

Business etiquette, language & culture

Overview

Many languages and dialects are spoken in South Africa, but English is the most-widely understood, and the common business language.

Most South African businesses are hierarchical and bureaucratic in nature, although increasingly black, younger middle-managers are becoming proactively involved in decision making.

You should avoid anything that could be considered a 'hard sell' approach. It is better to be understated and patient with South African contacts. Being seen as pushy will probably alienate people.

Given the large number of diverse and distinct sub-cultures within the country, you should have a good understanding of local cultures and issues. Putting together successful teams requires a great deal of local knowledge. A good understanding of local sensitivities can also assist with developing trust and good working relationships.

South African public holidays

2017

Date:

Holiday:

Saturday 16th December

Day of Reconciliation

Monday 25th December

Christmas Day

Tuesday 26th December

Day of Goodwill

2018

Date:

Holiday:

Monday 1st January

New Year's Day

Wednesday 21st March

Human Rights Day

Friday 30th March

Good Friday

Monday 2nd April

Family Day

Friday 27th April

Freedom Day

Tuesday 1st May

Workers Day

Saturday 16th June

Youth Day

Thursday 9th August

National Women's Day

Monday 24th September

Heritage Day

Sunday 16th December

Day of Reconciliation

Monday 17th December

Public Holiday

Tuesday 25th December

Christmas Day

Wednesday 26th December

Day of Goodwill

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Case Study (from a UK based company with proven success in South Africa)

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Contact IMA
International Market Advisor
IMA House
41A Spring Gardens
Buxton
Derbyshire
SK17 6BJ

United Kingdom

Email: info@ima.uk.com

General enquiries switchboard: +44 (0) 1298 79562

Website: www.DoingBusinessGuide.co.uk