

Five important things to keep in mind when doing business with Swedes! Do you agree?

- Be patient!

Swedes are slow, compared to Estonians. Just because you hear nothing from them for a couple of weeks does not mean they are not interested in your proposal – they might just be caught up in analysing it to see if it is the best solution. If in doubt, call and chat a bit and ask when to meet (again) to move things forward. To make decisions based on consensus takes time!

- Enjoy meetings!

Because Swedes do! There might even be meetings about scheduling meetings. Follow the agenda and prepare diligently. If needed, send a written analysis beforehand so all who are expected to the next meeting have had the time to read it and contemplate.

- Expect bureaucracy!

A lot of things can be done electronically in Sweden, but usually only if you have a Swedish BankID. If you do not live in Sweden, you cannot get it. To deal with Swedish authorities, there is still a lot that requires IRL signatures on physical papers that you send with snail mail.

- Have fika!

Fika is slang for coffee but as a concept, it enhances much more, both physically as there could be a sandwich or a cinnamon bun added to the coffee, but also psychologically as it is considered as stress relief. Many companies have official fika breaks (“fikapaus” in Swedish) twice a day. Fika is also a good way to step away from the negotiation table and to get to know each other a bit more. With “fika”, you can have a break, come back refreshed and look at things from a different perspective.

- Be Nordic!

Do not discuss politics, this makes Swedes nervous. Swedes might be critical towards their own system, but they do not appreciate hearing it from foreigners. Just be yourself but emphasise our common Nordic features and Swedes will feel more comfortable doing business with Estonians when they understand that we share much of our cultural background.

The article was written by NJORD partner and attorney of law Karolina Ullman. If you need help for successful negotiations with the Nordic countries, don't hesitate to contact Karolina.



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