

Hiring Immigrants MAKES GOOD BUSINESS SENSE



Niagara Workforce
Planning Board

Our Vision is Working

*A division of Niagara Training
& Adjustment Board*



NIEC
Niagara Immigrant
Employment Council



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**EMPLOYMENT
ONTARIO**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Face of Our Workforce is Changing	pg. 1
Know the Facts.....	pg. 2
Supporting Employers in Building a Diverse Workforce	pg. 3
Recruiting Diverse Talent	pg. 4
Skills International On-Line Database.....	pg. 4
Niagara Programs and Services Chart	pg. 5
Building Cultural Understanding.....	pg. 7
Tips for Interviewing International Candidates.....	pg. 7
Mentoring and Immigrants.....	pg. 8
Internships for Immigrants.....	pg. 9
White Oaks Conference Resort & Spa “Gets It”	pg. 10
The Other Side...Resources for the Internationally Trained Individual.....	pg. 11

THE FACE OF OUR WORKFORCE IS CHANGING

Did you know?

Canada's population and its workforce are undergoing major shifts that will affect all employers:

- Aging baby boomers are moving toward retirement
- Lower birth rates are leading to fewer young people for the workforce
- Demand is increasing for more highly educated and skilled workers
- There is an increased number of immigrants in Canada who bring skills and experience
- Skilled, experienced immigrants bring high levels of education, innovation and international expertise

The diversity of Canadian society is made up of those who immigrated to Canada many years ago and those who came to Canada more recently. We are rich with the presence of diverse languages, customs, ethnicities, heritages, religions, occupations and communications that make up our community, neighbourhoods and workplaces. There is an increased need to draw from the talents of all our populations and prepare them for the knowledge-based economy of the future.

An Aging Population

The Canadian Government estimates that by 2015, approximately 48% of the working population will be between the ages of 45 and 64, compared to 35% in 2004. Forty six percent of baby boomers – those born between 1946 and 1966 - are close to their retirement or are in their pre-retirement years. From 2001 to 2006, Niagara experienced an 11.8% rise in residents aged 55 years and older (*Supply and Demand Study, Niagara's Labour Market in Transition, Pg. 19, Niagara Workforce Planning Board, 2009*)

As an increasing number of Canadian companies realize the many benefits of creating a more diverse workforce, they are also realizing that hiring practices must reflect this required diversity. For most organizations that means, in addition to their regular channels for recruitment and job posting, it would benefit them to:

- diversify their networks to include New Canadians
- network with other employers who have a diverse workforce
- advertise placements through immigrant-serving organizations
- access programs and services offered by immigrant-serving organizations
- forge connections with leaders of ethnic communities
- advertise available placements through ethnic media outlets
- recruit via established educational programs
- create a corporate presence at cultural and community events
- set up a diversity committee to assist with recruitment and community connections
- create a policy that clearly welcomes and encourages all applicants



Ask yourself these important questions. Do you want...

- ✓ to be able to compete successfully in a global economy?
- ✓ a diverse, flexible and vibrant workforce?
- ✓ the best candidates available for your present labour needs?
- ✓ to be able to plan your labour force needs for the future?
- ✓ reduced turnover and loyal employees?
- ✓ fresh new approaches, ideas and experiences that a diverse workforce brings?
- ✓ employees who have education, skills and experience?
- ✓ a talented labour pool to draw from?
- ✓ to be responsive to clients and draw in a broader customer base?

If you answered "yes" to any of the above questions:

THIS PUBLICATION IS FOR YOU
because

HIRING IMMIGRANTS
MAKES GOOD BUSINESS SENSE
for your company, for our economy and for
Niagara's competitive advantage.

Organizations that maximize the skills of a diverse workforce understand the positive effect it can have on their bottom line including:¹

- Expanding global business opportunities
- Strengthening relationships with customers, suppliers and the public
- Enhancing creativity and decision-making
- Improving their reputation with investors and consumers
- Attracting and retaining top talent

Immigrants are more likely to have a university education:

- In 2007, 37% of immigrants aged 25 to 54, had a university degree, compared with only 22% of the same age of the Canadian born population. The difference was even more pronounced among those who immigrated between 2002 and 2007, with more than half of these immigrants, or 320,000, having a university degree.
- In 2006, 58% of recent male immigrants and 49% of recent female immigrants had at least a bachelor's degree.²
- Recent immigrants are more likely to enter Canada under the Economic/Business category of immigration than any other category.³

Before a skilled worker can come to Canada, they must take a skills test:

Skilled workers receive points for their education, abilities in English and/or French, work experience, age, whether they have arranged employment in Canada, and their adaptability. Take the skills test online at:

www.cic.gc.ca/english/immigrate/skilled/assess/index.asp

Economic Integration for Immigrants is Faster in Small Areas:⁴

Integration of immigrants in small, less urbanized areas is more rapid and that advantage increases over time. Economic class immigrants (Skilled Professionals) have difficulty integrating in the major urban centres, regardless of their education, their ability to speak an official language or their country of origin.

According to Citizenship and Immigration Canada's 2006-2007 report on plans and priorities, "Immigration currently accounts for more than 70% of net growth in the labour force, and it is projected that all net labour force growth will come from immigration sometime between 2011 and 2016 as the number of Canadians who are leaving school and entering the labour force will only be sufficient to offset the number of retirements."

Immigrants and non-permanent residents combined represent a 60% share of Canada's total employed science and engineering (S&E) doctorates⁵ in 2001:

This is a much higher share than the 20% for the Canadian employed population at large. Canadian-born PhD holders were more concentrated in non-S&E fields, whereas, the immigrant PhDs were more heavily concentrated in S&E fields, particularly in engineering and applied sciences as well as mathematics, computer and physical sciences.

Visible minority population in Canada is Growing:

- Niagara's population has become more diverse and has increased its percentage of visible minorities at a more rapid rate than that of Ontario. (*Statistics Canada, Census 2006; Census 2001*).
- According to the Conference Board of Canada (2004) 13.4% of Canada's population is made up of visible minorities and by the end of 2016, visible minorities will constitute more than 19% of the population or 6.6 million people.
- Visible minorities possess \$76 billion worth of combined purchasing power in Canada. Visible minorities form (approximately) 48% of the consumer market in Toronto, 20% in Montreal and 39% in Vancouver according to Dr. Jeffrey Gandz of the School of Business at the University of Western Ontario, a Business Case for Diversity www.lookingahead.bc.ca/employer/index.cfm?chpo=2

"We live in a community where we need to be representative of the community as a whole."

Yolande Paine, Manager of Human Resources, TD Commercial Banking
www.lookingahead.bc.ca/employer/index.cfm?chp=2



1 Business Critical: Maximizing the Talents of Visible Minorities: Conference Board of Canada 2005
2 Immigrants' Education and Required Job Skills: Diane Galarneau and René Morissette: December 2008
3 How Can Canada Prosper in Tomorrow's World: The Conference Board of Canada 2005
4 Immigrants in the Hinterlands: André Bernard, 2008
5 Where are the Scientists and Engineers: Michael McKenzie, Statistics Canada, 2007

SUPPORTING EMPLOYERS IN BUILDING A DIVERSE WORKFORCE

Multicultural and Settlement Services

Niagara has local organizations that assist employers who have or are exploring hiring a culturally diverse workforce with:

- Diversity training
- Access to internationally trained professionals
- Mentoring
- Cross-cultural education for the workplace
- Labour issues
- Job development
- Mandatory valid work permits

Employment Ontario

Government incentives exist to help companies hire new workers (for example, to offset training costs). If you are interested in hiring a New Canadian, and would like to know which incentives you are eligible for, visit the Employment Ontario website at www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/tcu/employers

Employer Signing Bonus

The 2004 Ontario Budget included a new \$2,000 Employer Signing Bonus initiative to encourage employers in the trades to register new apprentices in sectors where there is a high demand for skilled workers. This initiative will assist employers to hire and register youth under 25 years of age who have left school and require upgrading to meet the registration standards for apprenticeship training.

www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/tcu/employers/emp_bonus.html

Ontario Targeted Wage Subsidy

This service is designed to provide on-the-job work experience to unemployed people who are or have recently become eligible to receive Employment Insurance, and are experiencing difficulty in finding work. It also enables employers to hire people who face barriers to employment by offering temporary wage subsidies.

www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/tcu/employers/wageSubsidy.html

Job Connect Program

Employers who are looking to hire staff can advertise job openings through this Information and Resource Service. Job Connect staff can provide employers with screening and recruiting services to meet their business needs. Through Job Development and Placement Support, employers may be eligible for training incentives to offset some of the costs of providing on-the-job training/work experience to a Job Connect participant.

www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/tcu/apprentices/jobconnect.html

Provincial Nominee Program (PNP)

This employer driven pilot program was launched on May 24, 2007 and in its first year nominated 500 individuals. PNP is designed to contribute to job creation, job retention and economic development by attracting new investment, and by helping employers in targeted sectors to attract and retain qualified employees for jobs for which there are currently labour market needs. For more information on employer pre-screening, eligible occupations, multinational investors and student opportunities, consult: www.ontarioimmigration.ca/english/pnp.asp

Apprenticeship Training Tax Credit (ATTC) (Provincial)

The Apprenticeship Training Tax Credit (ATTC) is a refundable tax credit for corporations and unincorporated businesses employing apprentices in certain skilled trades during the first 36 months of an apprenticeship program.

www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/tcu/employers/taxcredit.html

Apprenticeship Job Creation Tax Credit (AJCTC) (Federal)

The AJCTC is a non-refundable tax credit equal to 10% of the eligible salaries and wages payable to eligible apprentices in respect of employment after May 1, 2006. The maximum credit is \$2,000 per year for each eligible apprentice.

www.cra-arc.gc.ca/whtsnw/pprntcshp-eng.html

Apprenticesearch.com

Apprenticesearch.com is a free online matching service for employers and job seekers. Providing information on apprentices/ apprenticeship candidates in Niagara. www.apprenticesearch.com

World Education Services - For Employers:

World Education Services (WES) helps employers identify top job candidates by providing a screening tool related to international education. With a WES credential evaluation, employers can verify the authenticity and Canadian equivalency of foreign credentials. www.wes.org/ca

Mandatory Valid Work Permit

In almost all cases, foreign workers must have a valid work permit to work in Canada. For more information visit Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC). www.hrsdc.gc.ca

Support Services for Hiring a Foreign Worker

Every year, Canadian employers hire foreign workers to help address skill and labour shortages. You can hire a foreign worker temporarily or you can offer a full time job to a skilled worker and support their immigration to Canada. Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) and Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) work to ensure that the employment of foreign workers supports economic growth and helps to create more opportunities for all Canadians.

www.hrsdc.gc.ca and www.cic.gc.ca

Hireimmigrants.ca

This website is a TRIEC (Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council) program that provides employers, HR personnel, and business leaders with the tools and resources needed to better recruit, retain, promote and successfully create a diverse workforce of skilled professionals. www.hireimmigrants.ca

RECRUITING DIVERSE TALENT

The interview provides the first real opportunity for employers and job candidates to meet face to face. Being a good interviewer provides all job candidates with a fair opportunity to present themselves for a position. Screening, selecting and recruiting qualified, immigrant professionals into your organization can:

- Solve skills shortages
- Provide you with highly motivated skilled workers
- Bring international experience and new, innovative ideas to the workplace
- Assist you to successfully compete in the increasing global marketplace

Diversity Recruitment Suggestions and Tips

1. Emphasize competencies rather than past experience.
2. Encourage the placement of interns and co-op students who are members of diverse groups.
3. Establish formal relationships with schools that have great diversity in their student body. This measure will ensure that you are always cultivating talent for your future workforce pool.
4. Make sure that all levels of management have received diversity training or they might not be in a position to give a fair evaluation during the hiring process.
5. When using an interview panel, make sure that it is culturally diverse to minimize potential bias.
6. Be sure that the qualifications defined for a given position are really those needed to do the job, and not based simply on historical assumptions.
7. Incorporate non-traditional networking channels to produce a diverse applicant pool.
8. A strong, diverse, informal network is a critical part of any successful diversity recruitment effort.
9. Encourage people in your organization to assist in providing names of possible recruits.
10. Provide volunteer opportunities to people in the community - it allows people to get relevant work experience and gives employers the opportunity to scope out up and coming talent.
11. Get involved in a community mentorship program that will enable you and/or your employees to mentor new immigrants; this can be an effective tool for recruitment.

Excerpt from The Multicultural Advantage www.diversityresources.com

Did you know?

Resumés and Cover Letters are quite different in Other Countries.

- In Colombia, a resumé must include a photograph, date of birth, marital status and other personal information.
- In Germany, a cover letter is expected to be a long and thorough chronological account of all of the applicant's previous jobs.
- In England, resumés often include graphics and must include an applicant's high school grades.

What can we learn from this? Take a second look and don't assume that a resumé with a different format is unprofessional – look at a person's qualifications, not the style in which they are written.

Remember: You are hiring the person - not the resumé.

NEW RESOURCE FOR EMPLOYERS

Skills International On-line Database

The Skills International database provides access to a pool of prescreened "job ready" internationally educated and trained professionals for companies across Ontario. This information includes a complete profile on the candidate, including scanned copies of key documents that reinforce his/her education, skills and work experience. All candidates have completed a specialized job preparation program through one of the partnering community-based agencies across Ontario. The database is cost effective, efficient and easy to use.

Who will use SkillsInternational.ca?

Employers who are recruiting for current openings or who are always interested in a particular skill set can use SkillsInternational.ca to help fill their labour market needs. SkillsInternational.ca connects employers directly with immigrant job seekers in Ontario who are qualified and assessed as work ready by professional employment preparation staff. This tool is particularly useful to employers who are specifically seeking to embrace cultural diversity in the workplace.

How do employers get access to SkillsInternational.ca?

Those wishing to search candidate profiles on SkillsInternational.ca can do so by completing the Employer Registration Form on the site. They will then be contacted to review and sign the Employer Participation Agreement that outlines their commitment to use the candidate profiles for employment purposes only.

Do employers have to pay to use SkillsInternational.ca?

No, there is no cost. Employers can access the skills that immigrants bring with them to Ontario by completing Basic and Advanced Searches at no cost upon registration and signing the Employer Participation Agreement. Value added features will have a nominal annual fee and include the opportunity to create perpetual positions that are matched against all current and future profiles, and the ability to create an electronic hiring committee that can review and comment on matched profiles in a collaborative format.

Visit www.skillsinternational.ca

NIAGARA PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

SERVICE PROVIDER	Phone	Website
Brock University	905-688-5550	www.brocku.ca/international/index.brock.php
CAIPS Canadian Access for International Professions and Skilled Trades, Welland	905-788-3751	www.caipsniagara.org
CAIPS Canadian Access for International Professions and Skilled Trades, St. Catharines	905-988-1353	
Casa El Norte, Fort Erie	905-871-4483	No website or contact email
Care Centre for Internationally Trained Nurses, Hamilton	905-521-1777	www.care4nurses.org
Centre Communautaire le Griffon	905-714-0088	No website or contact email
Centre de Sante Communautaire, Hamilton/Niagara, Welland	905-734-1141	www.centredesantecommunautaire.com
Chez Marie Refugee Assistance Centre, St. Catharines	905-682-5795	No website or contact email
Club 2000 Niagara Inc. Job Connect, Welland	905-714-1480	www.centre-emploi2000.com
College Boréal	905-688-9998	www.borealc.on.ca
District School Board of Niagara		www.dsbni.edu.on.ca/International
Employment Help Centre, Grimsby	905-309-5627	www.employmenthelp.org
Employment Help Centre, Smithville	905-957-2063	
Employment Help Centre, St. Catharines	905-685-1353	
Employment Help Centre, Welland	905-732-1605	
Folk Arts Council of St. Catharines, Niagara Falls	905-358-3452	www.folk-arts.ca
Folk Arts Council of St. Catharines, St. Catharines	905-685-6589 x 231	
Fort Erie Multicultural Centre, Fort Erie	905-871-3641	www.firststepsincanada.com
Multicultural Network of Niagara Falls, Niagara Falls	905-356-2249	www.mnrf.ca
Niagara Catholic District School Board, Fort Erie	905-991-8951	www.niagarac.com
Niagara Catholic District School Board, Niagara Falls	905-354-3531	
Niagara Catholic District School Board, St. Catharines	905-682-3360	
Niagara Catholic District School Board, Welland	905-734-8166	
Niagara College, Niagara Falls	905-374-7454, ext 3670	www.niagaracollege.ca
Niagara College, St. Catharines	905-684-4881, ext 442	
Niagara College, Welland	905-735-2211	
Niagara Employment Help Centre, Niagara Falls	905-358-0021	www.ehc.on.ca
Niagara Somali Canadian Community Centre, St. Catharines	905-938-1641	No website or contact email
Port Cares, Port Colborne	905-834-3629	www.portcares.on.ca
St. Clare Refugee Assistance Centre, Welland	905-735-0832	No website or contact email
Service Canada Employment Centre, Dunnville	905-774-7501	www.hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca
Service Canada Employment Centre, St. Catharines	905-988-4154	
Service Canada Employment Centre, Fort Erie	905-871-3932	
Service Canada Employment Centre, Niagara Falls	905-354-2534	
Service Canada Employment Centre, Port Colborne	905-834-3629	
Service Canada Employment Centre for Youth, Welland	905-732-5025	
Welland Heritage Council and Multicultural Centre, Welland	905-732-5337	www.wellandheritagecouncil.com
YMCA of Niagara, YMCA Employment Assistance Program, Niagara Falls	905-371-2513	www.ymcaofniagara.org
YMCA of Niagara, YMCA Employment Assistance Program, St. Catharines	905-684-3500	
YMCA of Niagara, YMCA Employment Assistance Program, Welland	905-734-8562	

**The above listed agencies receive specific funding for immigrant/newcomer service delivery

	Bridging	Employment Services	Francophone Services	International Credential Support	Job Shadowing	Language Assessment	Language Training	Mentoring	Wage Subsidy Information	Settlement Services
		✓				✓	✓	✓		
		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		
		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		
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BUILDING CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

As we interact with others, we need to be aware of our assumptions about them. As individuals, we place too much emphasis on the “like me” or “mirror image” perception. Different cultures offer different views of acceptable public conduct. True acceptance of differences may empower your organization as it strives for equality and respect, locally and globally. Each culture has their own rich history, beliefs, norms, customs, heritage, celebrations and rituals and each person from every culture wishes to be understood, accepted, included and respected.

“Every view of the world that becomes extinct, every culture that disappears, diminishes the possibility of life”.

Octavio Paz, Nobel Prize in Literature, 1990

Visit Citizenship and Immigration Canada for more detailed cultural profiles
www.cp-pc.ca/english

Tips for Interviewing International Candidates

Through the interview process, you can evaluate whether the skills and experience of the candidate meet the requirements of a particular job. In order to ensure that you hire the best candidate for the position and avoid any misunderstanding during the process, consider the following:

- Allow time to become acquainted with the interviewee before beginning a formal interview. This will allow them time to become familiar with the dialogue pace. Provide a comfortable environment away from distractions.
- Ask questions that allow the candidate to discuss their achievements in a group setting. In some cultures, taking credit for successes with direct ownership may not be viewed as appropriate.
- Be aware that maintained eye contact is not a universal norm. If eye contact is being avoided, take measures to clearly identify the reason. This may be viewed as a sign of disrespect in different cultures.
- Keep your interview questions concise and free of jargon or slang while also remaining gender and culture neutral. Be careful not to use acronyms or abbreviations while speaking clearly. Use an interview template.
- Clarify your understanding by paraphrasing and exploring further.
- Allow the candidate time for expansion in their thought process. Encourage individual reasoning and critical thinking.
- Be patient when interviewing a candidate where English is a second language. Don't impose your expectations on how someone should act. In different cultures, communication may not be as direct - suspend judgment and seek to gain full information.
- Keep an open mind. Do not expect to see a “mirror image”. Avoid a “like me” approach. With diversity comes a new view of opportunities. Ask yourself, “How can I see this differently?” The potential candidate is not the only one who can walk away having learned something new.
- Provide feedback to unsuccessful candidates. They will appreciate this information and use it for self-improvement in their future interviews.
- Ensure the question is understood by the candidate. You should be able to tell, based on their response. Repeat, if helpful.

Tips:

An alternative to a formal credential evaluation is to ask more detailed, technical questions during the interview to assess an applicant's knowledge; this is a quick and easy way for you to determine if an applicant has the specific knowledge required for the position. Review portfolios, dossiers, relevant documents, relevant work samples and other sources of verification. Conduct technical skills testing and assessments where warranted. Don't miss out on an excellent candidate who can make a positive contribution to your company.



MENTORING AND IMMIGRANTS

Mentorship is alive and well in many places as a way of welcoming and socializing individuals into a profession, a trade, a workplace or a new setting. It can assist immigrants to become familiar with the Canadian workplace and the new context for their career. Mentoring is used effectively in medicine, nursing, psychology, law, teacher development, youth work, engineering, the skilled trades, journalism and business. It has assisted many workers to be able to work in multi-national companies and in other parts of the world.

It is very important that immigrants have access to an effective mentoring relationship in the workplace to assist them to be successful and to be included in all aspects of their new life, including employment. Vance and Olson (1998) suggest that “a mentor relationship is a developmental, empowering, and nurturing relationship over time in which mutual sharing, learning, and growth occur in an atmosphere of respect, collegiality, and affirmation.”

Mentoring relationships can be established in a **formal** way by employers so that immigrants are matched to an experienced person in the workplace for a period of time after they are hired. This facilitated, and intentional mentoring provides a structure for assistance. **Informal** mentoring can also be encouraged by employers so that seasoned employees take new persons under their wing for awhile to show them around and help them to be familiar with the workplace culture, personalities and context. Most mentoring involves face-to-face relationships and communication. Group mentoring, electronic mentoring and peer mentoring can also be helpful. Mentoring activities provide socialization to the career, profession or organization, psycho-social support and encouragement and role modeling of skills and competencies that are required.

Several initiatives are in place in Niagara to assist foreign-trained nurses, doctors, journalists and entrepreneurs. A systematic plan to recruit, match and support mentors and mentees could provide mentoring in the workplace setting in the language, policies, procedures, technology, skills and nuances of behaviours and communications that are related to your specific workplace.

How do you proceed with setting up an effective mentoring action plan?

The following stages are suggested to organize a successful mentoring program:

1. Identify those who need, require or want mentoring.
2. Recruit experienced workers and good communicators to be mentors who are in different careers, positions and departments in your organization.
3. Provide training, resources and support for mentors and mentees.
4. Develop guidelines to assist mentors and mentees to establish the relationship and ideas for mentoring activities to be successful.
5. Create a method to match mentors and mentees as soon as possible.
6. Implement mentoring and monitor the results.

The stages of the mentoring relationship involve: initiating and setting up the mentoring, setting up goals and expectations together, active mentoring, meeting and communicating, and terminating or redefining the relationship as co-workers.

Resources to Help Set up Mentoring:

An Employer Guide to Mentoring:

www.ntab.org/publications/brochures.php

Reports from the Conference Board of Canada:

www.conferenceboard.ca

- *Making a Visible Difference: The Contribution of Visible Minorities to Canadian Economic Growth*
- *Toward Maximizing the Talents of Visible Minorities*
- *Mentoring: Finding a Perfect Match for People Development*

Mentoring and Corporate Mentoring Programs:

- Extensive list of corporate program examples across North America
www.mentors.ca/mentorprograms.html
- Mentor Match, Bell Canada's online mentoring program
- Summary of differences between coaching and mentoring
www.workforce.com.archive/article/22/13/28.php

Community Mentorship Programs:

- The Bamboo Network for international trained professionals and trades persons in Canada:
www.integration-net.cic.ca/inet/english/region/cbc/2004-01.htm
- Mentorship program established by the society of Punjabi Engineers and Technologists in BC
www.speatbc.org/mentorship.cfm
- Success Society of Lower Mainland has job mentorship for trained professionals
www.success.bc.ca

Mentorship Resources:

- www.mentors.ca
A directory of mentorship programs in North America
- www.mentorcanada.ca
Canadian Conference on Mentorship with resources
- www.onlinementoring.ca
The Canadian Youth Business Foundation program/resources
- www.mentoring.org
A US national mentoring partnership
- www.canadianinfony.org
An online mentorship resources for new immigrants
- www.fastcompany.com/guides/leadment.html
Online guide to leadership mentoring
- www.thiederman.com/artcles.php
Free online articles on mentoring
- www.stmichaelhospital.com
Making connections for new immigrants in the hospital

INTERNSHIPS FOR IMMIGRANTS

Internships are formal and structured work-related professional or career learning experiences that provide graduates, students, immigrants and career changers with an opportunity to gain important knowledge and skills. They can be paid or unpaid positions. Internships provide valuable real world experiences for students and immigrants to obtain relevant work experience.

Internships provide opportunities for **candidates** to:

- gain experience in their career or work field
- gain experience in a specific organization or position
- determine if they wish to further pursue a career or work field
- create a network of important career contacts

Internships provide **employers** with opportunities to:

- acquire talented and skilled workers
- orient a specific candidate to work in their company or work sector
- train professionals to take on positions in their organization

Internships provide learning by doing and experiential learning. Internships are well adapted to immigrants since they often have held similar positions in another country. They typically need the experience of working in that career here in Canada. Internships also provide an introduction to the culture of the organization and to the new country context. They provide an opportunity for a candidate to perform the functions typically associated with a position with the ultimate goal of turning interns into contributors to the company.

Internships are most effective when an employer:

- buys into an internship program and is committed to its success
- identifies the key jobs, careers and positions they are willing to have someone intern in
- establishes procedures for the recruitment, selection and appropriate supervision of interns
- clarifies expectations and tasks for mutual success
- provides a structured orientation and learning program for interns
- engages the intern in making contributions and sharing their expertise
- does not underestimate the range and complexity of tasks an experienced immigrant intern might be able to perform

Intern Bridge has provided a website with free “white papers” on internships:

www.internbridge.com/white_papers/index.htm

Articles related to immigrants and internships that are helpful to employers:

Hiring international students as interns: The process demystified

Intern Bridge organizational audit: Self-reflection for internship suitability

Additional sites and resources:

- www.internships.com
- www.canadianimmigrant.org/RESOURCES/Careerhelp.htm
- www.graduateinternshipcouncil.org



NIAGARA EMPLOYER “GETS IT”

WHITE OAKS CONFERENCE RESORT AND SPA INVESTS IN THEIR EMPLOYEES

Yasmine Mousa, Intern Journalist

These days, Julia Sebastian, Director of Human Resources at White Oaks Conference Resort and Spa, Niagara-on-the-Lake is much more at ease than she was five years ago. The tourism industry was thriving while the shortage of workers in this field was perceptible. “It has been very difficult to fill positions,” noted Sebastian. “Prior to the newcomers’ involvement in the region’s tourism industry, we were constantly fighting for the same people.”

Sebastian had noticed the flow of newcomers to Niagara Region several years ago. “There has been a definite increase in newcomers, thank goodness, in the past 4-5 years.”

She affirmed, “If not for the newcomers settling in the Niagara Region we would have been in dire straits. Out of the 500 employees of the company, the newcomers represent around five percent,” stated Sebastian. “We hire the people, regardless of background, origin or ethnicity. Having new Canadians on the team is a great learning opportunity for all team members at White Oaks. Anyone with a positive attitude can flourish in this environment.”

Moreover, she explained, “The multicultural nature of our team resulting from these new hires fosters an atmosphere that mirrors that of the spirit of the Canadian cultural mosaic.”

The resort strives to promote its employees. Sebastian remarks, “We train our workers. As long as they are motivated and willing to learn, then the sky is the limit, actually, 85% of our supervisors and managers started with frontline positions in housekeeping, or as janitors and cooks.”

White Oaks, which celebrated its 30th anniversary last November, is well connected with various organizations and agencies in the region that act as a liaison between the resort and job applicants. “We rely on the Employment Help Centres and the Multicultural Centres as a resource for employees, in addition to word of mouth among the community.”

Sebastian stated that the challenges are the same, adding there had been no issues whatsoever in employing a newcomer. “Culturally they bring a fresh perspective and a very strong work ethic. Their impact is mostly positive,” said Sebastian, in particular “on the morale and productivity of the existing team. Sometimes language is a barrier, but again with the great English classes around...” proficiency in English, Sebastian suggests, should not be an obstacle, especially with entry-level jobs.

With Frank Sinatra’s epic – “My Way” echoing in the background, Sebastian instinctively straightened the tablecloth and replaced the vase back on the table, which had earlier been used for the interview. “We pay attention to details, and our employees know that,” she said.

Among its numerous awards the White Oaks Conference Resort and Spa is recognized as one of the Niagara Region’s top employers. In 2005, White Oaks was ranked No. 2 on the list of the “50 Best Employers in Canada” by the Report on Business Magazine. In the same year, it was presented with the Training Excellence Recognition Award by Niagara Training and Adjustment Board (NTAB).

Obviously, they “get it” the “White Oaks” way.

Niagara employers have many more immigrant hiring success stories to share. See the following sites for more Canadian employer/immigrant success stories:

- www.NIEC.ca
- www.hireimmigrants.ca/resources/?resource=news&id=5
- www.torontoalliance.ca



THE OTHER SIDE...

RESOURCES FOR THE INTERNATIONALLY TRAINED INDIVIDUAL

Multicultural and Settlement Services

Settlement Services exist to assist new immigrants to integrate successfully into the community. Services include, among others, community orientation (obtaining a Social Insurance Number, health insurance, housing, etc.), general and immigration counselling, translation and interpretation services and language assessment. These services can help foreign-trained employees adjust successfully to their new community.

Niagara Immigration Portal

This website provides immigrants with the necessary information and tools to be successful in the Niagara Region. You will also find links to reputable sites that will provide immigrants with the most up-to-date information.

www.niagaraimmigration.ca

Bridging Programs

The Ontario government supports programs that can help newcomers get their license or certificate in their profession or trade so that they can work in Ontario.

These programs have been established by employers, colleges and universities, occupational regulatory bodies, and community organizations. They are called 'Bridging Programs.' For more details on individual programs, visit the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration's website at:

www.citizenship.gov.on.ca/english/working/experience/

www.careerbridge.ca

Online Resources

www.settlement.org is an award-winning website managed by the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI). This website provides newcomers with information and resources on a wide variety of topics to assist in the settlement process.

Language Classes

Many language classes exist to help immigrants improve their writing, speaking, reading, listening skills, assessment and training. Classes are run through a number of organizations, including school boards, community colleges, and immigrant and community organizations.

www.ontarioimmigration.ca/english/learnenglish_improving.asp

English as a Second Language (ESL)

ESL classes are generally offered by local school boards and are available to everyone, regardless of immigration status.

www.niec.ca

Literacy Programs

In areas where ESL is not available, services such as one-on-one or group tutoring in reading and writing may be arranged through local literacy organizations.

www.niec.ca

Did You Know?

The main type of unrecognized learning in Canada is foreign credentialed learning. More than 340,000 Canadians possess unrecognized foreign credentials. Those with prior credentialed learning are most likely to come from China, India, the Philippines, and Guyana.⁶

Credential Assessment and Evaluation Services

World Education Services - For Immigrants:

WES provides credential evaluation reports based on verified credentials that offer the Canadian equivalency for each of an individual's academic degrees and transcripts. Chosen by the Ontario government to provide credential evaluation services for immigrants, WES is a not-for-profit organization. Their mission is to help integrate newcomers into the Canadian marketplace.

www.wes.org/ca

Credential Assessments and Accreditation Support

The following websites can provide support to employees or potential candidates with credential assessments and accreditation:

www.credentials.gc.ca

www.cicic.ca

www.enic-naric.net

The Foreign Credentials Referral Office provides information, path-finding and referral services to help foreign-trained workers to succeed and put their skills to work in Canada more quickly.

Designed by and for the regulators on Ontario's self-regulated professions, Regulators for Access also contains information of interest to immigrant professionals, community groups, governments, colleges and universities, employers and professional associations.

www.regulators4access.ca

⁶ Brain Gain: The Economic Benefits of Recognizing Learning and Learning Credentials in Canada: Conference Board of Canada, June 2001



Niagara Workforce Planning Board

Our Vision is Working

*A division of Niagara Training
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NIAGARA WORKFORCE PLANNING BOARD

Niagara Workforce Planning Board serves the Niagara Region as a leader in local labour market planning, delivering authoritative research, identifying employment trends, targeting workforce opportunities and bringing people together to action solutions. The organization conducts annual research on the trends, opportunities and priorities impacting Niagara's labour market and releases an annual publication that captures strategic actions to address key priorities.

NWPB is one of the 25 planning regions in Ontario that make up the Local Boards Network. Local Boards are funded through Employment Ontario. Each year, they provide labour market planning that is tailored to local economic realities, delivering activities and projects to help communities achieve better results.

www.niagaraworkforceboard.ca

www.localboards.on.ca



NIAGARA IMMIGRANT EMPLOYMENT COUNCIL

The Niagara Immigrant Employment Council (NIEC) is a region-wide, multi-stakeholder collaboration of businesses, employers, community organizations, immigrants, occupational regulatory bodies and four levels of government. It was created to enhance Niagara's diversity and economic prosperity by strengthening its capacity to attract, recruit and retain internationally trained immigrants who have chosen Canada as their destination. The community organizations include: community foundations, service providers, secondary and post-secondary educational institutions, economic and workforce development agencies and labour unions.

www.niec.ca

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