



# Panama Cultural Briefing

Prepared for: Sales negotiation

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Deal context: \$250,000 pipeline

# ■ ■ Panama at a Glance

Region	Americas	Capital	Panama City
Language	Spanish	Currency	PAB / USD

## Key Stat

Decision cycles in Panama can be quick once trust is earned. Pre-meeting prep matters more than follow-up volume.

## Power Distance vs. USA



Panama is markedly more hierarchical than the US. Always address the senior person first.

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# The 3 Moves That Lose Deals

Specific to Panama · Sales negotiation

## × **Mistake 1: Pushing for a same-day "yes" with direct close language.**

**Why it fails:** Panama uses polite, formal initially; bilingual (spanish/english) in business. A blunt close reads as desperate or disrespectful.

✓ **Do this instead: Frame the ask as a draft for review. Let the counterpart raise the next step.**

## × **Mistake 2: Routing every decision back to one senior champion.**

**Why it fails:** Panama runs flatter decisions. Single-threading slows the deal and signals you do not trust the team.

✓ **Do this instead: Send a follow-up that all stakeholders can act on without their boss.**

## × **Mistake 3: Opening with discount math before the room agrees on the problem.**

**Why it fails:** Pragmatic, trust-based; international business culture. Leading with price erases your premium.

✓ **Do this instead: Anchor on the cost of the status quo. Bring price up only after they describe the gap in their own words.**

# Communication Style

## How they speak

Polite, formal initially; bilingual (Spanish/English) in business

## Hierarchy and titles

Moderate; relationship-based

## Meeting norms

Generally punctual in international business; relationship important

## Email tone — get it right

### × Wrong tone

Hi — circling back. Need an answer by Friday. Are we good to go?

### ✓ Right tone

Dear [Name], thank you for the time you have already invested in this discussion. I wanted to share where we are and ask whether end of next week would work to align on next steps. I appreciate your guidance.

# Trust-Building Timeline

## How relationships build

Pragmatic, trust-based; international business culture

## What signals trust

- ✓ Following through on small commitments faster than promised.
- ✓ Bringing data and a clear point of view to every meeting.
- ✓ Speaking measured, accurate words. Local audiences detect overpromising.

## What destroys trust

- × Switching contacts mid-deal without a warm introduction.
- × Promising executive sponsorship that does not show up.

## Gift-giving and etiquette

Welcome; modest quality items

## Face-saving and what to avoid

Respect indigenous communities; mind political sensitivities

# Your Next Steps

## 1. Practice this sales negotiation before the meeting

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## 2. Pressure-test your first outreach email

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