

Food Processing

There are opportunities for Canadian companies in food processing. Canada has the manufacturing facilities to test new products that Singaporean companies are interested in and the city's multicultural environment, westernized middle class, and expanding tourism sector encourage a diverse food market. For example, a number of food processing companies from Singapore test their products at facilities such as the dairy plant at St. Hyacinth, Quebec.

Advanced Technology

There are numerous opportunities in advanced technology products and services to complement Singapore's own growth objectives in this area. Information systems, advanced manufacturing, and electronics are areas of particular interest.

Defence Industry

Singapore has one of the region's best equipped armies. It is continuously on the lookout for advanced military technology and products.

Medical Services and Health Care

Singapore is emphasizing development of its health care industry to serve its affluent and aging population. The objective is to evolve into a regional centre of medical excellence. Canadian techniques of health care delivery would be of interest.

Energy

Singapore operates oil refineries and petrochemical plants. Canadian expertise and equipment in the oil and gas industry complements Singapore's activities in this sector.

Negotiating in Singapore

It is relatively easy to do business with large Singaporean firms since many of them are subsidiaries of western firms and as such, use western systems of management. The smaller firms, however, are managed with loose organizational structures coupled to highly centralized decision-making. Because Singapore is characterized by a fast pace of life, business can be conducted quickly.

Despite its Chinese majority, Singapore is characterized by cultural diversity. Many Asian cultural practices persist, but the western handshake has become a common form of greeting with the oriental bow reserved for Asians. Courtesy demands that a person be addressed by Mr, Mrs. or Miss and the family name: first names should not be used unless one is invited to do so.

Singaporeans are very punctual and expect punctuality from others. Unlike other Asians, they get down to business right away and do not spend time on pleasantries. They do not indulge in unnecessary or superficial smiling or familiarity. Singaporean business people restrict expressions of courtesy to people whom they know and treat people whom they do not know with a formal neutrality.

Touching another person, especially on the head, is considered impolite. When crossing legs, place one knee directly over other and do not point your foot or the sole of your foot at anyone. Avoid tapping or shaking your foot under the table while discussing business.

During the conduct of business, dinner invitations are frequent, and it is not uncommon to take guests out to restaurants virtually every night of week.