

# **Cultural And Environmental Factors Impacting Mexican Libraries**

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## **Talk to OCLC Staff**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The presentation will be an overview of cultural and organizational factors that influence the way libraries operate and provide services in Mexico. Culture is an underlying factor that influences the way librarians do business, and environmental factors determine, on the other hand, how a library organization operates and communicates with the outside world. These two factors are crucial for those who come from abroad and want to do business with Mexican libraries.

## Websites on Mexican Business Culture

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Cultura de negocios en México

[http://www.missionbayhigh.com/sister\\_cities/spanish/sp\\_resources\\_tj\\_business.html](http://www.missionbayhigh.com/sister_cities/spanish/sp_resources_tj_business.html)

Hacer negocios

[http://www.solutionsabroad.com/espanol/d\\_hacernegocios.asp](http://www.solutionsabroad.com/espanol/d_hacernegocios.asp)

Información y orientación: información para hacer negocios

<http://www.mexicocity.com.mx/orienta.html>

México: guía de negocios 2003.

[http://www.cera.org.ar/guiadenegocios/Guia\\_de\\_Negocios\\_2003\\_Mexico.pdf](http://www.cera.org.ar/guiadenegocios/Guia_de_Negocios_2003_Mexico.pdf)

MEXICO Información de negocios.

[http://mx.gotolatin.com/Info\\_s/Hbook/business.asp](http://mx.gotolatin.com/Info_s/Hbook/business.asp)

Prácticas de negocios en México

<http://mx.news.yahoo.com/030116/36/tsg9.html>

## **Business Hours**

The length of the workday varies depending on the type of organization. Businesses are generally open from 9:00 or 10:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M., although some of them close between 2:00 and 4:00 P.M. for the midday meal. Government offices are open from 9:00 A.M. until 1:00 P.M., and then from 3:00 to 6:00 P.M., Monday through Friday. Banks are open from 9:00 A.M. to 6:00 or 7:00 P.M., Monday through Friday, and a few open on Saturday from 9:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M.

## **Business Practices**

Doing business in Mexico is different from doing business in the U.S. Patience and respect for Mexican customs is the key to all negotiations. Social relations and family are important factors in Mexican business. It is very helpful to have a contact in Mexico, especially in the company with which you are dealing. If you do not, write to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in Mexico City.

In general, it will take several trips to Mexico to complete a business satisfactorily. Business meetings in Mexico will often take longer than they would in the States. Appointments should be made at least two weeks in advance. Making a call, a few days before arriving to Mexico, to confirm the day and time of the meeting is highly recommended. Be on time for business appointments, however. Mexicans may have a more flexible approach to punctuality. Never complain about this tardiness. Also, be flexible regarding deadlines.

Each business trip to Mexico will be different. The first visit is a sort of "field trip," to secure contacts and make initial approaches to the companies with which you would like to deal. Also, expect the first and possibly second meeting to be a social discussion. Mexicans want to know about you and your background before getting down to business. In the first conversations, mention how much you like Mexico, how charming the people are, and what you plan to see in the country. (Devine and Braganti)

In all conversations you should never state that something is done better or more efficiently in your country. Also, do not discuss religious or political topics, and avoid mentioning historic problems between Mexico and the U.S. (Devine and Braganti). In addition, do not be overly aggressive while negotiating; it is considered rude (Strategis). During a meeting be prepared for many interruptions, such as telephone calls or people coming in. Never show irritation. Be patient. Mexicans believe that people are more important than time schedules. If a business associate or a visitor drops in, give her or him your full attention. Put aside whatever else you might be doing (Devine and Braganti).

When preparing your presentation, keep in mind that Mexicans respond well to information conveyed with scientific appearance. Have computer printouts, charts, and graphs. Also, have proposals, catalogues, or instructions translated into Spanish. Although most people at managerial levels will be fluent in English, people at different levels of the company may have to deal with the materials, and they may not know English well. Mexican businesspeople will appreciate your effort. (Devine and Braganti)

Participation in social activities is very important to succeed in the Mexican business world. Much business is conducted over a meal, including alcoholic beverages (Strategis). Breakfast or lunch are the best meals to discuss business. During the

negotiating process, mutual invitations are essential. Business breakfasts may start at 8:00 A.M. Lunches often starts at about 2:00 P.M., and last for over two hours. Always reciprocate these invitations. Do not expect to do business at dinner. This time is for socializing. Dinner starts between 8:00 P.M. and 9:00 P.M. (Devine and Braganti).

On the second or third meeting with Mexican businessmen, men should be prepared for an "abrazo" (embrace) accompanied by two or three pats on the back and a handshake (Devine and Braganti). Also, you will find that women greet with a kiss on the cheek, and men may greet close female friends in the same way; however, you are not expected to do this (Culturgram). At all times, remember that Mexicans tend to stand very close to others and to make physical contact. If you withdraw physically, you may unintentionally establish a social or emotional distance (Devine and Braganti).

Although Mexicans tolerate closeness among others and physical contact, calling a person by his first name should be avoided until your Mexican colleague initiates it (Devine and Braganti). Furthermore, Mexicans make extensive use of professional titles (doctor, profesor, licenciado, ingeniero), it is a very important part of business protocol (Strategis). Some common titles are: Doctor (doc-tohr), Proffesor (proh-feh-sohr), Químio - chemist (kee-mee-coh), Ingeniero- engineer (een-heh-nyeh-roh), Arquitecto- architect (ahr-kee-tek-toh). "Lic." (An abbreviation for Licenciado) following a person's name in writing means that he or she has a bachelor's degree (Devine and Braganti).

Another important business practice is that parties at a meeting first exchange business cards. If possible, have your card translated into Spanish and be sure to have your university degree following your name, and also indicate your personal position with the company (Devine and Braganti). Also, it is customary to shake hands with all upon arrival and departure (Devine and Braganti).

Furthermore, In Mexico there is respect for people in high rank, senior members of a group and elders (Strategis). Mexican managers receive great respect because of their position, their age, or their influence (Devine and Braganti).

In addition, although the presence of businesswomen is increasing, business in Mexico is male oriented (Strategies). It is rare to find a woman in a top management position in Mexico.(Devine and Braganti)

## **Business Gifts**

Gifts in Mexico from a foreign representatives are always appreciated. Good business gifts are: a clock for the office, a fancy pen, fancy cigarette lighter, Scotch, Cognac, art books, or a present related to the foreign culture and place (Devine and Braganti). Also, it is customary to send a small gift or greeting card at Christmas to key business contacts (Strategis).