

Do not be excessively firm in your handshake. Some Malaysians prefer to touch palms and bring the hand back to the heart to signify a greeting accepted with sincerity. Have a good supply of business cards for both formal and casual functions. Business cards may be offered with the right hand or both hands. Briefly study a card given to you before putting it away. If it is offered to you at a table, it is acceptable to keep the card alongside your plate.

► **Follow-up**

Thank-you notes, samples, brochures and other promised information should be sent as soon as possible.

Appropriate follow-up can be crucial to the success of a business visit. Regular correspondence with Malaysian contacts and agents will prove your

interest and sincerity. Remember to copy the Canadian High Commission in Kuala Lumpur on any correspondence; it will be difficult for the trade staff to follow your progress or intercede on your behalf if they have not been kept in the loop.

► **Dress code**

Malaysia is predominantly a Muslim country and modest dress is advisable. Men should wear a long-sleeved white or plain-coloured shirt and tie for business meetings. A jacket can be added when meeting senior officials. A long-sleeved batik shirt and long trousers are often worn for evening events. Shorts and casual shirts should be avoided. Women should dress for business as they would in Canada, remembering to cover their shoulders and avoid very short skirts and shorts.

REPRESENTATION

Companies wanting to appoint agents or distributors should deal directly with a recognized person or firm who is familiar with the latest government regulations and who has established contacts with end-user organizations.

Canadian exporters to Malaysia can employ a number of marketing methods. Exports can be handled through appointed agents or distributors, established Malaysian trading firms or through setting up a representative firm, sales office or branch office.

It can be advantageous to deal with native Malay or Bumiputra-controlled agencies that receive special preference under the Malaysian National Economic Policy. The Malaysian government frequently awards tenders to Bumiputra companies, or companies in which Bumiputra hold majority shares. In awarding contracts to foreign firms, the government is very conscious of the Malaysian element involved in the bid; this involvement can be measured in terms of local expertise, work force and material.