How to Conduct Business in Latin America: A Business Student's Guide to International Success

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About this Blog and Author:

My name is Michelle Hicks and I am currently a senior at Bowling Green State University. I am set to graduate in May of 2014 and am enrolled in the Honors program. Currently, I am the secretary for the Global Management and Leadership Society, an organization which works to help prepare business students for a role in global business after graduation. As a requirement for the Honors program, if a student wishes to graduate with university Honors, they must complete a project which encompasses their Honors learnings.

After becoming more involved in this organization, I had come to the realization that we were struggling for membership and attracting potential membership. In an effort to apply my project to solve a real world issue, I decided, through my exploration of ideas in Honors 4980, which helps Honors students narrow and choose a project to complete, to create a blog for the members of GMLS to have access to and utilize. The blog can benefit not only the members of this business organization, but any student in the College of Business at Bowling Green State University.
My project is a combination of two existing fields of knowledge: Spanish (my major) and International Business (my minor). In addition, this blog is a creative project, in which I choose the content and the format. I believe that the members of the organization can benefit from the information presented in the blog and it will be an additional incentive for membership.

The format of each blog will be as follows:

- One-two paragraphs giving a brief historical overview of the country
- Two-three paragraphs delving into the actual business aspects of the country and how to conduct business within that country
- One paragraph and a bulleted list of Spanish words which may have a different meaning in that country and are of relevance to any business person
- Three-four additional links, included for additional reading
- Works cited
How to Pack for an International Business Trip:

Posted on January 24, 2014 by Michelle Hicks

This week’s blog post will be dedicated to the “art” of how to pack and what to pack for an International Business trip. It is important to note that before delving into how exactly to pack and such, a point of view will be taken that assumes all business travelers will be American traveling to other parts of the world (specifically Latin America). It is also important to note that this is not always the case and the basic packing information can still be applicable to other business professionals around the world.

To start, it is important, if you have time that you attempt to learn more about the country in which you will be traveling to. To be specific, information regarding travel and travel regulations and/or recommendations to that specific country will be helpful when not only packing, but obtaining the necessary paperwork for entrance into the country. For example, a trip to Mexico only requires that you have a valid US passport with at least one blank page for stamping. Also, that your passport is valid for at least the next six months and no entry visa is necessary for stays under 180 days. However, the situation is different in Venezuela as the laws here are a lot stricter. You must have a passport, one blank page for stamping, must show means of accommodation upon arrival and are not permitted to bring in more than 10,000 US dollars by any means unless it is declared in customs. It is also important to note that you should have a passport that is in good shape, as some people have been turned away for poor passports. This illustrates the difference in the laws concerning travel among even countries who speak the same language.

A passport is essential for any American traveler traveling outside the United States.
However, in addition to the above, you should use travel.state.gov for the latest travel information about the country you are traveling to and documentation you need. Additional documentation you may find helpful or useful during your trip includes: prescriptions, doctors note explaining use for medication(s), eye prescription, proof of up-to-date vaccinations, itinerary, hotel confirmation, airline ticket, driver’s license, credit card(s) and travelers checks. The United States Government recommends you make a copy of these documents including your passport and to place these copies in a separate place than the originals.

Packing your actual suitcase for a business trip overseas is the easiest part of any trip. International Business Seminars, a company which helps prepare students for careers in International Business through international trips and seminars, recommends you pack your suitcase in the following ways. First items to go in the suitcase should be heavier items such as shoes and books as they tend to shift to the bottom during transport. Clothing should be packed tightly together as to avoid wrinkling during flight. Also, dressier items that are prone to wrinkling such as dress shirts, suits, skirts and dresses can be packed in plastic bags from the dry cleaners to protect them. To save space, pack smaller items and socks into shoes so they keep their shape. The recommended way to pack other casual items is to roll them so they resemble a log and then pack them tightly together. As for your carry-on, items such as valuables, travel documents, keys, fragile items and medication should always be with you.

Avoid over packing luggage as many airlines can charge for luggage weighing more than the allotted amount. In addition, it is very cumbersome to carry around heavy luggage in a foreign country.
For women, it is recommended they follow the following packing list, written in a blog by Road Warriorette, a woman who is a frequent business traveler (based on a four day business trip):

- Two bottoms (pants or skirts)
- Four tops that match both of your bottoms
- One light jacket or a sweater (possibly a heavier coat depending on the destination)
- No more than three pairs of shoes (flip-flops for the hotel room)
- Pajamas
- Enough undergarments
- Toiletries
- Chargers (phone, computer, tablet)

As for men, *Real Men Real Style* recommends the following for a four day business trip:

- Two business professional jackets (navy blue and black)
- Two pairs of pants to match the jackets (navy blue and black)
- Four to five dress shirts with matching ties
- Enough undergarments for the duration of the trip
- Toiletries
- Chargers (phone, computer, tablet)

Here are a few final tips and recommendations for packing for that business trip. Remove any old baggage claims and stickers as to not cause confusion and or lost luggage. New luggage tags are recommended for all your pieces of luggage, however, for security purposes, it might be helpful to buy ones with flaps that hide your information. Never share your personal information, including address, destination, national origin and travel intent with anyone. It is also highly recommended you check the weather forecast, available at weather.com, so you can pack winter or summer business attire as needed. In addition, you may need an umbrella or poncho depending on said weather forecast.

**Works Cited:**


Overcoming Culture Shock

Posted on February 8, 2014 by Michelle Hicks

The focus of today’s posting will concern culture shock and how to overcome it when this happens to you as a business professional. Culture shock is a phenomenon that is relevant no matter what country you travel to or the length of stay in that country. Also, it is a process which happens in two stages, both in the foreign country and when you return home.

Above is the typically accepted model of culture shock with explanations of emotions at each stage of the process.

Elizabeth Marx is the author of Breaking Through Culture Shock: What You Need to Succeed in International Business. According to Marx, working in a new country can lead to any or all of the following emotions: anxiety, frustration, feelings of isolation, exhilaration, inappropriate social behavior, depression, inability to close the deal with business partner and confusion about what actions to take. According to Marx, it is important to note that there is great variation among the degree to which business professionals experience culture shock and the amount of time in which the phenomenon is experienced. In addition, Marx notes that if culture shock is not dealt with effectively, it can have long term effects on the business professional.
Marx identifies three phases in which every business professional experiences. The first is the honeymoon phase where everything in which is encountered is exciting, new and stimulating. After the honeymoon phase is over, culture shock truly begins to set in. This phase is characterized by either unease or annoyance at the foreign and anything that it involves. The second to final phase is recovery and it starts with stating that there is a problem and that it needs to be worked out. The final phase is the adjustment stage where professionals are able to incorporate the foreign culture into their skills and work successfully.

Marx outlines ten steps to help business managers minimize any culture shock they may experience. These steps include:

- Not letting culture shock take you by surprise and taking time before your trip to learn about the country and culture in which you are traveling to
- Expect culture shock to happen, regardless of your location on the globe
- When you arrive at your new destination, identify any and all possible opportunities to build a support network
- If you find yourself in a stressful situation, don’t give into it, fight it
- If possible, ask other international managers or professionals for advice on how to cope with culture shock, specifically ones who have traveled to the country in which you are assigned
- Give yourself time to adapt and try not to rush into any work related projects right away
- Don’t hesitate to ask for professional help-especially if the symptoms of culture shock persist despite using coping strategies
- Retain a sense of humor
- Think about the positive aspects of the culture
- Finally, expect the same to occur once you arrive home, also known as reverse culture shock

**Works Cited:**

Latin American Food:

Posted on March 3, 2014 by Michelle Hicks

This blog post will be dedicated to providing information about the typical food(s) of Latin America. I believe that it is important to learn about food as it is closely linked to the culture of a country. Also, as a business professional, it may interest you and/or concern you to learn about the foods you may or may not partake in on your travels.

To start, it is important to note that the food of Latin America is very diverse and simply cannot be covered in one blog post. However if you are more interested about Latin American food, follow the links at the end of the post to learn more. Regardless of where you travel in Latin America, there are a few staples that are bound to appear on your plate. Those are: corn, rice, beans, salsa, tomatoes, chicken, beef, soup (all kinds) and fruit. The type of fruit varies by region. For example, in Central America, the most common fruits are plantains, limes, bananas, zapote and passion fruit. While in South America, the following are common fruits: coconut, guavasteen, hog plum, pineapple and mango.

As for main dishes, the cuisine really varies by country. So, it will be best to take a tour from north to south to give you a feel for the local cuisine. In Mexico, there are the traditional foods we see in America such as guacamole, refried beans and salsa. However, most Mexican places in the United States are a mix of Texan and Mexican. Cecina is a smoked and dried meat that has been salted. It is most commonly either pork or beef. Empanadas are dough pies, filled with meats, cheeses and sometimes veggies and are fried. In Panama, Sancocho is a stew with many strong herbs and spices and combines corn, rice and chicken.

Cecina served with a flour tortilla and guacamole
Moving further south, in Peru, you can actually try dishes with fried Guinea pig in it, as Guinea pig is considered a delicacy there. Another dish which is considered famous in Peru is *Papa Rellena*, which are mashed potatoes rolled in meats and spices and then fried. While in Venezuela, you may wish to try *Tajadas*, which is one of the most popular dishes in the country. It is made by frying ripe plantain slices and is often one of the most common side dishes served. In Argentina, *Provaleta* is a large amount of melted cheese with oregano. Also, it is typical in Argentina to see lots of pasta and a large variety of it.

*Papa Rellena* in Peru

These are only a few of the millions of dishes that await you on your trip to Latin America. It is important to note that there will be fast food restaurants in every country, but the only way to truly expand your taste buds and mind is by trying the local cuisine. In addition, there are numerous websites and cookbooks which offer recipes for you to try cooking on your own. You can also try Latin American food at restaurants in the United States.

**Additional Reading:**

http://www.southamerica.cl/
http://elcomercio.pe/gastronomia?ref=nota_gastronomia&ft=menu_nay (in Spanish)

**Works Cited:**


Mexico:

Posted on March 24, 2014 by Michelle Hicks

History:

Mexico is located just south of the United States and is rich in culture and history. Around 100 B.C. is when the first inhabitants are believed to have lived in Mexico. Called the Olmecas, it is from these ancient peoples that it is believed that the great Aztec empire rose around the early A.D. years. The Aztec empire was situated in the center of what is today Mexico with the capital of Tenochtitlán. Another great pre-Colombian civilization that thrived in Mexico were the Mayans whose capital was Tikal. The Mayans were known for their intelligence, creating the first calendar and writing system thriving on the Yucatán Peninsula. However their civilization did not survive past the tenth century. In 1519, the Spanish conquerors came to the new world, specifically to Mexico. Led by Hernán Cortés, the Spanish troops had conquered much of the Aztec empire by 1574.

![Image of Chichén Itzá](image)

The great Aztec pyramid of Chichén Itzá

Throughout the Baroque period, there were constantly conflicts between the indigenous peoples and the Catholic Church beginning when they arrived in 1523. Also, the region experienced conflicts between Peninsulares (nobles born in Spain) and Criollos (nobles born in the new world). With the French (specifically Napoleonic) occupation of Spain in 1808, the Spanish grip on Mexico loosened. In 1810, Miguel Hidalgo, a Mexican priest, called a rebellion for Mexican independence. In 1821, Mexico finally gained their independence, however this came at a price. From about 1823 to 1909, Mexico saw a string of “Presidents”, meaning they did not act in a democratic manner, which finally
culminated into the Mexican Revolution in 1910. Lasting for ten years, the Mexican Revolution was a bloody and long conflict which ended in a constitutional republic.

**Business in Mexico:**
Mexican companies have a hierarchical approach to management and meetings. This means that the main decisions are made by the top officials in the organization with little power delegated to subordinates. Therefore, it may be beneficial to your company to send the top officials or top management of certain departments, as an alternative. In addition to the hierarchical style, titles are very important, such as deputy director of sales or senior executive director, be sure to use them when addressing not only your business partners but introducing yourself.

![Image of President Obama and President Enrique Peña Nieto](image.png)

**President Obama speaks with Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto in May of 2013; Even Obama has the demeanor of an International Business professional in negotiations**

For business attire, it is important to remember that Mexico has a hot climate year-round. Therefore try to buy and pack light, yet formal attire. The attire, in general, is very formal, for men this includes the entire business suit and cufflinks. For women, a dress is highly preferred with high heels. When conducting the actual business, it is important to get to know your business partner before delving into actual business. Business professionals of Mexican origin will only conduct business with people they trust and American business professionals should be prepared to spend the first two weeks building that trust. In addition, Mexicans prefer to not conduct business over the phone and see this as very impersonal. Based upon their cultural values, Mexicans see
face to face meetings as the most valuable way to communicate. Mexican business professionals have a hard time saying no to foreign business partners, so if you are negotiating and they don’t say no, do not take it as yes.

**Spanish Variations:**
One of the most important variations of the Spanish language in Mexico is the word *chaqueta*. It means something very offensive and should not be used at all to reference your jacket AT ALL. Instead the word *traje* can be used which references your suit as a whole. Below are other variations that one should be aware of if you plan on using Spanish.

**English-Traditional Spanish-Mexican Spanish**

- Glasses – *gafas* - *anteojos*
- Computer – *ordenador* – *computadora*
- Remote – *mando a distancia* – *control remoto*
- Peach – *durazno* – *melocotón*

**Additional Reading:**

http://www.visitmexico.com/
http://www.history.com/topics/mexico

**Works Cited:**


Dominican Republic:
Posted on April 6, 2014 by Michelle Hicks

History:
The Dominican Republic is an island located just south of the United States in the Gulf of Mexico. Taking up just about two thirds of the island also known as Hispaniola, it shares the island with the nation of Haiti. The island was discovered in 1492 by Columbus on his first voyage to the Americas, and the native people who inhabited the island, called Tainos, welcomed him. The island was used as a large sugar plantation and when native populations began to die out, the importation of African slaves began. Within the sixteenth century, the French arrived and started colonizing the western side of the island. By 1697, the Spanish eventually ceded control of the western third of the island to the French. In 1822, the island was conquered and held for over twenty years in Haitian power until 1844.

![Dominican Republic Map](https://via.placeholder.com/150)

The size of the Dominican Republic in respect to Haiti and the entire island

Upon the expulsion of the Haitians, the Dominican Republic was declared an independent state. However, the late 1800’s to early 1900’s were characterized by economic turmoil, threat from foreign intervention and internal disorders which led to US occupation of the country during World War I in 1916. However, this occupation was before US entrance into WWI. In 1930, the recently elected democratic government was taken over by Rafael L. Trujillo, an army commander. After his death by assassination in 1961, a republic was reestablished, but this was not without protest from opposition.
Two unsuccessful military coups caused the United States to intervene once more, and finally establish a free republic in the country.

**Business in the Dominican Republic:**
Dominican Republicans are very hierarchical, placing emphasis on meetings where the most important managers are present. In addition, it is important to note that attire for these meetings should be conservative yet still follow the typical formal business attire rules. They appreciate direct eye contact and see this as a clue that you are addressing them directly. Also, business meetings are often scheduled well in advance, two to three weeks, so make sure to clear your schedule and plan for the trip ahead of time.

![Image of a person](image.png)

**Typical model of the business gaze, eye contact should be directed either to the eyes, forehead or between the eyes**

Meetings are often conducted in an informal manner, with Dominicans interjecting thoughts or ideas as they occur. In addition, meetings first are informal, with small talk, as to build trust before conducting any business. When making actual negotiations be sure to schedule several and frequent meetings throughout your stay, as it may take several meetings to come to a final agreement. In addition to the negotiation process, the actual bureaucratic process may be delayed due to government structure and cultural traditions. If this process is rushed, an American business partner may be seen as rude or aggressive.
Spanish Variations:

Since the Dominican Republic was conquered by the Spanish in 1492, we currently see remnants of the old Spanish language dating back to the fifteenth century, present in the vocabulary of Dominicans today. In addition, the vocabulary and the Spanish language is adapted to fit the everyday lifestyles and traditions of these very conservative people. The language is adapted to not only social class but is tailored to the large African population which inhabits the country.

- **Mato**=tree
- **Tato**=good
- **Conuco**=Farm

Additional Reading:
http://www.dominicanrepublic.com/
http://dominicanrepublic-guide.info/travel.basics/

Works Cited:


History:
On Columbus’ fourth and final voyage to the new world in 1522, he landed in what is today known as Costa Rica. The Spanish were very optimistic about finding gold here, thus the name Costa Rica or “rich coast” in English however, they found very little actual gold. Instead, they turned to agriculture for profit. The Spanish governed this nation for three centuries under a military general. Costa Rica developed a rich agrarian society due to historical, social and individualistic factors within the country in the following centuries. Being located toward the southern part of Central America and isolated from Spanish control centers, Costa Rican society developed into an autonomous agrarian society. In addition, this developed due to their large lack of indigenous labor force.

Costa Rica touches both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans

Costa Rica joined other Central American countries in their declaration for independence from Spain in 1821. During their fight for independence, territorial disputes broke out between several of the Central American countries. Nicaragua annexed the northern providence of Guanacaste and as such, Costa Rica withdrew itself from the Central American Federation and declared its own independence. This declaration was followed by a period of peaceful democratic elections from 1899 to today. There were only two periods of unrest. The first involved Federico Tinoco taking control over the government in the midst of the First World War. The second involved an uprising led by José Figueres, where the results of the elections in 1948 were
questioned. This eventually led to a bloody but short civil war that ended with universal suffrage and the abolition of the military.

**Business in Costa Rica:**
Business etiquette in Costa Rica is very similar to the United States. However there are some very crucial differences that could make an American business professional uncomfortable or seem unprofessional. The first major difference one might notice is the idea of personal space. In the United States the idea of personal space is something very important and sort of a cultural “faux pas” if it is violated or entered. In Costa Rica, their definition of personal space is extremely different and often when meeting someone for the first time, a Costa Rican will touch you and invade the American’s definition of personal space. It is often uncomfortable but simply part of their culture.

This is a diagram of personal space in the US. If an American were to conduct business in Costa Rica, the Costa Rican may stand in the zone marked intimate distance to speak with the American.

In addition, family plays an extremely important role in Costa Rican society. Don’t be surprised if your Costa Rican counterpart asks you about your family. The Costa Rican culture is also considered a very machista. It is normal, in everyday life, for men to stare and make “cat-calls” at passing women. In addition, if this behavior is seen in the workplace, the women whom the behavior is being directed at should speak with management to clear up the issues and avoid further problems.
Spanish Variations:
As in many Latin American countries, the Spanish in Costa Rica has unique linguistic characteristics due to isolation and contact with indigenous languages. In addition, the Spanish language here is similar to its neighbors such as Panama, Nicaragua and Columbia. Also, the ‘r’ and ‘rr’ are more softly pronounced and can often sound like ‘j’ in English.

- ¡pura vida! – means “pure life,” but more than anything, it’s a way of life and is commonly used as a salutation or exclamation
- mae – can be used to mean “dude” between friends, or simply to refer to any man or woman
- tico/tica – Costa Ricans are often referred to as “tics”. This nickname is modified according to gender.
- aguevado/bostezo – bored or boring
- ¿cómo amaneció? – how are you this morning?
- dolor de jupa – a headache
- estar de chicha – to be angry
- estar de goma – to have a hangover
- ¡qué mala nota! – what a bad person!
- ¿qué m’iche? – what’s up?
- salirse del cauce – to overflow
- ¡sóquéle! – hurry up!, move it!
- jamar – to eat (comer)
- rulear – to sleep (dormir)

Additional Reading:

Works Cited:


Peru

Posted on April 27, 2014 by Michelle Hicks

History:

Peru has a rich and vibrant history that is defined not only by the indigenous people, who still play an important role today, but the Spanish, who came there in the sixteenth century. One of the most prominent indigenous groups in Peru are the Inca. They were highly developed and their empire spanned most of the Andes Mountains. The center of their empire was known as Cuzco or the “bellybutton” of the world. It is in 1523 when Francisco Pizarro lands on the coast of the country and begins to “exploit” the Incan people. By 1535, he had founded the city of Lima, the eventual capital of the country.

Macchu Picchu is the curious “lost city” of the Incan Civilization high in the Andes Mountains

The city of Lima became a Spanish “stronghold” during the Latin American wars for independence from 1820-1824. During this time, two foreigners, San Martín of Argentina and Simón Bolívar of Venezuela, led their struggle. Eventually, their independence was declared on July 28, 1821. This led to a three year conflict between Peruvian and Spanish forces which culminated in December of 1824, with the Spanish being defeated. After their victory, Peru entered into a few territorial disputes between many of its neighboring nations. A few of these were armed struggles and even involved external force from the United States. This eventually led to their instituting a democracy with free elections in the late 1970’s. However, the first few presidents of Peru were plagued with problems such as guerillas, economic instability and drug trafficking. However, in 2006, the most recent president to the country Alan Garcia Perez, won the popular vote and has shown major results in improving the conditions in the country.
Business in Peru:
All business relationships in Peru are based on trust. Trust is built by taking the time to get to know your business counterpart and build a relationship with them. In addition, as we have seen with many Latin American countries thus far, family has a high importance and may have a place in small talk when building a relationship with your Peruvian counterpart. Peru’s business society is very much hierarchical, which means that when you visit the country, a meeting should be reserved only for the company’s top officials. If you plan to bring a gift upon your first meeting, do not bring anything in odd numbers or a knife, which can symbolize the severing of the relationship.

Peru’s current vice-president, Marisol Espinoza, the first woman to hold the post and a step in the direction of inclusion of women in politics and business

It is considered rude in Peru to use your index finger to point at an object or even a person, which is even ruder. Instead place your palm downward, and move your fingers inward toward your hand in a sweeping motion. Peruvians take great pride in Spanish and even if you have no knowledge of the language, you should at least attempt to speak some Spanish. It is also important to note that if you are a woman, you may have issues connecting with or negotiating with Peruvians. It may be advisable to bring a male counterpart with you.
Spanish Variations:
Spanish is the most common language spoken throughout the country, however it is important to note that Quechua which is spoken by over 13% of the population. The Spanish spoken in Peru is mostly a costal Spanish, much like what is seen in Costa Rica today.

- ¿con quién paras? – who do you hang out with
- ¿manyas? / ¿computas? – do you understand?
- pues or pe – then, so – is used routinely in a post verbal position.
- ¡eres fresco! / ¡eres un conchudo! – you are shameless!
- me voy a mi jato a jatear – I am going home to sleep
- llego al toque – I’ll be right there, I’ll be there quickly
- ¡qué cuero/churro qué es! – how good-looking/handsome he/it is
- ¡qué roche! – how embarrassing!
- calato – nude
- chibolo/a – child, adolescent, immature.
- paltearse – to be confused or scared, (comes from the word for avocado)
- palta – avocado (comes from the quechua word for avocado – also used in southern countries of South America)
- latear – to walk

Additional Reading:
http://www.peru.travel/?internacional

Works Cited:


Venezuela:

Posted on April 27, 2014 by Michelle Hicks

History:

Venezuela is a country with a very unique and tumultuous history within South America. There are many groups which inhabited the area where Venezuela is currently located; however there were four dominant groups: the Chibchas, the Caribbeans, the Arawaks and the Wayuu. All of these groups of people were great hunters and farmers, living off the land and creating some of the first farming methods used by the Spanish. It was in 1498, on Columbus’ third voyage where he landed on the coast of what is today Venezuela. Other prominent Spaniards who eventually helped the Spanish to conquer the indigenous of the area were: Américo Vespucio, Juan de la Costa, Alonso de Ojeda and Vicente Yáñez Pinzón.

During the conquest, most of the indigenous were killed off by either disease or famine. These people were replaced by African slaves so the Spanish could exploit the land and resources. Since 1520, the indigenous and eventually African slaves organized uprisings against the Spanish in the hopes of independence. However, they did not gain independence until 1811 officially. However, their fight for independence lasted until 1821, due to remnants of the Spanish conquest remaining within Venezuelan society. The movement for total independence was led by Simon Bolívar, who was a “patriot” for many other Latin American countries as well.

The famous Angel Falls in Venezuela is the world’s tallest waterfall
After independence, a series of drastic changes took place throughout the mid 1800’s and early 1900’s. The first was the Federal War, which demanded many social reforms and even distribution of lands and led to the modern Venezuela we see today. The second change was a restructuring of society, which gave power to the rising middle class. This eventually led to the dictatorship of Juan Vicente Gómez, who ruled for nearly thirty years. Today, Venezuela has free elections and recently elected President Nicolás Maduro in late 2013. Oil is a major commodity and part of their economy and the US is one of their major trade partners for this reason.

**Business in Venezuela:**
One of the most important things to note about conducting business in Venezuela is punctuality is highly valued and respected. Therefore, it is advised that you show up early for meetings, usually about five minutes. Another important item is the fact that many Venezuelan business people find status an important part of business. Therefore, jewelry and makeup should be worn for women and men should be sure to adorn cufflinks and watches. It is important to note that you should wait for permission from your Venezuelan counterpart to address them by their first name. The same rule can apply when they address you.

**Former President Hugo Chávez and his family, which are an important part of Venezuelan life**
Conducting business in Venezuela is highly based on nepotism, so don’t be surprised if you are in a meeting and some of your counterparts are related to one another. However, it is important to note that even though nepotism is seen throughout many institutions in the country, favors are only granted in special circumstances and corruption is a sensitive topic. Don’t be too aggressive in conversations or negotiations; let the Venezuelans take the lead.

**Spanish Variations:**
Spanish in Venezuela takes on a unique blend due to its geographic location. The differences in the language are relatable to not only the Caribbean region but Central America as well. Also, the Spanish here borrows words from other languages such as: Italian, French and English. The Spanish here was influenced not only by their indigenous populations, but African languages as well.

- ¡anda vale! / ¡chochale vale! – these are fillers in sentences that have no specific significance.
- **vaina** – exclamation of something negative (¡que vaina!) or a word used to mean ‘thing’ (esa vaina – that thing)
- **hablame el mío / la mía** – what’s up, what’s going on? (talk to me dude)
- **está a pata de minga** – it’s right next door
- **jalar bola** – to sweet talk, to lick (someone’s) boots
- **llego el pacheco** – typical saying from Caracas and the surroundings meaning that the cold has arrived, winter is coming.
- **calarse** – to put up with something
- **corotos / macundales** – junk / trash
- **estoy guayabo** – I have the blues, I am heart-broken
- **guachiman** – watch-man
- **deja el chigüireo** – stop being stupid
- **carajito** – child, kid
- **bonche** – party
- **arrecho** – angry/tough

**Additional Reading:**
*It is very important to note that at the time of publication, the US has placed a travel advisory on travel to Venezuela, therefore the following links are websites concerning that warning or ways to keep you safe in the country*
Works Cited:


Argentina
Posted on May 1, 2014 by Michelle Hicks

History:
The Spanish navigator Juan Diaz de Solias visited landed in what is now Argentina in 1516. Throughout the next 60 years, Spain eventually established a permanent colony called Buenos Aires. Eventually, the city of Buenos Aires was incorporated into a vice royalty named Rio de Plata in 1776. Buenos Aires became a major port, flourishing in trade and commerce. Eventually, Argentina declared independence in 1816, however, this did not have an immediate impact. Federalists and Centralists waged war against each other for about 2 decades until a modern constitution was instituted in 1853 and a unity government was set up in 1861. Throughout the late 18th and early 19th century, Argentina became a major place for not only foreign investment but for immigration from Europe.

Argentina with respect to all of Latin America

Agriculture and infrastructure grew rapidly during this time period as well, making Argentina one of the ten wealthiest nations in the world. This rapid growth was eventually brought to a halt by the Great Depression, which originally started in the United States and spread to other areas of the world. Therefore, the government in the 1930’s in Argentina tried to usher in social and political change which led to economic
instability. This eventually led to a military coup and emergence of Domingo Peron as the government’s leader. He was elected to office twice before in 1955, he was exiled by the country’s military. After two more military coups and much political and economic turmoil, Argentina is today a thriving and prosperous country.

**Business in Argentina:**

To begin with, in the initial meeting with Argentinians, the eldest of the group are introduced first. This is because elders in Argentinian society have a high place and are treated with the utmost respect. In addition, as an American, you should wait for your host or hostess to introduce you to your business counterparts. Also, when first meeting an Argentinian, maintaining eye contact is important and is a sign of interest and will help to build trust. Titles are also an important entity in an introduction and should be remembered.

**Elders have a very important place in Argentinian society.**

If you tend to yawn or are tired during business meetings, your hand should cover your mouth. Also, it is considered very rude to put your feet on any furniture including:
chairs, sofas and tables. Negotiations with Argentinians can be a lengthy process as they tend to examine the finer details of a contract before reaching a consensus. In addition, the final decision will be made by the highest figure involved in the negotiations as Argentina is a country whose business practices are very hierarchical.

**Spanish Variations:**

The Spanish of Argentina is strongly influenced by one dialect called Rioplatense, which is mainly spoken in the *Rio de Plata* area of the country. There are some small indigenous influences on the language that still remain, but for the most part, the Spanish here is influenced by European languages, mostly Italian.

- **che** – an interjection used mostly to refer to ‘friend’, ‘pal’, ‘man’, but also as an exclamation or to emphasize understanding such as ‘right’, ‘yes’
- **se armo un quilombo** – it was a disaster (quilombo originally meant brothel in ‘Lunfardo’ slang but today is used to define disorder, problem)
- **te lo digo posta** – I’m telling you seriously / the truth
- **vos sabés** – you know (example of Argentinian ‘voseo’ as opposed to “tú sabes” in normal ‘tuteo’ or “vosotros sabéis” in Spain)
- **boludo** – a vulgar word for idiot, stupid, good-for-nothing. It is also used affectionately amongst friends and can be used as an affirmation.
- **boliche** – a discoteca or bar
- **purrete/pibe/guri** – different slang to say child, young person, immature...
- **bardear** – to insult, to make a mess
- **zarpado** – amazing, extraordinary, big

**Additional Reading:**

http://www.turismo.gov.ar/eng/menu.htm
http://www.countryreports.org/country/Argentina.htm

**Works Cited:**


Helpful Resources for Any International Business Professional

Posted on May 2, 2014 by Michelle Hicks

To wrap up this blog, I believe that it is beneficial for any business professional to be aware of the current conditions in the country in which they are traveling to. Travel.state.gov is a great website run by the United States government in which provides up to the day travel information for countries around the world. Many times, the government will provide information including travel warnings and advisories. Most recently, the US government has issued a travel warning for Colombia, based on many factors within the country. In addition, the website provides information about documents needed to travel to a certain country and important laws to abide by.

Another important website which can be useful in background research is the World Fact Book through the CIA. The CIA provides basic information about every country in the world including economic, demographic and political information in a detailed manner. This website can be very useful to learn more about the possible threats and opportunities a country may present. In addition, the website is also a great source which provides basic information including a brief history about the country and the inner workings of the government. Below are the two links for the websites addressed above.

http://travel.state.gov/content/travel/english.html

Reflection:

To reflect upon my project, as a whole it has been a very challenging yet rewarding endeavor. In my project proposal of last semester, I did say that the posts would be posted every two weeks on Friday; however that did not work out, in reality. Having five other classes to balance along with working on my project, at times, Friday’s were simply not convenient to research and write a post. In addition, I did say that there would be a division where I would start with two basic posts about problem associated with traveling overseas. Then I would move on to actual postings about countries in Latin America divided by area, such as Central America, the Caribbean, and South America. I did stay true to this, writing on a total of six countries within Latin America.

I would have liked to write on all the countries of Latin America, however with balancing the work of other courses, this was simply not possible. The countries I chose give a great representation of the area in which they are situated. In addition, it is my hope that maybe someone will come across the blog and wish to continue my work where I left off. The original purpose of the blog was to attract membership for Global Management and Leadership Society. However, throughout the semester, I found it difficult to attract readers to the blog. Originally, I started out reminding officers and members of the organization to check it out at meetings in January and early February. I also encouraged comments on posts and feedback. However, after an initial flurry of support and “promises”, nothing ever really “panned” out.

The only comments I ever got on my posts seemed to be spam or genuine comments from people I have never meet. In addition, I gained feedback from both of my advisors throughout the semester; it was just oral and not written. However, even though the blog did not serve it intended purpose; personally, I learned a lot about not only the history, but conducting business in these six countries. When I set out to come up with a project idea, I wanted to combine my major and minor so if the original intention fell through, I still benefited from the project. In addition, I do believe that the project has helped me with my future plans in which I want to translate for companies who have operations in countries where Spanish is spoken.

I simply cannot thank both of my advisors enough. Cynthia Whipple brought her expertise in the form of the Spanish language and grammatical aspects of the English
language. Man Zhang brought expertise in the form of her business and management experience. Both of my advisors have been extremely helpful in helping me realize my honors project goals and helping me produce a project that I am proud of. In addition, I am extremely proud of the final product, which I have put together in this document. It has been extremely challenging doing research and making sure my sources and information adhere to the honors guidelines, but I believe that I have done an excellent job.