



# UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

## Business Etiquette

### Organisational Structure

**The structure of American businesses varies according to their size. Large corporations with multiple offices typically adopt a hierarchical framework featuring numerous levels and sub-departments for operational efficiency.**

In contrast, smaller companies and departments within larger firms may operate with a flatter organisational structure.

Decision-making processes are generally swift and tend to follow a top-down approach in most businesses. Keep in mind that, given the vastness of the country, business practices can differ based on geographical location.

### Management Style

Management styles in the USA largely depend on the type of organisation and its work culture. Ambition is a vital motivator, leading to a strong emphasis on individualism and independent work. Employees are expected to advance in their careers and hone their skills.

Managers are direct and straightforward with their teams, expecting the same level of transparency in return. Communication is clear and predominantly verbal, and it is common to critique ideas openly in public without causing personal offense.

### Formality

Americans are known for their approachable nature and often initiate conversations with strangers. In business settings, it is customary to use first names from the outset, with titles being rarely employed.

Interactions can be quite physical, with gestures like backslapping and vigorous handshakes reflecting popular culture. However, politeness and courtesy are also appreciated, so remember to use phrases like "please," "thank you," and "you're welcome" when interacting with your American colleagues.

## Relationships

While Americans advocate for equality, status still holds importance, so be sure to show respect towards senior figures.

Networking plays a crucial role in achieving success, as leveraging connections and mentioning names can facilitate meetings and introductions. Remember that in this vast country, networking can also occur through phone calls, Skype meetings, and social media, so utilize those avenues to cultivate relationships.

## Correspondence

Business letters in the USA exhibit various styles. While they are generally written in a formal tone, there may be slight differences from British correspondence, such as the typical sign-off being "Sincerely" or "Sincerely yours" instead of "Yours sincerely."

Emails tend to be much less formal, often starting with "Hi" and concluding with a friendly line like "Have a nice day" or "Enjoy your weekend." If uncertain, it's best to maintain a formal tone initially.

## Dress Code

The standard business attire for men typically consists of a dark-colored suit, often paired with a shirt and tie or an open collar. Women usually wear suits or business dresses, complemented by conservative makeup and modest jewelry.

However, there is a geographical divide, with Western states generally allowing for more casual clothing than their Eastern counterparts.

Some businesses observe Casual Fridays, and summer dress codes may differ to accommodate warmer weather.

## Greetings

Business greetings in the USA can be more relaxed than in other regions, so don't be surprised if you hear "Hi there" or "How are you?" even in formal settings.

Always greet your American counterparts with a firm handshake and a warm smile.

Business cards are exchanged without a formal ritual, and they may be received with merely a quick glance.

## Punctuality

Arriving on time for appointments is essential, as lateness is perceived as disrespectful and unprofessional. Many Americans work overtime and conduct business outside regular hours, so they value their time highly.

## Meetings

Despite the casual greetings and customary small talk, business meetings are usually well-structured. Agendas are adhered to, and action plans are established before the meeting concludes.

All participants are expected to grasp the issues being discussed and actively engage in constructive discussions. Americans are not shy about asking questions, so be prepared for challenges regarding your presentation or data.

Meetings rarely conclude on an open-ended note, as Americans prefer to have a definitive conclusion or plan in place by the end.

## Cultural Sensitivity

The USA is a highly diverse society, so remain mindful that you may encounter individuals from various social backgrounds and cultures.

While they can seem quite forthright at times, Americans generally prefer to avoid discussing sensitive topics like religion and politics in public. Therefore, keep small talk to less controversial subjects.

## Business Language

Most business interactions in the USA are conducted in English, though American English may differ in spelling and vocabulary from British English. Additionally, there is a substantial Spanish-speaking minority, with over 10% of the population considering Spanish their first language.

You may also encounter speakers of Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, French, and German, so be prepared to communicate with individuals whose native language is not English.