

## COMMON BUSINESS PRACTICES CHECKLIST

The following checklist (in no particular order) is meant to be used as a starting point for familiarizing yourself with common business practices followed in Alberta. The list is not considered all inclusive. Check all that apply to your situation.



- Familiarize yourself with Western culture and values through books, magazines, Internet, TV, radio, and talking to people. Business practices in Canada follow Western culture.
- Design and print business cards to hand-out. You can potentially include the following information:
  - Business name and/or logo
  - Short description of your services
  - Name and title
  - Business address
  - Telephone and/or Fax number
  - Email address and/or website
- Ensure that you have a proper wardrobe for the type of business you will be doing (e.g. office = professional clothing, manual labour = casual clothing).
- Schedule appointments and meetings with appropriate contacts (e.g. banker, lawyer, accountant, insurance representative, financial advisor, human resources professional, business consultant).
- Pay your business taxes on time. Understand the tax differences between sole proprietorship, partnership, and corporation.
- Create professional documents on the computer. This may include letters, fax cover sheets, invoices, advertising, etc.
- Pay all of your invoices and expenses on time. Interest charges may accrue if you do not pay them.
- Ensure that you have the proper permits and licenses to operate your business.
- Treat your customers well by returning calls quickly, responding to emails, and answering questions.
- You are responsible for all actions of your business. Take the time to familiarize yourself with them. It is illegal to provide false or misleading information to customers.
- Privacy and confidentiality is important. Keep client and employee contact information and details confidential (e.g. social insurance numbers, names, addresses, numbers, birth dates, etc.).
- Understand Alberta's minimum employment standards if you choose to hire employees.
- If you have employees, you will most likely require Workers' Compensation coverage.
- Keep written/printed records of all of your transactions.
- French is the other official language in Canada. You may want/require some of your business's information to be in French.
- Be on time when you meet with clients or other professionals. (usually 5 minutes early).
- Direct eye contact is acceptable when talking to someone.
- Men and women are treated equally doing business in Canada.
- Shake hands firmly (a common gesture) when having meetings.
- Honour commitments and always follow through with what you promise.
- Common hours of work are 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, however this can vary depending on the type of business.

For more information or assistance, please contact **The Business Link** toll free at 1 800 272-9675.