**MBAP 6001: Business & Professional Communications**

**Country Analysis: Wales**

**by**

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The purpose of this essay is to give a general overview about the country Wales, a constituent country of the United Kingdom, about the economy and tradition of Wales and how to conduct business in this country. Information in this essay can be used as reference, if a business or individual from the U.S. would want to consider starting or expanding their business in Wales.

Wales is a country in southwest Great Britain known for its rugged coastline, mountainous national parks, distinctive Welsh language and Celtic culture. Cardiff, the capital, is a refined coastal city with a nightlife scene and a medieval castle with ornate Gothic Revival interiors. The land sits on the Greenwich time zone (GMT), +5 hours to U.S. Eastern Standard Time zone.

Wales is bounded by the Dee estuary and Liverpool Bay to the north, the Irish Sea to the west, the Severn estuary and the Bristol Channel to the south, and England to the east. The country is well-connected to the U.K., Ireland and mainland Europe by road, rail, sea and air. The capital city, Cardiff is around 2 hours from London, traveling by road or train.

The official languages are Welsh and English, where 81% of Welsh people speak English. The majority population want to preserve their identity and Celtic traditions by speaking the Welsh language, as well, which is one of the oldest languages in the world.

Wales has a maritime climate with frequent precipitation, while winter snowfall is significant in the uplands. July is the hottest month of the year, however, it is pleasant, not roasting. Temperatures hover between lows of 53°F (12°C) and highs of 70°F (21°C), leaping up to 86°F (30°C) during the occasional heatwave.

The Welsh economy generally reflects on the national trends and patterns of the United Kingdom. However, Wales has higher proportions of employment in agriculture and forestry, manufacturing, and government, while fewer jobs in financial and business services. There is an active foreign investment in Welsh manufacturing, particularly in its high-technology industries, but Wales’s gross domestic product (GDP) per capita and employment rates are far below average for the United Kingdom. The European Union has awarded significant developmental aid to parts of western and southern Wales in order to improve conditions there.

Agricultural production mainly focuses on the raising of sheep, cattle, pigs, and poultry. Major crops include barley, wheat, potatoes, and oats. Wales’s highly variable relief and climate are obstacles to the development of other commercial crops. Forestry Commission (a government department) owns and operates large estates for the commercial exploitation of timber. Wales has several small ports and hundreds of small fishing vessels, but the overall fishing catch is limited. Major catches include clams, cod, lobsters, and skate.

Financial and business services, government (including education and health services), hotels, restaurants, and trade account for more than half of the GDP and nearly two-thirds of employment in Wales. Most services are concentrated in Cardiff and other urban areas.

Wales has neither its own national currency nor its own central bank; instead, it uses the pound sterling and relies on the Bank of England for currency and other financial matters. A large number of commercial banks and insurance companies operate in Wales.

Another important source of income is tourism, particularly around the upland national parks and in the coastal region. The heartland, with its uplands, moorlands, and rivers, provides numerous attractions for tourists. The scenery and accessibility from English population centers make the central lowlands a popular tourist area as well.

The industry is diverse and ever so expanding in Wales. Many foreign companies are moving into Wales to expand on their business. There are many categories and paths for an international industrialist or entrepreneur to start a business or expand their existing business in Wales.

Unlike England which is mostly multinational, Wales is not as much, hence it is important to know the ways of interaction with local Welsh people. People of Wales have particular way for doing business, as their top priority is to preserve their Celtic traditions.

People of Wales have decent expectations with behavior, they expect courtesy, politeness, discipline and punctuality. A formal dress code is vital, and to greet with a handshake. Personal relationships or favoritism are not important. A standard workweek is 37 hours and most workers get around 5 weeks holidays a year. They are keen on punctuality and time management. For them time is money, hence, it is extremely important to arrive on time for a meeting or a business meal. Additionally, an agenda is expected to be shared prior to the meeting.

Business meetings should always be in formal attire, keeping conversations straight to the point. The visitor should be mindful of their Celtic traditions always when having conversations. Welsh are known to be secretive about their decision making and also prefer indirect communication. Any offer made should be a win-win situation.

Gift giving is not so important here, however if doing so, the gift shouldn’t be expensive. Appropriate gifts are company greeting cards, pens, books, or souvenir from visitor country.

Gifts can be exchanged upon successful business meetings, which are generally unwrapped immediately.

Business meal is important part of work culture in Great Britain. Having social meal with working colleagues to discuss business is common and happens quite often. Pub culture is an integral part of British life and it is common for colleagues to gather at the pub after work. Foreigners are always welcome to join for this relationship-building activity.

A U.S. person can travel to Wales and enter the country with a valid U.S. passport and without a Welsh visa for visiting or business purposes for less than 6 months stay. For more than 6 months a valid Welsh visa is required. If starting a new business in Wales, a valid visa is required. Also, a U.S. person can legally drive in Wales or anywhere in U.K. for up to 12 months with an international driving permit.

Lastly, it can be important to learn about their flag, national food, and religion which can be useful during business meets or chats. The flag of Wales consists for a red dragon passant on a white and green bi-color banner. The red dragon of Wales personifies the fearlessness of the Welsh nation. National food is the cawl, which translates to soup or broth. Welsh cawl is traditionally a hearty stew of meat and vegetables. Regarding religion, interestingly 46.5% of Welsh associate to no religion and 43.6% reported their religion as Christianity, and third highest being 2.2% reporting as Muslims.

In conclusion, it is possible to state that Wales holds strong to their Celtic traditions while doing their best to meet modern standards and technology by growing their export industry and also opening the country to foreign investments. The industry could still be vulnerable, though less likely, as cultural and ethnic peculiarities could create obstacles for the development of the business. Foreign investment has been growing vastly. There are over 1,395 foreign owned businesses that call Wales home, employing more than 161,400 people. These include blue chip investors such as Airbus, Toyota, General Dynamics, Deloitte, Siemens Healthcare and Oracle.

Wales people are democratic, flexible, and tolerant, even though they have strong traditions. To become successful in the Wales market, it is important to pay attention to the cultural aspect, while taking advantage of the multitude of opportunities available to start or expand your business in Wales.

**Sources**

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