

Always meet your business contacts in the lobby of your hotel. Avoid giving out your room number.

Print your business cards in English on one side and in the language of the host country on the other. Doing so will eliminate any misunderstanding about the rank or position you hold.

In India, men do not generally shake hands with women. They greet them by placing the palms of their hands together and bowing slightly.

Find out the correct way to give and receive business cards. In China and Japan, you are expected to use both hands. However, in parts of the Middle East, you must never use your left hand, as it is considered unclean.

Dress appropriately. If local women do not wear trousers to the office, neither should you. Wear sensible shoes that allow you to stand for long periods and to move quickly if necessary.

Learn how to decline food graciously during business dinners, so that no one will be insulted. For example, in Asia, leaving some food in your bowl implies that your hosts have fed you well and that you are no longer hungry.

Understand that, in some countries, even if you do business with men during the day, you may be seated separately with women for evening dining.

In certain cultures, businessmen may consider it acceptable to proposition or flirt with visiting businesswomen. Do not be offended. A firm "no" is appropriate.

Before offering gifts to your hosts, make sure that the type of present, and even the colour of the wrapping paper, are culturally acceptable.

For valuable information on cultural norms and workplace environments, see the "Country Profiles" section of our website. Women who will be living and working abroad for an extended period will also benefit from reading our booklet *Working Abroad: Unravelling the Maze* (available at www.voyage.gc.ca).