

Cultural Aspects of Egypt

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### **Cultural Aspects of Egypt**

Cultural examination of a prospective country to invest is critical to provide background information to acquaint the investor with various aspects of the culture of the country. Cultural background checks are significant for organizations wishing to invest in IT business in Egypt as they get to understand the effect of the prevailing culture on the firm. Also, the investors know the standard etiquette expected in the host nation especially on work-related issues and eliminate excessive effects of culture shocks.

#### **Geographic Location and Language**

Egypt, whose capital city is Cairo, is a North African country with desert-like climatic conditions consisting of long periods of dry summers and considerable winters. The country borders Gaza Strip in Palestine, Sudan, Israel and Libya. 95 % of the population is Muslims in religion while Christians and other groups practice the other 5% (Moscovitch, 2007). Egyptians are Arabic speakers, and both Coptic Christian and Muslims use in their daily communication and religious activities.

#### **The Egyptian Society and Culture**

Islam, being the primary religion guides the social, political, and economic lifestyles of Egyptians. Religious beliefs of Islam are depicted in the way of life in Egypt (abdelrahman, 2006). Every Friday, businesses are closed as it is a holy day for Muslims all over the world. Additionally, business activities scale down during the holy month of Ramadan because religion dictates that Muslims can only work for six hours a day. However, Egyptians attach great value to family attachments. The nuclear family, extended family and kinships dictate one's social relations. An interesting aspect of Egyptian values is their attachment to honor. Honor is the determinant of personal relations and honoring others is a right as well as an obligation. As such,

they are friendly to family, friends and guests. A man does not take back his word as it dishonorable even to family members, and therefore, his word is taken to be a bond. Egyptians practice social class system.

### **Egyptian Customs and Etiquette**

During a meeting with a close person, it is okay to kiss on one cheek, but a man does not extend a hand to greet a woman unless she offers hers first. Egyptians expect visitors to come with fine chocolate when visiting their homes (Moscovitch, 2007). Additionally, gift is only handed over using the right hand unless they are heavy. Egyptians consider it table manners when you wait for the host to give directions of where to sit. Once seated, use the right hand and ensure leaving a substantial amount once done as the host will keep on adding food thinking the visitor is not finished.

### **Business Etiquette in Egypt**

Egyptians are visual people, and it is advisable to look presentable to earn trust. As Egyptians trust relationships, it is important that businessman creates a wide network (IBP, Inc., 2015). When meeting with potential businessmen, offer the deepest admiration to the eldest person as is their spokesman as hierarchy demands. Arrange for business meetings early in advance and reconfirm attendance several days before the business meeting. Meetings are attended after a thorough background check so that the businessmen assign you a social class. Again, Egyptians hold business meetings in public, and that involves a lot of interruptions. Business negotiations take a lot of time due to the open door policy that allows for lengthy deliberations. As they are great hagglers, it is always to have an elderly person on your side to save time on negotiations and conclude a business deal quickly.

References

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Moscovitch, A. (2007). *Egypt: The culture*. Crabtree publishing Company.

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