

## Cultural guidelines for working in Saudi Arabia

- ✓ Import and the consumption of alcohol is strictly prohibited in KSA.
- ✓ Friday is the day of congregational worship.
- ✓ Physical contact between men and women should be avoided in a public setting.
- ✓ If you are male, hold back from shaking the hand of women unless it is offered.
- ✓ A woman should not extend her hand to be shaken by an Arab male unless she is confident that no embarrassment will ensue.
- ✓ Openly affectionate behaviour, even between a married couple, should be avoided.
- ✓ Wearing revealing clothing in public places is usually frowned upon and strictly prohibited.
- ✓ Always shake hands with your right hand.
- ✓ When an individual enters a room at a gathering, do rise to greet them and wait to sit down until the newcomer sits down. Elders are generally treated with a great deal of deference and respect.
- ✓ Talking about family is normal and expected but in more conservative countries, one should avoid asking or speaking about wives of businessmen.
- ✓ Respect prayer times. Muslim colleagues may excuse themselves during meetings to fulfil their obligations or may prefer to schedule meetings around prayer times.
- ✓ Never point the soles of your feet/shoes towards an individual.
- ✓ Avoid talking about politics, culture, or religion in a business setting.
- ✓ Do not ask someone to approach by beckoning with the upright forefinger.
- ✓ Do not be surprised or show irritation when meetings do not start on time or are frequently interrupted.
- ✓ During Ramadan, do not eat or drink in plain view of your local business partners, faculty, or students.

*\*Sourced from Technical and Vocational Training Corporation, Saudi Arabia*