

BUSINESS ETIQUETTES AND CUSTOMS



ENGLOBALLY
GROUP



CHILE

WORKING HOURS

- Monday to Friday 8.30 to 6.15 p.m. (45min lunch time) This is 45 legal hours per week

PUNCTUALITY

- Not very good timekeepers. Sometimes they may be 15-30-60 minutes late. Due to a mix of culture and dense traffic

BUSINESS CLOTHING

- Clothing is rather formal, not extremely high fashion, but elegant in a more traditional sense.

BUSINESS MEALS

- Business lunches or dinners are usually long and held in restaurants, hotels or residences. Water is not automatically served at the table. If you want water, ask for it, because they normally expect you to ask for juice! Never leave immediately after dinner.
- Expect the meal to be a bit late—Chileans typically don't eat dinner until 8pm or later. You can expect most dinners to be casual and friendly and you can be invited to have a typical barbecue at host house, with copious amounts of wine, conversation, and delicious Chilean,

Argentinian or American meat. The standard Chilean toast, "salud", is sure to be heard frequently throughout the meal.

- If you are going to someone's home, bring a wine or some beer will be much appreciated.
- Guests are expected to arrive a few minutes late. Showing up at exactly the announced time may catch your host unprepared.
- Wait until you are shown to your place before you sit.
- Wait to drink until a toast has been made.
- Never eat with your hands.

GIFTS AND PRESENTS

- Not expected before a relationship has been established. If necessary, it is best to choose conservative gifts such as leather-bound agendas, quality pens, lighters, office accessories or liquor...



BUSINESS MEETINGS

- Chile is more formal and serious than in the rest of South America.
- Punctuality is generally respected and expected in business. However, be prepared for Chileans to be some minutes late.
- Chileans don't like to feel pressured or rushed. Business may be conducted more slowly than in Europe and North America.
- Chileans tend to say yes to everything, showing interest in all your products, services, or business proposals, but do not celebrate too early, many times the interest can be true but thoughts like "may be later or, not totally necessary at this time" are kept in secret to avoid bothering.
- Expertise is less important than your personal, family and company background.

Family and friendship play a big role in business, and whom one knows is important. Red tape can be minimized considerably if you have the right connections. Decision-making is centralized and decisions are made at the top level, although all levels have input, and believe me, are a lot of middle manager for every little area. Visit top-level executives first. Mid-level executives can follow up on subsequent visits.

- Be prepared to always go through a secretary. Secretaries are screeners for their bosses and very well recognized.

NATIONAL PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

- Approx 15 days

ADDRESSING A PERSON

- Titles and qualifications are used in Chile. It is normal to address individuals by their professional titles and Universities and Colleges are normally understood as a social class and professional level, unfortunately.
- In Business settings, a handshake is the usual form of greeting.

WORK-LIFE BALANCE

- In Chile, about 10% of employees work very long hours, less than the OECD average of 13%. The Chilean government has expanded high quality childcare, building many new childcare centres and expanding existing ones, to increase female workforce participation (OECD Better life Index 2018).

CONVERSATION

- Try to avoid issues like comparing Chile to other South American countries, or politics or human rights unless they are introduced by your Chilean counterpart. Do not assume all Hispanic and Latin American people are the same.
- Chileans are proud of their development, recognize this will help the conversation to start more relaxed. Do not get surprised if Chileans are strict with their own country.
- Do not point or beckon with your hand or even just your finger. It is considered very rude.
- Do not openly discuss politics, unless you are close friends with someone. If the topic does come up, tread carefully.

