

EXPORT QUICK HITS: CULTURE AND GENDER BIAS

An overview and checklist for advisors to review with clients:

1. Research the differences in culture and business practices and acknowledge that potential gender biases and safety concerns may exist in the target market.
2. Become familiar with social norms and business protocols, including the definite dos and don'ts in the target market and the adjustments that will be required to the business plan and export strategy.
3. Assess what events, if any, are currently impacting the culture that may influence market entry.
4. Is your brand's UVP appropriate to the new market and if not, what modifications are necessary? Will your product/service require a new profile or design or product name?

SAFETY:

- ✓ Check whether travel advisories are in effect for the proposed destination and obtain information on safety and security, local laws and customs, health conditions, and entry requirements.
- ✓ Plan ahead. Careful preparation is the key to safe and successful travel. Obtain a valid Canadian passport and an appropriate visa for every country on your itinerary. Your clients must understand the terms of each visa. In some countries, they could be arrested for violating visa conditions.
- ✓ As a precaution against loss or theft, leave copies of important travel documents with family or friends in Canada. Encourage your clients to scan all documents and send them to themselves at an email address they can access anywhere.
- ✓ Have travel health insurance that covers all medical expenses for illness or injury (including hospitalization abroad and medical evacuation), loss or theft of valuables, damage to baggage, and flight cancellations or interruptions.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ADDITIONAL FREE RESOURCES ON CULTURAL DIFFERENCES:

- Global Affairs Canada's **Centre for Intercultural Learning** offers courses, workshops, a resource library, plus a country-by-country listing of insights.
- Connect directly with **Export Development Canada (EDC)** advisors in key international markets, who can provide not only market intelligence but also cultural insights.
- EDC also has an excellent blog series on export. **This post** by a women entrepreneur in the services industry focuses on how to build cultural intelligence, including an extensive list of resources.

- An extensive discussion of culture and its influence in international business including tips on how to be more culturally aware is provided by the **Trade Commissioner Service**.
- An extensive list of safety issues is included in the Government of Canada's safe-travel booklet **Bon voyage, but...essential information for Canadian travellers**. The booklet offers a preventive, female-friendly approach to tackling the security, cultural, health, and social concerns of women travellers.