



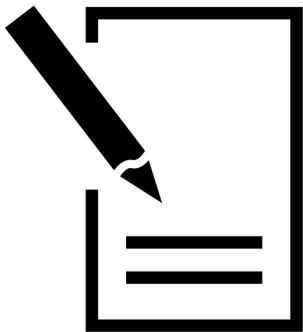
CANADIAN WORKPLACE NORMS

**A how to for the Canadian
Workplace**

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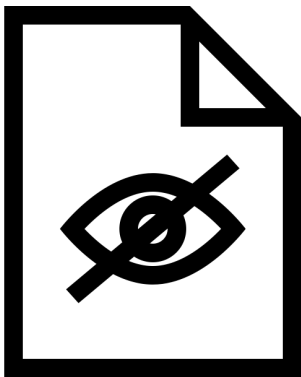
Every workplace has its own culture. Canadian workplaces may be different than what you are used to. The easiest way to figure out what that culture is, is to observe and ask. In this package outline some of the norms that exist in most Canadian workplaces.

Rules



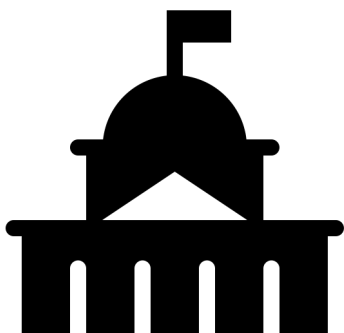
Written: policies and procedures written on paper by a company or organization. These vary from workplace to workplace.

Ex. All Lethbridge College employees must abide by the Respect in the Workplace Policy



Unwritten: certain values, behaviors and ways of communication are simply accepted and used by everyone

Ex. Saying please and thank you.

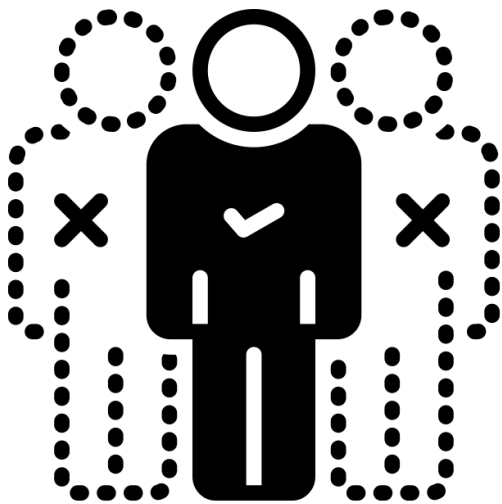


Government: laws that all people and organizations are required to follow

Ex. Occupational Health & Safety, Federal & Provincial Labour Standards and the Canadian Human Rights Act.

Time

Attendance:



- Time is important and valued
- You must be on time (punctual)
- Being 15 minutes early is a good rule
- Attendance and punctuality can be used to measure performance
- If you are going to be late, you must call a supervisor
- If you are going to be sick, you must call your supervisor in a timely fashion, especially if others are depending on you to show up
- If you are sick for more than one day, you must call each and every day you are sick and let your supervisor know



Deadlines:

- If a deadline is set, it must be followed
- Any issues regarding meeting a deadline need to be discussed with your supervisor, as soon as possible

Personal Space



Personal Space:

- General rule for physical space is two arms lengths
- Different for friends and family
- Notice if someone backs away, they are giving you a non-verbal cue that they want space

Identity



Gender/Sexuality/Religion:

- Canada is a very diverse country with people of all gender/sexual and religious identity
- You may spend time with people with very different identities
- You must still give the same kindness and respect whether you agree with or understand them
- We accept all people as they are

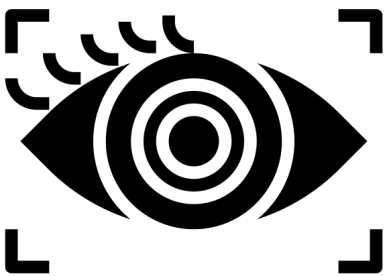
Handshakes

Handshakes:



- Handshakes are an easy way to professional greet a new person
- Make sure to explain if you do not shake hands for any reason, most people are understanding
- If you do not explain it could be misunderstood as rude
- When shaking someones hand, use a firm grip, not too hard not to soft
- A soft handshake can be view as a weakness

Eye Contact

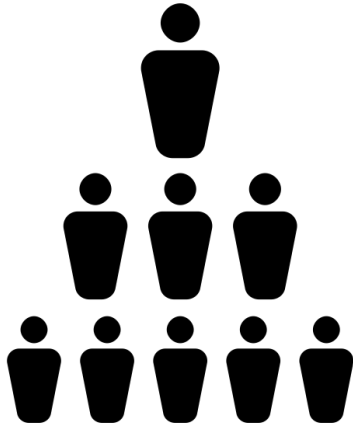


Eye Contact:

- Making eye contact, helps people feel a sense of trust in you
- If you are not making eye contact, people may think you are not listening

Hierarchy

Hierarchy:



- Most companies have a top-down system
- Employee's follow supervisor's directions
- If making decisions, asking for information or dealing with problems you be expected to talk to the right person based on your companies structure

Communication

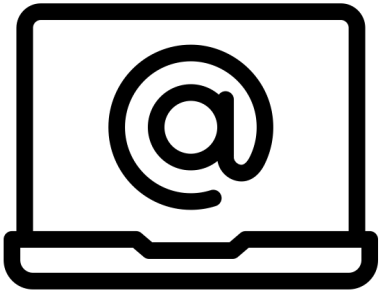
Formal vs. Informal:



- Canadian's tend to use more passive language, this can be misinterpreted as option, it is not
 - Could you.....
 - Would you.....
- The passive language is used as a more polite way of giving direction
- Do not refer to people by their title
 - Teacher
 - Boss

Communication

Email:



- Email is one of the most common forms of communication, yet often it is not used appropriately
- Use the following formula to ensure you have written an appropriate email
 - Subject Line: should indicate in one statement what the email is regarding
 - Greeting: address the person by name, or if unsure, To whom it may concern.
 - Body: this is the message you are delivering as indicated by your subject line
 - Salutation: always close with a sincerely, best or thank you. Do not forget to sign your name.

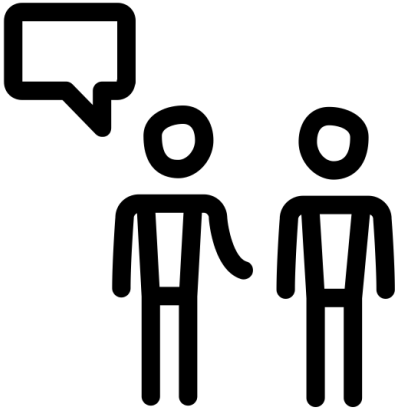
Phone:



- Phone is another common method of communications.
- Use the following formula to ensure you leave an appropriate voicemail
 - Open with your name
 - State the purpose of your message
 - Leave your name and contact information

Communication

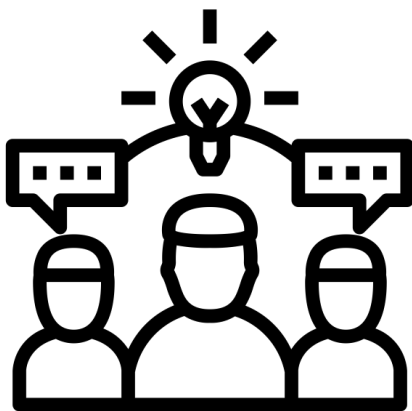
Small Talk:



- Is the informal conversation that helps with socialization
- Topics can range from the weather to what you did on the weekend
- Usually happens when waiting for something:
 - A meeting to start
 - A cashier to ring through your purchase
 - Filling the time

Teamwork

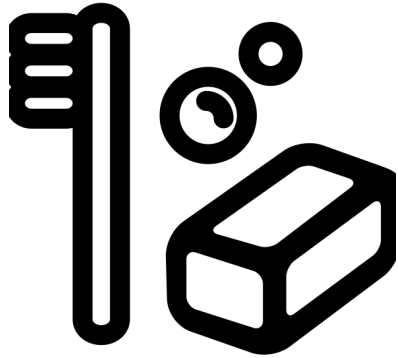
Teamwork:



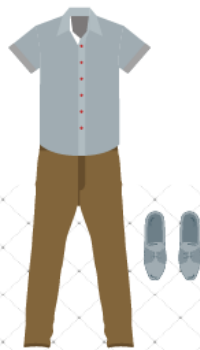
- Team work is considered essential for working in Canada
- Every individual must contribute to the teams success
- In a team setting, if unsure of anything, ask your supervisor. Especially in a new work environment
- The supervisor is typically the leader
- Do not be afraid to speak up and contribute
- You will be expected to offer ideas, suggestions and feedback
- In a team, we value each other's ideas

Appearance

Hygiene:



- Always ensure that you and your attire are clean and tidy
- Ensure that you do not use overly scented perfumes and soaps
- Wash your hands often
- Cover your hands when you cough or sneeze



CASUAL



BUSINESS CASUAL



BUSINESS



Canadian Workplace Values – From *You're Hired...Now What?* By Lynda Goldstein

Canadian work values compared with values in other cultures	
Common Canadian Values	Contrasting Values Of Some Other Cultures
Directness, honesty, openness: People should be open and honest and say what they think, but they should be polite and speak in a way that is considerate of other people's feelings.	Indirectness / increased directness: In many Asian cultures, saving face is most important. People are taught to be diplomatic and put the feelings of others first. Honesty isn't necessarily the best policy. In Russia and some Eastern European countries, people are even more direct than in Canada. They see directness as a sign of honesty and respect, but can seem rude to people from less-direct cultures.
Equality: All people are equal. In the workplace, status is observed in a less-obvious way than in other cultures.	Rank or status: Roles are defined in terms of one person being subordinate or superior to another, as in Russia or China.
Self-direction: Employees are often given a task and expected to figure out how to do it. They should be willing to work hard and show initiative.	Hierarchy: Employees are told exactly what to do and how to do it. Cultures such as those in East Asia and South Asia have a steep pyramid. The boss or chief at the top gives detailed directives which employees are expected to implement.
Change: New ideas are often well-received. Many organizations change constantly.	Tradition: In some Asian culture people are taught to respect their ancestors and observe the rituals, customs, and beliefs from their past.
Time flies: People must save time and be organized, using schedules and time management techniques. In business, it's important to be punctual.	Time walks: In many South American cultures and countries such as Indonesia, people take it easy and don't rush. They have more flexible hours and feel that what isn't done today will get done tomorrow.
Short-term outlook: Companies focus on short-term goals. They measure success on a quarter-by- quarter basis.	Long-term outlook: Companies sacrifice short term gain for long-term goals. The Japanese auto industry, for example, has longer-term goals than the North American auto industry.
Individualism and privacy: Respect individual needs, personal property and privacy. For example, people do not discuss their salaries with co-workers.	Group: The group's needs are most important. Individual needs and property are sacrificed for the group. In the Chinese culture, for example, people tend to consult the group

Canadian Workplace Values – From *You're Hired...Now What?* By Lynda Goldstein

	before making decisions. In group cultures, salaries are public knowledge.
Work: Many people define themselves by the type of work they do. They work hard and make work a priority, often giving up personal time for their jobs.	Being: People don't define themselves by their work. It's acceptable not to focus on work. In the Scandinavian countries, family life is considered more important than work.
Action and achievement: Action and accomplishment are highly valued. Being productive is a great asset.	Relationships: Relationships are more important than action and accomplishments. In the middle east, business leaders take much longer to get to know each other than North Americans do before they conduct business together.
Self-improvement: People try to improve their own lives. Continued learning is encouraged; many companies offer seminars and workshops, and pay for employees' evening courses.	Birthright or fate: People are born into wealth or poverty as determined by fate. It is difficult to change their positions in society. This view is part of Indian culture, although it is changing in some places.