

How to work with the Brazilians:

Comment: Please note that our intention is not to confirm stereotypes, but rather list hints that may be useful!

Some facts about the business world in Brazil:

- Being proficient in Portuguese is essential to making long-standing relationships.
- Hierarchy is important ("The boss is the boss"), but the leader is also a social leader.
- Subordinates don't always express their real opinions and say what they would like to say.
- Personal and professional worlds mix, so any criticism may be taken personally.
- Working hours begin and end a little later, lunch is usually longer.
- Brazilians are proud of their country and of their way to do business.
- Brazilians are used (and able) to do several things at a time.
- Brazilians are very adaptable to new trends and technologies, but, at the same time, may display a certain traditionalism.
- Brazilians are emotional (positively and negatively)!

Meetings...:

- ...may be called spontaneously.
- ...start 15 minutes later and don't finish on time.
- ...may not stick exactly to the original objectives.
- ...count on a 10-15 minute warm-up period.
- ...may end without clear results.

KEY HINTS:

In general:

- Don't criticize Brazil and the Brazilians.
- Give clear directions and use a stricter/closer follow-up.
- Remember that people will not ask questions if they didn't understand something!
- Resolve conflicts with consensus and give people the chance to "save face" (even if they are wrong).
- Accept that Brazilians do several things at a time.
- Be patient, ask questions, seek first to understand.
- Bring clear process in and prove the outcomes – people will follow.
- Get out of people's way and let them work towards results.
- Social competence is crucial to success, so know about people's personal life, don't offend anyone and be careful when publicly recognizing (or correcting) your colleagues.
- Lead by personal (as opposed to "virtual") contacts and show presence by leaving doors open and walking around.
- Try not to skip hierarchy levels.
- At meetings, have someone be responsible for the time, and minutes. Suggest simple but efficient action plans, with measures, responsibilities and deadlines.

Regarding communication:

- Communicate all the time and be transparent (otherwise people will make it up).
- Have people repeat what they understood you said.
- Be tough on the issue and soft on the person (true for e-mails also).
- Remember that silence or "yes" doesn't automatically mean that everyone agrees.
- If you want to hear real opinions, talk to people individually or in small groups.
- When you have to talk straight (e.g. personal annual reviews), explain what is happening.
- And: Be assured that even your discrete and superficial criticism will be understood!

Regarding motivation of people:

- Do's:**
- Having a good relationship with the boss (and his/her trust in one's competence) is all it needs to be motivated.
 - Praise your subordinates (in Brazil this is even more important than elsewhere!).
 - Take your team to work outside the office (hotels, clubs etc.) every now and then.
 - Offer perspectives of career and personal growth.
- Don'ts:**
- Do not correct or criticize people in public.
 - Don't be negative or sarcastic on issues and people.
 - Do not favor some colleagues over others.