

# Doing Business in Lithuania

**Source 7:** <http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/etiquette/doing-business-lithuania.html>

Sections used in our cultural research document are indicated as followed:

*This is a paragraph used in our cultural research document.*

For the globe-trotting international business person doing business in a foreign country offers certain intercultural challenges. Do I shake hands? What are taboos? Do they negotiate like me? Understanding a country's business culture, protocol and etiquette is important in achieving success abroad.

This guide to doing business in Lithuania offers some introductory points to some of the above mentioned areas such as business culture and etiquette. It is not intended to summarise all 'doing business tips' nor meant to stereotype. Rather, it highlights some important key areas for consideration when doing business in Lithuania such as how to meet and greet, communicate and conduct business meeting

## Meeting and Greeting:

*When doing business in Lithuania the handshake is the common form of greeting and you should shake hands with all meeting attendees both on arrival and leaving. Lithuanians appreciate lengthy handshakes and it's important that you make eye contact and smile during the process. In Lithuania eye contact is extremely important as the making of eye contact infers trustworthiness and sincerity.*

*Great status is attached to academic or honorific titles and you will find that such titles are regularly used, e.g. Professor / Doctor / Reverend / Sir / Lady / Baron etc. In the absence of an honorific title, the title Sir or Madam is used alongside the surname.*

*You should not progress to the use of first names when doing business in Lithuania until your Lithuanian hosts have determined that this is appropriate and done so themselves.*

Lithuanian businesspeople take a formal approach to business. There are differences in style between government officials and older workers who maintain formality and entrepreneurs who willingly dispense with formality. It is best to let your colleagues determine the level of formality used when doing business in Lithuania.

## Communication:

*Typically, Lithuanians prefer to establish a personal rapport with individuals prior to moving to business discussions. It is important that you do not hurry this process as it's critical to your success when doing business in Lithuania.*

*The Lithuanian workplace is hierarchical and it is extremely unlikely that you would witness a more junior staff member contradicting or challenging a more senior staff member. It is important that you follow the same lead.*

Lithuanians are typically modest in the work place. They usually speak in a calm and non emotive way without the use of unnecessary hand gestures and it is important therefore, that you remain collected during your meetings as any outbursts could lead to the dissolution of the relationship. They are also extremely polite during any interactions and it is considered rude to interrupt someone who is already speaking.

## Meetings and Negotiation:

*Meetings in Lithuania are usually attended by similar status / seniority attendees and for this reason it is important that you send a list of the attendees and a brief biographical account of each person when organising a meeting in order that your hosts can ensure that the correct level attendees are available.*

*Since the business place is fairly hierarchical, the meeting chair is likely to be the most senior meeting attendee. This individual will set the pace of the meeting and decide who can speak. They will also open the meeting and carry out the introductions in rank order. You will find that less junior staff only speak to their junior counterparts and only respond to questions from the more senior staff. It is important therefore, that you follow the same direction and do not breach this level of etiquette.*

In most cases, an agenda is used which is followed sequentially.

It is common practice for Lithuanians when doing business to offer a small gift at the end of the meeting. It is recommended that you also take a gift to give in return which is business related (e.g. something displaying your company logo).

Following the meeting summary and formal recap it is possible that you will be invited to participate in entertainment during the evening. It is important that you do not turn down this invite as it will provide you with an opportunity to further your rapport with the company.