

Business etiquette

Source 1: <http://businessculture.org/eastern-europe/lithuania/business-etiquette/>

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

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Corporate Social Responsibility

The understanding of Corporate Social Responsibility differs among Lithuanian companies and is frequently linked to philanthropy rather than partnerships. For most of them, CSR is about ethical conduct and transparency in operations. For others, protecting the environment is a socially responsible activity.

Codes of conduct are not considered as a must and the companies may have them in a written or verbal form. The development of codes of conduct is associated primarily with the improvement of employee relations and Lithuanian companies hold strong beliefs that that such codes play very little role in good government relations. The reasons that Lithuanian companies participate in social projects (mainly in the area of education environmental protection and health) include: creating a better reputation in society; improving relations with the local community; continued existence of the business in the long term; and increasing shareholder value.

The barriers to implementing CSR faced by Lithuanian companies are mainly due to the absence of proper regulations worsened by financial and government constraints. Specifically, overall costs are high, CSR has no direct impact on financial success, government involvement is deficient, there are no visible results and businesses place an excessive focus on short-term gains. Wider implementation of CRS depends on sharing information, collaboration between different stakeholders and the transfer of best practices from international companies.

Notwithstanding interferences and difficulties in the Lithuanian business world, understanding of the concept of CSR is growing, along with a sense of moral obligation and range of possible applications. Every company in Lithuania that recognises its social responsibility and takes action to improve its business practices is implementing modern human resources management technologies and strategic business plans. Companies that estimate the possible negative impacts on their natural and social environment are able to harmonise labour relations and take an active role in the social dialogue.

The Lithuanian government's national programme for the development of CSR between 2009 and 2013 is one of many signposts helping to establish changes in the country. The purpose of the programme is the creation of a friendly environment for future growth of CSR in Lithuania and to motivate companies to apply these principles in their operations.

Source: http://www.lm.gov.lv/upload/darba_devejiem/csr_060220_estonia_latvia_lithuania.pdf

Punctuality

Lithuanians are usually on time for meetings and visitors are expected to arrive on time. Generally, it is always a good idea to arrive about ten minutes before your appointment, in order to give you time to prepare for the meeting. If you know that you are going to be delayed, it is advisable to call ahead and apologize for your delay. Scheduling appointments 2 to 3 weeks prior to the meeting date is required. Lithuanians favour face-to-face meetings, because they need to foster relationships for mutual understanding. Punctuality may not be as strict in social situations.

Gift Giving

Business partners do not expect presents at the first meeting, but small gifts to business associates are generally acceptable and you might be expected to bring a souvenir from your own country, something small and unique that represents your country or your company. Gifts appropriate for a business meeting are items for the office, such as pens that are engraved with your company logo. In the course of developing a business relationship, gift giving is a standard practice. Corporate gifts can include a bottle of wine, high quality chocolates, or a basket of tea and biscuits.

It is traditional to bring something for the host when visiting a Lithuanian home. An appropriate gift is a bottle of wine or liquor or a box of sweets or chocolates. It is recommended to avoid giving white flowers that are reserved for weddings and chrysanthemums that are typical at funerals. The family is the central unit in the social structure of Lithuanian society. Therefore, a family gift should be accompanied with small gifts for the children or grandparents. In Lithuania, gifts are opened in front of the guest upon receiving them.

Source: <http://www.giftsforeurope.com/en/international-gift-guide/gifts-lithuania.htm>

Business Dress Code

In business, conservative/classical clothing is common. Men tend to wear a dark suit with a tie, while women might wear a trouser suit, or jacket and skirt. For business meetings, choosing a dark suit to wear is always appropriate for men and women should also wear a suit or something elegant. Lithuanians expect their foreign business associates to be well dressed and business attire is appropriate for almost all formal occasions.

During normal working hours, there is a less formal code. Men take off their jackets and usually wear short sleeved shirts. In small and medium sized companies, there is often no dress code. Dressing is business casual, unless they have some sort of business meeting or formal event to attend.

Source: http://www.culturecrossing.net/basics_business_student.php?id=119

Bribery and Corruption

According to the Corruption Perception index of 2012, Lithuania ranked 48th among 176 rated countries, with 54 of a possible 100 points. According to the Lithuanian office of Transparency International, business representatives saw a better outlook for Lithuania's anti-corruption environment in 2012. According the experts, Lithuania also boasts a favourable legal environment that can easily accommodate further anti-corruption measures.

According to the national and international surveys, Lithuania suffers from an average level of political and administrative corruption. Corruption is a result of poor public administration rather than a cultural heritage. Explicit anti-corruption policies are spreading, especially in police and hospitals, leading to reduced levels of participation in illicit activities. Bribery continues to be an issue outside the big cities. However, society understands the threat of corruption and the number of people and businesses that are ready to participate in anti-corruption activities is growing.