

Diversity Awareness & Understanding

MEXICO

Macomb County Defining Business + Life

Many Cultures, One Home

Map of Mexico



Geography

Mexico is the fifth largest country in the western hemisphere covering an area of 758,452 sq mi (compared to Macomb County 482 sq mi). Mexico is characterized by extraordinary diversity in topography and climate. The nation's capital, Mexico City, is one of the largest cities in the world.

Introduction

With a rich heritage and emerging economy Mexico has begun to position itself as a global player. Fortified with rich natural resources, such as petroleum, minerals, and natural gas, and a strong trading relationship with the United States, Canada, and other Latin American countries Mexico has modernized its economy into one of the 15 largest in the world. Mexican society has also evolved through the mixture of numerous cultural, ethnic, and political influences. With a booming population, which has reached over 108 million people focused on attaining better employment opportunities, educational experiences, and health care access, the influence of Mexican culture will undoubtedly be felt throughout the world.

Macomb County Profile: Persons of Mexican Descent

Total population	8,274
Male.....	4,301
Female.....	3,973
Under 18 years old.....	3,125
18 to 64 years.....	4,891
65 years and over.....	258
Speak a language other than English at home (population 5 years and over).....	3,106



Mexico's Flag

Languages

Spanish control of Mexico led to the dominance of the Spanish language, Mexico's official language, throughout the country. Alongside the dominance of the Spanish language there are as many as 100 Native American languages still spoken in Mexico.

Society, Culture & Religion

Mexicans hold family life in high regard, as it is the center of social structure and the single most important institution in Mexico. Family sizes are traditionally large, and extended families are as important as immediate families in providing stability. Mexicans consider it a duty to help family members in any way they can. Mexicans uphold hierarchical and vertically structured relationships. Those who are on the top of social structures are looked at for guidance, and usually have the most decision-making power. Mexicans are very aware of where each individual fits into a particular hierarchy, and view it as disrespectful to break the chain of such hierarchies. Christian denominations comprise the majority of Mexico's religious affiliations. About 89 percent of the Mexican population identifies itself as Catholic. Protestant religions have become more prevalent in Mexico with 3 percent of the population practicing some Protestant denomination.

Etiquette & Customs

- Mexicans find continued, intense eye contact to be aggressive and threatening.
- In Mexico it is appropriate for men to shake hands when greeting.
- Women will often pat each other on the right forearm or shoulder instead of shaking hands.
- Titles are very important in Mexico.
- When addressing someone, use titles until that person invites you to use their first name.
- Conversations take place at a much closer distance than what is considered comfortable for most Americans.
- At social gatherings give a slight nod to everyone as you enter the room. In Mexico it is customary to greet and shake hands with each individual.
- When dining, do not sit down or start eating until the host does so first.

General Business Practices

- The business atmosphere in Mexico is friendly, gracious, and unhurried.
- Personal friendships are vital to business in Mexico. Mexicans look for long-term relationships based on mutual trust and responsibility.
- When doing business in Mexico be warm and personal, yet retain your dignity, courtesy, and diplomacy.
- Mexico's long and unhappy history with the United States makes most Mexicans suspicious of United States businesspeople, and, to a lesser extent, of foreigners from any industrialized country.
- Punctuality is not strictly adhered to in daily life.
- Make appointments approximately two weeks prior to your arrival in Mexico, then reconfirm one week before the appointment.
- Mexicans avoid saying "no". Get all agreements in writing, as the "yes" may have been said out of politeness and the agreement later reversed.
- When negotiating emphasize the trust and mutual compatibility of the two companies.
- In general Mexican businesses are status conscious. To ensure effective business relationships high ranking officials should be a part of your team.
- The issue of financing the cost of foreign goods and services is a major barrier in many business relationships, therefore be prepared with creative funding solutions.
- Men should dress in conservative business attire comprised of dark suits and ties. Women should also dress conservatively with suits, pantsuits, or dresses.



Disclaimer

People may use portions of this brochure for other purposes but please refer to original sources listed on the main brochure for accuracy and relevancy.

Sources:

1. Encarta – www.encyclopedia.msn.com/text_761576758_0/Mexico.html
2. Kwintessential Cross Cultural Solutions – www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/mexico-country-profile.html
3. Morrison, T. and Conaway, W.A. (2006). *Kiss, Bow, or Shake Hands* (2nd ed). Adams Media: Avon, Massachusetts
4. United States Census Bureau 2000 Census – Demographic Profile Summary File 2, Summary File 3, Summary File 4 – www.factfinder.census.gov

