Yes. And one of the common errors that firms make when planning to enter the U.S. market is to underestimate the differences between the United States and Canada because there are so many similarities. The differences may be only of degree, but independent research and the experiences of Canadians doing business in the United States have shown that **the following five cultural differences can influence buying habits and make or break a deal:**

1. U.S. views

Americans continue to see the United States as 'number one' worldwide and people in business may have a hard time accepting that they can learn from others. In addition to knowing your buying rights under the Canada–U.S. Free Trade Agreement (FTA), be aware that U.S. customers are likely to respond positively if you can show them that **your service can reinforce their top position.**

2. U.S. ethnocentrism

Americans are somewhat isolationist and mistrustful of foreigners. In contrast to Canada's multicultural approach, the United States has always pressed new immigrants to blend in. While being foreign is initially a disadvantage, once you are in the door Americans view Canadians as ethical, trustworthy, committed business partners and very knowledgeable about international business.

3. U.S. pragmatism

Americans are generally practical. They want to know "what's in it for them" in dollars and cents. Although they may be friendly and sociable, they won't do business unless they can compare options and are convinced they have gotten the best deal possible. Be prepared for hard-sell, comparative marketing and expect some hard bargaining. Most executives expect they will have to modify their first offer.

4. U.S. entrepreneurship

U.S. business lore is filled with stories of executives that "pulled themselves up by their own bootstraps." The typical businessperson is wary of government interference and has little respect for someone who expects or condones government assistance. The U.S. private sector keeps a much greater distance from government than in Canada, and your approach to private sector clients must reflect creative entrepreneurship. The United States is one of the few markets where visible support from the Canadian government can be a liability rather than an asset.

5. U.S. initiative

Time is money for U.S. businesses, and most communities of any size are equipped with 24-hour business support services. Potential customers will be sensitive to how quickly you respond. If you want the business, be prepared to provide same-day turnaround or at least a response within 24 hours. Similarly, be prepared for the fact that Americans are rapid deal makers. They are often ready to get started before you even realize the deal has been closed.