“The entrepreneurial life is one of challenge, work, dedication, perseverance, exhilaration, agony, accomplishment, failure, sacrifice, control, powerlessness... but ultimately, extraordinary satisfaction.”

- David S. Rose
Deadlines and hours
Respecting deadlines is an important matter in every working place. The Portuguese tend to accomplish them but, when the issue is time, some tend to arrive 5 to 10 minutes late.

Though to some extent this may be a cultural thing, the fact is that except for more rural areas, traffic is becoming more and more intense and the Portuguese are still getting used to deal with this (if they are 5km away, they will probably think 5 to 10 minutes will be enough and won’t consider any other variables).

When a person is late, it is expected that he / she apologises or telephones explaining and informing about the delay.

Communication and contact with colleagues
Communication at work will depend on the number of employees (e.g. a SME composed of three or four family members will naturally differ from a bigger company). Nowadays, although f2f contact still prevails, institutional communication uses internal calls and email a lot.

Obviously, people are not supposed to speak about personal things during work. However, there are occasions, such as lunch time or coffee breaks, where colleagues normally establish a friendship relation.

Entrepreneurial culture in Portugal
SME’s are very common in Portugal. These often have a traditional family structure.

One of the most important aspects when entering a company is to understand the work environment.

Understanding the dynamics and the work environment of a company is an important aspect that leads to successful integration.

Hierarchies
Normally there is a chief who is also the manager of the company. Following the chief there are several other sub-chiefs or middle managers who are responsible for different working units / working divisions.

The hierarchical relations between Chief and sub-chiefs and other staff are well understood in the normal working environment and through the way people treat each other because we have more than 95% of Small and Medium Size Companies and their formal structure is mainly traditional family companies.

Addressing people
This will depend on school level, social status, position / function and age of the person.

We use “You” when we want to establish an informal dialogue with family, mates and young colleagues with whom we have a trusting relation.

When a person has an academic title and we are not in the same position, it is common to call that person first by Mr. (senhor) followed by the academic title and then by his / her first or second name, like for instance, “Senhor Dr. João Cunha” or “Senhor Eng. João Cunha”.

If we want to have a more formal conversation with someone or if we are addressing an older person, we use “Mr.” or “Mrs.” before the name: Mr. João (“Senhor João”) or Mrs. Ana (“Senhora Ana”).

Dress Code
Normally, this will depend on the type of work and working on the frequency of contact with people.

In a more administrative job, it is common to wear “suits” (skirt / trousers with a jacket / blazer), preferably of dark colours, whether in a more informal environment, we can wear practical clothes such as jeans with a sweatshirt or T-shirt. Factories, as well as other companies, however, have specific garments for work, such as smocks and others.

As mentioned before, the way to dress is more related to the type of company and to the positions / function occupied by the people. In fact, the truth is that in Portugal there is normally no strict code regarding dressing. However, in general, Portuguese people appreciate and give value to a good appearance.

It is always very important that one expresses his/her opinion so that he/she can show interest and commitment to the work developed.