



The B.C. Employer's Guide to Hiring Internationally-Trained

# ICT Professionals

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## Have You Considered Hiring ICT Professionals from Abroad?

Internationally-trained ICT professionals offer B.C. employers a largely untapped pool of exceptional talent. This guide is designed to help you better relate to ICT job applicants from other countries during the job interview and help them adjust faster to our workplace culture once you have hired them. Use this information in conjunction with the *B.C. Technology Employers Selection Toolkit for Internationally-Trained Professionals* to make a fair and unbiased assessment of the applicant's knowledge and skills and perhaps uncover ways that the applicant can add value to your company that you may not have thought of before.

## There Are Two Ways This Guide Can Help You:

### For Use by Job Interviewers

1. Get quick facts on the job applicant's country of origin
2. Get quick facts on the job applicant's cultural community in B.C.
3. A heads-up on possible cultural differences between Canada and the applicant's cultural norms to help you make an unbiased decision based on the applicant's skills, knowledge and experience.

### For Use by Workplace Coaches and Mentors

1. A guide to help get your new hire up to speed and productive quickly through explaining and demonstrating Canadian workplace norms.
2. Understand better what takes your new hire by surprise, and what may take you by surprise, including additional strengths that you may not expect.

## The Business Case for Hiring Internationally-Trained ICT Professionals

Many internationally-trained ICT professionals arrive in Canada with skills, talents, knowledge and qualifications related to both technology and management. Although they have the skills the economy needs, they often don't fully understand how to communicate those skills to employers.

Employers, meanwhile, can't always decipher the training and qualifications of a newcomer to Canada and ultimately look elsewhere to make a hiring decision. This decision means that employers are often overlooking the strengths and benefits that an internationally trained ICT professional can bring.

## The Value Internationally-Trained ICT Professionals Bring to B.C. Employers

Growth in B.C.'s technology sector and increasing skills shortages are encouraging employers to consider job applicants from non-traditional applicant pools. Those newcomers bring education, training and work experience from related industries outside of Canada. Provided that applicants are found generally competent (see *B.C. Technology Employers Selection Toolkit for Internationally-Trained Professionals*), hiring staff from cultural backgrounds other than Canadian or American, can have a surprisingly positive outcome. In fact, the business case for a culturally diverse workplace is well documented:

1. Cultural diversity drives business growth and customer service, through cultural sensitivity, language skills, business networks and market knowledge of foreign markets.

2. Connections to their home country and the potential to open up new markets.
3. More diversity of perspectives in teams drives creativity and improves problem-solving.
4. If people feel valued regardless of their background, companies benefit from better working relationships, more commitment and better retention.

### Consider Experience and Talent of the Applicant

When interviewing internationally-trained ICT professionals, look carefully at the experience and talent of the applicants. There are many alternative positions in which ICT professionals can start making an immediate contribution to your company, such as:

- Project Manager
- Procurement Specialist
- Testing Specialist
- Quality Assurance Specialist
- Research and Product Specialist
- Software Support Specialist
- Programmer / Implementer
- Database Designer
- Workflow / Algorithm Designer
- Analyst
- Technical team leader
- Maintenance
- Middle Managers
- Upper Manager
- Project manager
- Technical unit manager
- Software Development Project Manager
- Web Programmer / Developer
- Web Designer

Some individuals may be content to stay in one or more of those positions for the remainder of their career. Others may elect to go through the process to have their international credentials recognized in B.C. Either way, it can be a win-win situation for both you and your new hire.

## Understanding Common Cultural Differences and Becoming Bias-Aware

Without specific knowledge of a candidate's culture it can seem daunting to conduct a productive interview or onboard new staff. But, just like Nova Scotians differ from British Columbians and rural Canadians differ from those living in urban centres, a common country of origin does not guarantee that all job applicants from one country are alike. The very fact that they have made the effort to emigrate means that they are significantly different and unrepresentative of the population in their home country.

For best outcomes and to avoid stereotyping, we encourage you to take a general approach to cultural values, how they impact behaviour and how they can interfere with your selection of the best candidate. Research shows that employer recruitment tends to favour those with English-sounding names and with Canadian work experience, disregarding their actual performance, competencies, credentials and capabilities.

Perhaps most importantly, decide on explicit criteria you will use as your benchmark before you start recruiting. Identify the requirements of the job and the desirable additional qualities an ideal candidate would bring. Avoid specifying skills (such as proficiency in a certain language) that are not essential for the job. You can fine-tune these criteria as your recruitment proceeds. The important thing is to establish basic explicit criteria from the beginning because it will help you be objective. The Human Rights Code prohibits discrimination in employment advertising and hiring, based on a number of prohibited categories, including race, colour, ancestry and place of origin.

Everyone is biased. We have a tendency to quickly categorize and evaluate people, places or things. This lets us make sense of the world and carry out our daily activities efficiently. Unfortunately, this ability can cause us to be biased and use positive or negative stereotypes. For example, at work we trust that a "yes" means "yes" and that women and men are considered "equal". In a homogenous workplace of Canadian staff, this is likely true, but when people come together from different cultures, some of our most fundamental assumptions may be held to the test.

*Cultural differences are not black or white, they differ to a degree. It is helpful to look at cultural difference as a continuum or spectrum between two opposite extremes. In reality, it is neither practical nor critical to learn the intricacies of each country.*

Below we have listed five important dimensions of cultural difference which B.C. residents may regularly experience in a multicultural workplace. The table which follows each description shows where a particular culture lies on the spectrum. We have used the Philippines, the People’s Republic of China and Iran as examples to compare to Canadian values (these are the countries in the *IMPACT B.C. Employer’s Guides to Hiring Internationally-Trained Professionals*). Read more about values and behaviours that merge when people trained around the world work and interact in the same setting:

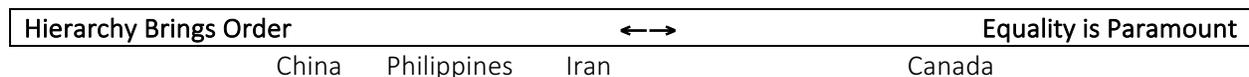
- <http://geert-hofstede.com/countries.html>
- <https://sevendimensionsofculture.wikispaces.com/Trompenaars'+Seven+Dimensions+of+Culture>
- Erin Meyer’s *The Culture Map*; information on this 2014 book available at <http://erinmeyer.com/book/>
- <https://www.communicaid.com>

### 1. Hierarchy Brings Order Paramount<sup>1</sup>

VS

Equality is

As Canadians we take pride in treating others as equals, whereas in many other cultures, hierarchical relationships in the family and workplace are valued as models to maintain order and subordinates enjoy being looked after by their superiors. Respect for authority impacts interactions in the workplace in many different ways. For example: subordinates may avoid eye contact out of respect; subordinates may expect managers to have the answers to most questions; subordinates may also tend to avoid debating topics directly with or even only with their manager present.

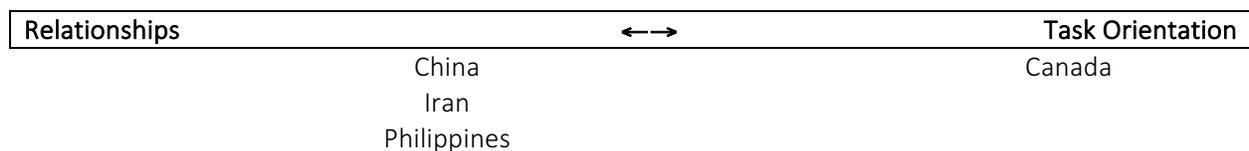


### 2. Relationships

VS

Task Orientation

Canadians and Westerners in general try to achieve their goals through focusing on a task, creating meeting agendas and being punctual. In other cultures, time is seen as fluid, interruptions are more frequent and goals are more likely to be achieved through managing and maintaining good relationships.

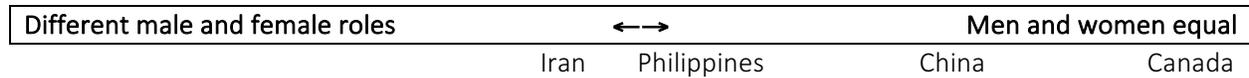


<sup>1</sup> Continuums presented have been adapted from comparable culture information pioneered by Geert Hofstede ([geert.hofstede.com](http://geert.hofstede.com)) and have been adapted for an employer audience using elements of Fons Trompenaars’ *Riding the Waves of Culture: Understanding Cultural Diversity in Business* (available at <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.695.447&rep=rep1&type=pdf>). The details have been further enriched with more current information.s

### 3. Men and Women Have Different Roles VS

### Men and Women Are Equal

In the last 50 years gender equality has vastly increased in Canada and many Western countries. In many other cultures, however, men and women's roles at home, in society and at work continue to be divided. Gender roles can also be influenced by religion. Traditionally, Catholicism and Islam have maintained a clear division of gender roles. Depending on the culture, this division is more or less strict. For example, Iranian Muslim men may not be familiar with working for a female manager and women may not be comfortable shaking hands with their male counterparts.

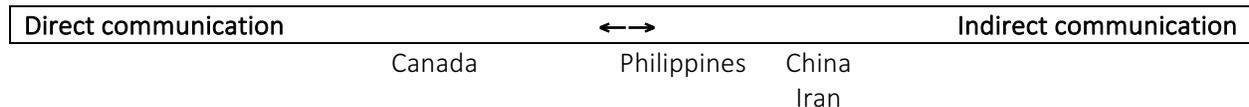


### 4. Direct Communication

VS

### Indirect Communication

In the Western business world, direct communication is valued as the most efficient way to reach goals and make deals. However, many Western companies operating in Asian markets have learned the hard way that subtlety, deference, patience and what sometimes appears to be dishonesty is the prevalent and most effective style to work and conduct business. In indirect communicating cultures, nonverbal signals such as smiles and hand gestures add a great amount of meaning to a conversation. It is best to ask for clarification to avoid misunderstandings.

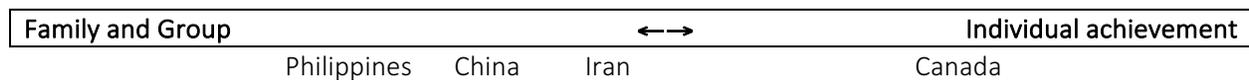


### 5. Family and Group is Most Important

VS

### Individual Achievement is What Matters

There are two ways to understand the relationship between individuals in a group. In one extreme the individual is the most important, he/she acts alone and even in a group mostly individual contributions are rewarded. In the other, the group is the primary entity and individuals serve as members of the group. Group orientation makes it difficult for individuals to present themselves as driven and confident professionals; they may come across as humble and insecure instead.



*Throw out the golden rule.* For a long time, the old adage "Treat people as you would want to be treated" was considered gold; it was a sensible rule in a homogenous world where people are very much alike. In today's culturally diverse world, however, consider applying the platinum rule "Treat others as they want to be treated".

## Supporting Productivity and Loyalty in Newcomer Employees

Companies that have experience with hiring internationally-trained professionals have developed a number of practices they find helpful for getting their new staff up to speed and keeping them happy, loyal and productive:

- Have a plan for getting your staff member working at full speed and accustomed to your organization's culture (3, 6, or 9 months)
  - Provide training: this can include informal on-the-job training while working with peers, supervisors or perhaps even just reading up on industry, company or product news
  - Encourage and support self-development activities, not just formal courses but participation in professional bodies
  - Pair your new staff member up with a buddy or mentor, a seasoned volunteer employee, to help the new hire get the inside scoop on the informal workings of your workplace
  - Check in at regular intervals to review progress and adjust the plan as needed
- Provide opportunities for them to use their full set of skills and develop them further
  - If someone used to be a manager, give them opportunities to practice supervisory tasks in a way that is appropriate to the Canadian workplace
  - Encourage short presentations on any topics that challenge and enrich the way work is being done in your company. Perhaps your foreign-born staff has experience doing things in a different and possibly better way
  - Find stretch assignments that give your foreign-born staff a chance to practice important non-technical skills such as their verbal language ability, leadership, etc.
  - Encourage and support self-development activities: participation in social events, sports, voluntary activities in the community, and even exploring B.C. and Canada

### *A note on the country profiles which follow:*

The content of the country profiles which follow was selected from internet research that was subsequently reviewed, validated and augmented by ICT professionals from each of the countries highlighted. They have worked in their country of origin and are now working in B.C.

ICT	China	
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<b>Country Information</b>	
<p>China is one of the world’s oldest civilizations and it led the world for many centuries in arts, sciences and technology. It entered a period of decline in the 19th century, during which it struggled with famine, civil revolts, military defeats, and foreign occupation. The communists under Mao Zedong came to power in 1949, and introduced a centrally planned economy and other sweeping reforms, some of which led to severe hardships for many millions of people. In 1978, market-oriented reforms were introduced, resulting in an economic boom that has lifted 400 million people out of poverty. Since then, China has increasingly expanded its international sphere of influence, both economically and politically.</p>	
Geography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Largest country in Asia and fourth largest country in the world (after Russia, Canada, and the U.S.)</li> <li>• Geography is vast and diverse, including forest steppes, high mountains, plains, subtropical forests, and deserts.</li> <li>• Climate varies regionally, from cold and dry continental in the north, to humid sub-tropical in the south.</li> <li>• Pollution in big cities is a major issue.</li> </ul>
Politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• China consists of 22 provinces, 5 autonomous regions, 4 city-regions (Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai and Chongqing) and 2 special administrative regions (Hong Kong and Macau). It claims sovereignty over Taiwan.</li> <li>• One-party state governed by the Communist Party.</li> </ul>

Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National language: Mandarin, or <i>Putonghua</i> (native language of about 70% of the population). Close to 300 other languages are spoken, including Chinese regional dialects (e.g., Cantonese, Shanghainese, Hokkien), and minority languages such as Tibetan, Mongolian, Uyghur, and Korean.</li> <li>• The country is officially atheist, but traditional folk religion, Buddhism, Daoism, Islam and Christianity and other religions are practised.</li> <li>• Confucianism, a philosophy that emphasizes moral conduct and social harmony, remains a strong influence.</li> </ul>
Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total population is 1.3 billion (largest in the world).</li> <li>• About 90% of the population are ethnic (Han) Chinese. There are 55 official ethnic minorities (e.g. Zhuang, Manchu, Tibetan, Mongol, Uyghur).</li> <li>• Rapidly ageing population, with a gender imbalance favouring males. The “one child policy” in family planning was introduced in the late 1970s but started phasing out in 2015.</li> <li>• Population density is generally high, especially in cities. Density is lower in autonomous regions in which higher proportions of ethnic minorities live.</li> <li>• Rural-urban migration has been rapid since economic reforms in early 1980s.</li> <li>• Life expectancy at birth is 75 (2013).</li> </ul>
<b>Economy</b>	
Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• World’s 2<sup>nd</sup> largest economy, and until 2015, world's fastest-growing major economy, with growth rates averaging 10% over 30 years.</li> <li>• World’s largest manufacturing economy and largest exporter of goods.</li> <li>• World’s fastest growing consumer market and second largest importer of goods.</li> <li>• GDP in 2014 is estimated at US\$18 trillion (at purchasing power parity); GDP per capita in 2014 approximately US\$13,200, compared \$45,400 in Canada.</li> <li>• Highest level of foreign exchange reserves in the world (US\$3.2 trillion).</li> <li>• Inflation is estimated at 2%.</li> <li>• Unemployment is low and estimated at around 4.1% in 2014 (Canada’s is 6.9%).</li> </ul>
Sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major industries include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- mining and ore processing, iron and steel, aluminium, coal</li> <li>- machinery</li> <li>- armaments</li> <li>- textiles and apparel</li> <li>- petroleum</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- cement</li> <li>- chemical fertilizers</li> <li>- food processing</li> <li>- transportation equipment</li> <li>- consumer products (footwear, toys, electronics etc.)</li> <li>- telecommunications and information technology</li> <li>• World’s leading manufacturer of chemical fertilizers, cement and steel.</li> <li>• Preferred location for global manufacturing.</li> <li>• Agriculture is still a major sector.</li> </ul>
<b>Education</b>	
Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nine years of free compulsory education: 6 years of primary school and 3 years of junior secondary school.</li> <li>• Students can complete either a further 3 years of academic senior secondary school or 3-4 years of vocational secondary school.</li> <li>• Education places strong emphasis on rote memorization; there is a gap in quality between rural and urban areas.</li> <li>• Students from Shanghai and Hong Kong have obtained among the highest scores in mathematics, science and literacy in a worldwide evaluation of the scholastic performance of 15-year-olds run by the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).</li> <li>• A highly competitive national university entrance exam (<i>gaokao</i>) is the prerequisite for entrance into higher education institutes.</li> </ul>
Vocational education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocational or technical senior secondary schools provide subject- and occupation-specific education and training. Graduates of these schools normally enter the workforce.</li> <li>• Vocational/technical colleges offer 2-3 years of full-time post-secondary study which lead to a <i>zhuanke</i> diploma. In a limited number of fields, graduates of these programs can obtain the equivalent of a bachelor’s degree through upgrading programs.</li> </ul>
Universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More than 2,000 universities and colleges, with more than six million enrolments. There are over 100 national key universities. The majority of institutions are public.</li> <li>• Universities offer bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral degrees.</li> <li>• Major destination for international students (most popular country in Asia and third overall among all countries for international students in 2013)</li> </ul>
Adult Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 96.4 %</li> </ul>

ICT	
Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One of China’s most dynamic and fastest-growing sectors. Market size was USD 1.79 trillion in 2012. Industry revenue is estimated to have grown by an average of 13.5% annually between 2009-2014.</li> <li>• Production base for computers for the world and largest market of computer products in the world.</li> <li>• Home to 630 million internet users and 1.3 billion mobile phone users (2014).</li> <li>• The sector has received strong government support for construction of national information infrastructure, including next generation broadband, 3-network convergence (internet-telecoms-TV), and investment into the "internet of things" and cloud computing.</li> </ul>
Major employers	<p>Large Chinese companies include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Internet: Baidu (search), Alibaba (ecommerce), and Tencent (social)</li> <li>- Telecoms: state-owned enterprises China Mobile, China Telecom and China Unicom, and communication equipment manufacturers Huawei and ZTE.</li> <li>- Hardware: Lenovo, Founder Group, Haier, Tsinghua Tongfang, Xiaomi</li> <li>- Software: Kingdee, ZTE, Insigma, Langchao, Neusoft, Founder Group, Haier, UFIDA, Beyondsoft, Chinasoft and Hisoft</li> <li>- IT Services: Tencent, Baidu, Alibaba, Netease, INsigma</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many thousands of small firms in all areas also exist.</li> <li>• Key cities for the sector include Shenzhen (electronics and hardware manufacturing, and home to Huawei and ZTE), Beijing and Shanghai (technology clusters and headquarters for many domestic and international tech companies) Hangzhou (home to Alibaba), and Chengdu and Dalian (software, cloud computing and outsourcing)</li> <li>• Most large international companies have a presence in China, including AT&amp;T, Nokia Siemens, Alcatel-Lucent, Ericsson, IBM, HP, Dell, Apple, Samsung, Microsoft, Oracle, SAP, CISCO, Ubisoft.</li> </ul>
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Top 10 institutions for computer science and technology according to the Alberta government’s <i>International Education Guide for the Assessment of Education from China</i>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- National University of Defence Technology</li> <li>- Tsinghua University</li> <li>- Peking University</li> <li>- Computing Technology Research Institute of China Academy of Sciences</li> <li>- Harbin Institute of Technology</li> <li>- Beihang University</li> <li>- Zhejiang University</li> <li>- University of Science and Technology of China</li> <li>- Northeast University</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Nanjing University</li> </ul>
Industry bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) regulates the wireless signal, internet, broadcasting, communication, software, and electronic goods markets. The Economic and Information Technology Commission (EITC) provides support at the provincial and municipal level.</li> <li>• Other industry bodies include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- China Computer Industry Association (CCIA)</li> <li>- China Information Technology Security Certification Center</li> <li>- China National Copyright Administration</li> <li>- PCI Industrial Computer Manufacturers Group (PICMG)</li> <li>- Shanghai Information Commission</li> <li>- Shanghai Software Industry Association</li> <li>- China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC)</li> <li>- China Semiconductor Industry Association (CSIA)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Things to note</b>	
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Chinese ICT market is globally oriented. Companies are flexible and dynamic and respond quickly to the market. The pace of development is comparatively laid back in BC, and the orientation is more local.</li> <li>• Products are brought to market quickly and tested in the market, in contrast to Canada where they are tested before being brought to market.</li> <li>• The market in China is much larger and more dynamic. ICT professionals can easily find jobs with other companies. Layoffs are rare.</li> <li>• Issues of intellectual property rights protection and cybersecurity are challenges within the Chinese ICT market.</li> </ul>
Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equipment is updated more frequently in China and is usually more advanced than in Canada.</li> </ul>
Organization structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The scale in China is much larger, and there are many more large companies with more than a thousand employees compared to Canada. Organizational structures of these large companies are complex because of their size.</li> </ul>
Certification requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chinese companies will evaluate candidates based on their work performance and experience, and knowledge and skills rather than requiring certification. The sector is under such rapid development that certification generally lags the demand for new skills.</li> <li>• In China, employers do not formally require continuous professional upgrading, but ICT professionals will regularly upgrade their skills so as to remain valued in their companies.</li> </ul>
Work conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Because of the rapid pace of development and fierce competition, software work is much more high-pressure in China. Deadlines are always met and no excuses are accepted.</li> <li>• Career development also moves rapidly, so that one has to be constantly acquiring and applying new skills in different jobs within the same company.</li> </ul>

	It is rare, for example, to have a programmer continue working on PHP for 10 years, as may happen in Canada.
Potential opportunities and benefits in hiring ICT professionals from China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chinese ICT professionals are highly skilled and used to working hard in a fast-paced, dynamic market.</li> <li>• Chinese professionals are familiar with and may have useful contacts in the ICT sector in China. (Note however that technical people do not necessarily have interest or ability in marketing or sales.)</li> <li>• Chinese professionals can bring knowledge and skills related to new ICTs that are not well known in Canada (e.g. WeChat, Xiaomi). Some of these technologies may be suitable for development for the Chinese-Canadian market</li> </ul>

<b>Work Norms and Culture</b>	
Work attitudes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In general, Chinese professionals are very serious and diligent about their work. Canadian work attitudes appear very relaxed and casual in contrast.</li> <li>• Unlike in Canada, workers in China are often expected to work overtime without extra pay in order to meet a deadline.</li> </ul>
Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chinese workers tend to interact more formally with their colleagues in a work setting than Canadians do, and are less casual in dealing with authority.</li> <li>• Chinese professionals may appear to be reticent and quiet compared to Canadians, even discounting for unfamiliarity with communication in English. It is Chinese custom to downplay one's accomplishments, and it is considered immodest to draw attention to one's achievements.</li> <li>• A Chinese proverb says, "Think three times before you act" and Chinese professionals will rarely speculate on matters that they have not thoroughly researched. It is not common to voice one's opinions without being asked, or debate others openly or publicly in China.</li> <li>• One-on-one personal communication is preferred for giving feedback or criticism.</li> <li>• There is less direct eye contact in communication than in Canada.</li> </ul>
Work place differences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Companies in China, especially large ones, are more present in their employees' social and everyday lives than in Canada. Companies in China provide many services and support for their employees, such as cafeteria lunches, group outings, and uniforms.</li> <li>• Many work meetings are held in China, but it is not the custom to speak up about one's ideas or debate openly at meetings.</li> <li>• Companies rarely lay off employees but will instead reduce hours when there is less demand.</li> <li>• Chinese professionals are used to working individually and/or in teams. Workplaces are generally less ethnically diverse than in Canada.</li> </ul>

Quote from Chinese professionals	“Chinese immigrants have very strong technical skills and excellent work attitudes...we may be weaker in our communication skills, but if given the opportunity, we work extremely hard and employers will definitely be satisfied.”
BC cultural community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• China is among the top 3 source countries of permanent residents to Canada. Approximately 10% of the population in B.C. and 30% of the population in the Greater Vancouver Regional District is of ethnic Chinese origin. Fifty percent of residents in Richmond identify as Chinese. Chinese immigrants to BC come from different regions of China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and countries in Southeast Asia and may speak Mandarin or different Chinese dialects including Cantonese, Hakka, Shanghainese, Taiwanese, and Teochiu.</li> <li>• There are many Chinese community and cultural associations including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- S.U.C.C.E.S.S.: initially founded to assist new Canadians of Chinese descent to overcome language and cultural barriers, it is now one of BC's largest multicultural social service providers serving people at all stages of their Canadian experience. It has locations in Greater Vancouver and Fort St. John and in Taipei, Taiwan and Seoul, Korea.</li> <li>- BC Chinese Cultural Society</li> <li>- Chinese Benevolent Association of Vancouver</li> <li>- Chinese Cultural Centre</li> <li>- Richmond Chinese Community Society</li> <li>- Richmond Chinese Mental Health Support Group</li> <li>- Vancouver Association of Chinese Canadians</li> <li>- Vancouver Senior Chinese Drop in Centre</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

ICT	Iran	
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**Country Information**

Iranians moving to Canada are not necessarily motivated by money because many enjoy a good standard of living in Iran. They come to improve the quality of their lives. Canada is a democratic country with freedom of speech and religion, while Iran is a conservative Muslim theocracy and does not tolerate freedom of speech (television and the media are heavily censored) and there is limited freedom of religion. There are many restrictions, including gender discrimination and an intolerance of new ways. The majority of Iranian immigrants come to Canada from urban areas and they gravitate towards urban centres in Canada. Iranians are rightly proud of their ancient civilization, which has influenced many cultures and traditions, and today’s nation consists of a mix of communities speaking a common language.

<p>Climate and Geography</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Iran is located in West Asia and covers 1,650,000 square kilometres, making it the 18th largest nation in the world.</li> <li>• In the north-west, winters are cold, with heavy snowfall. Spring and autumn are mild, summers dry and hot. In the south, winters are mild and summers very hot (38° C+). Arid or semi-arid and subtropical along the Caspian coast.</li> <li>• The population of Iran is 80 million - second largest in the region after Egypt, and more than twice that of Canada.</li> <li>• Tehran, the capital, has 7,200,000 people.</li> </ul>
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<p>Politics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Iran is a theocracy guided by Islamic ideology. It has an elected president and parliament, as well as a publicly-elected “Assembly of Experts” and local councils. The most powerful office and ruling over parliament is the Supreme Leader or Ayatollah, appointed for life by the Assembly of Experts. He appoints the heads of the most powerful positions.</li> <li>• UN sanctions on Iran were lifted in 2016 with positive implications expected for the Iranian economy and the welfare of its citizens.</li> <li>• Human rights and freedom of speech are repressed, although this is denied by Iranian officials who claim they are not bound by the West’s interpretation of human rights.</li> </ul>
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<p>Culture</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Iran was founded as a distinct and original nation in 1502, but the Persian Empire goes back to 550 BCE. Iranians consider themselves Persians and are offended if labelled as Arabs even though they share their numerical and some language terms. Some traditional language writings are in Arabic which many Persians can read and write, although spoken and written Persian is much different than Arabic.</li> <li>• Islam is the primary religion, comprising about 98% of the population. However there are Christians and Jews in the population (even synagogues in some cities). About 90% are Shi’a and 10% are Sunni – the opposite of the rest of the world such as Iraq and Saudi Arabia.</li> <li>• Iran is a Persian nation, and women can do many things that they cannot do in some neighbouring countries. Women drive personal vehicles, even taxis, and may hold public office. Women make up 65 percent of all university students. Women are engineers, doctors, and lawyers.</li> <li>• Persian, often called Farsi, is the official language in Iran, Afghanistan and Tajikistan. It is spoken by about 110 million people worldwide.</li> <li>• 93% of the adult population is literate (97% among young adults between 15 and 24 years of age).</li> <li>• Displaying hospitality is a core component in the culture - it measures a person’s reputation and character.</li> </ul>
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<b>Economy</b>	
<b>Overview</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Iran is the second largest economy in the Middle East after Saudi Arabia. GDP is US \$1.4 trillion (at Purchasing Power Parity), but \$400 billion at official exchange rates.</li> <li>• Current GDP growth rate is around 0.6% (2016), but this expected to grow rapidly with the lifting of UN sanctions. GDP per capita is US \$18,000 (at ppp).</li> <li>• Inflation rate ranges from 11% to over 20% (2016) and more.</li> <li>• Iran ranks second in the world in natural gas reserves and fourth in proven crude oil reserves. Economic activity and government revenues still depend largely on oil revenues and therefore remain volatile.</li> <li>• Unemployment is 11% (2015) and higher amongst young people. Iran continues to suffer from serious unemployment and underemployment. Lack of job opportunities has convinced many educated Iranian youth to seek jobs overseas, resulting in a significant brain drain.</li> </ul>
<b>Sectors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large hydrocarbon sector, small scale agriculture and services sectors, and a noticeable state presence in manufacturing and financial services.</li> <li>• The Iranian state plays a key role in the economy with large public and quasi-public enterprises dominating manufacturing and commercial sectors. The financial sector is dominated by public banks. It is estimated that over 65% of the population is employed in government services and enterprises.</li> <li>• However, in the last 25 years, many organizations have been privatized or moved to public/stock exchange ownership. There is a thriving free market economy of small to medium sized private business.</li> </ul>
<b>Education</b>	
<b>Schools</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More than 50% of the country's 80 million people is under 25, which has created huge demand within the education system. As of 2013, 4.5 million students were enrolled in universities.</li> <li>• All children attend Primary School from ages 6 to 12; Middle School runs from Grades 7 to 9 and High School from Grades 10 to 12. Primary and Middle School education is compulsory.</li> <li>• There are both public and private schools. Grades 1 to 12 are free at public schools.</li> <li>• All students are segregated by sex.</li> <li>• Higher education requires a High School Diploma and the passing of the Iranian University Entrance Exam usually at the national level, the equivalent of the French baccalaureate exam. Admissions to the free post-secondary programs are highly competitive. Private fee paying university is available to those unable to qualify for state institutions.</li> <li>• Most universities receive their funding from the state, and students do not pay for tuition or accommodation. Private institutions are also available. However, students attending public universities are either</li> </ul>

	<p>required to commit to serve the government and /or work in the country for the number of years equivalent to those spent at the university, or to pay for their own tuition.</p>
Vocational Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students are able to study two more years in tertiary education, which provides them with the skills to become skilled technicians and receive an “integrated associate degree”.</li> </ul>
Universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are 92 universities, 512 Payame Noor University branches (a public university system), and 56 research and technology institutes. Islamic Azad Universities that are scattered about the country with many branches in urban and rural areas.</li> <li>• Iranian universities turn out almost 750,000 skilled graduates annually. Roughly 30% are in engineering and construction, and 10% in sciences.</li> <li>• 65% of university students are women.</li> <li>• The education system in Iran favours students who choose scientific and engineering paths. They are considered the most prestigious; higher education and degrees are recognized and respected. In recognition of the quality of Iranian education, post graduate students in many western countries are well represented by Iranian students. A graduate with only a bachelor’s degree is often considered underqualified, and so there is strong incentive for students and even experienced bachelor degree holders to obtain higher degrees. The level of education and degrees attained are valued more than field experience (unlike Canada, where employers value experience at least as much as the level of education).</li> <li>• Iran continues to operate an 18 month to two year military draft system which is mandatory for male university graduates. After an initial multi-month boot camp training, the rest of the time can be spent in public institution internships, particularly for masters and PhD graduates.</li> </ul>

## ICT

Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The telecom market is very important to the Iran economy and provides one the largest non-oil based revenue streams. Improving and expanding telecom infrastructure has been the focus of investment in recent years, and Iran’s tech-savvy, young population is eager to take up next generation services.</li> <li>• The ICT sector accounts for 1.3% of GDP.</li> <li>• The ICT Ministry is the main governing body.</li> <li>• Iran’s mobile telephone segment is the centerpiece of its ICT sector.</li> <li>• The data segment is now seen as the key driver of the industry, as players vie for various 3G and 4G technology rights.</li> <li>• Iran is among the first five countries which have had a growth rate of over 20% and the highest level of development in telecommunication.</li> <li>• Software exports were about \$400 million in 2014.</li> <li>• The easing of sanctions could see the country become the fastest-growing ICT market in the Middle East, Turkey, and Africa (META) over the next five years.</li> <li>• Current growth areas are Information (cyber) Security, Cloud, and Mobile.</li> <li>• ICT in Iran has had an unbalanced development due to Islamic influences. While Islamic seminaries have established extensive portals for distribution of their scholarly writings, the government considers ICT as a tool used for the spread of Western culture, the creation of political instability, espionage and subversion.</li> <li>• Poor IPR protection in Iran has hindered the development of Iranian software companies causing a lack of foreign direct investment in this sector.</li> <li>• There is emigration of many IT professionals due to the restrictions at home. The combination of high training and low compensation has led to a brain drain.</li> </ul>
Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• About 150,000 people are employed in the ICT sector, including around 20,000 in the software industry.</li> </ul>
Major employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Iran’s telecommunications industry is almost entirely state-owned, dominated by the Telecommunication Company of Iran (TCI).</li> <li>• The government runs the broadcast media, which include 5 national radio stations and 5 national TV networks and dozens of local radio and TV stations.</li> <li>• TCI, Mobile Communications Iran (MCI), MTN Irancell, Tamin Telecom (Rightel), Rafsanjan Industrial Complex (Taliya)—(established by Rafsanjan but now owned by Sepah, a military group), Mobile Telecommunications Company of Isfahan (MTCE), Telecommunication Kish Company (TKC).</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is more competition in the internet arena, where 11 private access providers (PAPs) and TCI vie for market share, offering ADSL2+, WiMAX, and other fixed wireless broadband services.</li> <li>• Domestic firms involved in software production include Sena Soft, Dadeh-Pardazi, Iran Argham, Kafa System Information Network, Iran System and Puya. Magfa (Information Technology Development Center) and Iran Info-Tech Development Co. are also leading players in this sector. The largest private computer software producer in Iran is Hamkaran Systems with 7000 customers.</li> <li>• The Automotive industry uses ICT in areas of infrastructure and HR development. The natural gas and petroleum industry is further developed in terms of ICT than most other industries. The banking industry is heavily invested, even though use of e-banking is not widespread due to depositor mistrust of the system. Health sector wins in private health-care institutions.</li> </ul>
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ICT professionals with a technical orientation are eager to apply their technical knowledge to real practical experiences. They want to practice their creativity.</li> <li>• Many are eager to gain more practical experience and apply the knowledge learned from their student years, and work hard to learn new techniques. They seek tangible results and enjoy observing their technical successes.</li> <li>• Many value interpersonal skills because they recognize that ICT jobs often require significant social interaction with customers, co-workers and end users.</li> <li>• Software engineering in Iran is relatively new, compared to other engineering disciplines. As a results, software engineers tend to be more generalists than specialists, and are used to working collaboratively across disciplines (i.e., AI, strategy, interactive design, code, etc.)</li> </ul>
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ICT professions are not regulated in Iran.</li> <li>• ICT courses are required to comply with a national “subject benchmark”. In addition, ICT courses are accredited by the UK professional body, Chartered Institute for Information Technology (BCS).</li> <li>• The College of Applied Sciences in Post &amp; Telecommunications (ICT Faculty) was established based on the certification permit of the ‘Higher Education Development Council’, with the objective of training the specialists of the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology and its affiliated bodies.</li> <li>• ICT professionals are trained in high school and at post-secondary level. A large number of graduates complete college and university degrees in the field of ICT; a large percentage of these graduates emigrate.</li> </ul>

Industry bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research: Center for ICT Research; Ministry of Communications &amp; Information Technology; the Center for Development of Electronic Commerce; Ministry of Industry, Mines, and Commerce.</li> <li>• Foundation for National Video Games</li> <li>• National Scientific Network.</li> <li>• Iranian ICT Guild Organization (IIG): an NGO with over 9,000 members comprising private companies, computer stores and consultants which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ maintains ties with the government for the promotion of ICT companies</li> <li>○ encourages members to improve the quality of their products and services to comply with the latest technology development</li> <li>○ improves, with participation of IIG members, the rules and regulations concerning the Software Engineering discipline.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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Work Norms and Culture	
Iranians in B.C.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are close to 40,000 Iranians in B.C., centred mainly in Metro Vancouver, especially in North and West Vancouver, Vancouver, Burnaby and Coquitlam.</li> </ul>
Support systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Civic Association of Iranian Canadians</b> is a non-partisan organization involved in social and political issues in Canada. It teaches the concepts of freedom, the constitution of Canada, and the responsibilities and rights of citizens of Canada.</li> <li>• <b>The Society of Iranian Canadian Professionals of B.C.</b> promotes collaboration and networking among members and provides opportunity for professionals in technical and educational fields to lead and contribute to the regional development of B.C. Their mission is to achieve greater alignment and integration of the society's professional membership with the Canadian socio-economic structure.</li> <li>• <b>Greater Vancouver Counselling &amp; Education Society for Families</b> is a clinical counselling and educational organization, mainly serving Farsi-speaking communities. Its mental health professionals are dedicated to promoting mental health and a feeling of well-being among members of the Iranian community.</li> </ul>

## Workplace Culture Differences Between Iran and Canada

This table serves two purposes. First, it provides B.C. interviewers a quick overview of cultural similarities and differences between Iran and Canada. Second, it is a tool for workplace coaches / mentors and new hires to structure the mentoring process for quick results.

<i>Interviewers</i>	You may observe behaviour displayed during interviews or on the job that is not “normal” Canadian workplace behaviour or etiquette. This table will help you understand differences and the reasons behind the behaviours (all of which can be quickly modified on the job with the help of this table and minimal coaching) so that you make a hiring decision based upon the individual’s qualifications and skills and minimize any (unconscious) cultural bias.
<i>Coaches/Mentors (Work Buddies)</i>	Once you hire a candidate, match him or her with a workplace coach or mentor who can use this table to coach and mentor the new hire through each of the issues in the list.

Most Iranians seeking employment in B.C. know there are differences in the workplace cultures between Iran and Canada. They often know what those differences are, but they have not had the opportunity to see the Canadian ways in action or to practise them. Use this table as a mini-lesson plan to address the issues listed:

1. Discuss the issues with the new hire
2. Get their take on the issue
3. Demonstrate the Canadian way if necessary (as listed in the “In Canada” column)
4. Ask the new hire to demonstrate the behaviour
5. Enable practice on the job
6. Provide constructive feedback.

This will bring positive results amazingly fast so the new hire, with a better understanding of the dynamics at play in the Canadian workplace, can focus on doing the job he or she was hired to do, and quickly become a contributing, productive member of your team.

Topic	Iran	Canada
Authority	Top down hierarchy. Initiative and employee input not always welcomed by directors. An adherence to rules and regulations is not second nature to some individuals. For example, traffic rules may be ignored. Workers can be somewhat combative, and if they are unhappy, they may employ passive resistance by	Respected as long as it is fair. Ideas from the rank and file are generally listened to, and often encouraged and expected (e.g., what are we paying you for?) Rules and regulations are mostly respected. We generally value the rule of law in everyday behaviour.

	ignoring direction or carrying out instructions very slowly. The western interest in specific goals and outcomes cannot be followed or practiced in some meetings.	
Punctuality	Flexible. Meetings may not start or end on time. (It depends largely on the employer. Government offices tend to be more lax than in private firms.)	Critical to be on time (or early) for work, appointments, etc. Use a calendar to keep track of meetings, appointments, events.
Meeting Participation	Expectations are for meetings to be to the point and on an academic more than practical level. Decisions tend to be made by directors. Tea is a very traditional ritual in most meetings and is served by an aide. Meetings can include both light and strenuous discussions.	Meetings here are more practical-based and tactical in nature, concerned with who will do what, by what time, etc. Decisions are often arrived at through consensus, although the person in charge may make the final decision. More concrete and sequential.
Addressing Superiors, Peers, Support Staff	Correct titles and formality are important when meeting people for the first time; first names perhaps once relationships are established, but the last name is predominantly used. Class-oriented society. Respect is highly valued, and higher positions are shown more respect than lower ones. Leadership, experience and education are the qualities most respected in senior managers and directors. Superiors are respected because of their position; those at a peer level or below are afforded correspondingly less respect. Assistants bring tea, run errands for professional staff.	Iranian new hires would be surprised to see their manager or the company owner taking out the garbage. Very few workers, including managers, have assistants. There is a high level of equality.  Newcomers may not understand why others get paid more even though they may not have such high qualifications (i.e., they are less than me, so why am I not respected more?)

<p>Working with mixed teams / colleagues (male, female, LGBT)</p>	<p>Gender and religion and the traditions surrounding them often affect the workplace. Women are challenging the system, but in the end they may have little voice, especially in government offices. (In other organizations, women are respected more, but generally men have the position and power.) However, the society is not entirely homogeneous and attitudes and values do vary according to social class, education level and family background. There is little tolerance for visible or overt LGBT as it is illegal and punishable by corporal punishment. Members of the same gender often display affection in public and seeing two men holding hands is not unusual as it is a sign of friendship. When starting a new job, co-workers help the new worker and make the job easier.</p>	<p>Many men report to women. Women often have the position and power, although there are vestiges of old school attitudes in some companies and sectors (i.e., ones which are still male-dominated), although these are slowly changing.</p> <p>Discrimination by gender in employment or the provision of goods and services is illegal.</p> <p>Newcomers need to learn sometimes that LGBT people are also people. This and a male reporting to a woman can be an issue if the newcomer holds strong religious views.</p> <p>Co-workers may be neutral about helping the new worker until they get to know him or her better.</p>
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<p>Dress</p>	<p>Men wear suits or a jacket and dress pants. Ties are banned for government employees and any man wanting to show support for the regime because they are seen as a symbol of Western decadence. Conversely, those who want to object to the theological regime wear ties in public.</p> <p>Beards may be worn as an expression of religious protocol but are not allowed to be shaggy. A clean shaven look is also very common and is not considered to be against religious symbols.</p> <p>Men are not allowed to wear shorts nor have bare arms. No T-shirts in government organizations. Women are not allowed to have bare arms nor shoulders nor leg showing dresses. Pants are required and capri pants are not allowed. A head scarf covering the hair and neck is required at all times. Police have the power to enforce dress codes on all citizenry in the streets.</p> <p>Many liberalized westernized Persians live a life of western dress within the privacy of their own homes.</p>	<p>Semi-formal dress is less frequent than it was 15 or 20 years ago. Business casual tends to be the norm.</p> <p>It is within rights to require clean shaven faces especially in food processing or in industrial sites where masks and breathing apparatus is required to be worn.</p> <p>If there is hospitality involved in the workplace, remember anything pork or alcoholic is likely strictly forbidden.</p>
<p>Team work vs. individual initiatives</p>	<p>Organizations may not appreciate or encourage teamwork; in the end the final call is made by a minority group, as the majority of employers are not private companies. People may start their own business when they see their work or ideas not</p>	<p>Teamwork is highly valued. In fact, employees are let go because they don't support or get along with their team members. In the best-functioning teams, team members support the team lead, who in turn supports the members. Not being a strong team member is considered a problem. Individual thinking and</p>

	<p>being well received. There is less value or respect for subordinates or their rights. Many businessmen are family oriented. Accountability or customer service is not a strong trait in less professional environments. Tribal (family) ancestry is still under the surface with respect to kinship and collegiality networks. While most Persians are Shia, there are those who are Sunni and the minority does experience discrimination in business networking.</p>	<p>action is valued, but it must support the team's direction and mandate. Helping each other to get the job done is considered a necessity.</p>
<p>Work Hours and Breaks</p>	<p>The work week is Saturday through Wednesday, and through Thursday in some companies. Friday is the holy day. The work day is normally eight hours (9 – 5). Particularly in government offices, there are a few breaks during the day: tea breaks, prayer breaks, lunch breaks. Work that needs to be done may sometimes seem secondary. Staying late is not common. It is customary to take a break for private prayer at least once during the work day in government organizations. This is preceded by a visit to a washroom to wash hands and face. Professionals (doctors, engineers, etc.) tend to work as hard and as long as it takes to get the job done. Doctors often must see 100 patients per day.</p>	<p>Starting time for companies varies, but is usually between 7 and 9 am, depending on the organization and the sector. Regular working hours range between 7 and 8 hours per day. Fewer and fewer organizations have scheduled coffee breaks, and those that do generally allow 15 – 20 minutes (morning and afternoon). Lunch breaks can be from 30 minutes to an hour. Smoke breaks, especially in offices, are discouraged or not allowed. Overtime applies to the hours beyond the normal work time. For salaried professionals, overtime is considered to be part of their salary and is not paid. Many workers have coffee at their desk, while walking, or in meetings.</p>

Eye Contact	Physical distance when communicating is often much closer than in Canada.	Important to make frequent eye contact when talking with all company employees, no matter what their rank. And they will do the same with you, no matter their rank. Important not to stand too close to others when conversing.
Greetings	<p>A common and respectful greeting is “Salam,” although many today use “Droud,” which is a non-religious greeting. Long greetings are normal. Often there is a reference to family.</p> <p>Shaking hands is only common between men, although liberal women may shake hands. Men greeting women place their right hand over their heart as a verbal greeting is given. Do not assume a woman wishes to shake hands in public or the workplace. Women will shake the hand of another woman. Men will kiss the cheek of other men (once on each cheek and perhaps a repeat of the first) but primarily it is used for those who are known. This is the case for women as well. Under no circumstances does a man give a hug to a woman, or vice versa.</p> <p>Participants do not as a rule touch the person such as on the shoulder or forearm.</p> <p>As a sign of respect, both men and women stand when meeting another person or when the person enters the room. A slight bow of acknowledgement is common. They also wait for another to</p>	<p>Everyone shakes hands when meeting for the first time, when saying goodbye at the beginning of a trip, or when meeting someone they have not seen for a long time. Employees don’t shake hands with other employees they see every day at their workplace.</p> <p>Cheek kissing is not practiced in the workplace in the Americas.</p> <p>Business cards are often barely glanced at, and reviewed later.</p>

	<p>go first through a door as a further sign of respect.  Business cards are reviewed carefully when received.  Saying “Hello” and “Goodbye” is very important. Not responding is considered very rude.</p>	<p>Newcomers sometimes find colleagues don’t always greet them, especially when they are new to the company. They may feel unwelcome.</p>
<p>Giving Feedback,  Receiving Criticism</p>	<p>There is some covering-up of issues and problems because no one likes getting negative feedback or criticism. Criticism can be partly personal.  If the exchange is between a superior and an underling, it can be sharp or dismissive.  Formal feedback performance reviews are not common practice.</p>	<p>Many companies incorporate an annual formalized performance review for each employee, which is intended to identify areas of good performance and areas where the employee can improve through a planned approach (training, self-development, coaching, mentoring, etc.). Criticism is expected to be constructive and aimed at correcting the deficiency, and never a personal attack.</p>

<b>ICT</b>	<b>Philippines</b>	
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<b>Country Information</b>	
<b>Geography</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Philippines archipelago consists of 7,000 islands in South East Asia. It lies south-east of China, north-east of Malaysia, north of Indonesia.</li> <li>• Total area is 300,000 sq km, about one-third of B.C.</li> <li>• Total coastline is 38,000 km, with no land borders.</li> <li>• Terrain is mostly mountainous, with coastal lowlands.</li> <li>• Climate is tropical marine, with monsoons all year round.</li> <li>• Natural hazards are typhoons, cyclones, landslides, volcanoes, earthquakes, flooding and tsunamis.</li> </ul>

Political	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Spanish colony since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, ceded to the US in 1898, occupied by Japan during WWII, The Philippines achieved full independence in 1946.</li> <li>• The US maintained large military bases which were used extensively during the Vietnam War.</li> <li>• Republic, with an elected executive President.</li> <li>• The post-war period has seen dictatorship, civil unrest, coup attempts, with terrorism and insurgency, but peace talks and accords too. Some areas are considered unsafe.</li> <li>• There are tensions with China over the South China Sea.</li> </ul>
Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Official languages are Pilipino, also known as Tagalog, (with eight major dialects) and English. Filipino refers to the people or nation, Filipina for female.</li> <li>• Roman Catholic is the dominant religion (81%) with other Christian, Muslim, and others.</li> </ul>
Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total population is 101 million, the 13<sup>th</sup> largest worldwide, three times Canada.</li> <li>• An additional 12m Filipinos live overseas, one of the world's largest diasporas.</li> <li>• 34% are under age 15.</li> <li>• 44% reside in urban areas. Urbanization is increasing at 1.4% annually.</li> <li>• The capital city is Manila, with 13 million people. Other much smaller cities are Davao, Cebu and Zamboanga.</li> </ul>
<b>Economy</b>	
GDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The overall economy is stable and growing. Philippines is regarded as a “newly industrialised country (NIC)”, not one of the “Asian tigers” but a “tiger cub”.</li> <li>• GDP is US\$ 693bn (at purchasing power parity), half that at the official exchange rate, growing at 6-7% pa.</li> <li>• GDP per capita is \$8000, one of the lowest in the world.</li> <li>• Exports are \$48bn. Major markets are Japan, USA, and China.</li> <li>• Unemployment has reduced to 6% (Canada is similar at 7%). Youth unemployment is over double that at 16%, slightly worse for females. Under-employment is estimated at 20%. 40% of employment is in the informal sector.</li> <li>• Inflation is very low at only 1%. Canada is also low at 1.6%.</li> <li>• The total labour force is 65 million, three and a half times that of Canada.</li> <li>• 25% of the population is below the poverty line, but this is reducing at around 2 to 3% per year (Canada is 10%).</li> </ul>

Sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Major components are: Agriculture and Fishing, Electronics (mainly assembly), Garments and Footwear, Refining, Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals.</li> <li>IT outsourcing is very strong and growing. The Philippines is comparable with India, employing 1.3 million people, generating \$27 billion, almost all exported.</li> <li>Agriculture is 12% of GDP, employing 32% of the workforce. Major products are coconut, pineapple, rice and sugar.</li> <li>Tourism is 10% of GDP, employing 3.8 million people, 10% of the workforce.</li> <li>The country is rich in non-metallic minerals and natural gas. 27% of electricity generation is geothermal.</li> </ul>								
<b>Education</b>									
Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expenditure on education one of the lowest in the world at 2.7% of GDP – Canada is twice that.</li> <li>Up to recently, students attended “elementary” school from age 6 for six years, then high school for four years.</li> <li>This is currently in transition to a compulsory K-12 style system, as in Canada. Junior high school is grades 7-10, Senior is grades 11 and 12.</li> <li>There is a compulsory national curriculum. Additional subjects may include languages, ICT, sciences.</li> <li>In 2010, it was reported that 28% of elementary aged children either never attended or never completed school. This is being addressed by additional language (mother tongue) teaching and bridging programs.</li> </ul>								
Colleges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Colleges (and universities) are considered “Higher Education Institutes” (HEIs).</li> <li>Most provide specialized courses in one or a limited range of subjects, usually in technology and vocational studies.</li> <li>Vocational training is accredited and approved by an official body, TESDA, which also administers exams and provides certificates.</li> <li>There is official concern over the number of unapproved “diploma mills”, i.e. of uncertain quality.</li> </ul>								
Universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are 600 public and 1600 private HEIs - universities and colleges.</li> <li>The public bodies are further classified into 500 national and 100 local. All public are non-sectarian. Local HEIs are regulated municipally or not at all.</li> <li>Most universities are private and Catholic. Accreditation is voluntary.</li> <li>The following are reported as the top universities: <table border="0" data-bbox="451 1711 1307 1900"> <tr> <td>Adventist University of the Philippines</td> <td>De La Salle University – Dasmariñas</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ateneo de Manila University</td> <td>Silliman University</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ateneo de Davao University</td> <td>Trinity University of Asia</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ateneo de Naga University</td> <td>University of Santo Tomas</td> </tr> </table> </li> </ul>	Adventist University of the Philippines	De La Salle University – Dasmariñas	Ateneo de Manila University	Silliman University	Ateneo de Davao University	Trinity University of Asia	Ateneo de Naga University	University of Santo Tomas
Adventist University of the Philippines	De La Salle University – Dasmariñas								
Ateneo de Manila University	Silliman University								
Ateneo de Davao University	Trinity University of Asia								
Ateneo de Naga University	University of Santo Tomas								



ICT	
Revenues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• US\$ 27 bn, growing at around 10% pa. Call centres are 2/3 of this.</li> <li>• Exports are almost all of this, to USA, Europe, and Japan.</li> </ul>
Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Government has adopted an ambitious vision for the development of ICT, Philippines Digital Strategy, including becoming a world-class provider of ICT services and an e-enabled society.</li> <li>• There is an IT Hub in Mindanao, along the BIMP-EAGA corridor.</li> <li>• The Department of Education is implementing project LINK to provide equipment, software, multimedia to elementary and secondary schools. Intel and Microsoft are assisting with teacher training.</li> </ul>
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Philippines is a top-tier provider of IT outsourcing: “A Western pocket in Asia”. It is rated as fifth in the world.</li> <li>• Outsourcing revenues are continuing to grow.</li> <li>• Particular strengths are games, animation and art.</li> <li>• Electronics manufacture and assembly are strong.</li> </ul>
Tele-communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobile telephony with 111 million customers (13<sup>th</sup> highest in the world) dominates fixed telephones with only 3m customers.</li> <li>• Internet usage is reported as very strong, with 39 million users, the 17<sup>th</sup> highest worldwide, but the ITU gives a very much lower figure.</li> <li>• It is reported that 27% of the population use Facebook.</li> </ul>
Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 638,000 of which 416,000 are voice/call centres.</li> </ul>
Major employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All the major global vendors are represented in the Philippines.</li> <li>• Texas Instruments, Toshiba, Lexman, and Ericsson have manufacturing plants.</li> <li>• There is no local computer manufacturer.</li> </ul>
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vendor certifications are valued, because they are identical worldwide.</li> <li>• Canadian certifications Information Systems Professional (ISP) and Information Technology Certified Professional (ITCP) are legally recognised in B.C.</li> </ul>
Industry bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National ICT Confederation of the Philippines (NICP), with 37 member ICT Councils from provinces and cities <a href="http://www.nicp.ph">www.nicp.ph</a></li> <li>• IT &amp; Business Processing Association of the Philippines (IBPAP) <a href="http://www.ibpap.ph">www.ibpap.ph</a></li> <li>• Department of Science &amp; Technology, ICT Office. <a href="http://www.icto.dost.gov.ph">www.icto.dost.gov.ph</a></li> <li>• Canadian Information Processing Society(CIPS) <a href="http://www.cips.ca">www.cips.ca</a>, <a href="http://www.bc.cips.ca">www.bc.cips.ca</a></li> </ul>
Industry differences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are no differences in terminology, equipment or standards.</li> <li>• Some technologies are more widespread in Canada than The Philippines, (e.g, cloud, virtual machines, modern programming languages) but this is not always the case.</li> </ul>

<b>Work Norms and Culture</b>		
<b>Topic</b>	<b>Philippines</b>	<b>Canada</b>
Timekeeping	Timekeeping is more relaxed. Meetings are often late. "After lunch" could mean 12.30 to 3.30.	Punctuality is important. Meetings generally start and finish on time, and usually follow an agenda.
Authority	Status, seniority and age are important and respected. Colleagues are usually addressed by title or by Mr/Mrs/Miss, or Sir/Madam.	Colleagues, even superiors, are addressed by first names. In a meeting, the most knowledgeable person, however junior, would be expected to speak up. It is usual to ask questions, even challenge superiors tactfully.
Responsibilities	Tend to increase with age and length of service.	Competence is more important. Junior/younger colleagues may be given more responsibility. Individual initiative is expected. Achieving results is important.
Workplace environment	Formal and hierarchical. Reporting lines are respected.	More informal. Team work is more common. Employees are expected to go outside direct relationships to obtain information and cooperation, e.g. from other departments.
Communication	Disagreements and confrontation are avoided, and may be disguised. It is advisable to avoid discussing religion, politics, or social class; and avoid irony too.	Directness (with tact) is preferred: Yes means Yes, No means No. This is not rudeness.
Attitude to law	Laws may be broken, because they are not enforced.	Laws are generally followed (except maybe speeding).
Attitude to work	Filipino workers are generally hard working and very loyal to their employer (possibly because good jobs are valued because they are hard to come by).	Canadian workers are also good loyal workers.  They usually expect to go home on time.
Employment values.	Education is highly valued.	Experience and competence is more highly valued than education.