

Cultural Diversity of Russia

Historically, Russians have not been open to outside information. Many Russians acknowledge they must learn new ways; at times it can be a struggle. Their tendency is to process information subjectively and associatively.

The demise of Communism has abolished many of the structures the people depended upon for stability. This stability is now being sought in religion, social groups, the family or elsewhere. The transition to a free market economy and democracy will not succeed unless the people can be shown that these changes provide increased security and stability.

Business Practices:

Russians only display affection in public during greetings. Relatives and good friends will engage in a noisy embrace and kiss each other on the cheeks.

Except at formal or state occasions, **Russians usually greet a stranger by shaking hands and stating their name**, rather than uttering a polite phrase (such as “How do you do?”). **Respond in the same way.**

- Always be punctual, but do not be surprised if the Russians are not on time. It is not unusual for Russians to be fifteen to thirty minutes late
- Historically, patience, not punctuality, was considered a virtue in Russia.
- Allow plenty of time for each appointment. Not only may they start late, but they may run a bit longer than originally planned.
- The date is written differently in Russia; the day is normally listed first, then the month, then the year. Be sure the date is clearly understood by everyone.

Negotiating

- It is said that Russians are great “sitters” during negotiations. Traditionally, Russians regard compromise as a sign of weakness. Russians would rather out-sit the other negotiator – and gain more concessions from the other side.
- Be certain that all members of your negotiating team know and agree on exactly what you want out of the deal. Do not show the Russians anything other than unity among your team.
- “Final offers” are never final during initial negotiations. Be prepared to wait; the offer may be made more attractive if you can hold out.
- Until you have signed a formal agreement, do not get overconfident about the deal at hand. Never expect that you can negotiate later for a better deal. This contract is as advantageous as you will ever get.
- The Russians may request that some funds be paid to them directly in cash, or to an account in a foreign bank.