

DOING BUSINESS IN THE PHILIPPINES



TOGETHER WE ARE STRONG

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Facts and Statistics	
1.	Population : 103,775,002 (estimated as of July-2012)
2.	Currency Exchange Rates HKD : \$1 : ₱5.51 (HKD : PHP) EURO : €1 : ₱56.14 (EUR : PHP)
3.	Foreign Exchange Control: No
4.	Corporate Tax Rates (approx.): 30%
5.	Value Added Taxes (if applicable): 12% or 7% or 0% (in some cases, foreign investors are zero-rated)
Meeting Etiquette	
1.	Initial greetings are formal and follow a set protocol of greeting the eldest or most important person first.
2.	A handshake, with a welcoming smile, is the standard greeting.
3.	Close female friends may hug and kiss when they meet.
Gift Giving Etiquette	
1.	If you are invited to a Filipino home for dinner bring sweets or flowers to the hosts. If you give flowers, avoid chrysanthemums and white lilies.
2.	You may send a fruit basket after the event as a thank you but not before or at the event, as it could be interpreted as meaning you do not think that the host will provide sufficient hospitality.
3.	There are no color restrictions for the wrapping paper and gifts are not opened when received.
Dinning Etiquette	
1.	If you are invited to a Filipino's house, never refer to your host's wife as the hostess. This has a different meaning in the Philippines.
2.	Dress well. Appearances matter and you will be judged on how you dress.
3.	Wait to be told where to sit. There may be a seating plan.
4.	Do not start eating until the host invites you to do so. Whether you should leave some food on your plate or finish everything is a matter of personal preference rather than culture-driven.
Business Meeting and Negotiation Etiquette	
1.	Appointments are required and should be made 3 to 4 weeks in advance. It is a good idea to reconfirm a few days prior to the meeting, as situations may change.
2.	Face-to-face meetings are preferred to other, more impersonal methods such as the telephone, fax, letter or email.
3.	Avoid making exaggerated claims.
4.	Always accept any offer of food or drink. If you turn down offers of hospitality, your colleagues lose face.
5.	It is important to remain for the period of social conversation at the end of the meeting.

Business Negotiation	
1.	You may never actually meet with the decision maker or it may take several visits to do so.
2.	Filipinos avoid confrontation if at all possible. It is difficult for them to say 'no'. Likewise, their 'yes' may merely mean 'perhaps'.
3.	At each stage of the negotiation, try to get agreements in writing to avoid confusion or misinterpretation.
4.	If you raise your voice or lose your temper, you lose face.
5.	Filipinos do business with people more than companies. If you change representatives during negotiations, you may have to start over. Negotiations may be relatively slow. Most processes take a long time because group consensus is necessary.
6.	Do not remove your suit jacket unless the most important Filipino does.
Business Cards	
1.	You should offer your business card first.
2.	Make sure your business card includes your title.
3.	Present and receive business cards with two hands so that it is readable to the recipient.
4.	Some senior level executives only give business cards to those of similar rank.
Dressing Code	
1.	Business attire is conservative.
2.	Men should wear a dark coloured, conservative business suit, at least for the initial meeting.
3.	Women should wear a conservative suit, a skirt and blouse, or a dress.
4.	Appearances matter and visitors should dress well.
Other Customs	
1.	It is a sense of social propriety and conforming to societal norms of behavior.
2.	Filipinos believe they must live up to the accepted standards of behaviour and if they fail to do so they bring shame not only upon themselves, but also upon their family.
3.	One indication of this might be a willingness to spend more than they can afford on a party rather than be shamed by their economic circumstances.
4.	If someone is publicly embarrassed, criticized, or does not live up to expectations, they feel shame and lose self-esteem.

Visa Permit for Entrance to Philippines			
Nationality of foreign country (Territory) / Type of Travel Document	Visa free period for stay not exceeding 21 days	Visa Required	Visa free for stay not exceeding 59 days
Afghanistan ¹		Y	
Albania		Y	
Algeria*		Y	
Andorra	Y		
Angola	Y		
Antigua and Barbuda	Y		
Argentina	Y		
Armenia		Y	
Austria	Y		
Australia	Y		
Azerbaijan		Y	
Bahamas	Y		
Bahrain	Y		
Bangladesh		Y	
Barbados	Y		
Belarus		Y	
Belgium	Y		
Belize		Y	
Benin	Y		
Bhutan	Y		
Bolivia	Y		
Bosnia-Herzegovina		Y	
Botswana	Y		
Brazil*			Y
Brunei CI Holders		Y	
Brunei Darussalam	Y		
Bulgaria	Y		
Burkina Faso	Y		
Burundi	Y		
Cambodia	Y		
Cameroon	Y		
Canada	Y		
Cape Verde	Y		

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Central African Republic	Y		
Chad	Y		
Chile	Y		
China, PROC**		Y	
Colombia	Y		
Comoros	Y		
Congo	Y		
Costa Rica	Y		
Cote d'Ivoire	Y		
Croatia		Y	
Cuba		Y	
Cyprus	Y		
Czech Republic	Y		
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Y		
Denmark	Y		
Djibouti	Y		
Dominica	Y		
Dominican Republic	Y		
DPRK ³		Y	
East Timor ²		Y	
Ecuador	Y		
Egypt*		Y	
El Salvador	Y		
Equatorial Guine	Y		
Eritrea	Y		
Estonia *new*	Y		
Ethiopia	Y		
Fiji	Y		
Finland	Y		
France	Y		
FYROM		Y	
Gabon	Y		
Gambia	Y		

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Georgia		Y	
Germany	Y		
Ghana	Y		
Gibraltar	Y		
Greece	Y		
Grenada	Y		
Guatemala	Y		
Guinea	Y		
Guinea Bissau	Y		
Guyana	Y		
Haiti	Y		
Honduras	Y		
Hong Kong CI Holders		Y	
Hong Kong DI Holders		Y	
Hungary	Y		
Iceland	Y		
India*o		Y	
Indonesia	Y		
Iran		Y	
Iraq*		Y	
Ireland	Y		
Israel*			Y
Italy	Y		
Jamaica	Y		
Japan	Y		
Jordan*		Y	
Kazakhstan		Y	
Kenya	Y		
Kiribati	Y		
Kuwait	Y		
Kyrgyzstan		Y	
Lao People's Democratic Republic	Y		
Latvia *new*	Y		

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Lebanon*		Y	
Lesotho	Y		
Liberia	Y		
Libya*		Y	
Liechtenstein	Y		
Lithuania *new*	Y		
Luxembourg	Y		
Madagascar	Y		
Malawi	Y		
Malaysia	Y		
Malaysian CI Holders		Y	
Maldives	Y		
Mali	Y		
Malta	Y		
Marshall Islands	Y		
Mauritania	Y		
Mauritius	Y		
Mexico	Y		
Micronesia	Y		
Moldova		Y	
Monaco	Y		
Mongolia	Y		
Montenegro		Y	
Morocco	Y		
Mozambique	Y		
Myanmar	Y		
Namibia	Y		
Nauru		Y	
Nepal	Y		
Netherlands	Y		
New Zealand	Y		
Nicaragua	Y		
Niger	Y		

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Nigeria*		Y	
Norway	Y		
Oman	Y		
Pakistan*		Y	
Palau	Y		
Palestine*		Y	
Panama	Y		
Papua New Guinea	Y		
Paraguay	Y		
Peru	Y		
Poland	Y		
Portugal	Y		
Qatar	Y		
Republic of Korea	Y		
Romania	Y		
Russia	Y		
Rwanda	Y		
Saint Kitts and Nevis	Y		
Saint Lucia	Y		
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Y		
Samoa	Y		
San Marino	Y		
Sao Tome and Principe	Y		
Saudi Arabia	Y		
Senegal	Y		
Serbia		Y	
Seychelles	Y		
Sierra Leone		Y	
Singapore	Y		
Slovakia	Y		
Slovenia	Y		
Solomon Islands	Y		
Somalia	Y		

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South Africa	Y		
Spain	Y		
Sri Lanka*		Y	
Stateless Persons ^a		Y	
Sudan*		Y	
Suriname	Y		
Swaziland	Y		
Sweden	Y		
Switzerland	Y		
Syria*		Y	
Taiwan		Y	
Tajikistan		Y	
Thailand	Y		
Togo	Y		
Tonga		Y	
Trinidad and Tobago	Y		
Tunisia	Y		
Turkey	Y		
Turkmenistan		Y	
Tuvalu	Y		
Uganda	Y		
Ukraine		Y	
United Arab Emirates	Y		
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Y		
United Republic of Tanzania	Y		
United States of America	Y		
Uruguay	Y		
Uzbekistan		Y	
Venezuela	Y		
Vietnam	Y		
Yemen*		Y	
Zambia	Y		
Zimbabwe	Y		

Notes:

¹ May apply for a visa only from the Philippine Embassy in Islamabad.

² May apply for a visa only from the Philippine Embassy in Dili.

³ May apply for a visa only from the Philippine Embassy in Beijing.

* May apply for a visa only from a Philippine Foreign Service Post in their country of origin or place of legal residence.

** Chinese nationals from the mainland coming for tourism purposes and with a valid Australian, Japanese, Canadian, Schengen or US visa do not need a visa for a stay not exceeding seven (7) days provided they possess a return or onward airline ticket.

° Indian nationals may also apply for a visa in any country that requires entry visas to Indian nationals.

^a Stateless persons may apply for a visa only from a Philippine Foreign service Post in their country of legal residence, except for those who may apply at any Foreign Service Post because they possess all of the following:

1. Permanent residency in a country with which the Philippines has diplomatic relations;
2. A travel document which entitles re-entry to the country of residence, with such re-entry permit valid for at least six (6) months beyond the contemplated period of stay in the Philippines.
3. Their country of origin has diplomatic relations with the Philippines; and
4. Gainful employment and guarantee by employer that they would not become public charges, or financial independence which would preclude them from becoming public charges.

The following are allowed to enter the Philippines without a visa for a stay not exceeding seven (7) days:

1. Holders of British National Overseas (BNO) passports
2. Holders of Portuguese Passports issued in Macao

The following are allowed to enter the Philippines without a visa for a stay not exceeding fourteen (14) days:

1. Holders of Hong Kong Special Administrative (SAR) passports
2. Holders of Macao Special Administrative Region (SAR) passports