

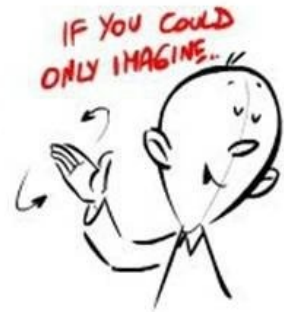
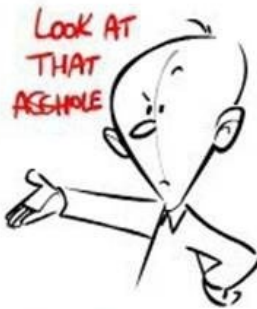
# Intercultural communication

Although Italian culture emphasises individual responsibility, close family ties play an important role. This means that Italians will tend to take care of themselves and their immediate family first. You may find regional differences as people in the north tend to focus on their nuclear family whereas Italians from the south often share the house with their extended family. The economy is dominated by small, family-owned companies which reflects the Italians' preference to do business with people they are already familiar with.

The term "bella figura" is often used to describe the ability to present oneself well and behave demurely and formally and it is a key element in Italian business culture. In some areas of Italy, particularly the south, maintaining "bella figura" is believed to enhance beauty and peace in the world. In Italian culture, appearance and other's opinions are considered extremely important. When doing business in Italy, it is vital to ensure that all presentations and business materials are aesthetically pleasing to your Italian counterparts.

An important aspect of Italian culture is the openly expressed thoughts and feelings common to most Italians. Emotions tend to flow easily in this culture with expansive hand gestures and close personal contact frequently found during Italian conversations. As a result, Italians are often guided by their feelings and in business situations this is important to remember as establishing solid relationships based on trust are vital for effective business negotiations.

# - ITALIAN POPULAR GESTURES - (JUST A FEW.)



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