

CORPORATE CULTURE IN SWEDEN





A white, circular button with a red prohibition sign (a red circle with a diagonal slash) in the center. The word "TABOO" is written in bold, black, uppercase letters across the center of the button, partially overlapping the red slash.

TABOO

Cultural taboos

- Swedes avoid arguing, especially with visitors. If a discussion appears to be turning into an argument, do not be offended if a Swede abruptly changes the subject.
- Do not use a lot of superlatives when speaking. The Swedes are opposed to stretching the truth. The marks of rank or status are disliked.
- Do not get too personal. Topics like family, income and personal background should be avoided.
- Swedes are very proud of their society, so it is wise not to criticize their way of life, welfare system, economy, government or culture.
- Racist or sexist jokes are not tolerated.



Punctuality

In Sweden, as in Finland and Denmark, punctuality is very important both when doing business and making social engagements. It follows that you should never be late. If you must be late for any reason it is polite to phone and let someone know. Being late is seen as poor etiquette.

Scheduling and planning are sometimes mentioned as part of the Swedish 'way of life'. As a general rule spontaneity and improvisation are not the strongest characteristics of Swedes.



Gift giving

In business dealings, gifts are rarely given at the beginning of the relationship. Wait for your Swedish partner to give you a gift first. Although exchanging gifts is not common at the beginning of a business relationship, it is appropriate when you are closing your transaction.

At social events gifts are expected. For instance, when you are invited to a dinner, flowers, liquor, wine, cake, or chocolates are appreciated by the hostess. Chrysanthemums, white lilies, red roses or orchids should be avoided as they are associated with other occasions. Family is very important to Swedes, so it is much appreciated if you bring small gifts for the family, e.g. candy for the children.

Holiday cards are appropriate, particularly as a thank you for the recipient's business during the previous year, and these should be mailed in time to be received the week before Christmas. It is customary to exchange small gifts at Christmas among colleagues and business partners, too.



Corruption

Sweden is one of the least corrupt countries in the world and there is very strong public opinion against all modes of corruption. Since 1962, the Swedish criminal code has included sanctions against any person receiving or giving any kind of bribe. This is good news for investors who want to set up a business in Sweden.



DRESS

CODE



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Dress code

Sweden is one of the European countries where a casual dress code is the most popular in the work place. However, for business appointments you should dress more conservatively. Swedes themselves are usually fashionably well-dressed in public. Appropriate clothes would be a dark suit and tie for men, and a business suit or skirt and blouse for women. Trousers are also acceptable for businesswomen in Sweden. Swedes value quality and that is also true when it comes to clothes.

**THANK YOU FOR
ATTENTION!**