

Business etiquette, language & culture

Background

Denmark is world-renowned for its focus on sustainability, new Nordic food, bikes, classic furniture design and for being the happiest country in the world.

In Denmark people strive to create a better environment by developing new and greener ways of living, greener transportation, town planning, industry and more. Along with the sustainable agenda, Denmark is a country with great cultural surplus, because of its wealth and prosperity. Art is often supported by the government and this gives abundant opportunities for artists to develop and express their creativity.

Many think of furniture design and architecture when they think of Danish lifestyle and culture. Yet today, Denmark is perhaps equally famous for food, films and sports. The world's best restaurant "Noma" has introduced a whole new way of cooking with New Nordic Cuisine. Filmmakers such as Lars von Trier and Susanne Bier have won a multitude of international awards, and one of the world's best female tennis players, Caroline Wozniacki, is Danish.

[Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark]

Money

The currency in Denmark is the Danish Krone, not the Euro.

The Danish language

The Danish language is a northern Germanic language. The Danish alphabet has 29 letters and uses the basic 26-letter Latin alphabet plus the three additional letters Æ, Ø, Å. Danish (Dansk) is one of the North Germanic languages (also called Scandinavian languages).

Over 98% of the population speak Danish, although around 20,000 people speak German in the Nord-Schleswig region bordering Germany. Greenlandic is an Inuit language, spoken by approx. 0.1% of the population.

If you are selling into Denmark, it is important to use Danish for all your communication materials, which will need to be of a very high quality. Do not use internet translation sites, which are not always accurate. Consider what type of future relationship you want to have in Denmark, and how much Danish you might need. For translation enquiries contact AST Language Services.

As a common courtesy, as a UK business wishing to succeed in Denmark you will find that understanding and speaking a little Danish – although possibly not essential – does indicate that you are serious about doing business there, and shows that you are keen to understand and appreciate their local culture.

Danish Society & Culture

Women in Danish society Denmark is a very egalitarian society. Maternity and Paternity Leave are particularly generous in Denmark, and fathers share many of the child-rearing responsibilities.

Women are highly regarded in business, with equal pay and access to senior positions, and a large number of organisations allow flexible working hours to assist working mothers manage both a family and a career.

Danish values Most Danes are modest, and are more concerned about group rather than individual needs, talking in moderate tones and not doing anything to call attention to themselves.

Children are raised to be independent from an early age, and attitudes to marriage are fairly liberal. Many couples live together and start a family without marrying. Homosexuality is legal and Danish law allows same-sex marriages

Etiquette & customs

Greeting Greetings tend to be casual, often using first names. Handshakes are fairly firm, combined with direct eye contact and a smile. Always shake hands with women first.

Dining If invited to a Danish home for dinner you should bring a gift for the host, such as flowers, chocolate or wine.

Business protocol

Titles In business, professional titles are often used followed by the surname, or simply Herr (Mr), Fru (Mrs) or Froken (Miss) plus the surname instead. It is not unusual to move to first names quickly, but best to wait until invited to do so.

Meetings

- Always make appointments first, and confirm in writing

- Avoid arranging meetings between mid-June and mid-August as many Danes are on holiday
- Always arrive at meetings on time – the Danes you are meeting will be punctual
- On arrival, shake hands with women first

Business negotiation Danes are keen on attention to detail, careful planning, consultation and consensus, considering concrete facts rather than novel sales techniques:

- Always agree and send an agenda before the meeting, and keep to it
- Decisions are made after consulting with everyone involved
- Ensure your presentations are clear, using facts and charts
- Maintain eye contact while speaking

Public holidays 2016

Date:

Day:

Holiday:

24th December

Saturday

Christmas Eve

25th December

Sunday

Christmas Day

26th December

Monday

2nd Day of Christmas

Public holidays 2017

Date:

Day:

Holiday:

1st January

Sunday

New Year's Day

13th April

Thursday

Maundy Thursday

14th April

Friday

Good Friday

16th April

Sunday

Easter Sunday

17th April

Monday

Easter Monday

12th May

Friday

Prayer Day

25th May

Thursday

Ascension Day

4th June

Sunday

Whit Sunday

5th June

Monday

Whit Monday

5th June

Monday

Constitution Day

24th December

Sunday

Christmas Eve

25th December

Monday

Christmas Day

26th December

Tuesday

2nd Day of Christmas

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