

HOW TO DO BUSINESS IN THE UK

A CULTURAL GUIDE

FACTS

- #5 LARGEST ECONOMY IN THE WORLD
- ACCESSIBLE LANGUAGE
- GATEWAY TO INTERNATIONAL MARKETS
- LONDON WORLD CITY
- INCOMPARABLE DIVERSITY
- HOME TO ONE OF WORLD'S LEADING FINANCIAL CENTRES
- AT THE FOREFRONT OF R&D
- #8 IN THE WORLD ON THE EASE OF DOING BUSINESS INDEX



MAIN ECONOMIC ATTRIBUTES

- The UK is a **service-oriented economy** (the service industries account for 79% of GDP), but also a leader in **engineering and manufacturing**.
- It is a country of **freelancers** and individual consultants.
- There is a booming **start up culture** and an appetite for **innovation and creative solutions**.
- The UK presents an outstanding density of **incubators, accelerators, and other open innovation programs**.
- 99.3% of UK businesses are **small and medium enterprises (SMEs)**, and make up 60% of private sector employment.

BUSINESS ETIQUETTE

- The use of **first names** is common.
- Contrary to the custom in Switzerland, the salutation "Doctor" is generally only used by medical doctors.
- **Politeness** is a key aspect of British business culture. Never state dislike or disapproval directly.
- Don't overestimate someone's interest in your ideas. The British are often open to discussion and willing to listen even when their level of interest is not high.
- **Patience** is a British virtue, don't pressure anyone into making a decision.

WORKING CULTURE

- **Working hours** are typically from 9-6 and working from home is common.
- **Business** is often conducted **outside of the office**.
- **Hierarchy** is important, yet the concept of **teamwork** is a crucial aspect of British work culture.
- **Social media** is an indispensable channel to converse with clients.

THE ART OF CONVERSATION

- **Humor and understatements** are often used in British business communication. You will need to read between the lines.
- **Pub culture** is an integral part of British life. Going to the pub after work is still a popular relationship-building activity.
- **Meet-up groups** provide informal **networking opportunities** that must not be neglected.
- **Networking events, trade shows, fairs and conferences** are a highly effective way to gauge potential market interest, and the variety of events the UK offers is exceptional.

SWISS BUSINESS HUB UK

The Swiss Business Hub UK + Ireland is the key contact point for Swiss and Liechtenstein SMEs looking for export opportunities in the United Kingdom + Ireland market. Our team provides individualised consulting and expertise for current and aspiring exporters. For any queries on this fact sheet or enquiries about export opportunities please contact lon.sbhuk@eda.admin.ch