



The Egyptian Mindset Map



Historical Insight

- Nile Valley settled 7,000 BC
- 2500 BC - construction of Pyramids
- 1859 Suez Canal built
- 1914 Egypt becomes British protectorate
- 1953 Egypt declared a republic
- 1981 Sadat assassinated
- 1981 Mubarak becomes president; now in fifth term

Primary Belief Systems

- Muslim but with reasonable tolerance of most other religions
- Islam affects everyday life and business decisions
- Deeply conservative society but still a strong link between Arab countries and the West
- Fatalistic attitude: everything is God's will

Geographical Influences

- Bridges gap between Europe, Middle East, Africa and Southern Asia
- Everything is affected by the Nile - climate, economy, population spread
- Hot, dry desert climate with little variation
- Few desert oases
- Suez Canal is vital link between Mediterranean and Red Sea

Economic & Political Conditions

- Democratic republic
- Privatisation programme since 2001
- Disapproves of US and British foreign policy in Middle East
- Steady growth of GNP
- 2003 Egyptian pound devalued
- Tourism, Suez canal revenues, oil, cotton and textiles main sources of income

Egyptian Mindset

- Strong family ties
- Honour and respect important values
- Deeply hospitable with strong social etiquette
- Known for their sense of humour, socially and in business
- Great negotiators
- High context communicators

Life Style Aspirations

- Risk averse
- Egyptians seek comfort and a family atmosphere
- Haggling is a way of life
- Entertainment is strong factor in business - traditional Arab hospitality
- All business is relationship-based

Characteristics of Society

- Almost entire population lives along the Nile or in the Nile Delta
- 30% are farmers
- Cairo is the largest city in Africa with 7 million inhabitants
- Social class very important with little social mobility
- Women have more power than in many other Muslim nations

Educational Structures

- Free, compulsory education up to age 15
- High drop-out rate as young children work illegally
- Many go on to work in the family business
- University education highly prized
- Dual system; special schools available to children of devout Muslim families

Language

- Arabic Egyptian
- Arabic Egyptian is widely understood through the Middle East; Egyptian media read in many countries
- English spoken by educated Egyptians and business community
- Some older Egyptians speak French
- Many people in tourism business have strong linguistic abilities