

The Japanese often conduct formal negotiations through several teams. Each team may go over the same issues to ensure that they understand every aspect of your proposal. Be patient, sincere and forthcoming. Be prepared for long negotiations before the Japanese come to a decision, but once a decision is made, be ready for instantaneous implementation.

The spokesman for the Japanese side may be the person that speaks English the best rather than the leader of the negotiations. To ensure that you understand all the details and that you are properly understood, you should employ your own qualified translators.

Japanese culture places a high premium on consensus and harmony. Conversely, the Japanese strive to avoid unpleasantness and confrontation. As a result, businesses rarely take each other to court. They will be offended if you take a lawyer to your meetings or present them with a draft contract prematurely. The Japanese also do not like complicated legal documents. Contracts cover the essential points but leave both parties leeway to make adjustments as the need arises. The Japanese expect both parties to be able to alter implementation as circumstances change. Remember that the Japanese do not feel bound by any verbal discussion or by any document until they have affixed their personal seal to it.

On rare occasions you may be invited to a private home in Japan. If that occurs, you should reciprocate with an invitation to dinner in a private room of a restaurant. Remember that shoes are removed before entering Japanese-style houses and restaurants. When sitting on the floor, men can cross their legs and take jackets off after the initial toast. At large formal dinners, it is common to sing songs and you should have one ready, just in case.

Key Contacts:

For further information about securing investment from Japan, interested Canadian companies should contact the following:

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