



10 Top Tips for Doing Business in the Middle East

1. Relationships (You can't be a stranger)

Ask any business people who have been successful in the Middle East, what the key success factor is, and they should say relationships. On numerous occasions, your customers will be buying from **you** and not from your company, so to achieve success, make sure you are never a stranger. Take steps to build a successful relationship with your key contacts

2. Patience (Erratic Timekeeping)

Patience is a virtue. It is more so in the Middle East where this statement rings true. Time is not an asset so you must be prepared to wait and always be patient, no matter what the circumstances might be.

3. Due Diligence (Competitor Activity)

It is important that you spend some time assessing and being aware of your competition, their status in the market and making sure you are fully aware of where they stand within the market

4. Etiquette (Ladies shaking hands)

You should familiarise yourself with some local etiquette. For instance, do not go to shake the hand of a local lady unless, she offers her hand to you. Do not point and always be cognizant of who you are dealing/speaking with. For those of you who would like to learn more on this subject, I would recommend that you get a book entitled "*Don't They Know its Friday*". It can be found on Amazon as well as all good bookstores

5. Choosing the right partner (Oil & Gas Compliant)

It goes without saying that you must be ultra-careful when choosing your local partner. For instance, in Abu Dhabi, the local party's trade licence must carry an oil & Gas endorsement for them to act within the oil & gas sector. Due Diligence is paramount and if necessary, it would be a valuable investment to engage with a local legal entity to assist and thereby make a better informed decision that does not go pear-shaped further down the line

6. One partner for one Market

You will no doubt meet people who will say that they can represent you in multiple markets spread across the Middle East. Please be cautious as it would be challenging for your business if your representative is based outside your market of choice

7. Local Content





This is becoming a major topic which has a major affect on business. Saudi Arabia, Oman and Iraq have their own local content programmes and if you are planning to enter these markets, it is best to acquaint yourself of the requirements to satisfy their In Country Value initiatives

8. Negotiation Techniques

More information under this heading can be found in the aforementioned book, “Don’t They Know is Friday” The title is apt because across the Middle East, the working week is Sunday to Thursday with Friday being their Sabbath. Middle East businessmen are very shrewd negotiators so it is essential that stay aligned to your own profitability targets

9. Regional Issues (Qatar, Iran, Libya, Yemen etc)

Whilst not directly affecting the business climate, it is nevertheless worth considering some geopolitical items of note. Qatar is currently cut off from any direct access to the markets of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the UAE and Egypt. There isn’t time to go into detail here but be aware that if you wish to do business in Qatar, you cannot access the market from the UAE. Kuwait and Oman have taken a neutral stand in the disagreement so if you wish to make a visit to Qatar whilst in the region, this can only be achieved by flying from either Kuwait or Oman.

Iran is in the news at the moment. However, from a trade perspective, the UK plus the EU remain committed to seeking a trade relationship with Iran despite the sanctions being imposed by the US. How this will pan out given the current stand off re shipping, remains to be seen but you will no doubt be approached by Iranian business representatives and if so, the first question that you need to b answered is how you will get paid.

Libya is still unstable but despite this, there are business opportunities available if the right partner can be found.

The conflict in Yemen remains a talking point given that the coalition of Saudi, The UAE and Jordan have each experienced economic challenges due to the funding of the conflict

10. ADIPEC is much more than a UAE focussed event

Please be aware that whilst the majority of visitors might be from the UAE and surrounding markets, ADIPEC has proven time and time again that it is now a global event with visitors coming in from all four corners of the world. OTC Houston was always considered the #1 Oil & Gas Show for the world but ADIPEC took over this mantle a couple of years ago where the average attendance is now significantly over the 100,000 mark so do not be surprised if you meet people from as far away as Australia, the US, South America and especially Africa

