Rate:** .9992 per US dollar
- **GDP:** $494.3 billion
- **GDP Real Growth Rate:** 1%
- **GDP Per Capita:** $59,400
- **Principal Industries:** Machinery, chemicals, watches, textiles, precision instruments, tourism, banking, insurance
- **Exports:** $301.1 billion
- **Imports:** $243.4 billion

Population: 8,179,294
**Population Growth Rate:** 0.7%
**Unemployment Rate:** 3.4%
**Life Expectancy:** 82.6 years
**Literacy Rate:** 99%
**Infant Mortality Rate:** 3.6
**Time Zone:** UTC +1

Major Trading Partners
- Germany
- United Kingdom
- United States
- Hong Kong

Doing Business

Strengths
- High per capita GDP
- One of the most competitive economies

Weaknesses
- Already highly competitive for FDI

Opportunities
- Highly skilled labor force

Threats
- Uncertainty in the European Union

SWOT Analysis

Consumer Preferences
- Value is of a product is important when purchasing
  - Designer or brand is less important
- After sale customer service is valued
- Many Swiss prefer making purchases in store
- Knowledgeable salespeople are important to close a sale
- Quality is appreciated

Market Development
- Switzerland has had long term stability
- Developed country
- Increasingly dependent on foreign trade and investment
- Tourism adds about 35.5 CHF to the economy
- Skilled workforce
  - 25% of workers are members of unions
- Few barriers to investment
- Financial and banking sector is highly developed and brings financial instruments into the country

Ease of Doing Business

- **Ease of doing Business:** 31
- **Starting a business:** 71
- **Dealing with construction permits:** 68
- **Paying taxes:** 18
- **Enforcing contracts:** 39
The Netherlands

Koninkrijk der Nederlanden

Common Phrases
- Hallo/ Hello
- Hoe gaat het met u?/ How are you?
- Proost/ Cheers
- Ik Begrijp het niet/ I don’t understand
- Ja/ Yes
- Nee/ No
- Spreekt u Engels/ Do you speak English

Geography
- Location: Western Europe
- Area: 41,543 sq. km
- Climate: Maritime climate, cool summers, mild winters

Culture
- Official Language: Dutch
- Other languages:
  - English
  - German
  - French
  - Spanish
  - Arabic
- Low Context
- Individualist

Religion
- Roman Catholic: 44%
- Protestant: 29%
- Dutch Reformed: 7%
- Muslim: 6%
- Other: 9%
- No Religion: 5%
- Calvinist: 4%

Government
- Head of State: King Willem-Alexander
- Head of Government: Prime Minister Mark Rutte
- Type of Government: Constitutional monarchy
- Elections: Voter turnout: 77%

Main political parties:
- Center right – People’s Party for Freedom and Democracy
- Center Left - Labour Party

Capital: Amsterdam
- Government Capital: The Hague

Business Etiquette
- The use of titles is important
- It is best to let the host begin and end discussions
- Direct in speaking
- Straight forward in conflict resolution
- Be on time, if not early, to meetings
- Agendas are followed strictly in meetings
- There is little to no small talk in business setting
- If invited to one’s home, bring a gift

- The Dutch usually dress simply
  - Young and wealthy professionals dress in more expensive and international brand names

- The Dutch are conservative
- All opinions are valued and tolerance is important
- Sense of freedom is integral to Dutch citizens
- Avoid personal or intimate questions
Economic Profile

Currency: Euro
Exchange Rate: .9214
GDP: $769.9 billion
GDP Real Growth Rate: 1.7%
GDP Per Capita: $50,793
Principal Industries: Services, Manufacturing, Public Administration
Exports: $460.1 billion
Imports: $376.3 billion

Population: 17,016,967
Population Growth Rate: .4%
Unemployment Rate: 6.2%
Life Expectancy: 81.3 years
Literacy Rate: 99%
Infant Mortality Rate: 3.6
Time Zone: UTC +1

Major Trading Partners
- Germany
- China
- Belgium
- United Kingdom

GDP Composition

- 78% Services
- 20% Industry
- 2% Agriculture

Doing Business

Strengths
- Important trade hub
- Sound public finances
- Stable political environment

Weaknesses
- High levels of debt
- Highly correlated with the Eurozone
- High rate of long term unemployment

Opportunities
- Well developed infrastructure

Threats
- Brexit vote could harm exports

SWOT Analysis

Consumer Preferences
- Shopping is a popular leisure activity
- Consumers are spending more on leisure and recreation
- Willing to splurge on high quality products
- Usually no domestic bias
- Environmentally conscious consumers

Market Development
- 6th largest economy in Europe
- 5th largest European exporter
- Dependent on foreign trade
- Relatively equal income distribution
- Government assistance and subsidy for innovative companies exists

Ease of Doing Business

Ease of doing Business: 28
Starting a business: 22
Dealing with construction permits: 87
Paying taxes: 20
Enforcing contracts: 71
Brazil
Republica Federativa do Brasil

Common Phrases
Olá/ Hello
Tchau/ Goodbye
Sim/ Yes
Não/ No
prazer em conhecê-lo/ Nice to meet you
Eu não entendo/ I don’t understand
Você fala inglês?/ Do you speak English?

Geography
Location: South America
Area: 8,515,770 sq. km
Climate: tropical, temperate in the south

Culture
Official Language: Portuguese
Other Languages:
• Spanish
• German
• Italian
• Japanese
• English

High Context
Collectivist
65%
22%
2%
2%
9%

Religion
- Catholic 65%
- Protestant 22%
- Spiritist 9%
- Other 2%
- None 2%

Government
Head of State and Government: President Michel Miguel Elias Temer Lulia
Type of Government: Federal presidential republic
Major Political Parties:
• Absolute majority
  o Workers’ Party
  o Brazilian Democratic Movement Party
  o Brazilian Social Democracy Party
  o Democrats
• There are many other parties that exist
Capital: Brasilia

Business Etiquette
- Negotiations take a lot of time, patience and investment
- Personal contact and relationships are important, it is better to have a continuous relationship
- Be punctual but expect delays
- Physical contact is normal
- Use titles according to age and status
- Know your contact before negotiations start
- Understanding and confidence are essential for relationships
- Expensive gifts can be misconstrued as bribes
- Negotiations typically are done in Portuguese
  o Use an interpreter if necessary
- Elegance in business attire is important for first impressions
- Business cards should be bilingual
Economic Profile

Currency: Reals
Exchange Rate: 3.483 per US dollar
GDP: $3.135 trillion
GDP Real Growth Rate: -3.3%
GDP Per Capita: $15,200
Principal Industries: Textiles, shoes, chemicals, cement, lumber, iron ore, tin, steel, aircraft
Exports: $189.7 billion
Imports: $143.9 billion

Population: 205,823,665
Population Growth Rate: 0.75%
Unemployment Rate: 12.6%
Life Expectancy: 73.8 years
Literacy Rate: 92.2%
Infant Mortality Rate: 18 deaths
Time Zone: UTC – 3

Major Trading Partners
- China
- United States
- Germany
- Argentina

GDP Composition
- Agriculture: 6%
- Services: 22%
- Industry: 72%

Doing Business

Strengths
- Abundant natural resources
- Established manufacturing

Weaknesses
- Political instability
- High inflation

Opportunities
- Diverse population

Threats
- Possible negative effects of policy changes

SWOT Analysis

Market Development

- 5th largest country
- 9th largest economy
- Well-developed manufacturing and agriculture
- Currently in a recession
- President Temer implemented new fiscal adjustments
  - Success of the markets depends on these
- High inequality
- Heavy government interference in the economy

Ease of Doing Business

Ease of doing Business: 123
Starting a business: 175
Dealing with construction permits: 172
Paying taxes: 181
Enforcing contracts: 37

Consumer Preferences
- Consumers used to be brand loyal but that is changing as the economy slows
- In search of the best deals
- Richer consumers care more about quality, service and CSR
- Purchases focus on food and housing
- National brands are preferred as it reflects national pride
- Foreign products are a sign of wealth
Ireland
Eire

Geography
Location: Western Europe
Area: 70,273 sq. km
Climate: Temperate maritime

Common Phrases
Dia dhuit/ Hello
Slán/ Goodbye
Is deas liom bualadh leat/ Nice to meet you
Ní thuigim/ I don’t understand
An bhfuil Béarla agat?/ Do you speak English?
Sláinte/ Cheers

Culture
Official Language: English, Irish (Gaelic)
High-medium Context
Individualist

Religion
- Roman Catholic
- Church of Ireland
- Muslim
- Other
- None

84%
6%
3%
6%
1%

Government
Head of State: President Michael Higgins
Head of Government: Taoiseach (Prime Minister) Enda Kenny
Type of Government: Parliamentary republic
Major Political Parties
- Anti-Austerity Alliance- People Before Profit
- Fianna Fail
- Fine Gael
- Green Party
- Labour Party
- Renua Ireland
- Sinn Fein
- Social Democratic Party
- Socialist Party
- The Worker’s Party
Capital: Dublin

Business Etiquette
- Punctuality is essential but if you run a few minutes late it may be forgiven
- Make direct eye contact
- The Irish enjoy debating a wide variety of topics including politics and religion
- Share your views if they are informed
- Irish rarely use titles, they move to first names quickly
- Meetings usually begin with some small talk
- Silence is considered rude
- Business approaches are often informal
- Decisions take a long time to be made
- The Irish work with other Irish usually
  - Outside of that they work in a network of contacts
- Gift giving is not expected
- Keep in mind that the Irish are usually focused on short term profits and

55 benefits
Economic Profile

- Currency: Euro
- Exchange Rate: .9214 per US dollar
- GDP: $324.3 billion
- GDP Real Growth Rate: 4.9%
- GDP Per Capita: $69,400
- Principal Industries: Pharmaceuticals, chemicals, computer hardware and software, food, brewing
- Exports: $160.1 billion
- Imports: $88.01 billion

Population: 4,952,473
- Population Growth Rate: 1.2%
- Unemployment Rate: 8%
- Life Expectancy: 80.8 years
- Literacy Rate: 99%
- Infant Mortality Rate: 3.7 deaths
- Time Zone: UTC 0

Major Trading Partners
- United Kingdom
- United States
- France
- Belgium

Doing Business

- GDP Composition
  - Agriculture: 1%
  - Services: 41%
  - Industry: 58%

Strengths
- Access to the EU
- Lowest nominal corporate tax rate

Weaknesses
- Weaker property laws
- Research and Development taxes

Opportunities
- Irish government wants innovative partnerships between American and Irish companies

Threats
- IRA and terrorism

SWOT Analysis

Market Development
- One of the fastest growing markets in Europe
- Committed open markets
- Sound and stable economy
- Highly industrialized
- Dependent on trade
- Widening income gaps between Dublin and the rest of the country is causing political debate
- Regulations are conducive to foreign investment
- Economy focuses on technology intensive industries and services

Consumer Preferences
- Consumers are most concerned with quality
  - Then price and service
- Youth is more concerned about brand and materialistic
- Brand loyalty is important
- New desires to buy products that benefit the environment and other social issues
- 68% of consumers prefer domestic products
- Choosing experiences over products is an increasing trend

Ease of Doing Business
- Ease of doing Business: 7
- Starting a business: 16
- Dealing with construction permits: 17
- Paying taxes: 10
- Enforcing contracts: 31
Russia
Российская Федерация

Common Phrases
Здравствуйте/ Hello
Прощай/ Goodbye
Я не понимаю/ I don't understand
Ты говоришь по-английски?/ Do you speak English?
Пожалуйста/ Please

Geography
Location: North Asia
Area: 17,098,242
Climate: Steppes, humid continental, subarctic, tundra

Culture
Official Language: Russian
Other Languages:
- Tartar
- Ukrainian
- Chechen
High Context
Collectivist

Government
Head of State: President Vladimir Putin
Head of Government: Premier Dmitriy Medvedev
Type of Government: Semi-presidential federation
Major Political Parties:
- A Just Russia
- Civic Platform
- Communist Party of Russia
- Liberal Democratic Party of Russia
- Rodina
- United Russia
Capital: Moscow

Religion
- Russian Orthodox
- Muslim
- Other Christian
- Nonpracticing or Nonbelieving

Business Etiquette
- Personal relations and trust are the center of business partnerships
- Direct contact
- Meetings cancelled often
- Russians prefer if an introduction is made by a 3rd party
- Giving gifts is standard
  - These should be personalized to the recipient
- Negotiations are long and often fail when rushed
- Compromise is seen to be a sign of weakness
- Contract are only binding when signed
- Most discussions are informal but the final meeting will take place in an office
- Conservative and formal dress
  - A lot of money is spent on nicer clothing items/ name brands
- Business cards are essential and should be printed in English and Russian
Economic Profile

Currency: Russian rubles
Exchange Rate: 68.06 per US dollar
GDP: $3.745 trillion
GDP Real Growth Rate: -0.8%
GDP Per Capita: $26,100
Principal Industries: Coal, oil, gas, chemicals, metals, machine building, defense industries
Exports: $259.3 billion
Imports: $165.1 billion

Population: 142,355,415
Population Growth Rate: -.06%
Unemployment Rate: 8.2%
Life Expectancy: 70.8 years
Literacy Rate: 99.7%
Infant Mortality Rate: 6.9 deaths
Time Zone: UTC +3 (in Moscow, Russia spans 11 time zones)

Major Trading Partners
- China
- Netherlands
- Germany
- China
- United States
- Germany

GDP Composition
- Agriculture: 5%
- Services: 62%
- Industry: 33%

Doing Business

Strengths
- Oil and Gas

Weaknesses
- Corruption
- Bureaucracy

Opportunities
- Large workforce to utilize

Threats
- Political instability
- Western economic sanctions

SWOT Analysis

Consumer Preferences
- Often make impulse purchases
- Brand, quality and the life span of products are important factors
- Price is less important but Russians like bargains
- Banking system uncertainty causes low savings
- Family affects shopping decisions and habits
- Middle class creates 80% of the demand
- Value western products and lifestyles

Ease of Doing Business

Ease of doing Business: 40
Starting a business: 26
Dealing with construction permits: 115
Paying taxes: 45
Enforcing contracts: 12

Market Development

- Transition to a market economy caused many problems in post-soviet Russia
- Relies heavily on energy exports
- Inflation has been falling
- Economic growth is still happening
- Private sector remains harmed by political constraints and a repressive government
- State enterprises are increasing dominance in the financial sector
- Recession since 2015
- Weak property rights
Iran
Jomhuri-ye Eslami-ye Iran

Common Phrases
Haletun chetore/ Hello
Khuda hafiz/ Goodbye
Mersi/ Thank you
Bebakshid/ Sorry
Nemifahmam/ I don’t understand

Geography
Location: Middle East
Area: 1,648,195 sq. km
Climate: Arid or semiarid

Culture
Official Language: Persian
Other Languages
• Azeri Turkic
• Kurdish
• Gilaki
• Arabic
High Context
Collectivist

Religion
Shia: 89%
Muslim: 10%
Sunni: 1%

Government
Head of State: Supreme Leader Ali Hoseini-Khamenei
Head of Government: President Hasan Fereidun Ruhani
Type of Government: Theocratic Republic
Major Political Parties:
• Followers of Walayat
• Pervasive Coalition of Reformists
• Principalists Grand Coalition
• Progress and Justice Population of Islamic Iran
Capital: Tehran

Business Etiquette
• Conversations start with family and health
• Do not discuss politics or religion
• When meeting someone for the first time, give them space
• Men dress formally with no tie and a full beard
• Women must fully cover most of their bodies, including their hair
• Meetings often take longer than the scheduled time
• Hierarchy is important and should be respected
• Personal relationships that build trust are essential for business relationships to form
• Hard work ethic
• Separation between work and family lives
• Money, status and personal recognition motivate most business decisions
Economic Profile

Currency: Iranian rials
Exchange Rate: 30,462.1 per US dollar
GDP: $1.459 trillion
GDP Real Growth Rate: 4.5%
GDP Per Capita: $18,100
Principal Industries: Petroleum, petrochemicals, gas, fertilizers, textiles, cement
Exports: $87.52 billion
Imports: $62.12 billion

Population: 82,801,633
Population Growth Rate: 1.18%
Unemployment Rate: 10.7%
Life Expectancy: 71.4 years
Literacy Rate: 86.8%
Infant Mortality Rate: 37.1 deaths
Time Zone: UTC +3.5

Major Trading Partners
- United Arab Emirates
- China
- India
- South Korea
- Turkey

GDP Composition
- Agriculture: 9%
- Services: 51%
- Industry: 40%

Doing Business

Strengths
- Second largest economy in Middle East
- High purchasing power

Weaknesses
- Heavy reliance on oil exports
- High inflation levels

Opportunities
- Demand for Western products

Threats
- US sanctions restrict investors
- Corruption

SWOT analysis

Ease of Doing Business
- Ease of doing Business: 120
- Starting a business: 102
- Dealing with construction permits: 27
- Paying taxes: 100
- Enforcing contracts: 70

Consumer Preferences
- Materialistic - goods dictate status
- Highly brand loyal
- Growing desire for foreign goods
- Young population

Market Development
- Member of OPEC
- Corruption
- Male dominated workforce
- Investment is increasing
- State owned monopolies in automobile, gas, oil and agriculture industries
- Privatization is beginning
- Mostly a centrally planned economy
- Considered an “energy superpower”
- Mixed and transition economy
Common Phrases
مرحبا/Hello
وداعا/Goodbye
تشرفت بمقابلتك/Nice to Meet you
 أنا لا أفهم/I don’t understand
هل تتحدث الانجليزية/Do you speak English?

Geography
Location: Middle East
Area: 2,149,690
Climate: harsh, dry desert

Culture
Official Language: Arabic
Other Languages: English is widely spoken
High Context
Collectivist

Most forms of religious expression that are not Sunni interpretations are restricted. Non-Muslims cannot have citizenship.

Religion
- Shia Islam: 15%
- Sunni Islam: 85%

Government
Head of State and Government: King and Prime Minister Salman bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud
Type of Government: Absolute monarchy
Capital: Riyadh

Business Etiquette
- Family is the basis of all society
- Nepotism is considered positive
- Men and women outside of the family cannot greet each other in public
- Entertainment is normally same sex only
  - If both sexes are present entertainment will happen in separate rooms
- Dress is very conservative
- Punctuality is not crucial but it is appreciated
- A sponsor is needed to enter the country
- Saudis often stand close to you while speaking
- Trust is essential
  - Business negotiations begin with developing a relationship
- Saudis judge appearance so dress well
- Decisions are made very slowly
- Hierarchy is important
Economic Profile

Currency: Saudi riyals
Exchange Rate: 3.75 per US dollar
GDP: $1.731 trillion
GDP Real Growth Rate: 1.2%
GDP Per Capita: $54,100
Principal Industries: Crude oil, petroleum, petrochemicals, ammonia, industrial gases, fertilizer
Exports: $205.3 billion
Imports: $157.7 billion

Population Growth Rate: 1.46%
Unemployment Rate: 11.2%
Life Expectancy: 75.3 years
Literacy Rate: 94.7%
Infant Mortality Rate: 13.6 deaths
Time Zone: UTC +3

Major Trading Partners
- China
- United States
- Japan
- Germany
- China

Doing Business

Strengths
- Security
- No sales or VAT tax

Weaknesses
- Gender inequality
- Religious conflict

Opportunities
- Stable market for investors

Threats
- Terrorism
- Inter-regional conflict

SWOT analysis

GDP Composition
- Agriculture: 43%
- Services: 55%
- Industry: 2%

Consumer Preferences
- Price is an important consideration
- Customer service after purchase is important in creating brand loyalty
- Consumers are usually young and high spending
- Increasingly using credit
- Buy products that are accepted in the Koran and that align with Islam

Ease of Doing Business
- Ease of doing Business: 94
- Starting a business: 147
- Dealing with construction permits: 15
- Paying taxes: 69
- Enforcing contracts: 105

Market Development
- Oil based economy
- Largest Arab economy
- High income and market oriented economy
- Foreign trade accounts for about 70% of total GDP
- Trade balances change depending on the current price of oil
- Leader in OPEC
- Most workers are foreigners
Sources

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**France**


**India**


**Taiwan**


Italy


Switzerland


Netherlands


Brazil


Ireland


Russia


Iran


Saudi Arabia


