
Be Patient: Brazilians Get Lessons on How to Make Deals with Arabs

Contributed by Isaura Daniel
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Brazil's CCAB (Arab Brazilian Chamber of Commerce) has placed at the disposal Brazilians a study about the processes for trading with the Arab culture. The study shows what to take into consideration at the time of doing business with people in the region.

It was developed by the Market Development Department at the Chamber, mainly the secretary general, Michel Alaby, who has a long trajectory in the contact with the Arab business world.

Among the recommendations are, for example, taking into account the idea residents of the region have of time. The Arabs prefer not to plan business meetings too much in advance and do not like to have clocks running their lives. Possible delays must not be seen as offensive.

Another clue is to stick to the same negotiator throughout the transaction, as trust in the person negotiating is fundamental in Arab culture. Changes may delay or compromise the negotiation.

The study also shows that Arab women have freedom, in a large part of the Arab countries, to develop most of the activities that previously were developed only by men. They also occupy high positions and negotiate.

In Saudi Arabia, however, women need to cover their arms and legs and wear abaias, the dark tunic, over their clothes. In other countries, the use of women's suits is also very well accepted. In the case of men, wearing a suit and tie is appropriate.

Michel Alaby stated that, in his experience, he notices that one of the most important items in negotiations with the Arabs is trust and friendship. "The negotiation is a consequence," stated the secretary-general.

Another important observation, according to him, is patience. "The Arabs do not like to be pushed. You may establish deadlines, but not push your customer before the deadline," he said. Personal contact is also important. They appreciate negotiation face to face. Instead of just one e-mail, the Arabs prefer a conference on the Internet or a telephone conversation.

According to the Market Development manager at the Arab Brazilian Chamber, Rodrigo Solano, the study demystifies the business environment in the Arab world.

"The Arabs are much alike the Brazilians and this may be advantageous at the negotiating table," says Solano.

The manager also points out the part played by women in the Arab world, as they are participating more and more in the decision making process in the region.

"There is now, in the Arab world, a more informal and friendly environment in negotiations," he said. The complete study, in Portuguese, may be found on the Arab Brazilian Chamber of Commerce site.

Service

Study: Negotiating with the Arab Culture

Site: www.ccab.org.br

Link: <http://www.ccab.org.br/site/areafile/analise/Países%20Árabes%20-%20Negociação%202008.pdf>

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