

7 Hacks to Winning Negotiations with Arab

Negotiations with Arabs is very tricky so we have gathered seven hacks to know how to win your negotiations with your Arabic partners.

1- Personalized Business Relationships

In the Arab world, family and friends always come first, and this is usually how the Arabs takes their business decisions. It is therefore crucial to establish and sustainably maintain a solid relationship with your Arab business. Holding several meetings and maintaining a personal relationship would enable you to have an easier negotiation and less tension in addition to a long-term business relationship and support.

The Arabs appreciate the personal face-to-face meeting, rather than any other contact, while maintaining a consistent contact by phone or email can help in keeping a solid business relationship.



Regular business trips to the Arab world would significantly impact your relationships with the Arab contacts. One or two business trips in a year will not be enough to create a sustainable relationship with your contacts and reflect your interest to establish a long-term business in the Arab world.

Your on-ground presence can be a success factor among your competition who may not be able to maintain such a continuous presence. In addition to this, your presence will consequently enable you to expand your Arab network and help you to have solid connections that will reflect on your business success.

Although the Arab businessmen majority can speak English, it is important to at least learn some Arabic everyday phrases and idioms and implement them in your conversations, this attempt will be very beneficial in your business negotiations.

2- Use of Middlemen

Having access to a middleman, who has many influential contacts, will help you with new business opportunities, negotiations and closing deals. It is a part of the Arab business culture; new business relationship usually starts from the recommendation of a middle man. So, it is always important to grow your Arab contacts, so you can be able to use Middlemen to close your deals.



3- Time Management

In the Arab world, time has a different perspective, but your keys to success are patience and fixable scheduling. When you finish all your plans and negotiations, but you are still waiting for the deal to be signed without a clear deadline, this is considered to be the normal in the Arab business world. That's why you have to be patient to a great extent as you will be waiting "God willing" (Inscha 'Allaah). Then, after a long time of waiting, your Arabic partner would like to push things to work really fast and you have to be prepared to work with adventurous deadlines that's why having a flexible plan to launch your business will be very efficient. You have also to note that a sentence as "I have no time" is considered to be extremely rude in the Arab world. Moreover, family commitments can be considered as an apology for delaying or cancelling any business meeting, it is not also considered as unprofessional as the family is always considered the highest priority for Arabs.

4- Awareness of Cultural Characteristics

Long ago, the Arabian business culture was based on trade and mobility and as the mobility is not relevant anymore, so they are focusing more on trade. Therefore, they always consider buying and selling is more of a matter of person to person. Therefore, spending some personal time with your business partner will be very beneficial as having a personal tie will always indicate a long-term business relationship.

5- Compliance with Religious Principles

As the majority in the Arab world are Muslims, there are few things to consider before dealing with Arabs. There are some basics in Islam that you need to note as the ban of alcohol and pork, so you should never offer any to a Muslim unless they ask. Also, if you are planning a business dinner, make sure that the restaurant you chose is offering Halal options. In addition to this, when dealing with women business partners, you have to make sure that you are always leaving a distance while standing and you should never ask for a handshake until she gives a hand first.

6- Hierarchical Structures

As the Arabic world was established based on tribes, you have to do extensive research on the leading families in the country you are investing in. Knowing the families, their important members, the decision makers and their relationship with other families will definitely be beneficial in starting your business with your Arab partner. Having a Middleman will always be helpful in introducing you to the right people and would also give you more info about each family and their rivals. Moreover, being present in the social events will grow your contacts significantly and enhance your current relationship with your Arab partners.



7- Indirect Negotiation Style and Usage of Metaphors

In the Arab countries, the negotiation best practice is the indirect style of negotiation, as the direct demands or competitive style of negotiation usually have a negative effect on your partner and considered to be rude. When refusing any idea or suggestion by your partner, you should not refuse by a direct “No” as it is considered rude, it would be better if you replied indirectly with a diplomatic reply. Therefore, to win a conversation with your Arab partners, it would be better to have an indirect communication and be able to use and understand metaphors, signals and comparisons.