

LP

RELOCATION

CANADA

14 - Doing Business

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There are **definite differences** between doing business in Quebec and other parts of the world— notably with office behaviour and relationships with colleagues and superiors.



René-Lévesque Blvd, the heart of Montreal business district.

Quebecers are always very **punctual**. It is quite usual to arrive 10 minutes before the meeting. Professional meetings are **short and effective**. If everything can be said in 15 minutes, why drag things out ? It is useful to send a memo (*memorandum of facts*) after the meeting.

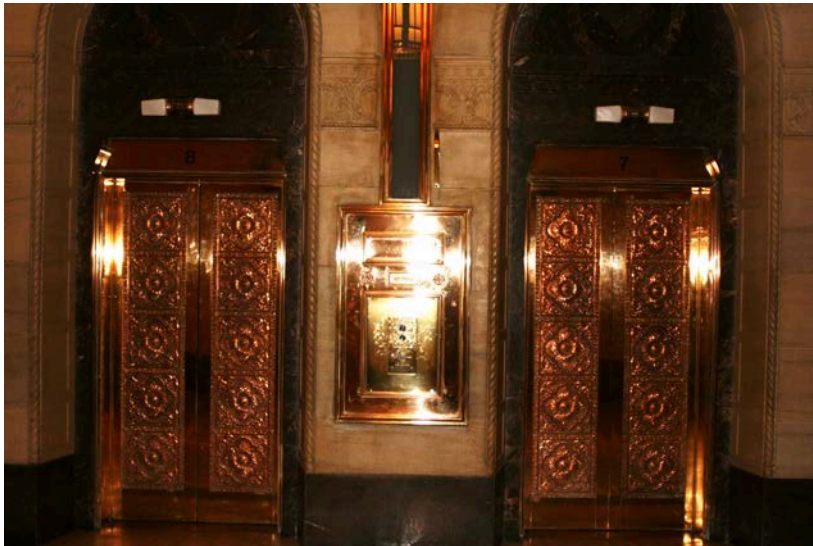
In Montreal, **English** is often used, primarily for dealings with other Canadian provinces and the United States, but as well with businesses which have set up in Quebec. However, French is used almost exclusively throughout the rest of Quebec.

« Dejeuner » is breakfast, « diner » is lunch and « souper » is dinner. If you invited to a “Dejeuner d’affaires”, this would be as of 7 am....

Many Quebecers arrive very early to the office (as of 7 am). This means they leave the office at 3 or 4 pm. With regards to traffic, the rush hour is between 3 and 5 pm. Families often eat dinner as of 6 pm, with this being the main meal of the day. This leaves the evening free for pastimes such as taking a walk, getting the children to hockey or soccer practice or even getting in a few runs on a ski hill (yes, many ski hills are close by and illuminated for night-time skiing). There are definitely many ways to enjoy a healthy lifestyle!

Networking is a basic tool of doing business in Quebec. Business people spend an important amount of time attending networking activities (Chamber of Commerce, dinners, cocktail, conferences, golf tournaments...). To be a member of a golf course is without a doubt a very smart move. Networking goes beyond a simple exchange of business cards. People tend to associate better with people that they have met. Moreover, “referrals” is a cultural institution: sending someone a client (often with a referral fee attached) is common practice and legal. An important part of finding new clients is done through referrals.

The normal **letter size** is *US letter*. You may want to adjust the format of your documents on your computer. *US legal* (longer) exists, but is usually used in official documents, especially leases.



The magnificent brass doors of the elevators, Dorchester Place.

Many business transactions are handled over the **phone**: to apply for a multi-risk home insurance policy or to sign up for Videotron cable TV service, a simple call is sufficient. For future use, in order to identify yourself over the phone, initially you may be asked an odd question (such as “what is the maiden name of your mother?”).

Quebecers – as all North-Americans – are very **reactive** : you are expected to return a call or an email within the next 24 hours. They usually take rapid and clear decisions, positive or negative. Nevertheless, Quebecers **do not accept aggressive behaviour**, which will be considered as offensive. The true base of relationship with colleagues is consensus, listening, mutual acceptance and valorizing others' standpoint

The **5 à 7 (happy hour)** is common practice : from time to time, colleagues have a drink together, in the office or at nearby pub. Christmas parties are very important, too.

Salaries are paid every two weeks (26 payments a year), generally on Thursdays.

Bank holidays	
New Year	January 1 st
Veterans Day	3 rd Monday of May
Holy Friday and Easter	Variable
Fête du Québec (St John Baptist)	June 24 th
Canada's National day	July 1 st
Labour Day	1 st Monday of September
Thanksgiving	2 nd Monday of October
Christmas	December 25 th
Boxing Day	December 26 th

Except for June 24th, most shops are open on these days.

Construction Holiday (last two complete weeks at end of July/beginning August). The construction industry closes completely, and many businesses notice an increased slow down (except of course, in the tourist industry).



The Sun Life Building, Dorchester Place, during many years the highest building of the British Empire.

Can my spouse work ?

Yes, if he/she obtains a Work Permit. Best to apply for the spousal work permit at the same time as applying for the expatriate's. The work permit for the expatriate is an *Executive* Work Permit (good only for a given company, for a specific address and a specific job.) . On the contrary, the spousal work permit is open, valid for any job, in any company, anywhere in the Province of Quebec.

Attention : A work permit does not allow you to study. You must choose between studying and working. When in doubt, ask for a Student's Visa.

Federal and provincial immigration policies change frequently. **LP Relocation** recommends that you consult a trusted and competent immigration lawyer.

Professional behaviour is very different in Quebec, with respect to Europe and especially with respect to France. We advise you to consult a specialist (a business coach, for example) to learn how to prepare a CV aimed at the Canadian employment market, how to prepare yourself for an interview and what you need to know about networking.

Many professions are organized and governed by **Societies** (in Quebec *Ordres*) for example, real estate agents, engineers, all health professionals, artists etc. You must become a member of an *Ordre* in order to exercise your profession. You would apply to the *Ordre* in order to evaluate your diploma (an often long and complex procedure), which may even include a refresher course, a traineeship.... Inform yourself before beginning your job hunt.

In North America (Canada and Quebec included) your **skills** are far more important than the diplomas on your wall or who you are related to back in Europe... Key is your work experience **in Quebec**. As you have just arrived and you do not have any, you may have to be willing to accept an inferior job to that of your past experience or ambitions. Do not aim to become Managing Director for your first job : if you are competent and efficient, then in no time you will quickly climb to the position you aspire to.

Can my children work ?

All or almost all Canadian students work in order to finance their studies and to acquire work experience. It is quite normal to finish your undergraduate degree, work a few years, then return to University to do a Master's degree, then return back to the workforce.

Many jobs (sales clerks, waiter/waitresses..) are mainly filled by students, normally on a part-time basis (recommended not to surpass 15-20 hours/week so as not to affect their studies). Some

schools require the students to get authorization from the school in order to work, which may be denied if the student's marks are not sufficiently high enough.

Some jobs may be a full-time job (for example a sales attendant in a shop) shared between 3 to 4 students to cover the entire week. These jobs are likely to be paid per hour. The current **minimum salary** (May 2014) is **\$10.35/hour**. Normally there is no increase for overtime, working at night or on Sundays.... The minimum salary of **waiters and waitresses** is less (presently at **\$8,90**), and count on tips to compensate their salary.

Foreign students whose Student Visa was issued **before June 1, 2014** :

- must apply for a work permit
- must wait 6 months before working off-campus
- must apply for a SIN (Social Insurance Number) at Services Canada
- must have a bank account

Foreign students whose Student's Visa was issued **after June 1, 2014** and are **full-time** students at an **accredited** Education Centre (all Universities and Cegeps are accredited) :

- can work without asking for a work permit
- can work off-campus
- can work immediately, without waiting for 6 months
- may not work more than 20 hours/week during the school year and may work full time during vacation time.
- must apply for a SIN (Social Insurance Number) at Services Canada
- must have a bank account

A wise precaution...

We do not want to scare you, but we advise to make your **will and testament**, especially if you buy your home in Quebec.

Should you have children, it is very important to stipulate who will be the guardians of your children in the case of death of both parents.

Quebec law allows you to freely choose to whom you wish to leave your patrimony. Without a will, there is a stipulated formula of how your estate will be distributed. You will be asked to choose an administrator for your estate.

This is done preferably by a solicitor or a notary (approximately \$700 for a couple).

Consulates

It is highly advisable to sign up you and your entire family with your country's consulate office. If you are already signed up but in another country, advise them so that they can put your file up to date, especially with respect to electoral lists, should your country of origin offer that service.

Consulate General of United States in Montreal

1155 St-Alexandre Street
Montreal, Quebec H3B 3Z1
City: Montreal
Phone: (+1) (514) 398-9695
Fax: (+1) (514) 398-0973
Email: montreal.usconsulate.gov
Office Hours: 08.15-17.00

British Consulate-General in Montreal

Suite 4200
1000 De La Gauchetiere West
Montreal, Quebec H3B 4W5
Canada
City: Montreal
Phone: (1) (514) 866 5863
Fax: (1) (514) 866 0202
Email: bcgmtl@bellnet.ca
Office Hours: GMT: Mon-Fri: 1400-2200 Local Time: Mon-Fri: 0900-1700

Australian Consulate-General and Trade Commission

175 Bloor Street East
Suite 1100 - South Tower
Toronto, Ontario M4W 3R8
City: Toronto
Phone: +1 (416) 323 3909
Fax: +1 (416) 323 3910
Web Site: <http://www.canada.embassy.gov.au>
Email: canada@ustrade.gov.au

Consulate General of Japan in Montreal

600 rue de la Gauchetiere West, Suite 2120

Montreal, QC

Canada, H3B 4L8

City: Montreal

Phone: (514) 866-3429

Fax: (514) 395-6000

Web Site: <http://www.montreal.ca.emb-japan.go.jp/>

Email: general@consuljaponmontreal.org

Office Hours: Information and issuance of visas including the Working Holiday Visa. Monday to Friday 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Consulate of the Federal Republic of Germany in Montreal

1250, Boulevard Rene-Levesque Ouest,

Suite 4315

Montreal,

Quebec H3B 4W8

Canada

City: Quebec

Phone: 1-514-931-2277

Fax: 1-514-931-7239

Web Site: <http://www.montreal.diplo.de/>

Email: mail@montr.diplo.de

Office Hours: The Consulate General ist open for the public from Monday to Friday from 9.00 to 12.00 and can be reached by telephone from Monday to Thursday until 16.45 and on Friday until 13.45.



Enjoy your stay in Montreal !