Guide to Social & Business Etiquette in Mexico
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**MexicoInsight: Guide to Social and Business Etiquette in Mexico**

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Foreword

As you settle into your life in Mexico, you'll begin to encounter distinct social graces and rules of social etiquette. Learning and adapting to local customs and practices is an important—most seasoned expats would say critical, actually—part of assimilating your lifestyle when living in an environment that is foreign to your primary culture.

It takes time and patience to adopt the ways and graces of a foreign culture and having some background knowledge can bring additional awareness and understanding ahead of time, so when you find yourself in real-life situations, you’ll be better placed to understand some of the nuances unfolding before you.

This guide has been written to help you to navigate Mexico's modern-day social etiquette, get a good grasp of the graces practiced in the local cultural environment and, it’s hoped, prevent you from committing unnecessary faux pas.

If you plan to move to Mexico, this guide shares invaluable information about how to assimilate Mexican customs. If you plan to work in Mexico, or if you’re planning to visit Mexico to conduct business and develop commercial relationships here, you’ll find both the social and business sections a real insight that will help you prepare for your meetings, negotiations and working relationships.
PART ONE: SOCIAL ETIQUETTE IN MEXICO

Class and Society in Mexico

Mexico is a class-conscious society. Titles (see section later in this guide) and other status symbols are important within Mexico's social framework and should to be politely acknowledged.

Mexico has extremely polite and courteous mannerisms built-in to its social norms. Politeness, patience and tolerance in situations, however frustrating they may appear, is always appreciated and, indeed, ultimately rewarded in Mexico.

Conversely, a display of impatience, anger, frustration or lack of general respect in formal or informal situations tend to fall on 'deaf ears' when dealing with most people in Mexico; and although people around you may not outwardly react to your conflictive behavior, the ultimate outcome in a situation could be made worse for you through deliberate obstruction or total rejection of your wishes, not because it is impossible to fulfill them, but as a reaction to what is deemed your impoliteness.

Language Formalities in Mexico

Mexicans are extremely polite by Latin American standards: indeed, politeness is built-in to the language and social graces of the culture.

It is common to use the formal form of language (*Usted*) when dealing with people you do not know or who are senior to you; for friends, close associates and informal situations, the informal (*Tu*) form of language is more appropriate.

The use of formal language in informal situations in Mexico is often employed as a means to express irony.

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PART TWO: BUSINESS ETIQUETTE IN MEXICO

Introduction to business etiquette in Mexico

Conducting business is a foreign country is challenging at many levels and requires a good deal of pre-planning and preparation to get right. Most business people concern themselves foremost with their products and services and the “pitch” they will deliver to convince the Mexicans to buy from them, or perhaps to persuade the Mexicans to provide vital supplies or support services which are essential to their commercial success in Mexico. And yet, long before you consider how you will sell to or work with your Mexican business associates, you need to develop the relationship. If Mexicans don’t like you, they won’t work with you.

Social nuances within the business environment are important; entwined with and emanating from these arise a number of business protocols which you also should familiarize yourself with and be prepared to acknowledge and act upon at the appropriate moment.

If you don’t lay the groundwork, and enter into your meetings and negotiations with an understanding of what Mexican business people are expecting from you at a personal and relationship-building level, your efforts to work in Mexico and your investment of time and resources may become frustrated at best and forlorn at worst.

Business etiquette is a natural extension of social etiquette, and you should read Part One of this guide to give yourself a grounding of the core principles of Mexican social culture. This part of the guide will help you to prepare for your meetings, presentations and negotiations.
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