

Doing Tradeshow Business in Mexico

Personal Comments about my Mexican experiences...

Each of my trips to Mexico have created a different story to tell.

Business and tradeshow experiences can be ruined by not watching what you eat or drink or by jumping into a strange taxi. Paying attention and common sense are a good rule of thumb.

In 2007, I was asked to speak to the Mexican association of exhibit specialists called AMPROFEC. The meeting was in Monterrey that is quite different than Mexico City. On the day of my flight I ran to the airport to catch my United flight direct to Monterrey and realized that I had left my passport on the kitchen table at home. I now had to book another flight with Air Mexicana and return home to get the passport. I called my hosts in Mexico to inform them that I would be arriving 3 hours late. Upon an on time arrival, my host and friend Ruben Garcia from Fabric Images picked me up at the airport as calm as can be, and rushed me to the meeting. The group of 100 people were entertained with other speakers until I arrived nearly 2 hours late due to plane delays. The audience graciously waited and greeted me to finally make my presentation. Although I was embarrassed for my delay, they made me feel like a welcomed guest. The Mexican community of exhibit industry suppliers showed ultimate respect and expressed the pride that they felt about serving in the Mexican exhibit industry. This left a lasting impression upon me about the character of the region.

During another trip to Mexico City, I attended a yearly OSPI meeting, held in a different world city each year. OSPI is a name given to a group of select exhibit system users called the Octanorm Service Partners from around the world. At this meeting 32 different country partners attended, along with the 12 Mexican partners. After our daylong meeting at a hotel in Mexico City, a bus was to take us to a restaurant about 15 miles away.

We left the hotel at 5pm and arrived at 8pm. Three hours to travel 15 miles! Traffic in Mexico City is unbelievable during rush hour. The restaurant we visited also had a mini bull ring. After a shot of tequila with 35 different country members, the restaurant invited our group to have a soccer match in the bull ring in view of the restaurant guests. You have

to understand that soccer is a passion and a game played by the whole world, except the US who can take it or leave it. The Mexican macho players took on the rest of the world countries. An ultimate culture clash! The game became quite aggressive and I was surprised at how skilled that the European and Mexican representatives were at playing soccer. Now soccer might be a very popular spectator sports in Mexico but Bull Fighting was #1. The soccer game between the Europeans and Mexicans was tied at 1 to 1, so the restaurant then decided to let two small bulls into the same rink. The bulls began to charge at the players. Norm Friedrich from Canada was knocked to the ground but the group kept on playing. There was no way that either side was going to get distracted by a dam bull. A few people got hurt so they stopped the game and we feasted on specially grown beef, tortilla delights, tequilla, and Mexican beer. The drive home took only 45 minutes.

Now my wife is a high school Spanish teacher. In 2008 she took a sabbatical from teaching to live in a Mexican village where many of her students in America lived. She met their families and visited their schools to get a better idea about the life that her students have come from. After her month long visit, I met her in Puerto Vallarta, a great beach town where we then played golf for three days. Upon arrival at the hotel, I decided to celebrate our month away from each other by ordering the best tequila they had. Well there is regular tequila and there are grand tequilas. How much could it possibly cost in Mexico where everything was cheaper? How about \$62 a glass! I learned my lesson to ask how much the best really can cost! I will stick to beer in Mexico.

In 2014 I was invited to speak at the World Meeting Forum at the Hard Rock Hotel in Cancun. My presentation was Doing Tradeshows from One Country to the Next. Our host invited all speakers to a nice dinner at 8pm. Myself and two other American speakers arrived at 8pm, but were the only ones there. We kept the bartenders busy until others arrived at 8:40pm, the Mexican time for 8pm. Live and learn.

Tradeshaw Overview-

Contrary to what many people believe, there are many good exhibit supplier sources in Mexico that can provide excellent labor, tradeshaw services, as well as a choice of outstanding exhibit design and manufacturing who can provide full tradeshaw services with good quality. In Mexico it is possible to build custom or rental exhibits with a raised floor, fabric panels, graphics, and nice furnishings at a considerably lower price than in USA, Canada, or Europe. The differences in exhibit styles, freight handling, and labor regulations can be quite different from the US.

Venue locations-

Mexico City has 3 main venues:

1. CENTRO BANAMEX (north)
2. WTC (south)
3. CENTRO BANCOMER (north)

MESSE **CANCUN** has also opened recently. A recent international event on Global Warming was held here with great success. Also the **CANCUN CENTER** nearby is a smaller, but very modern venue.

Other Expo locations in Mexico-

Centro Banamex is the biggest and most frequently used center in Mexico



City. It is used for national and international show organizers and it is a world class venue.

Guadalajara and Monterrey also offer two of the country's most important venue locations (EXPO GUADALAJARA AND CINTERMEX in Monterrey) for international and national shows. Other



cities, like Puebla, Leon, Guanajuato, Acapulco, and some beach locations, are growing their infrastructures to fully accommodate exhibitions and conventions.

Bus and train transportation in Mexico is not recommended for foreigners, except for small cities and towns that are mostly for tourism purposes.

Taxi transportation is fine from airport and hotels but never take on taxi on the street. Take into consideration that traffic in Mexico is heavy, so you must take the time to reach your destination on time. Parking is always available. You will find all kinds of accommodation close to the exhibition centers.

Taxi cost from airport in Mexico City to hotel or venue center will take from 30 min to 1 1/2 hrs, depending on the rush hour. The cost is about \$20 USD.

To Expo Bancomer time and cost will be higher, up to 2 hours in rush hours and will cost \$30 to \$40 USD.

Major **Hotels** are near each of the convention centers. You will find all kinds of **accommodations** and restaurants nearby. However, during the exhibition, it is necessary to book the accommodation well in advance.

Safety- It is safe to use taxis from the venue or hotels. When walking the streets at night safety precautions to consider are to be accompanied, do not wear jewelry or expensive watches. Walk only short distances, areas around venues are safe.....common sense will always apply.

Top International Tradeshows in Mexico

- **PAACE Automechanika** Mexico City is Mexico and Central America's most important automotive trade show. <http://paaceautomechanikamexicous.messefrankfurt.com/mexicocity/es>
- **Expo CIHAC**- show for sustainable construction <http://www.cihac.com.mx>
- **La Expo Nacional Ferretera** - Electric construction.- Guadalajara, <http://www.expoferretera.com.mx>
- **PLASTIMAGEN Mexico** - the most important business forum for the plastics industry in Mexico and Latin America <http://www.plastimagen.com.mx>

- **Expo ANTAD**- Integrating Retail and supply chain
<http://www.expoantad.net>
- **Expo Gurida**- The leading show in North America for security systems
<http://www.exposeguridadmexico.com>
- **Expo Manufactura**- decision makers who decide and influence the purchase of machinery
<http://www.expomanufactura.com.mx>

The currency in Mexico -- \$1 USD = 12 MXN (Mexican Pesos)

Dining-

Typical Mexican Breakfast-

Coffee or tea available in high standard hotels and you will get a buffet with a lot of variety and choice. If you stay in a cheaper hotel breakfast will always have a comprehensive choice of basic cereals, cheese, ham, eggs and yogurts.

Restaurants

There are many choices for **lunch and dinner** locations near and around the expo center. Please note that during a fair, especially in Mexico City, you best make a reservation for a restaurant in advance. The menu is usually available in both Spanish and English for location near the venue.

Food- Mexican cuisine is varied and very good. You should ask your partner in Mexico to give you information about restaurants. It is worth trying some of the gourmet restaurants, which are located in the Polanco area of Mexico City. Lunch is usually between 2.00 and 3.00 pm, and dinner around 8.00 or 9.00pm.

Eating- Mexicans love food, it is common to discuss business matters over lunch or dinner. If invited over to a business meal, you are not expected to pay, however making an attempt to pay is well regarded.

Drinks- Aside from Tequila, Mexican beer is quite good. Try some of the local's brews as well. Nice and trendy bars in Polanco and La Condesa are abundant. My advice- Drink water from a bottle. Mexican tap water will affect people differently, better to be safe than miserable.

Exhibiting in Mexico-

Exhibit Suppliers- Most of the Mexican Exhibit Service Partners are located in Mexico City. This report details information for Mexico City, Guadalajara and Monterrey in particular.

When working somewhere else in the country, be sure to hire an experienced company in Mexico, since service will be more efficient if local. For added references, contact the Mexican Exposition Association called **AMPROFEC**.

Rules & Regulations-

Requirements for exhibition service providers, and for exhibitors, have been pretty lax in the past, but now venues are requiring insurance and structural calculations to permit double deck structures, high walls, or ceiling signs.

Each show in Mexico will have different rules and regulations regarding height allowed and other issues, it is best is to fill all forms from the on-line exhibition manual offered by all major shows usually 2 to 3 months prior. In most shows, the maximum height allowed is 5meters high, and walls should be set back 1 meter in the booth space (no perimeter walls in the booth limit, only 1 meter in).

Smoking and alcohol are not allowed on the show floor during set up and venues also ask for medical insurance for working staff, who must be registered with the proper credentials. Staff needs to be 18 to enter the venue to perform labor services.

Other than exhibit properties, all plasma screens and laptops must be secured with special locks provided by the venue to avoid losses during night hours. Security personnel is provided by the venue for most almost all shows in Mexico.

Two story booths-

Double deck exhibits are also very common in Mexico allowing additional space within a booth generally used for entertaining and added meeting space. The weight and the time needed to install double deck exhibits is more costly, but since upper space is free, then additional space is gained without paying for the floor space.

An engineering stamp is required for proof of stability, especially when used in Mexico City. It is wise to partner with a local supplier to expedite this requirement.

Hanging Signs-

Hanging fabric signs or banners are also commonly used in Mexico, similar to the USA.

In general, exhibit suppliers are not allowed to hang exhibit signs from the hall ceiling. This job is always done by the hall representatives and should be reserved and paid for in advance at the venue or by internet before the show dead lines. Most exhibit houses will take care of this and charge a 10% on top. Also, Venues tend to be slow in this service, so it is good to hire a Mexican company that has relation with riggers. This service is cheap compared to other countries. If you hire during show installation, you have a big chance not to get your sign up.

Graphics-

In Mexico very few people speak English; Slogans can be in English, but if your intention is to communicate with the local audience prepare your graphics in Spanish with secondary copy in English for an international show.

Mexican suppliers are very familiar working with all graphic methods used in the US and Europe- like light boxes, vinyl transfer letters, fabric banners, and direct printing on to a rigid surfaces.

Mexican Design vs USA-

The style of booth construction in Mexico is also totally different from the US or in Europe. A US booth design tends to be a much simpler design with a more open feeling. Much of this is a result of height and setback rules that are imposed by the show organizers. Many US booths use a series of free standing components that are placed into a booth space with a minimal amount of linking structure. A ceiling banner above the booth with strong branding is also quite normal within US tradeshow and can be effective.

The American booth generally is pre-built and crated at the exhibit facility, with the weight factor of the booth design a major consideration relative to drayage charges at the American tradeshow site. In Mexico weight is not a factor and pad wrapped for shipment to venue site.

Booths in the US are usually built on a thick carpet with padding, while in Mexico the clients, like Europeans, prefer raised floor structures in laminated or wooden finishes.

In Mexico a lot of the designs are made from systems and they are rentals, but surely can be custom oriented. The mix of system and custom build is now considered the best solution for a quality look. There is very little fabric used in the market but this is changing.

In Mexico most custom solutions are produced and designed with the idea that the exhibit will be reused for future shows. Mexican exhibiting companies are very demanding in terms of quality.

Mexican exhibit design tends to have more structure, especially since the weight of materials used has no direct effect on the final cost of the booth relative to drayage costs. Although the booth is generally pre-fabricated within a local facility, there is often more on-site building, enabling seamless walls, and much more elaborate structures. In fact, in Mexico, many booths are actually built at the show site from scratch, then painted with graphics applied. This will depend on complexity and size.

Finishes can also vary differently in Mexico. For example a paint finish applied on site is much more common practice than within the US whereas everything tends to be pre-finished laminate prior to assembly. Red Octanorm rentals are very plentiful in Mexico.

A Mexican booth is also more visually prominent and more design oriented because the attitude of the Mexican sales approach differs from the US. The Mexican sales approach is more casual and less aggressive and allows the booth design to be the draw to bring in potential customers. The sales staff then analyzes the visitor to determine the sales pitch, if any. Mexican shows are also open for short periods, 2 days for business to business shows, and usually five days for consumer focused events.

In Mexico the **cost per square meter** for exhibit materials and turnkey services will range from 200usd to 650 usd per sq mt. This depends on the complexity or rental vs. custom. You also need to add inscription fees, depending on the kind of exhibition and the location in Mexico.

Picking a Partner-

Finally when choosing a partner to work with in Mexico, it is important to look into the actual experience and the size of the exhibit house, as many Mexican companies call 'sell' themselves as 'International/Global Exhibiting Companies' but can just be two or three people operating from a very small facility and subcontracting all the work. These companies are limited in the service they can provide.

It is also worth while checking to see what partnerships they have had with like minded exhibit houses globally. Check if they are part of their industry association AMPROFEC or any world alliances like- IFES, OSPI, EDPA, FAMAB, etc which are good places to start.

Also, try to choose an exhibit house who has global experience. This will assure you that the partner understands the different world approaches to exhibiting required from a region. This kind of partner will offer solutions that links both with your expectations and with their approach for doing business in Mexico.

Multi Talented Employees-

Exhibit service employees in Mexico, will tend to be more multi-talented than their US counterparts. They are expected to be carpenters, electricians and graphic installers. In Mexico, a booth a carpenter can assemble the booth, install the electric, and mount the graphics, subject to the complexity of each project. In complex or bigger projects, a team of specialist may assemble a scaffold to reach all wall areas for paint, graphics, and lighting. It is advised to hire a well established Mexican exhibit company to serve as your partner for exhibit events in Mexico.

Installation & Dismantling of the exhibits-

In Mexico, the **set up and dismantling** hours can be short. To access the exhibit hall area, all workers and cars are asked to show an entry pass. Such entry passes for set up and dismantling can be purchased in advance. Please note that the exhibit area is guarded by the show organizers only during the show and therefore, you should be very careful during the set up and dismantling due to stealing of material. Arrangements here can be done with a local exhibit supplier.

In some cases, exhibits are shipped in from another country and require the local supplier to provide carpet, furniture, AV elements, lighting, and

installation labor only. A local labor fee will cost from \$35 USD to 60 USD per man per labor hour, depending on level or expertise and if it is standard or over time. This price may vary enormously depending the size and reliability of the company.

Mexican labor tend to be hired in advance to provide labor for a single project. It is rare to bring in non-skilled labor to complete a project for a well established exhibit company.

Generally it is also common that when a project is fabricated in a Mexican suppliers workshop, the main carpenters will also be the set up crew members for on site installation the booth. This creates familiarity and a continuity that assists in the speed to install and dismantle.

It is important to follow the chain of command at show site. If you need something from a technician on the exhibition floor you should ask who his manager or superior is and then talk to them.

Catering-

You should hire the venue directly for this service, no exhibit suppliers do it directly but they can take responsibility for this, and will add a mark up charge on top. Catering is usually expensive by Mexican standards but cheap for US. Similar expectation in all of South and Central America.

Electric Services-

Electricity, water, hanging signs, Wi-Fi and the other venue services are very expensive and can add an extra 20 % to cost if you are late to place your service orders. Work closely with a local exhibit supplier to avoid over charges or late fees.

Additional Services-

Rental furniture, monitors, truss lighting, and floral are all available locally in the major cities, but it is usually better to have your exhibit company arrange these for you. This way the cost will be less and the problem of dealing with different service providers with a language barrier and their levels of professionalism can be significant.

Bringing machinery or exhibits to Mexico (temporarily imports)

Shipping regulations in Mexico are strict. If you are bringing a booth to Mexico, to install and dismantle there, and then move it to another country afterwards, you should use a company in Mexico that will be willing to

manage it as a **temporary import** and will be responsible for the merchandise with their *Mexican Tax ID number*. This process is sometimes takes longer, and is more expensive, than building a new booth in Mexico. Customs paperwork is often complicated, and slow. Bring your own exhibit- it is only recommended if your client owns a branch in Mexico that can deal with these importation issues or only in the case of bringing the customer machinery needed to exhibit in Mexico. If you will be using the same booth for more than a year, you can purchase it locally for a very reasonable price and ask for storage terms from your Mexican exhibit house for an additional cost.

Freight Movement-

Another major saving in Mexico is the lack of drayage. The American way to manage a typical tradeshow is to hire a show Contractor who then is exclusively responsible to unload all freight, store empty containers, and return crates to the space after the event to be reloaded on trucks. Most delivery trucks in the US are not owned by the exhibit houses, they are hired. The majority of Mexican exhibit houses have their own delivery trucks and will self load trucks from their own facility, and will deliver and unload direct to the booth space with their own lift if needed, similar to Europe.

In Mexico, freight usually does not go to an advanced warehouse nor do they charge for the freight that is delivered by other to the booth. There is the occasional cost for a forklift delivery from the dock to the booth at some venues, but this is rare and the majority of exhibit houses use their own labor to transport and pallet jacks to move the exhibit from the truck to booth site. Note that empty crates or skids are reloaded back on to the delivery truck and stored offsite for return of empty crates to the exhibit space at the dismantle, similar as in Europe. This is the extent of freight movement charges for Mexico. The US contractors calls this freight movement process drayage and the official show contractor charges exhibitors by weight rather than time, truck, and site storage fees.

Exhibit suppliers are allowed to move freight with their own pallet jacks. Again this is an acceptable practice as there are no union jurisdiction within tradeshow venues. The use of a fork lift can be provided by the show contractor in the hall for a minimal fee upon request.

Most venues will only give exhibitors 30 to 60 minutes per truck to unload at the designated entrances, so be aware of this.

Waste materials at Show site-

Collection of waste of material is during the set up of the stand is done in exhibit venue for a fee. The show organizers expect that exhibitors leave a totally clean space afterwards. If not, you may be charged for waste and disposal.

In Mexico, separation of the **waste** is not obligatory. However, you can find different waste containers (mainly for glass, paper and plastic) depending on the specific exhibition area.

Storage after the show-

After a tradeshow, custom and rental exhibits are generally returned to the booth builders' facility for storage until the next show. Storage charges will apply on custom components, not rentals. Fee is reasonable and charged by the month.

Attracting Visitors to your Exhibit Space-

It is common to attract visitors with pre promotions and pre arranged meetings, especially if closing a deal. You may also attract visitors with a bar and attractive product demonstrations at the booth perimeter. A warm handshake and exchange of a business card is always a good start for declaring your level of interest.

Depending on the show, or the product you are selling, your dressing attire for a tradeshow should be business casual.

Be friendly and inviting: In Latin America, people are shy while entering a booth, especially if you are a foreign exhibitor. In our experience, pre determined meetings + a bar are a good meeting strategy to sell at shows. Crowds may attract many visitors but this will not always attract the truly potential buying customers. It is common to hire a professional model to demonstrate products and greet guest. They will dress in stylish clothing, but this style is often a problem since you may attract people who are not interested to buy anything, unless you are selling tires, cars, or related commercial products in Latin markets. As an exhibitor, you can instruct your reception/models to dress as you wish.

Booth Etiquette-

- Mexican business people have a relaxed idea of time. They adhere to time commitments in a flexible manner, which might confuse Americans. At social functions, people typically show up 30 minutes after they are expected. According to "Mexico Business Etiquette Customs," the term "Hora Inglesa" literally means English Time. It translates to the idea that people must adhere to agreed times.

Meeting protocol- Mexicans are friendly and flexible people. They become excellent friends after they get to know you. Greeting hugs are normal after establishing a relationship. Mexicans can be loud after they know you.

Greetings-

- A firm handshake with eye contact is good.
- If you are, among more people, introduce everyone, starting from the person who has the higher level in your organization, say the name first and then the position he/she has in your organization.
- A visitor usually give business cards, the exhibitors give leaflets or brochures, only special guests receive drinks and access to lounge meeting.

Dress-

Directors and owners wear sport clothes, but you can see them in a suit as well, depending on the situation. However for more official occasions (opening of the exhibition) it is better to do be in a suit or formal wear.

- Although Mexico might be hot during your visit, make sure you dress professionally. There are regional differences in the type of clothes business associates expect you to wear. For instance, large cities and areas in Northern Mexico demand upscale clothing for work meetings. Some tropical areas, including Cancún, call for formal tropical clothing with no sandals. Usually no ties.

Male/female business differences It is not common to see women while the exhibits are being installed. Once the tradeshow starts it

is very common to see women as exhibitors and attendees. Today, more and more women are working on fairgrounds than in the past.

Language:

- In Mexico very few people speak English, but at higher management levels you may find more people who speak English. Nowadays, most of the people you meet in Mexico (especially the younger) will speak English; at the airport, at the hotel, with the show organizer, the show suppliers, and the show attendees.

If you are exhibiting at an international event, signs and graphics should be in Spanish with secondary graphics in English. If you are a foreign exhibitor, it is a good idea to have someone from your exhibiting staff (hostess) to speak Spanish well.

Language Notes:

- Mexico is one of the few places in the world where writing systems evolved independently.
- There is no constitutional official language at the federal level in Mexico. Spanish, spoken by 97% of the population, is considered a national language.
- Mexico has the largest Spanish-speaking population in the world with more than twice as many as the second largest Spanish-speaking country. (Spain, Argentina, and Colombia. Almost a third of all Spanish native speakers in the world live in Mexico.
- **English** is widely used in business at the border cities, as well as by the one million U.S. citizens that live in Mexico.

Drinking alcohol on the fairground is permitted. At the stand, Mexican exhibitors may offer beer, wine, or spirits for guests during all hours of the day. Keep in mind that that serving drinks may bring some unwanted people to your booth. Might be wise to serve for VIP's only.

As a visitor, you can drink with your host but you should be always in control. Not good to get loud and drunk. If you do not wish to drink, excuse yourself by explaining that you will be driving a car

later on. As a foreign exhibitor, serve food and drinks that come from your country. Your brands and food types will be more appreciated.

Mexicans love to make a toast. If you decide to make one it's ok.

Smoking at the Venues-

It is forbidden to smoke in exhibition halls during set up and dismantling as well as during the event. Compliance with this restriction is monitored closely. You should follow the instructions of the exhibition area during the show for permitted smoking areas. Now a days there are NOT designated smoking areas within the halls.

Some Things to Know about Mexico-

After rapid economic, social, and technological growth beginning in the 1990s, Mexico is now one of the world's largest economies, as well as one of the fastest growing economies in the world with emerging power. It has the 13th largest nominal GDP. The **economy of Mexico** is the 11th largest in the world.

The economy is strongly linked to those of its North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) partners, especially the United States.

Mexico is the world's tenth most visited country, making tourism over \$21.4 million USD.

Foreign relations in Mexico are directed by the President of Mexico and managed through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The principles of Mexican foreign policy are constitutionally recognized.

Mexico is one of the founding members of several international organizations, most notably the United Nations. Mexico has been one of the largest contributors to the United Nations regular budget, and in 2008 over 40 million US dollars were given to the organization.

Drug-traffic and narco-related activities have been a major concern in Mexico and are monitored frequently.

In 2008, Current president Felipe Calderón made abating drug-trafficking one of the top priorities of his administration. In a very controversial move, Calderón deployed military personnel to cities where drug cartels operated. While this move has been criticized by the opposition parties and the National Human Rights Commission, its effects have been praised

by the Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs as having obtained unprecedented results.

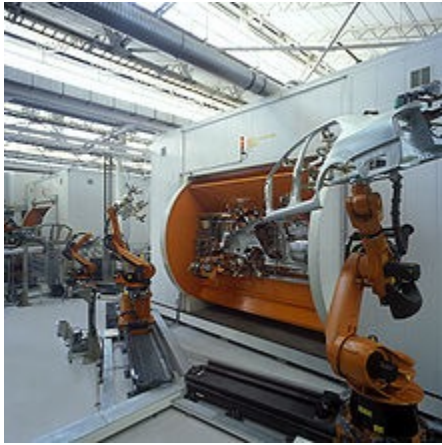
Economy-

As an export-oriented economy, more than 90% of Mexican trade is under free trade agreements (FTAs) with more than 40 countries, including the European Union, Japan, Israel, and much of Central and South America. The most influential FTA is the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which came into effect in 1994, and was signed in 1992 by the governments of the United States, Canada and Mexico. In 2006, trade with Mexico's two northern partners accounted for almost 50% of its exports and 45% of its imports.

In terms of **US-Mexico trade**, in 2010 Mexico had a positive trade surplus of \$55 billion dollars against a negative deficit of \$55 billion for the United States, showing that the NAFTA agreement has now began to work more for Mexico than the United States. In August 2010 Mexico surpassed France to become the 9th largest holder of US debt, which some economists have predicted may give Mexico a position of economic leverage against the United States in international trade, especially when combined with Mexico's now large trade surplus against the United States.

Ongoing economic concerns include the commercial and financial dependence on the US, low real wages, underemployment for a large segment of the population, inequitable income distribution (the top 32% of income earners account for 55% of income), and few advancement opportunities for the largely Mayan population in the southern states. **Daily minimum wages** are set annually by law and determined by zones; 57.46 Mexican pesos (\$4.52 hr USD).

Industry



An automated Volkswagen factory in Puebla

Among the most important industrial manufacturers in Mexico is the automotive industry, whose standards of quality are internationally recognized. The automobile sector in Mexico differs from that in other Latin American countries and developing nations in that it does not function as a mere assembly manufacturer.

The electronics industry of Mexico has grown enormously within the last decade. In 2007 Mexico surpassed South Korea as the second largest manufacturer of televisions, and in 2008 Mexico surpassed China, South Korea and Taiwan to become the largest producer of Smartphone's in the world. Some large industries of Mexico include Cemex, the largest cement and construction conglomerate in the world; the alcohol beverage industries, including world-renowned players like Grupo Modelo; conglomerates like FEMSA, which apart from owning breweries and the OXXO convenience store chain, is also the second-largest Coca-Cola bottler in the world; Gruma, the largest producer of corn flour and tortillas in the world; and Grupo Bimbo, Telmex, Televisa, among many others. Mexico is the second largest producer or silver and precious metals.



Mexico is the world's largest manufacturer of Smartphone's.

Maquiladoras (Mexican factories which take in imported raw materials and produce goods for export) have become the landmark of trade in Mexico. This sector has benefited from NAFTA. As a result of this process Mexico is the world's third largest maker of refrigerators after China and Brazil.

Currently Mexico is focusing in developing an aerospace industry and the manufacture and design of helicopter and commercial jet aircraft is taking place. Foreign firms such as MD Helicopters and Bombardier build helicopters and commercial jets respectively in Mexico. Since 1990 Mexico has been the largest destination for foreign companies to design, manufacture, and service aircraft.

As compared with the United States or countries in Western Europe, a larger sector of Mexico's industrial economy is food manufacturing, which includes several world class companies. There are now national brands and local brands that have become international.

Tourism



Coastal skyline of Cancún, Quintana Roo

According to the World Tourism Organization, Mexico has one of the largest tourism industries in the world. The most visited attractions are the Meso-American ruins, colonial cities, and especially the beach resorts.

There is also a burgeoning domestic tourism that is growing with an affluent middle class who are beginning to vacation within their own country. While Mexico's middle/lower class usually promotes national tourism, the middle/higher class usually prefers to travel overseas.

Other tourism activities include shopping at its world class shopping malls, or *plazas*, then taking a tour to the surrounding.

Energy-

Natural resources are the "nation's property" (i.e. public property) by constitution. As such, the oil sector is administered by the government with varying degrees of private investment. Mexico is the sixth-largest oil producer in the world, with 3.7 million barrels per day. In 1980 oil exports accounted for 61.6% of total exports; by 2000 it was only 7.3%.

Transportation-

Much of Mexico's automotive traffic depends on the national highway system. The paved-roadway network in Mexico is the most extensive in Latin America.

Being one of the first Latin American countries to promote railway development, the network, though extensive is still inefficient to meet the economic demands of transportation.

Internet usage is prevalent in Mexico even in rural areas where there are usually pay per use internet centers to give internet access to those without home computers.

Demographics-

The recently-conducted 2010 Census showed a population of 112,322,757, making it the most populous Spanish-speaking country in the world. Mexican annual population growth has drastically decreased from a peak of 3.5% in 1965 to 0.99% in 2005.

Mexican population is increasingly urban, with close to 75% living in cities. The five largest urban areas in Mexico (Greater Mexico City, Greater Guadalajara, Greater Monterrey, Greater Puebla and Greater Toluca) are home to 30% of the country's population.

The Mexico-U.S. border separates densely populated Tijuana, from Diego. This is the most frequently crossed international border in the world, with 250 million legal crossings per year.

Mexico is home to the largest number of U.S. citizens abroad (estimated at one million as of 1999), which represents 1% of the Mexican population and 25% of all U.S. citizens abroad. Other significant communities of foreigners are those of Central and South America, most notably from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Peru, Cuba, Venezuela, Guatemala, and Belize.

Illegal immigration has been a problem for Mexico, especially since the 1970s. In 2006 Mexico detained more than 182,000 people who entered the country illegally, mainly from nearby Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, all being Central-American countries neighboring Mexico to the south. Smaller numbers of illegal immigrants come from Ecuador, Cuba, China, South Africa, and Pakistan.

Mexico represents the largest source of immigration to the United States. About 9% of the population born in Mexico is now living in the United States.

28.3 million Americans listed their ancestry as Mexican as of 2007.

Religion-

- Mexico has no official religion, and the government does not provide any financial contributions to the church, and the church does not participate in public education.
- The last census reported, by self-ascription, that at least 82.8% of the population is Christian. Roman Catholics are 76.5% of this total population, 47% percent of whom attend church services weekly. In absolute terms, Mexico has the world's second largest number of Catholics after Brazil.
- About 6.3% of the population is Protestant, in Mexico.
- According to the 2000 Census, 3.1% of the Mexican population manifested having no religion; this number is expected to be significantly higher in the 2010 Census.

Culture



Jarabe Tapatio, an example of traditional Mexican dance and costumes.

Mexican culture reflects the complexity of the country's history through the blending of pre-Hispanic civilizations and the culture of Spain, imparted during Spain's 300-year colonization of Mexico. Exogenous cultural elements, mainly from the United States, have now been incorporated into Mexican culture.

Music

Mexican society enjoys a vast array of music genres, showing the diversity of Mexican culture. Traditional Mexican music includes Mariachi, Banda, Norteño, Ranchera and Corridos; on an every-day basis most Mexicans listen to contemporary music such as pop, rock, etc. in both English and Spanish. Mexico has the largest media industry in Latin America, producing Mexican artists who are famous in Central and South America and parts of Europe, especially Spain.

Cuisine



"Chocolate" originates from Mexico's Aztec cuisine, derived from the Nahuatl word xocolatl.

Mexican cuisine is known for its intense and varied flavors, colorful decoration, and variety of spices. Most of today's Mexican food is based on pre-Columbian traditions, including the Aztecs and Maya, combined with culinary trends introduced by Spanish colonists.

The *conquistadores* eventually combined their imported diet of rice, beef, pork, chicken, wine, garlic and onions with the native pre-Columbian food, including maize, tomato, vanilla, avocado, papaya, pineapple, chili pepper, beans, squash, sweet potato, peanut and turkey.



Cabrito con Tamales

Mexican food varies by region, because of local climate and geography and ethnic differences among the indigenous inhabitants and because these different populations were influenced by the Spaniards in different ways. The north of Mexico is known for its beef, goat and ostrich production and meat dishes, in particular the well-known Arrachera cut.

Central Mexico's cuisine is largely made up of influences from the rest of the country, but also has its authentic dishes, such as barbacoa, pozole, menudo, tamales, and carnitas.

Mexican Sports-

- Mexico's most popular sport is association football (**soccer**). During the World Cup all televisions everywhere are soccer.
- The national sport of Mexico is Charreada.
- Bullfighting is also a very popular sport in the country, and almost all large Mexican cities have bullrings. *Plaza México* in Mexico City, is the largest bullring in the world, which seats 55,000 people.
- Professional wrestling (or *Lucha libre* in Spanish) is a major attraction.
- Baseball is popular in the Gulf of Mexico, Yucatán Peninsula and the Northern States. In some regions baseball has traditionally been more popular than soccer. Mexico has had several players signed by Major League teams, the most famous of them being Dodgers pitcher *Fernando Valenzuela*.
- Mexico is an international power in professional boxing (at the amateur level, several Olympic boxing medals have also been won by Mexico).
- Golf is also becoming extremely popular. Notable Mexican athletes include *Lorena Ochoa*, who is currently ranked in the top of the LPGA.



Science and technology

Some good things to know about Mexican pride-



Rodolfo Neri Vela, the first Mexican in space



Mario J. Molina became the first Mexican citizen to win the Nobel Prize in science.

- Guillermo González Camarena was the inventor of a color-wheel form of color television
- According to a study by the Carnegie Endowment, Mexico is among the top developing countries well prepared for more rapid adoption of foreign technologies, largely because of their relatively high levels of educational attainment and supportive infrastructure.

Information provided by:

Mariana Albarran Rodriguez
Expoquartzo Exposition
Mexico City, Mexico

Ruben Garcia
Fabric Images-Mexico
Mexico City, Mexico