

Entertainment can be an important part of business development. Canadian business representatives are often entertained and reciprocal invitations are much appreciated. Government or public officials, however, are unlikely to accept invitations or gifts. The Singapore Government has achieved a reputation of being free of corruption.

Your first presentation should be complete and include literature, product specifications, samples, and price, delivery and quality control information. Ensure the products you hope to export meet local labelling, content, environmental, size, and other standards. Let the Canadian High Commission and prospective buyer know if you will need audio-visual equipment for your presentation; Singapore uses PAL-format video tapes only. Video tapes no longer have to be reviewed by Singapore authorities if the Singapore addressee to whom they are sent signs a declaration that the videos are for commercial purposes only. ***Please note that the Canadian High Commission cannot certify the tapes for you. If no Singapore addressee is available, allow several weeks for the videos to be cleared by the Board of Film Censors.***

Appropriate follow-up can be crucial to the success of your visit. Thank-you notes, samples, brochures or other requested information should be dispatched as soon as you return to Canada. Regular correspondence with those you met, as well as the staff of the Canadian High Commission, will show you are serious and committed to the Singapore market. ***Singaporeans expect a turnaround of 24 hours to their faxes,*** even if this is only a note of acknowledgement and an indication of when the answer will be forthcoming. A follow-up visit should be planned in the event there is business potential.

BUSINESS CULTURE

Chinese names begin with the family name, followed by the generational and individual name. Thus, Lee Chow Meng would be addressed as Mr. Lee. Sometimes, an individual may also have a Christian name, in which case the business card might read John Lee or John Lee Chow Meng. He would still be addressed as Mr. Lee. Most Malay names follow the Singapore example, i.e. Abu Bakar Mohamad is Mr. Abu Bakar, and East Indian names have the family name at the end, the same as in Canada.

All three cultures in Singapore share a similar respect for age, family, and rank. In business, this translates into requests for meetings being accompanied by a desire to know the status and number of Canadians attending, in order to ensure Singaporeans of the equivalent level and group size are present. Often, only the most senior Singapore representative will speak. Family, networking, and close personal relations remain important links in business dealings. Less visible, but still present, is the Asian concept of "face" which is related to respect. ***Criticism is counterproductive. Decisions will be reached by consensus.***