

Business communication

Source 2: <http://businessculture.org/eastern-europe/lithuania/business-communication/>

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

This is a paragraph used in our cultural research document.

Face-to-face Contact

Lithuanians are respectful with a conservative demeanour. They are formal and tend not to use many physical gestures. Usually, men and women do not touch whilst talking, although patting on the shoulder might be observed. It is recommended not to point with a single finger, but to use the whole hand with the palm facing up.

Eye contact is crucial and Lithuanian business people prefer to look into the eyes of their partners while discussing business opportunities. Maintaining good eye contact is a sign of respect and demonstrates how seriously someone is taking the subject of discussion.

Lithuanians are usually conservative in their manners and the way they communicate; they are direct and say what they mean politely. Lithuanians are warm people, although they might not give this impression at first. When they get well acquainted with somebody, they are willing to share more personal information. Lithuanians are very reserved and not emotive talkers. They do not say much and do not like people who talk too much. So, when you are in discussion with them, be careful not to talk too much and get straight to the point. Lithuanians obviously try not to offend at the first meeting, but they are still going to say exactly what they think and will expect the same from their partners.

Language Matters

Lithuanians are multilingual, often speaking Russian, English, French and German as second languages. Lithuania is ranked in the top five EU countries with the highest number of people who are proficient in at least two foreign languages. 90% of the population is able to communicate in at least one foreign language and approximately 50% of Lithuanians can speak two foreign languages.

Source: <http://www.investlithuania.com/en/why-invest/talent-pool>

Source: <http://www.intercultures.ca/cil-cai/ci-ic-eng.asp?iso=lt>

Business Relationships

Like in other Baltic states, it is very important to have a personal contact in the destination country. Lithuania is more product-orientated, which means that if you have a good product, they would be willing to do business with you.

A Lithuanian businessman will be more comfortable in engaging in business with you, if you have been introduced to him by someone he knows and trusts. If you can approach a potential business partner through a trusted mutual contact, that is usually the best way to open communications. The business community in Lithuania is very close-knit; many business people are good friends and know each other very well. According to researchers, Lithuanian businesses are more likely to cooperate with foreigners that they do not know than Lithuanians they do not know.

Once a contact has been made, you must be prepared to make frequent visits to Lithuania to solidify the business relationship. In business, personal relationships are very important and critical business issues require face-to-face discussion. Frequent visits and phone calls will also be required to build the trust for a lasting relationship.

You should dedicate time and effort in fostering relationships through informal meetings and continuing communication.

Lithuanians prefer to have all agreements on paper, signed and sealed. Verbal agreements are good, but not legally binding. All agreements, deadlines and procedures are written up in both English and Lithuanian and signed by both sides

Making Contact

The custom in Lithuania is a firm handshake. Close friends and family may give each other light hugs or exchange kisses on the cheek. However, foreigners should wait for the Lithuanian partners to define when your acquaintance is so close.

Personal space and touching:

Personal space is important to Lithuanians. An arms' length is the norm, although this might be less with family and close friends. Lithuanians are generally very affectionate with their family, friends and colleagues, while maintaining a good degree of respect.

Any topic of discussion is good to start a conversation with. You can talk about family, work, hobbies and sports. Lithuanians are fond of basketball and their national team is among the best in the world.

Source: <http://www.intercultures.ca/cil-cai/ci-ic-eng.asp?iso=lt>

Source: <http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/lithuania.html>

Source: http://www.lingo24.com/international_business_intelligence/lithuania.html

Personal Titles

People are referred to by their title and surname. Colleagues and supervisors are usually referred to by their first name with Ponas (Mr), Panele (Ms) or Ponia (Mrs) or by title: Doctor, Professor, Director, Principle etc. and sometimes including last names. It is important not to address someone by their first name until invited to do so.

It is advisable to use the information on their business card to determine how to address an associate. So, if he or she has a title written in front of their name, then you should address the person by their title and surname. Academic titles are highly recommended to be used and you would generally be expected to use a formal form of address until requested not to. Male and female surnames differ, e.g. "Sakalauskas" for male and "Sakalauskiene" for wife or "Sakalauskaitė" for daughter. There are no specific protocols surrounding the giving and receiving of business cards.