Common Do's and Don'ts in Canada

• Broadly speaking, Canada is divided into two distinct societies, i.e., English-speaking and French-speaking. Both languages are official in the country. However, most of international business is conducted in English.

Do's

- Shake hands and introduce yourself when meeting for the first time. Always, shake hands firmly when meeting or departing. Eye contact is important. During Covid times, this tradition is being followed in light of health considerations.
- When a woman enters or leaves a room, it is polite for men to rise. Men normally offer their hands to women.
- Canadians are more formal with regard to names and titles. Use last names and appropriate titles until invited by our Canadian hosts or colleagues to use their first names.
- Academic titles and degrees are important to French Canadians. You should know and use them properly.
- Punctuality is demanded for business meetings and social occasions.
- Business communication is quite direct in Canada.
- For business meetings, men may wear suits and ties. Women may wear conservative suits or dresses.

Don'ts

- Do not debate contentious national issues of Canada.
- Canadians are more reserved. Maintaining a certain personal space is important.
- Take off your hat or sunglasses when speaking to someone. Don't sit with your legs apart, or with your feet propped up on tables or chairs.
- It's considered rude by many in Quebec to talk with your hands in your pockets.