

DO'S & DON'TS IN SINGAPORE

General directions for making a good impression

- Group interests, harmony and mutual security are more important than the individual.
- Always treat elders with the utmost respect and courtesy; make sure they are introduced, greeted and offered food and drinks first.
- Rather than rejecting someone by saying "no", say "I will try" or "I will see" thus allowing you and the other party to save face.
- Chinese Singaporeans prefer a light and a bit more prolonged handshake; Malay Singaporeans might refrain from shaking hands with the opposite sex.
- Traditionally Chinese Singaporeans have 3 names. Their surname/family name is mentioned first followed by two first names. They might adopt a Western first name that will be placed in front of their Chinese surname. E.g. Tony Seow Jia Bao.
- Indians might not use a surname in Singapore. Instead, they put the first letter of their father's surname in front of their own first name. E.g. M. Nithi.
- Your hierarchical position within the company represents your achievement; it should be clearly indicated on your business card (English/Chinese).
- Appointments are necessary and should be made at least two weeks in advance by email or phone, it's customary to reconfirm your appointment one day in advance.
- Personal relationships are essential to business success, as is your network. Relationships are maintained by frequent short lunch, coffee meetings or phone calls.
- Singaporeans are quite sensitive to body language and prefer a calm demeanour. Tone down facial expressions and body language and refrain from speaking loudly.



These do's and don'ts help to make a first good impression when meeting business partners. However, for a successful business outcome, a tailored cross-cultural approach is key. We gladly provide you with more country and industry specific cultural advice. Contact us at info@culture-inc.com.