

# DOING BUSINESS IN FRANCE

## **Cultural and Business Tips**

- In business the French language is preferred, although there is a growing use of English, depending on the sector. Product literature should preferably be in French. Faxes, e-mails and letters should also be in French if possible, especially in the initial stages.
- In business negotiations, a handshake does not generally suffice. The French prefer agreements to be in writing. Furthermore, French companies are concerned about confidentiality, and will often ask people to sign non-disclosure agreements before disclosing any confidential information.
- New Zealand companies selling innovative products should check that their products are protected (for example by a valid patent covering the French territory).
- Generally speaking, bureaucracy is important in France and companies are expected to come with written documents demonstrating their claims (specification sheets, appropriate certifications etc.)
- While France is part of the EU and applies most EU regulations, some market specificities still
  prevail (for example, labelling has to be in French and French standards sometimes apply in
  addition to European norms).
- The French favour strategic alliances built on enduring business relationships. New Zealand
  exporters must be prepared to visit their clients and learn about their businesses in order to
  build on these relationships.
- The French are more formal in their conduct than New Zealanders. They rarely use first names until the relationship is well established.
- Business suits are expected for all formal meetings.
- New Zealand companies should not plan to visit the market in July or August, as their French contacts may be on summer holidays and some companies even close in August. Public holidays should also be taken into account before organising meetings (for example, the month of May usually has four public holidays and many French people will take leave).
- The business lunch remains an important and frequently used business and social occasion. If an appointment is made near lunchtime, lunch is assumed to be included. Be sure to be clear as to who is doing the inviting. As a general rule suppliers invite their clients.
- Tips are not generally expected but are always appreciated.

# **Language Tips**

hello bonjour good-bye au revoir



please s'il vous plaît

thank you merci

excuse me excusez-moi

yes/no oui/non

## Some translation agencies in New Zealand

ORGANISATION	WEBLINK
NZTC International	www.nztcinternational.com
MLT Translation Centre	www.mlt.co.nz
Pacific International Translation Services	www.pactrans.co.nz

Note: this is not an exhaustive list.

# **Regulatory Issues**

#### **Tariffs and duties**

France conforms to the EU customs duties which are based on the international Harmonised System of product classification. For more information see the customs tariffs database on the European Commission Taxation and Customs Union website:

http://ec.europa.eu/taxation\_customs/common/databases/taric/index\_en.htm

## **Health Regulations**

If you export food or food-related products from New Zealand to Europe, there are legal and administrative requirements you must meet, either before shipping or on arrival. The New Zealand Food Safety website outlines requirements. Visit <a href="https://www.nzfsa.govt.nz">www.nzfsa.govt.nz</a> for further information.

#### Packing and Labelling

There is a vast array of EU legislation outlining the marking, labelling and packaging of products. Some are mandatory and others are voluntary. Exporters of electrical, mechanical and other products with safety liability need to determine whether or not they need CE (a European Community safety standard) approval before selling into any EU country. Product labels should be in French or should be multilingual including French.

#### **Safety Regulations**

The General Product Safety Directive outlines general safety requirements at the EU level to ensure that manufacturers place safe products on the market. For further information, visit the Product Legislation section of the European Commission website:

www.ec.europa.eu/consumers/safety/prod\_legis/index\_en.htm.

## Some certification agencies in New Zealand

ORGANISATION	WEBLINK
International Accreditation New Zealand (IANZ)	www.ianz.govt.nz
Asure Quality (food safety and biosecurity)	www.asurequality.com
Bureau Veritas New Zealand	www.bureauveritas.com
SGS	www.sgs.com

Note: this is not an exhaustive list.



## **Useful Websites**

ORGANISATION/GUIDE	WEBLINK
France-New Zealand Association	www.france-nz.com
French New Zealand Chamber of Commerce	www.fnzcci.org.nz
KEA France	www.keanewzealand.com/node/114/
France Guide (French government tourist office website)	www.franceguide.com
Invest in France Agency	www.invest-in-france.org/us/