We've offered the Raleigh community space-saving solutions for the past 10 years. We recommend Northwind Traders to anyone who will listen to us. They helped us reclaim over 700 square feet of our house!

"Os trechos de clientes são uma excelente forma de demonstrar o seu sucesso e realçar o seu valor. Estes trechos também tornam o seu conteúdo mais apelativo."

- Kim Abercrombie
Deadlines and hours

In Italy, deadlines are to be respected but if you have an appointment with an Italian, he will expect you to be on time, though he may also be five or ten minutes late. And, of course, if you’re going to be more than five minutes late, it’s wise to telephone, apologise and explain.

Communication and contacts

Usually, the first contact with an Italian business partner should be formal. You should send an e-mail, make a phone call or send a fax or letter.

More recently, Italian companies have been using Social Media like LinkedIn in order to promote their businesses and a lot of contacts have also been initiated throughout this communication tool. Please also consider that after the first contact, Italians like to do business on a face-to-face basis rather than by phone, fax or e-mail.

If you don’t speak Italian, you should indicate this clearly in your letter, e-mail or fax, indicating the language you feel more confident speaking. Often, Italian businessmen do not speak English and they are prepared to use the services of a professional translator. The ability to use the right language and the right gestures when communicating is very important. Hand gestures and personal contacts are a feature of Italian conversations. If you move away or keep your distance, this can be considered unfriendly. During a meeting, try not to create a sense of urgency since this can appear rude or a weakness.

Entrepreneurial culture in Italy

Cross cultural awareness should improve the potential of having business relations in Italy. Before starting doing business in Italy, it could be very important to look at the way in which meetings are conducted and Italian negotiation styles.

Hierarchies

Italian companies tend to have a pyramidal hierarchy; final decisions are centralised and taken by the persons positioned in the upper levels of the pyramid. Employees also have a great respect for their bosses and they tend to look for consensus with their colleagues.

Meetings are one of the best ways to get a deeper and common understanding of an issue rather than being the conclusive part of a decision making process. In this sense, meetings are more analysis-oriented than decision-oriented.

Addressing people

According to a popular joke, to stop an Italian talking just block his/her hands. Italians, in fact, tend to gesture to emphasize their speech.

Eye contact is vital because it is considered to be a sign of interest, openness and honesty. On the other hand, looking away is not appropriate.

Business cards can be exchanged at any time during a meeting. Italian business cards normally contain all important business information including: contact details, business position, education degree and/or professional titles. Sometimes, such titles are crossed out when the card is handed over. This is to indicate that a less formal relationship has been established and the formal title is not required when addressing your Italian partner.

A certain formality is still common and appreciated. The use of professional titles is required, especially in writing.

Initially, you should address people by their title and last name (e.g. Dottor Rossi, please…) and wait to be explicitly invited to use other forms (first name or last name coupled with the Italian “tu”).

Dress Code

Presentation and impression are of great importance, especially when applying to a job interview. As we have seen, Italians in general like to dress well, so suits and formal wear are expected – of course it will also depend on the type of job, since you are not expected to dress in the same way to work in an office and to work in theatre or other arts, for example.