

CULTURAL INSIGHTS THE NETHERLANDS



a culture crash course every other month, sent right to your inbox!

QUICK FACTS

Time & Task Orientation

The Dutch are very punctual and regard time as a resource not to be wasted. Time and scheduling are typically well organized. Be on time in business and for social occasions. The Dutch maintain strong boundaries between private life and work. Respect time by keeping emails to working hours.

There is a tendency towards being task oriented with a focus on efficiency, pragmatism, and results. Meetings should have a clear purpose and agenda and be followed up with an action list. The Dutch highly value relationships, but relationships are not essential to getting the job done.

Hierarchy & Decision Making

Generally, the Dutch promote equality and democratic ideals. There is a strong emphasis on fairness and individual contribution. Management structures are flat, and less attention is given to titles than in other countries. "Overleg" describes the Dutch practice of well-rounded debate and consultation to reach a consensus in decision making. While the goal of **overleg**, or detailed debate, is to reach consensus despite the longer time required, once consensus is achieved action can be taken quickly.

While there is much progress to be made, the Dutch are well known for tolerance and progressive policies that reflect how highly equality is valued. The Netherlands is multicultural, with the country's largest immigrant groups hailing from Turkey, Morocco, Surinam, Aruba, and Antilles. The Netherlands was the first country in the world to legalize same-sex marriage on April 1st, 2001.

FUN FACTS

The Port of Rotterdam, established in the 13th century, is Europe's largest seaport

The Dutch are the world's largest producer of dairy products and flowers

The Netherlands is very bike-friendly, and it is estimated that there are 13-22 million bicycles for its population of 17 million

90% of Dutch citizens are fluent in 2 languages and over 70% are fluent in 3 or more languages

TABOO!

Avoid referring to the country as **Holland**, which is a region within the country.



Beware of criticizing the Dutch Monarchy as many hold great affection for their Royalty.

COMMUNICATION IN THE NETHERLANDS

LOW CONTEXT



The Dutch are well known for their frank and direct communication. Yes means yes and no means no. Little attention is given to nonverbal cues or body language. "Small talk" is acceptable but not expected, while personal questions may be seen as invasive. Employees are expected to share useful feedback without reprisal and debate is encouraged and expected.

EMOTIONALLY RESTRAINED



Emotions may be regarded as unprofessional. In a business context, trust and credibility are developed through suppression of emotions. The Dutch are normally more emotionally expressive with family and friends.

THE DETAILS THE NETHERLANDS CULTURAL PROFILE



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