

Beverley Payne
Terry Webb

OXFORD

You're Hired... Now What?

**An Immigrant's Guide to Success
in the Canadian Workplace**

WORKBOOK

Illustrated by
Sarah Jane Payne



Canadian
workplace
language in a
classroom-ready
workbook

Chapter 1

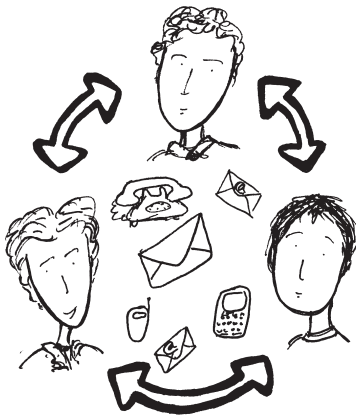
How to Work Well in Canada

Key Point Focus

- Business culture
- Being open to new ideas
- Workplace values

First things first

The *Oxford ESL Dictionary* defines *culture* as “the customs, ideas, and civilization, etc. of a particular society or group of people.”



Understanding business culture and communication patterns in the Canadian workplace can involve a steep learning curve for many new immigrants. Canada covers a large geographical area, and you may observe regional differences in some cultural practices as you travel from place to place. Although there are federal and provincial regulations that provide laws and guidelines for working Canadians, each company will also have some of its own customs, practices, and workplace values. And just like Canada does, each workplace contains a mix of cultural practices.

Trying to observe and understand culture is like trying to observe and understand an iceberg. There are things that are easy to see on the surface. However, it is not so easy to understand and predict what is under the surface. Values are sets of beliefs about the way people should behave with one another. Sometimes these values are easy to see and other times they seem to be very challenging to understand.

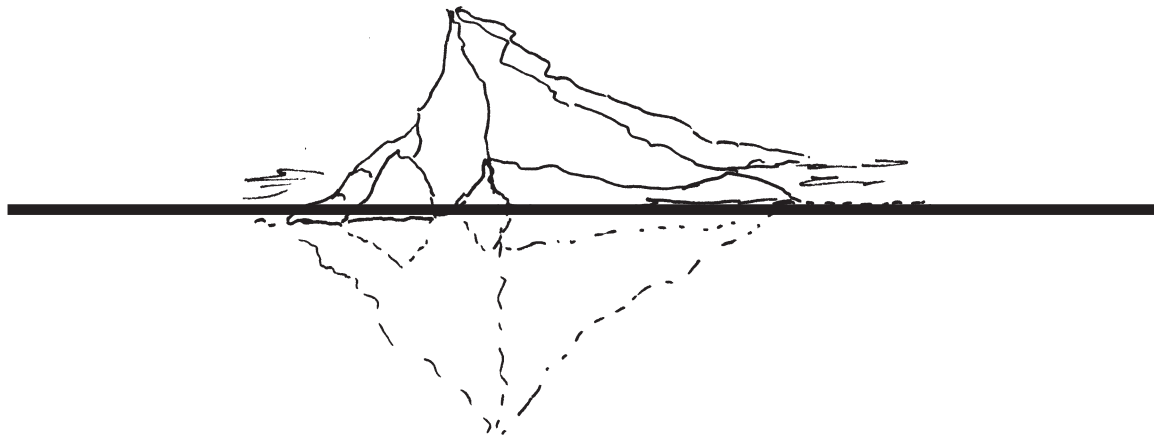
Anyone who is either looking for a job or starting out in a new job will require some time to figure out the expectations, culture, and customs of any new or prospective workplace. Meeting new people and learning about a new workplace culture can be difficult.

Exercise A

Working with a partner, discuss your observations about the following workplace values. Which values are similar to those of your native culture and which values are different?

Canadian Workplace Values	Values That Are Similar to Those in My Native Country	Values That Are Different from Those in My Native Country
Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct expression of your ideas • Politeness and diplomacy • Use of personal space 		
Equality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislation for equity • Same job types and positions for men and women 		
Self-direction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectation of individual initiative • Ability to problem solve • Ability to work on individual projects 		
Teamwork <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to collaborate and communicate with others • Ability to share ideas and tasks 		
Time <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time-wasting not acceptable • Keeping to a schedule • Beginning meetings at a specified time • Being on time 		
Informality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of first names • Business casual clothing at many workplaces • Few formal rituals • Greeting can be a wave, a handshake, or a hello 		
Self-Improvement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending workshops • Taking classes 		

Exercise B



1. Above the line, make a list of the Canadian workplace values and customs that are easily seen.
2. Below the line, make a list of the values and customs that seem confusing and are not as easy to understand.
3. Working in small groups, discuss your answers to questions 1 and 2.

Exercise C

In pairs, complete the following.

1. How would you explain the two concepts below? Do you live to work or do you work to live? Mark an X to show where you would place yourself on this scale. Discuss your response with your partner.



2. Complete these sentences.

Work in Canada is ... _____

Work is ... _____

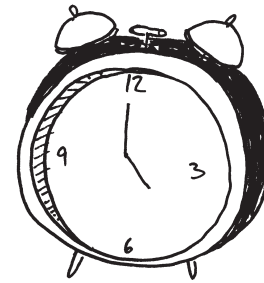
My career is ... _____

My hope is ... _____

Buzzwords

- don't beat around the bush
 - do your own thing
 - many hands make light work
 - out of the running
 - steep learning curve
 - take you under their wing
 - the early bird catches the worm
 - there is no time like the present
- time flies
 - time is money

Add your own drawing to this clock to illustrate one of the *time* buzzwords.



Fill in the blanks with phrases from the list above and example sentences that contain these phrases.

Definition	Phrase	Example Sentence
1. Large tasks become smaller when the work is shared by many people.	Many hands make light work.	<i>We've got a big job to do today, but ...</i>
2. Be direct in your communication		<i>I would like to understand, please don't ...</i>
3. Do what you want or think is best		<i>I might do it differently, but I know you will ...</i>
4. Time passes very quickly		
5. Time is valuable and should not be wasted		
6. Not able to participate		

Language patterns

Asking for help

Would you and *could you* are both polite forms that can be used to make requests and ask permission. *Can you* is also used to make informal requests; however, it sounds less polite.

Exercise A

Complete the following sentences.

Could

- Could you recommend *a good place to buy a computer* ?
- Could you recommend _____ ?
- Could you tell me a little more about _____ ?
- Could you please _____ ?

Would

Would it be possible to *fax this report* _____ ?

Would it be possible to _____ ?

Would you be able to _____ ?

Exercise B

Working with a partner, use the *could* / *would* sentence patterns to ask each other for help with, or information about, the following:

- finding a new apartment
- finding a doctor
- good restaurants
- making an international phone call
- team meetings
- Canadian business culture

Vocabulary

aggressive	equality	rituals
annoyed	minimize	task
collaborative	oblivious	valuable
customs	promptness	values
embarrassment		

Use five of the vocabulary words to write an email to a friend about Canadian workplace values.

Share your email with a partner. Then, discuss the definitions of any vocabulary words that you did not use in your email.

Dialogue

Elizabeth Arti Farjar

Elizabeth: Welcome! Please come in.

Arti: Thank you.

Elizabeth: Did you have any difficulty finding my home?

Arti: No. Not at all. Your directions were very clear.

Elizabeth: Oh good. We were just beginning to get a little worried about you.

Arti: Worried?

Farjar: Worried? I am not sure I understand.

Elizabeth: Oh, I understand how time flies. We are all just glad you arrived here safely. Go ahead into the living room while I take care of your coats.

Arti: Farjar, does Elizabeth seem a little anxious to you?

Farjar: Yes, she does. She also seems a bit annoyed.

Arti: I wonder what she meant by *time flies*?

Exercise A

Working with a partner, discuss the dialogue.

1. Why was Elizabeth anxious? _____

2. What values does her anxiousness involve? _____

Writing

CLB 5

Write a 150-word paragraph about equality in the Canadian workplace.

CLB 6

Write a 250-word paragraph about equality in the Canadian workplace. Include one specific example of workplace equality.

CLB 7

Write a 350-word paragraph about equality in the Canadian workplace. Include two specific examples of workplace equality.

CLB 8

Write a 3-paragraph, 500-word report about equality in the Canadian workplace. Include three specific examples of workplace equality.

Group work



Canadian Business Concept: Work is a high priority for most Canadians, and many people work overtime and on weekends to complete their work.

Exercise A

1. Discuss the similarities and differences in the amount of time that people from various cultures spend at work and commuting. Do you find anything unusual about this aspect of Canadian work culture?
2. Based on what you have experienced so far in Canada, would you agree or disagree with the Canadian Business Concept above?

Use these expression patterns to state your opinions.

Agree	Disagree
That sounds right because ...	I don't think that sounds right because ...
I agree that ...	I disagree because ...
That's probably right because ...	I find it hard to agree because ...

Give some examples to support your responses.

Exercise B

In small groups, select a sentence from the box below. How would you explain the meaning of this sentence? How does it relate to Canadian workplace values? What is your reaction to the sentence?

Time is money.	Thank you for the flowers and get-well card.
Canadians are time conscious.	Many hands make light work.
The early bird catches the worm.	There is no time like the present.
Call me Fred. We don't use the <i>Mr.</i> very much around here.	Don't beat around the bush.

Exercise C

Equality in the workplace is not just about gender. It also involves race, age, religious background, and physical ability. What are your experiences and observations about workplace equality in your native country? Compare this to what you have observed in Canada.

On your own

Watch a TV program that takes place in a workplace environment (ask your friends or your teacher for suggestions). What customs and values did you notice? Share your observations with your classmates.

Do an online search for *Equality in the Canadian Workplace*. Take notes on the information you find. Share your notes with your classmates.

Personal learning: practising English outside of the classroom

Keep your own record of your communication goals, progress, and reactions to new concepts. Review it weekly to help you chart your progress.

Canadian business culture is ... _____

Today I learned ... _____

By next class I will use this learning by ... _____