

Nordea

Working with people from the Nordics

Some common recommendations

- Communication
- Work culture
- Career
- Cooperation long distance
- When in the Nordics
- Holidays

Country background and some notes

- Sweden
- Denmark
- Norway
- Finland



Summary

- The following contains some common and country-specific themes to be aware of and some recommendations hopefully helping a person from India to create a good working relationship with persons from the Nordic countries faster
- Please note that any such recommendations are based on cultural generalisations and stereotypes. You will be working with individuals who can have a different background and experience – please listen to your counterparts and be open to find your common way of working
- If general guidelines can help you achieve that goal faster – then they have been valuable

Communication

- In general Nordic people may seem more quiet than people from India
- It is OK to say No if there is something you do not understand or do not know
- It is OK to ask questions and comment on topics even though not been asked
 - It is seen as being proactive and valued
- Often Nordic people use irony or sarcasm
 - Example – ‘You really work hard, aye’ – this actually means the opposite – that you do not work hard
 - Another example – ‘It is all going really well’ – when it is not going that well at all
 - The tonation and the use of ‘really’ gives the correct or opposite meaning when being said out loud



Work culture

- You may notice a more flat organisational structure than in many Indian companies
- Often people have one role, but can act in many other roles as well at the same time in a project or in the organisation, e.g. requirement specifier may do a bit of the development and test as well
- When you make an agreement with people in the Nordics, they stick to the agreement

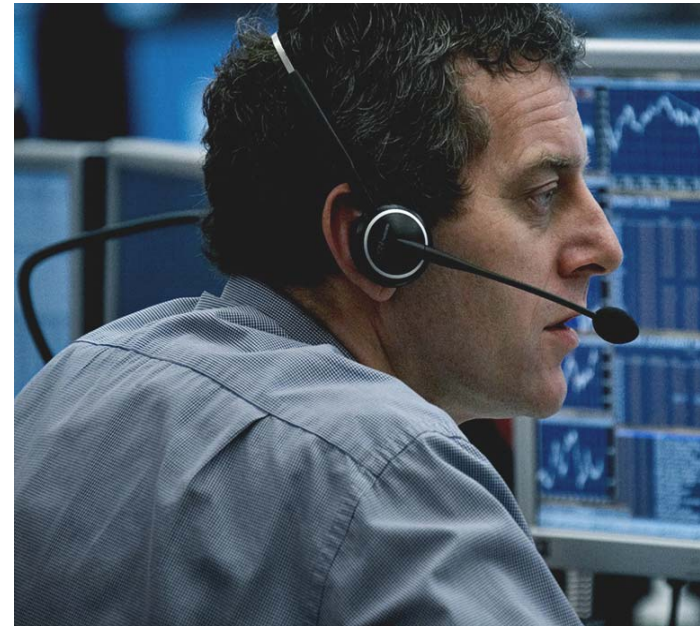
Career

- Many European IT professionals have worked in the same role for many years and find their motivation from deepening the knowledge, working with new technologies or new business problems
- In Nordea you may find people who have worked here for 40 years



Cooperation – long distance

- Use effective means of communication (Audio/Video) to compensate lack of face-to-face meetings – Skype for Business
- Use common tools for document handling
- Use e-mails and ask questions



Recommendations for Indians working with Nordic people

- Give open feedback – also problems, risks and challenges can be discussed
- Do not promise what you know will not be possible
- It is OK to say “no” or to work to find another solution
- Ask if you do not understand. It is not seen as a sign of incompetence but as a sign of taking responsibility
- You can help in many situations by bringing more structure, processes and documentation to the way of working
- Do not take silence from your European partner as a sign of impoliteness. It is OK to go and talk with him/her
- Talk much slower than you normally do

When in the Nordics

- Vacation
 - Normally people in the Nordics have from 5-8 weeks of vacation each year
 - July is the most popular vacation month where most people take 3-4 weeks off
- Food
 - Most people eat meat, fish and vegetables, and have a lot of national and local dishes
 - The international kitchen has a huge influence on dishes today, especially Italian and Asian food is popular
- Alcohol
 - Most Nordic people drink alcohol in connection with meals
- Smoking
 - Outside Nordea office buildings
- Hospitality
 - Nordic people may seem more reluctant to invite people to their home until you get to know them well

Some holidays in the Nordics 2016

Date	Holiday
1.1.	New Years Day
6.1.	Epiphany SE, FI
24.3.	Maundy Thursday DK, NO
25.3.	Good Friday
27.3.	Easter
28.3.	Easter Monday
1.5.	1 May - Labour Day SE, FI, NO
5.5.	Ascension Day
17.5.	Constitution Day NO
22.4.	Great Prayer Day DK
15.5.	Whit Sunday
16.5.	Whit Monday DK, NO
5.6.	Constitution Day DK
6.6.	Constitution Day SE
25.6.	Midsummer Day SE, FI
1.11.	All Saints Day SE, FI
6.12.	Independence Day FI
24.12.	Christmas Eve
25.12.	Christmas Day
26.12.	Second Christmas Day
31.12.	New Years Eve



Sweden

Facts

- Kingdom of Sweden, constitutional monarchy
- independent since 1523
- capital Stockholm
- 9,3 million inhabitants, 85% urban
- 87% Lutheran Christians
- labour force: 70% services, 28% industry (e.g. car and other manufacturing), 1% agriculture
- currency: Swedish krona (SEK)

Good to know

- a welfare state with high degree of social responsibility
- managed to avoid war for 200+ years, was an European superpower before that
- Sweden is the 3rd largest EU country in land area, after France and Spain
- high focus in reaching consensus – into which all are committed
- Sweden has an excellent reputation as a car maker with Volvo and Saab. Scania trucks are also Swedish
- the world-famous discount furniture chain IKEA was founded in Sweden in 1943



Denmark

Facts

- Kingdom of Denmark, constitutional monarchy
- independent since ca. 965, constitutional monarchy 1849
- capital Copenhagen
- 5,5 million inhabitants, 87% urban
- 90% Evangelical Lutheran
- labour force: 77% services, 20% industry (e.g. construction), 2,5% agriculture
- currency: Danish krona (DKK)

Good to know

- a welfare state, which has managed to solve many of the financing issues
- a long tradition in trade, has had a gatekeeper role to the Baltic sea (Russia, Poland, Germany, Baltic countries, Finland), has ruled major parts of Scandinavia and Northern Germany
- the flag of Denmark, Dannebrog, is the oldest state flag in the world still in use by an independent nation. It was adopted in 1219.
- in many areas closer to Continental Europe than the other Nordic countries



Norway

Facts

- Kingdom of Norway, constitutional monarchy
- independent since 1905 (from Sweden)
- capital Oslo
- 5 million inhabitants, 77% urban
- 88% Lutheran Christians, 1% Roman Catholic
- labour force: 58% services, 40% industry (e.g. oil, fishing), 3% agriculture
- currency: Norwegian krona (NOK)

Good to know

- on the welfare state financing level Norway has a unique position in Scandinavia through the North Sea oil
- the unification of Norway was achieved in 872, the year the Kingdom of Norway was founded. From 1319 to 1905, the Kingdom of Norway existed as a union with Denmark, Sweden, or both
- the modern Kingdom of Norway only exists as an independent entity since the dissolution of the personal union with Sweden on 18 November 1905
- historically one had to survive rough conditions with the sea and the mountains – often in isolation
- language very close to Danish, also close to Swedish



Finland

Facts

- Republic of Finland
- independent since 1917 (from Russia)
- capital Helsinki
- 5,4 million inhabitants, 63% urban, 92% Finnish/5,5% Swedish as first language
- 83% Lutheran Christians, 1% Orthodox Christians
- labour force: 77% services, 18% industry (e.g. paper and forest, electronics), 4,5% agriculture
- currency: Euro (EUR)

Good to know

- was part of Sweden for 700 years, part of Russia for 200 years, has been independent since 1918
- historically one had to prepare for the winter to survive – often without neighbours
- Finland is the most sparsely populated country in the European Union, with only 16 inhabitants per km²
- Finnish language (a.k.a. Suomi) is a non Indo-European language, which is different to the rest of the Nordic countries

