

Business practices in Italy

The cultural values

Italy



1. When meeting and departing always shake hands.



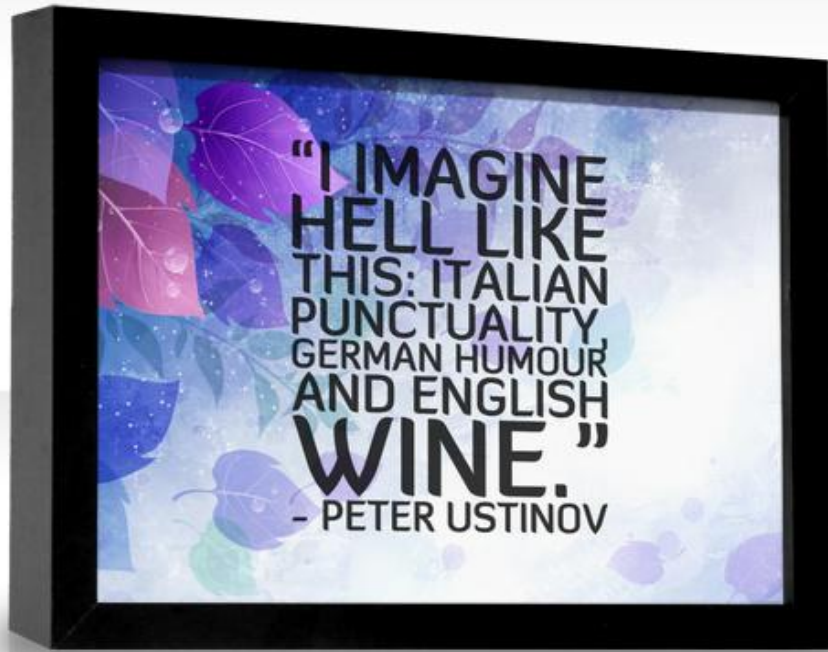
This is valid for both individuals and groups.

After doing business in Italy for a period of time and building relationships do not be surprised if you are embraced when being met. This indicates the relationship has reached an intimate level.

2. How to address?

If you are familiar with Italian, use the polite 'lei' form until a relationship is established, then use the more informal 'tu' form. When doing business in Italy, address people using 'Signor' (m) or 'Signora' (f) followed by their surname. 'Dottore' (m) or 'Dottoressa' (f) is used for those who have graduated.

3. Punctuality



Italians are usually relaxed around issues relating to time. Being late with a good reason will not have any negative consequences.

However, deliberate lateness is considered sloppy and taking people's time for granted is simply rude.

4. Business Entertaining

Invitations to lunch and dinner are to be expected when doing business there. At such occasions a small exclusive group will usually be present. Each attendee will have a particular interest in your visit. If you plan to host a meal, ask the most senior Italian contact who you should invite.



5. Meeting

- Negotiations can be slow. Demonstrating a sense of urgency is seen as a sign of weakness. At the beginning of meeting avoid business and concentrate on some small talk. Topics of discussion: Italian culture, food, wine, soccer.
- A known Italian tactic is to dramatically change demands at the eleventh hour to unsettle or test flexibility of their counterparts.

