



Information Sheet:

Travel and Visits

Background

One of the newest areas of concern for small businesses getting involved in global markets is the aspect of culture. Most international business travelers have been attuned to this need, but pre-export managers planning their first overseas travel generally receive little information to prepare them for this experience. In addition, many companies (and cities!) are experiencing an increase in the number of foreign visitors they receive.

Fortunately this is an area where there is a wealth of printed information available to help. Two key sources of information are the **Culturgrams**, prepared by Brigham Young University, and the **Background Notes**, available from the U.S. Department of State. Although these resources have long been used by savvy international business travelers, they are equally beneficial to firms entertaining potential international visitors. Both provide excellent opportunities for the export service provider to give some valuable international assistance.

Culturgrams

Prepared by the David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, these yearly updated publications can generally be found in District Offices of the U.S. Department of Commerce, as well as major libraries. Covering over ninety individual countries worldwide, they are prepared in a special four page format and focus on providing pragmatic information for the traveler planning a visit to the country. They also make excellent references for helping create a better understanding of visitors that may be hosted in your area. The information is presented in categories describing the specific country's *background* (land/climate and brief history); *people* (population, language, religion, attitudes and dress); *customs and courtesies* (greetings, gestures, visiting and eating); *lifestyle* (family, dating and marriage, diet, recreation, holidays and commerce); *society* (government, economy, transportation and communication, education and health); and any special *travel* needs.

Background Notes

Available from the U.S. Department of State, this information is prepared and updated regularly by the approximately 154 overseas offices located around the world. They are printed as a series in pamphlet form, and offer current information on a specific country's leaders, politics, investments, economy, foreign relations and more, including an up-to-date map. The series is available as a set or as a subscription service. They have been an excellent resource for preparing individuals planning to go to the specific country, particularly those going for an overseas assignment.

Other resources

Obviously there are numerous publications for world travelers, in addition to the myriad of information available from international travel agents. Other suggested resources are: *World Factbook*, an annual statistical publication of the Central Intelligence Agency; *Current History*, a world affairs journal with articles that describe and analyze current political, economic and social trends in select countries; The *Statesman's Yearbook*, a statistical and informational guide to all countries; *A Basic Guide to Exporting* published by the Department of Commerce.