

In Latin America handshakes are longer than in Western countries. When the partners are acquaintances, they are often accompanied with a hug and two pats on the back.

Names and Titles

One of the most sensitive issues in international business etiquette is the use of names and professional titles. In traditional cultures, such as Chinese or Japanese, you shall always call people by their family name; in the US or the UK first names are quickly used, and even diminutives thereof (Tom for Thomas, Will for William or Bob for Robert) while in Germany, Italy and Latin America is more common the use of professional titles.

In Asian countries (China, Japan, Korea) the order of the names is the opposite of that used in the Western countries. Family names come first, then the generational name and in third place, the first name. For example, in the name of Chang Wu Jiang, Chang is the family name, Wu is the generational name, and Jiang is the first name. The correct way to approach this person is Mr. Chang, not Mr. Jiang.

The Arab and Russian names, follow the same order as in the West (first name and then family name) but with the need to insert a patronymic name—derived from the family name—between them. For example, in the Arabic name of Shamsaddin bin Saleh Al Batal, the first name is Shamsaddin, the patronymic name is bin Saleh—which means son of Saleh—and the family name is Al Batal. Following the same rule, in the Russian name Mijailevich Tachenko Sergei, Sergei is the first name, Mijailevich is a patronymic which means son of Mikhail and Tachenko is the family name. In both cases the right thing is to address these people as Mr. Al Batal and Mr. Tachenko, though in Arab countries is usually to use the first name (Mr. Shamsaddin) to address people in a business environment.

In the Hispanic culture it is common to use the first name and two family names, the father first, and then the mother. In conversation only the father family name is used, while in the written documents and for legal purposes, both family names should be used.

In some countries it is advisable to use university and professional titles when introducing people. For example in Latin America, Italy and Portugal graduates and professors are called Doctors (*Dottore* in Italy) while this word in most Western countries is reserved for medical professionals. In Latin America it is customary to use professional title preceding family name (engineer Ramirez, architect Benegas