

## Brazil

### Establishing Credibility

#### Establishing credentials

Making connections, building relationships, and exercising patience are the three most important factors for establishing credibility in Brazil. Each of these can demand a significant investment of both time and resources.

**Family background.** In Brazilian business settings, individual credibility hinges in part on one's family background and social status. Class and status carry great weight and are in general closely tied to one's family of origin. Loyalty to [family](#) is a core cultural value, and nepotism within the business community is an accepted and important means of building connections between Brazilians.

**Third-party introductions.** For the foreign businessperson in Brazil, class and family background are not likely to affect his or her credibility. Therefore, it is important to find other ways to make connections, such as utilizing the services of a local Brazilian contact who is well connected in the relevant industry.

Local representation is particularly critical because fundamental credentials such as family lineage and social status may be extended through this individual to a foreign national. Third-party introductions are necessary in order to form the personal networks key to doing business in Brazil, and an appropriate local representative can save time by providing this service. This person should be selected with care.

**Potential representatives,** as well as opportunities for initial introductions, can be identified through international business organizations, accounting firms, attorneys, consultants, or embassies.

#### On the job

It is nearly impossible to establish credibility in Brazil



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without recognizing the importance of [personal relationships](#) in almost every substantial business transaction. For the most part, Brazilian professionals will be intent on getting to know associates before they are willing to enter into business discussions, and certainly before they are ready to negotiate seriously or make decisions.

Building a relationship in Brazil requires sincerity, commitment, and most of all, patience. Don't rush things — indications that you are in a hurry to get down to business or to close a deal may send the message that you do not value the personal relationship being formed.

In general, the personal relationships that develop between business associates will take precedence over other elements, such as a company's name and reputation, or legal documentation. It is therefore critical to allow the time needed to form these bonds. If you are traveling from another country to conduct business in Brazil, schedule multiple visits in order to allow for substantial face-to-face contact.

***Socializing*** outside the office is essential for establishing credibility and developing personal ties with your Brazilian counterparts.

Lunch and dinner meetings are especially popular; they tend to last several hours, and very little (if any) business is usually discussed. Being warm, articulate, and personable during these times together will help to make a good impression and demonstrate personal interest.

***Follow-through.*** It is important to deliver on commitments and promises; failure to do so will greatly damage credibility, which may take substantial time and effort to repair.

## **Video: Building strong relationships**

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## Attitudes toward local culture/people

**Displaying humility** is another important factor in establishing credibility in Brazil. A manager who arrives with the assurance that he or she knows "the right way to get things done," or believes that business should be conducted in Brazil as at home, will find his or her credibility greatly compromised.

## Strategies

- Good connections and good relationships are essential for establishing credibility in Brazil.
- Individual credibility depends in part, first, on family background and social status; second, on having good connections.
- Remember that nepotism is an accepted and significant means of building important connections among Brazilians.
- Before investing in substantial business dealings in Brazil, obtain the services of a local Brazilian contact who is well connected in your industry.
- Building a relationship in Brazil requires sincerity, commitment, and patience.
- If you are traveling from another country, schedule multiple visits in order to allow for substantial face-to-face contact with Brazilian counterparts.
- Long lunch and dinner meetings are particularly popular for cultivating personal relationships.
- Keep in mind that "cold calls" (that is, without an intermediary or an introduction) on prospective customers are not recommended.