

# Etiquette & Customs

## Meeting Etiquette

- . Initial greetings are formal and follow a set protocol of greeting the eldest or most important person first.
- . A handshake, with a welcoming smile, is the standard greeting.
- . Close female friends may hug and kiss when they meet.
- . Use academic, professional, or honorific titles and the person's surname until you are invited to use their first name, or even more frequently, their nickname.

## Gift Giving Etiquette

- . If you are invited to a Filipino home for dinner bring sweets or flowers to the hosts.
- . If you give flowers, avoid chrysanthemums and white lilies.
- . You may send a fruit basket after the event as a thank you but not before or at the event, as it could be interpreted as meaning you do not think that the host will provide sufficient hospitality.
- . Wrap gifts elegantly as presentation is important. There are no colour restrictions as to wrapping paper.
- . Gifts are not opened when received.

## Dining Etiquette

If you are invited to a Filipino's house:

- . It is best to arrive 15 to 30 minutes later than invited for a large party.
- . Never refer to your host's wife as the hostess. This has a different meaning in the Philippines.
- . Dress well. Appearances matter and you will be judged on how you dress.
- . Compliment the hostess on the house.
- . Send a handwritten thank you note to the hosts in the week following the dinner or party. It shows you have class.

## Table manners

- . Wait to be asked several times before moving into the dining room or helping yourself to food.
- . Wait to be told where to sit. There may be a seating plan.
- . Do not start eating until the host invites you to do so.
- . Meals are often served family- style or are buffets where you serve yourself.
- . A fork and spoon are the typical eating utensils.
- . Hold the fork in the left hand and use it to guide food to the spoon in your right hand.
- . Whether you should leave some food on your plate or finish everything is a matter of personal preference rather than culture-driven.

# Business Etiquette & Protocol

## Relationships & Communication

- . Filipinos thrive on interpersonal relationships, so it is advisable to be introduced by a third party.
- . It is crucial to network and build up a cadre of business associates you can call upon for assistance in the future.
- . Business relationships are personal relationships, which mean you may be asked to do favours for colleagues, and they will fully expect you to ask them for favours in return.
- . Once a relationship has been developed it is with you personally, not necessarily with the company you represent.
- . Therefore, if you leave the company, your replacement will need to build their own relationship.
- . Presenting the proper image will facilitate building business relationships. Dress conservatively and well at all times.

## Business Meeting Etiquette

- . Appointments are required and should be made 3 to 4 weeks in advance.
- . It is a good idea to reconfirm a few days prior to the meeting, as situations may change.
- . Avoid scheduling meetings the week before Easter.
- . Punctuality is expected. For the most part your Filipino colleagues will be punctual as well.
- . Face-to-face meetings are preferred to other, more impersonal methods such as the telephone, fax, letter or email.
- . Send an agenda and informational materials in advance of the meeting so your colleagues may prepare for the discussion.
- . The actual decision maker may not be at the meeting.
- . Avoid making exaggerated claims.
- . Always accept any offer of food or drink. If you turn down offers of hospitality, your colleagues lose face.
- . It is important to remain for the period of social conversation at the end of the meeting.

## Business Negotiation

- . You may never actually meet with the decision maker or it may take several visits to do so.
- . Decisions are made at the top of the company.
- . Filipinos avoid confrontation if at all possible. It is difficult for them to say 'no'. Likewise, their 'yes' may merely mean 'perhaps'.
- . At each stage of the negotiation, try to get agreements in writing to avoid confusion or misinterpretation.
- . If you raise your voice or lose your temper, you lose face.
- . Filipinos do business with people more than companies. If you change representatives during negotiations, you may have to start over. . Negotiations may be relatively slow. Most processes take a long time because group consensus is necessary.

- . Decisions are often reached on the basis of feelings rather than facts, which is why it is imperative to develop a broad network of personal relationships.
- . Do not remove your suit jacket unless the most important Filipino does.

### **Dress Etiquette**

- . Business attire is conservative.
- . Men should wear a dark coloured, conservative business suit, at least for the initial meeting.
- . Women should wear a conservative suit, a skirt and blouse, or a dress.
- . Women's clothing may be brightly coloured as long as it is of good quality and well tailored.
- . Appearances matter and visitors should dress well.

### **Business Cards**

- . You should offer your business card first.
- . Make sure your business card includes your title.
- . Present and receive business cards with two hands so that it is readable to the recipient.
- . Examine the card briefly before putting it in your business card case.
- . Some senior level executives only give business cards to those of similar rank.

Ref.: <http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/philippines-country-profile.html>

Look much more here: [www.Etiquette.PhilippineCulture.ph](http://www.Etiquette.PhilippineCulture.ph)