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# Introduction

France as a country has a population of approximately 58 million people and is one of the largest West European country, approximately 4/5 the size of Texas. France does not have an official religion, but the majority of French citizens are Roman Catholic. France is home to approximately 4.5 million foreigners many of whom are from other European countries or former Communist countries. Education is of great importance to the French as it is considered as a key element of success. This is demonstrated by the fact that the educational system is almost free of charge from the primary school through the Ph.D. level for French citizens (France Business Etiquette, 1998). According to the Geert Hofstede analysis for France illustrates the importance on uncertainty avoidance. The high uncertainty avoidance ranking indicates France's concerns for rules, regulations, and issues with career security. In addition to uncertainty avoidance, both individualism and power distance are also ranked fairly high, with masculinity ranking the lowest (Geert-hofstede, 1973).

GDP by sector: Services at 78%, Industry 20% and Agriculture 2%. France is the most visited country in the world with 75 million foreign tourists every year. Major economic issues: tax burden (50% of GDP) is the highest in Europe; unemployment has been close to 10% for decades; economic growth is sluggish; urgent reforms keep being postponed because of public opposition (executive planet, 1998).

## Doing Business in France

Doing Business in France (Business etiquettes) In France, the quick handshake is common form of greeting. Often, friends may greet each other by lightly kissing on the cheeks, once on the left cheek and once on the right cheek. When doing business in France, first names are used only after being invited to do so. Moreover, the French give information on people based on their appearance because your business attire is a reflection of your success and social status. Furthermore, appointment is necessary and should be made at 2weeks in advance. They do not try to schedule meeting during July or August, at this is a common vacation period and in particular meetings are to discuss issues, not to make decision (International business etiquette France). When doing business with French, especially in a meeting, people always remains polite and courteous at all the time and avoid personal question. A negotiation become very passionate, especially argument is not meant to be confrontational but an opportunity to exchange viewpoints. People in a negotiation often maintain direct eye contact while speaking.

## PEST of France

### Political

France is a multi-party country, the main political parties include Union pour un Mouvement Populaire, Parti Socialiste, Les Verts, Nouveau Centre, MoDem, Parti Communiste Français Front National and some other parties. The current ruling party is Union pour un Mouvement Populaire. The current Fifth Republic Constitution is by referendum in 1958 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China 2012). Metropolitan France divided into 22 regions, 96 provinces. There are also four overseas region province, six overseas districts and a special status of overseas possessions (CIA 2011).

### Economic

Because the influence of GFC, the GDP growth rate in 2010 is 1.7%, the real GDP in 2010 is 1.94578 trillion Euros. Total imports and exports in 2010 is € 1.0273 trillion, at the same period, the public budget deficit is 144.8 billion Euros, accounting for 7.65 % of GDP. The unemployment rate is 9.7% (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China 2012).

## Social

The population of France is 65.027 million in 2011, the metropolitan territory population of 62.79 million. The official language in France is French, in local residents, 64% are Catholic, 3% are Muslim, 2.1% are Protestant, 0.6 % are Jewish, and 27% of them claiming no religious belief (CIA 2011). France is a high welfare state, various types of social security expenditure is 570.4 billion Euros in 2008. Currently, France has 54,875 primary schools, 7919 secondary schools, 83 universities and 226 prestigious schools (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China 2012). The literacy rate in 2011 is 99% (Index mundi 2011).

## Technology

France is one of the most developed industrial countries. It is the world leader in nuclear power, aviation, aerospace, and rail. Transport facilities, water, land and air transportation are very convenient. Energy mainly relies on nuclear energy, about 78% of electricity supported by nuclear energy (Index mundi 2011). Nuclear power equipment, petroleum processing technology are after the United States, ranking second in the world. Aviation and aerospace industry are after the United States and Russia, ranking third in the world (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China 2012).

## Economical Condition

The French economy is exceptionally diversified and is one of the largest economies in the EU, as a result it offers an attractive option for investment for rest of the world. However, recently in light of the recent economic crises several issues within the economy, comprises of public deficit and high levels of unemployment are growing concerns (Austrade).

France is based on three major industries, agriculture, manufacturing and the service sector. The 2009 – 09 Global Financial Crises had a significant impact on the French economy, which accounted for an A\$34 billion government stimulus package in response to the crises. Unemployment is on the rise in France, as it was 9.8 percent in 2010 (austrade). As a result of recent crises, the government announced increased taxes and over 100,000 loss of jobs in the public sector.

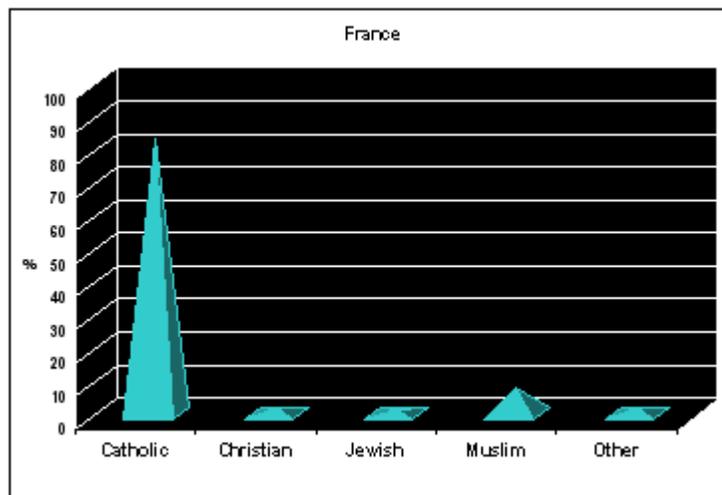
## Political Situation of France

France is a Parliamentary democracy with a President elected by universal suffrage for a period of five years. Nicolas Sarkozy who is the present President of France was elected as the seventh President of the fifth republic in May 2007. After electing Sarkozy as the head of the State, French voters endorsed the wide ranging program, of reforms that were the focal point of Sarkozy's campaign.

## France Trade Relations

In EU (European Union) France is considered as a powerful member, as it holds strong ties with other European countries. France plays a very significant role in Africa, through its former colonies, by providing extensive aid programs, fostering commercial and military activities. In recent times, France has become an increasingly important source of direct investment and technology, most importantly in the defense sector. For Australia, France is its 7<sup>th</sup> largest source of foreign direct investment (Austrade.gov.au).

## Religion in France



\* WORLD FACTBOOK 2011

In a country that has over 50% of its population practicing the Catholic religion, we found the primary correlating Hofstede Dimension to be Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI). However at present the fastest growing religion in France or in Europe as a whole is ISLAM. New research suggests there are now more practicing Muslims in France than practising Catholics (Kerr. D, 2011). In France only 41 percent of the country’s 6 million Muslims actually describe themselves as “practicing,” although 75 percent are happy to label themselves “believers.”

### France Fun Fact

The French people generally are very aware of their presence, and are extremely proud of their heritage. They boast of their long history and their important roles in world affairs, as well as being known as a world center for culture (France Business Etiquette, 1998).

## France Country Facts

Capital City	Paris
Surface Area	552000 sq km
Population	63 million
Official Language	French
Head of State	President Nicolas Sarkozy
France Principal export destinations	Germany, Italy, Belgium
France Principal import sources	Germany, Belgium, Italy

(Source: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade - Country economic fact shee

### Making appointments

### *Executive planet et al*

Best time to schedule meetings is 11:00 a.m. or 3:30 p.m.

Business meetings: It's alright to arrive ten minutes after the scheduled time (not later).

French employees get a minimum of five weeks vacation.

With the mandatory reduction of the workweek to 35 hours, executives and professionals are getting additional vacation time in lieu of a shorter working week (two weeks every year). Many offices are practically deserted during Christmas and Easter school closings. You will need to consider this when planning your business trips to France.

### **Guidelines for business dress**

Senior managers' dress is formal for both men and women, whether in business or social situations.

Men mostly wear dark suits, particularly during the winter. Women are advised to dress simply and with elegance.

French women often wear more makeup than American women do. In summer, they do not wear stockings.

### **Welcome Topics of Conversation**

Common welcome topics for French are food/praising French cuisine art, music, and philosophy sports (soccer, tennis, "The Tour de France" (bicycle race), Olympics in season)) current events/history.

### **Topics to Avoid**

It is extremely bad manners to ask an individual about his political leanings or who he has voted

for. You can inquire about the political system in France or about public opinion of political leaders.

Never criticize Napoleon, who has a lasting identity with the French spirit.

Refrain from using the standard U.S. conversation opener, "What do you do?"

Avoid making personal inquiries in the course of a conversation, especially during first introductions.

### **Respectfully addressing others**

In accordance with French business protocol, use first names only when invited. Use of first names has become common for colleagues at work. Outsiders, clients, suppliers are usually referred to as Monsieur or Madame followed by their name.

Only Medical Doctors are called "Docteur". Lawyers love to be called "Maître" (Master).

"Madame" is a basic title of courtesy for all women, as is "Monsieur" for men. Today, the courtesy title "Mademoiselle" (Miss) should be avoided unless the person requests it.

### **Gift-Giving**

Be aware that displays of warmth and generosity between business associates are not the norm in French business culture. Giving presents is acceptable here, but exercise discretion.

Gifts are expected for social events, especially as thank-you after a dinner party.

Don't be overly concerned about whether your gift is too expensive or too inexpensive: select something you think the recipient will appreciate.

Esoteric books and music are often valued as gifts.

### **Entertaining for business success**

Business lunches are preferred to dinners. Actual business, however, is not supposed to be

conducted during lunch or dinner. Sharing a meal is intended to help establish a personal acquaintance.

A business lunch will start at 12:30 or 1:00 p.m. and may last until 3:00 p.m. or later if required.

A business lunch is a formal event starting with an appetizer, followed by a main course, cheese, dessert and coffee. It is OK to drink a glass of wine or even two (but not more).

Dinner invitations are usually at 8:30 p.m. and you are expected to stay until 11:00 p.m. at the earliest. The polite way to take your leave is to wait until the other guests are finished with their coffee.

The business drink should not be held in a café, since these establishments are far too noisy. You can usually have a conversation without distractions in a hotel bar.

The person that extended the invitation for the meal or drink is expected to pay.

Reservations are necessary in most restaurants, except in brasseries and hotels.

If you're making the dining arrangements, a French restaurant is a safe choice.

Wine is customary with meals. Do not refuse wine; just sip it slowly.

### **Acceptable public conduct**

If you can't speak French, preface what you are saying whenever possible with: "Excusez-moi, s'il vous plait, de vous deranger, mais je ne parle pas francais" ("Please excuse me for bothering you, but I do not speak French"). If you say these words, you are more likely to receive assistance. Expect to be greeted by a handshake; kissing on the cheeks (across genders) is also common amongst colleagues at work. It is not usually extended to outsiders and you should not attempt it until your female colleagues have made the initial move. Despite the formality of French business culture, people tend to stand close when speaking to each other. Moreover, touching a shoulder, patting an arm is also commonplace and usually within the bounds of French business etiquette amongst men. With women colleagues, you should use more discretion.

Maintaining eye contact is important, but try not to focus too intently on the other person.

Chewing gum in public is considered vulgar.

Keep your hands out of your pockets when speaking in public.

Snapping fingers at a waiter is considered offensive.

Smiling is treated only with indifference here. It will not be perceived as a greeting or as an indication of approval.

Make a writing gesture in the air to ask for the check.

The U.S. "O.K." sign (forming a circle with the thumb and forefinger) actually means "zero" or "useless" in France. The French "O.K." symbol is the North American "thumbs up;" use this symbol to express approval.

## Conclusion

Despite all the cultural difference and barriers France is still a country that can be targeted for expanding any business, regional and ethnic differences combine to create a multitude of smaller markets in France. Many of these are potential targets for small and medium-sized companies whose niche products can often find a ready market. The increasing amount of leisure time available to the French following the introduction of the 35-hour working week has opened up new opportunities for outdoor and leisure products. French people are very welcoming and love to work with other people, in business the French language is preferred, although there is a growing use of English, that helped a lot of international companies to operate in France.

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## Appendix

## Company Overview

The Carrefour group has grown to become one of the world's leading distribution groups. This company has operated for the last 40 years. The world's second-largest retailer and the largest in Europe, the group currently operates four grocery store formats: hypermarkets, supermarkets, cash&carry and convenience stores. The Carrefour group currently has over 9,500 stores, either company-operated or franchise (Carrefour, 2012).

The Carrefour group offers its products in different ways such as hypermarkets, markets, convenience stores, creating deliver on products in 2011 and e-commerce. Carrefour with the large way to offer the product includes quality and array of choices on products in hypermarkets, also in Markets offer a wide range of food products adapted to local needs at very competitive prices. In convenience stores products are offered for any people looking for commodity and easy access, they are operated mainly for franchisees. Moreover, the technology helps the company to create facilities for costumers such as deliver the product and also the capacity to buy any product online with e-commerce.

## Doing Business in China

Business meeting etiquette in China is quite different from France. Chinese people are very seriously in formal occasion .They preferred the meeting is held seriously. In this sense, that regards the humor as a kind of rude behavior if someone very humorous in the meeting. The Chinese appreciate it when one side of the business card presented is in Chinese. It is very important that you r business card is engraved in gold. In China, this is a symbol of your status. On accepting a business card from your Chinese colleagues, show your interest by glancing at the details of the card. Putting the card immediately into your wallet or briefcase without reading it is an unforgivable insult to the Chinese business culture. Another important thing to remember is not to touch your Chinese, do not even pat him on the shoulder. 'Make an effort not to use your hands to illustrate your speech. The Chinese don't like this. They prefer a safe distance, and formal talk. When the body languages used too often, they will consider the meeting is not formal. Try as well to refrain from looking straight into he eyes of Chinese. Do not arrange business meetings around the times of Chinese festivals. Similarly, it is important to remember that late

arrival to a meeting is considered a serious insult to the Chinese. It may well entail the failure of the entire meeting. It is recommended to bring a translator to the meeting who can translate for you and assist in explaining business customs according to Chinese formalities (International business etiquette China).

## **PEST of China**

### **Political**

China has implemented multi-party cooperation but one-party dictatorship, Chinese Communist Party is the only ruling party from 1949. There are eight democratic parties to assist the Communist Party. The party member of Communist Party in 2010 is 80.269 million. China Constitution was formulated by The National People's Congress in 1982 (China Today 2012). There are 32 provinces, 4 municipalities and 2 special administrative regions under Central Government (U.S. Department of State 2010).

### **Economic**

From 1990's China GDP growth rate annually increase around 10%, the GDP per capital increased 9% from 2009 to 2010. In the same period, the percentage of import and export increased 34.6% (CIA 2011). However, because the fast rising food prices, the inflation rate in China is 6.5% on last three years.(The New York Times, 2011). The FDI of foreign companies in 2010 reach to 106 billion US\$ (Federal Foreign Office Germany 2011).

### **Social**

China has the biggest population with about 1.3 billion in the world. There are 56 ethnic groups in China. Han is the main ethnic group, accounting for approximately 90% population. The main religions in China are Taoist, Buddhist Muslim and small percentage of Christian. The official language in China is mandarin (U.S. Department of State 2010). The literacy rate in China is 91.65%, the government implement nine-year compulsory education. 4 of the top 100 universities in the world are located in China (and 8 of the top 500) (CIA 2011).

### **Technology**

In 2008, Chinese total social investment is more than ¥16 trillion. Total road length are 3.5 million km, total railway length are 90,000 km. There are 87 coastal ports and 151 civil airports.

China is also actively developing its software, semiconductor and energy industry. Currently, China has the most mobile phone user in the world with over 700 million users in 2009, China also has the largest internet users in the world(China Knowledge 2011).