



Do's & Don'ts in Saudi Arabia

- ▶ Meetings are arranged for by a Saudi contact person; an experienced contact person is vital for business success so make sure you choose the right one (you are not allowed to switch!)
- ▶ Appointments are arranged for between prayer times; often specific starting times are not set. You may check the local newspapers for the prayer times (they vary with the season of the year) and do not expect to keep more than one appointment a day
- ▶ It is standard to keep supplicants, including foreign business people, waiting. Be in time and do not get annoyed when the meeting is often interrupted
- ▶ Coffee will be served at the end of a meeting; another signal for rounding up is incense
- ▶ The Saudis have their own ways of doing business and awarding contracts; don't expect any transparent procedure or western-style checks and balances
- ▶ Do not bring any alcohol, pork meat or pornographic material into Saudi-Arabia, and refrain from any criticism on Islam or the Royal Family; this is prohibited. The display of any non-Islamic religious symbol (such as a cross) is not recommended.
- ▶ Genders are separated in any public activity; do not provoke these traditions by any controversial behavior
- ▶ Saudis speak at close distance to their conversation partners and touching is normal (between the same gender; NB homosexual behavior is illegal)
- ▶ Obey to the Saudi dress code (cover arms and legs), but don't wear any local clothing
- ▶ Hosting visitors is a virtue among Saudis; be prepared to take off your shoes and never eat with your left hand

These do's and don'ts assist you in making a good first impression when meeting business partners. However for a successful business outcome, a tailored cross-cultural approach is key. We gladly provide you with more country and industry specific advice and workshops.

