

Diversity Awareness & Understanding

GERMANY

Macomb County Defining Business + Life

Many Cultures, One Home

Map of Germany



Geography

Germany ranks as the seventh largest country in Europe with a total area of 137,827 sq mi (Compared to Macomb County 482 sq mi). Berlin is the capital and largest city.

Introduction

The Federal Republic of Germany, centrally located in Europe, has been viewed as a crossroads for many peoples and ideas that have had a profound impact on our world. Boasting a storied and rich history, German culture and society has, and continues to impact civilization through literature, art, music, and architecture. Germans demand high living standards, plentiful leisure time, and comprehensive social services. Evolving into one of the most industrialized and urbanized nations, Germany is home to the world's third largest economy fortified by iron, steel, machinery, and automobile industries. Viewed as an economic powerhouse in the global marketplace, Germany is a driving force behind greater economic integration and cooperation throughout Europe and the world.

Macomb County Profile: Persons of German Descent

Total population	189,358
Male.....	92,572
Female.....	96,786
Under 18 years old.....	48,428
18 to 64 years.....	120,113
65 years and over.....	20,817
Speak a language other than English at home (population 5 years and over).....	7,381



Germany's Flag

Languages

German is the official language of Germany with over 95% of the population speaking it as their primary language. There are small indigenous language minorities such as Sorbs, Danes, and Romani spoken by less than 1 percent of the population. The various immigrant populations also retain their native languages including Turkish, Greek, Italian, Spanish, and Croatian.

Society, Culture & Religion

German culture values careful planning and separation of one's business and personal life, which provides a sense of security. At the end of the business day, you are expected to leave the office and enjoy any leisure time you may have. There is great pride in one's home, which allows for relaxation and expression of individualism. About 90 percent of the population is covered by comprehensive compulsory insurance for sickness, accidents, disability, long-term care, and retirement. Most of the workforce is employed in the services sector. Almost all Germans profess a love of nature, enjoying outdoor activities such as hiking, biking, camping and skiing. The largest religious group in Germany is Protestants, with 37 percent of the German population. Roman Catholics make up the second largest religious group comprising of 35 percent of the German population. Other religious minorities include Muslims and Jews.

Etiquette & Customs

- Greetings are mostly formal with titles being very important. Say 'Herr' (Mr.) or 'Frau' (Mrs.) and the person's title and their surname, until invited to use their first name. A handshake accompanied by a nod of the head is an acceptable greeting in Germany.
- Germans keep a slightly larger personal space around them; about six inches beyond handshaking distance.
- Never talk to someone while chewing gum.
- When entering or leaving a shop it is considered polite to say hello and goodbye to the sales clerk.
- Extended, direct eye contact is expected when conversing. Failure to meet a German's gaze will give the impression that you are untrustworthy.
- Friendships are not developed quickly, but they are deep and highly selective.
- Privacy is very important to Germans.

General Business Practices

- Punctuality is immensely important to Germans whether for business or social engagement.
- Appointments should be made well in advance; at least one week.
- Germans are analytical and conceptual in their information processing; therefore the pace of German corporate decision-making is methodical.
- Germans depend on objective facts. Emotional involvement is unacceptable in negotiations.
- Once a position is decided upon, Germans rarely budge, which gives Germans a reputation for being tough negotiators.
- Decision-making is slow and involved, as all peripheral concerns must be taken care of in the process.
- Directness is appreciated, while exaggeration and hype are looked down upon in Germany.
- Germans take a lot of time to establish close business relationships.
- Educational and business credentials are highly respected in Germany
- Business is serious; Germans do not appreciate humor in a business context.
- If a problem arises, be prepared to explain it clearly, in detail, and unemotionally.
- Expect a great deal of written communication and to maintain a record of decisions and discussions.
- Agendas, contracts, and final decisions are rigorous and strictly adhered to.
- Business dress in Germany is very conservative. Virtually all businessmen wear dark suits, sedate ties, and white shirts. Women dress equally conservatively, in dark suits, pantsuits, and blouses of neutral color.



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Sources:

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