

IEP CONFERENCE ASSESSMENT
March 16, 2005
Metro Toronto Convention Centre,
South Building



Engineering Sector

Format of the session: Introduction from Lionel, Panelist Introduction, Participant Networking, Pre Prepared Questions/ Questions Generated from the Networking Break, One Tip from the Panelists

Moderator: Lionel Laroche Moderator Chemical Engineering

Panelists

Mariana Grinblat Bingham- HRSDC

Ramadoss Sranivasan Consulting Engineer in Toronto

Don Barry Associate Partner, IBM Business Consulting Services

Rick Muzar VP Brookfield Lepage Johnson Controls-Pubic and private outsourcing

Hanan Jibry Ontario Society of Professional Engineers

Hira Ahuja Educational Program Innovations Center

Rakesh Shreewastav Ministry of Transportation

Sam DiGianDomrigo Director Ontario Association of Certified Engineering Technologists

Kim Allen Professional Engineers of Ontario

Should IEP's get additional training or take additional courses to be more employable? Which ones?

Hira - Flexibility and general knowledge are valuable, each company has different software and skill needs, some use AutoCAD some don't.

Kim - Do IEPs need a license for PEO and need Canadian Experience. Why? How is PEO helping? Are other licenses available.

Kim:

- They need a license to be sure they understand codes and practices. Employers may not hire them if they are not screened by PEO.
- Provisional license introduced.
- You can be anywhere in a Canadian jurisdiction supervised by a PEO.
- You must satisfy professional practice requirements.
- Applications to PEO increase every year. 2200 certified last year. 336 practicing. Retirement trends will open up opportunity.
- There are provisions to apply from offshore. Start early
- Experience may count in the academic assessment as an equivalency.
- Canadian degree is broad, IEP's have more depth.
- 1700 interviews last year.
- 4 licenses
- Professional Engineer
- Provisional without 12 months experience
- Limited license for a specialty-can be quick
- Temporary license

What are the 3 most important factors that make an applicant successful?

Rick - Company works in outsourcing with large corporations. Outsourcing is new in Canada.

#1 Show your experience applies to the job, make the connection between your past experience and the job very clear.

#2 Be a business cultural fit. Work together and work well with clients. Show a good fit in attitude. Do your research and prepare good questions to show your insight and your fit for the company

#3 Flawless written communication. Client reports and correspondence must be professional. Absolutely no grammar or other mistakes in your application

Is an OACETT designation helpful before you get your P.Eng.?

Sam - It shows recognition, and may meet minimum requirements for employer, some government agencies require a designation. The engineering team has scientists, technicians and trades people. There is no disadvantage. Just needs 2 years of experience, may get your foot in the door.

To What extent do you need to understand the Canadian System to succeed?

Don - Understanding the Canadian system is important, but so is international experience. IBM has 9 patents a day, a leader, all over the world, asset management. They look for people to share methods, bridge cultures. IBM meetings are like UN meetings, you need strong facilitation skills. IBM looks for global solutions. IBM uses technicians as well as certified engineers. Adapt and get along.

Do Canadians have trouble when they have Engineering degrees? How long does it take?

Hanan – in 2004-Finding it difficult. May not have accurate data.

Many IEP's feel that Canada has made a promise to them that they have not kept. Where should IEP's direct their complaints?

Mariana - Use her list of web sites. She has a Masters and Engineering from the US and had difficulty finding work, but took a job in another area. Be flexible in your job search.

Why were you successful compared to other IEP's ?

Rakesh - Your international experience is an asset. Use a different approach, the Canadian approach. One important factor, involve yourself in professional organizations. Canadian Society of Civil Engineers for example is an opportunity to network with experienced professionals. Persistence and self-confidence are important. Believe in yourself.

What are the "Cutting Edge Trends"? How do IEP's take advantage of the labour market?

Ramados - Training and learning on an ongoing basis.

Focus on technical knowledge.

Fast learning and problem solving

Adaptability

Licensing process was enjoyable.

Get a job or get certification. A chicken and egg situation. Which comes first?

Kim - Could have credentials recognized and get a provisional license. Working with Career Bridge and MCTU-active in promoting provisional license.

How can we get a P. Eng designation if we don't get the responsibility on the job that we need for the P. Eng.

Kim - For many jobs you don't need a P Eng. The person who takes accountability has the P Eng. Many ads say eligible to be licensed.

Hira - Some employers want international experience. Not all employers want a P. Eng.

Hanan - Depends on the field-in Civil all are P. Eng but it varies with the field of engineering.

Who can help us get the one year of professional experience? What about coops?

Kim - We won't help with a job. Try the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers

Hira - Update on Pathways a six week program, Rakesh is a grad. 1000's of applications. MTCU supported it. Graduates had a 60% success rate. It was a COSTI program and there wasn't enough money to continue. There are programs through other sources.

Rakesh - Apprenticeship programs check the Ontario Government web site and the Engineering Development Program.

Hanan - Career Bridge is also an option.

Mariana - Use the web sites and learn how to use them well.

Sam - The Options Program at MCTU and CLTA
50 in the program 57% working in their disciplines. Work search and job placement.

What are the key skills for electrical engineers?

Rick - Development, design and maintenance. For consulting, understand the business aspects. Problem solving skills are huge.

Don - Project management, good financial management

Ramados - Both the hard and soft skills

Lionel - You need four things.
What problem can you solve?
Who needs to have that problem solved
How do you know who that is?
How can you convoke them?

Do you always look for the designation?

Kim - you only need it if you are practicing as a PEO and taking accountability.

How important is the P.Eng? What skills do you look for in a project manager would supply chain be as valuable?

Hanan - 40% of those working in Chemical Engineering fields have the designation. It is not as difficult as civil without the license.

Don - I look for business understanding, the engineering license is not key. It depends on the project job I have to do. For project management: ability to lead, manage time, assess the project, solve the set backs and report. Faith and confidence of the client.

What are the prospects for textile engineers in Toronto?

Lionel - Not good. Work has gone to developing countries.

Should you network without a license? Why don't employers call after they receive an application

Hanan - OSPE-membership category called "resident" April 26 & 26 Job Fair, Some employers just want you to start your P. Eng PAL license \$32.10 to use the services for job search.

Radesh - Use your local PEO chapter and go out and network. Use provincial and federal.

Lionel - You may not meet the requirements in the advertisements or you may not

Hanan - Associate designation just has resident requirements (Reside in Ontario and pay \$95 fee (includes discounts) go to the site. www.ospe.on.ca)

What education programs do you recommend?

Lionel - Hard to answer. Depends on your situation. In Canada, a degree is just a start. It is not a pass key like other countries.

Mariana - Environmental Engineering is cutting edge and there are opportunities for women. The ministry of labour is hiring 200 inspectors for health and safety. This area could apply to engineering.

How do you assess qualifications?

Don - I find out: Do they understand the questions? Do they give me an answer I can understand? I make sure people want to be travelling and fit the job.

What are the specialties in Chemical Engineering and where are the jobs?

Lionel - Oil and gas hires and I would advise engineers with that experience to move there. Pharmaceuticals are based in Montreal. Tar sand development is providing jobs, and so is the power industry.

Look at these things. What have you done? What problems have you solved? Explain it in the same way a Canadian would. Many IEP's talk in a way that Canadian employers do not understand.

Ramados - Apply for a job in the background. Do your research. Send fewer applications and do your research. Have someone in the same field who has worked in Canada for a long time read your resume.

Rakesh - You must customize the resume.

How do immigrants get references?

Hanan - Volunteer or look for part-time employment. A conference such as the one on climate change in Toronto is an opportunity.

Lionel - Volunteering is the # 1 way to get started. Go to PEO information sessions and site visits sponsored from your chapter.

Don - I don't think the last employer is always the best reference. Clients, team members can give you a reference for your skills to fit in.

Kim - Put the location plus peo. on. ca in to find your chapter at PEO

Sam - We have a network at OACETT with a national job bank and each chapter has events www.oacett.org We have networking and resume writing seminars. We will write to a past employer overseas, but we do require some work experience references from Canada.

Is food engineering common in Canada? Should I call myself a technologist.

Mariana - The federal government overseas food inspection, start there.

Hanan - Career centres can help you to find the right job titles. Try the PAL program form OSPE

Kim - There are 97 engineering programs in Canada. We try to match your course content.

Is there an aircraft engineer specialist program?

Hanan - Aeronautical Engineering is at U of T. Community colleges also have programs for working in aerospace.

Kim - there is a new federal trades program.

Mariana - I have a contact for pilots and inspectors.

Does getting the OACETT designation first help with the Engineering designation later?

Sam - I think it is a good step. There are so many international qualifications. OACETT can set a standard. PEO and OACETT is looking at joint projects.

Kim - PEO is looking at a special application of limited licensing that would recognize OACETT

Rakesh - I used a designation through OACETT. I got quick processing and it helped on my resume and gave me a network.

The One Tip

Kim - Get your credentials recognized. Look at the tools and options.

Hanan - Leverage your skills to your advantage.

Rakesh - Get out and network. Take advantage courage, spirit.

Marianna - Keep banging on doors. One will open. Believe in yourself.

Ramados - Research. Look for employers with IEP's working for them.

Don - The soft skills are important. The designation may not be the most important

Rick - Research and apply your skills to unconventional jobs.

Sam - Don't wait for a certification. You can still work in technology.

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Teaching Sector

Facilitated by Denise Overall, Toronto District School Board

PANELLISTS:

Linda Genesi-Williams, Ontario College of Teachers

Linda Zacks-Walker, Teach in Ontario

Sandy Tanaka, Toronto District School Board

Yuliya Steshenko – Toronto District School Board

Susan Lloyd – ATAPTIE (Alternative Teacher Accreditation Program for Teachers with International Experience)

Faye Drennan – Ontario Principals Council

Karen Hurst – Toronto District School Board

How long does it take to become a teacher in Ontario if I have no teaching background?

If you have an undergraduate or first degree you can apply to the faculty of education. They must be accredited by the College

One year bachelor program

Rec to college of teaches

Leads to certification

If you are a teacher from home country

Review transcript, look for the equivalent on one year teaching. Look for specific qualifications that match Ontario.

How long does it take for the application process?

It depends on how long it takes for you to get documents to them. Once file is complete it may take 6 wks

Why doesn't the college recognize international experience?

They look for a practicum of min of eight weeks. If there was no practicum in Home Country they will look for one year teaching experience.

Any fee for the application?

Fee for applying is 350 dollars. Once letter is sent, there is any annual fee each year of 104.

Do you provide any assistance to pass the Ontario teachers test?

It no longer exists. MTCU created and delivered the test. Government is currently preparing to create a new test. When you are certified you have a year from the date to take the test.

TESEL certified teacher, where can I teach?

This is not a program for teaching in Ontario. It is to teach language outside of the Board. You may be hired privately. May be able to teach general interest course for which no credits are offered. Apply through Con't Ed dept.

How can one go about finding int. trained language teachers for adults?

Many language institutes. Check the phone book and the TDSB through Cont. Education.

Is there a Mandarin teaching program, where do I start?

TDSB offers a course. First become certified and take additional qualification courses.

How can a person with an MBA in Bus an HR become a teacher?

Attend one year program at one year faculty of education.

Is it mandatory to be in College of teachers for one year to be certified?

Some people are certified in a couple of months, some may take years. Your file will be kept open for two years then closed if docs not received

Is there a University that offers part time studies towards accreditation?

B of E programs are offered during the day. Laurentian University and Ottawa U. Multi Session programs for French Teachers. Summer Sessions, take 2 sessions and teach between the two sessions and you will become certified

Can I apply for teaching post if I am not certified?

Yes you can and start the process of applying on line because there are things that you need to hand in ahead of time. Once all requirements are handed in, your application will be held until you present your certificate.

If you are Eng teacher from China can we continue to teach in Ontario (English to Chinese). If yes, how?

If it is a certified, credit course you must have your certification. If you would like to teach in a private school you may be able to do so by applying directly.

What are the requirements for teaching in Universities or Colleges?

You are not required to have certification but they may be looking for a PhD. You should check the University website as they will advertise there. It is a long process and you will have to work towards achieving tenure. Community Colleges are not necessarily looking for PhD but they will be looking for experience. They may also request a teaching certificate, not a requirement.

ON average, what is the % that receives certification out of those who apply?

3500-3700 applications from 100 different countries
2700 are certified
400 do not complete the application process
350 are denied, but app are told what they can do to become certified.

Verification of degree- How can we get them to you?

Cannot send them directly because it must come from the University directly. It will take time. Teach in Ontario will help if you can show that you are having difficulty.

Why is the Ont Teachers College asking for a Bachelor of Education? Why are they making it so hard?

Not asking for a BofEd, in Ontario the only route is through one of the faculties and you will take a bachelor of Education. They do recognize that some countries do not offer a Bof Ed. They aren't making it hard to get in, they need teachers.

Bof Sc fro University of Bombay, Is there any possibility of getting teaching experience here if it is not my background?

Teach in Ontario will help you with this, contact them.

Do I first have to get qualified to work in a Public Funded school?

Yes you must be certified.

What kind of degree is required to become a teacher in ON?

Each University has specific admission qualifiers.
Must have a first degree and there is a language prof. requirements.

Why does a college not recognize assessments from WES?

There is currently no contract with them to provide this service.

What steps should be taken to become a computer teacher?

The choices you make in University courses.

How does number of years teaching in Ontario private school count towards experience?

Must have 194 of experience. They will accept exp in private schools if you have your certification.

How long does it take for school?

B of Ed takes one year. Application window is now closed. Can obtain the application in Sept of 2005.

Questions to Toronto District School Board

Where can I find info about Special Needs teaching in Toronto?

You must have that qualification. 9000 applications are received by TDSB each year. They suggest that you take this course.

What does TDSB do once they receive your application?

The website gives you a step by step guide

Where can I find a list of teaching posts available?

You must apply through the website and go through an interview. If you are successful you will be placed on a list and principals will choose from that list

How do you get involved in teaching through volunteering?

They are looking for experience previously, of volunteering in a school. It will take some leg work but you can start by speaking to the principals of the schools. If you have children in the school system, try starting in your child's school. You will need a criminal reference check.

What are the requirements of becoming an educational assistant?

Volunteering, primary students may require grade 12 or equivalent. Special needs may require more special courses and references. University experience is an asset.

What is the employment rate for teaching assistants/educational assistants?

The stats are not available at this time.

What are the opportunities for Educational administration in Ontario?

Each province has different rules. It requires additional certification. If you have international experience you must become certified here, have 5 years teaching experience in Ontario, Masters degree and then you can apply to become a principal or vice principal. You must also be certified in at least three of the 4 levels. Primary Junior, Intermediate, etc.

In Ontario, there is a shortage of administrators.

Other admin jobs include, HR, IT and other specialized positions.

What about the issue of diversity?

The teaching population does not reflect diversity? This is recognized as a problem but the process must be maintained (i.e. Certification)

Is there a mandatory age for teachers or an age factor to apply to become a teacher?

There is no certain age, you have to have the qualifications. The mandatory age for retirement is 65.

Susan Lloyd - 50% of academic requirement is your academic credentials; the other 50% is your experience

Is there a likelihood of an ATAPTIE program for Toronto?

It is a possibility, look at the different websites to see if there is anything specifically for IE Teachers

Private Schools?

Many private schools do not require certification. Find out directly from the school if they will request this.

Why is it not necessary to become qualified to teach in a private school?

If MTCU is inspecting the school they will be asking for certification, if it is not inspected, certification may be still asked of you.

TEACH IN ONTARIO - www.teachinontario.ca

Language training to prepare for test?

Teach in Ontario website offers information on places you can go. Teach in Ontario will soon be offering a program to help towards passing the test. You must apply to Teach in Ontario and will have to take a free assessment in order to determine suitability.

What is the different between Language upgrading and STICK program?

STICK program is there to assist with leveling the playing field so you can learn about education and classrooms in Ontario so you will be familiar with the school system.

Interim Certificate of Qualification

Where can I study?

Before you go to school, talk to a representative of the College or Teach in Ontario

Does each individual school have its own discipline policy or is it province wide?

Both. Safe schools governs all schools and how children are disciplined. Each school board in Ontario has to develop their own policy but it must include what the province says. School principal has the authority to determine whether students must be disciplined. Some things are mandatory and require disciplinary action, others are discretionary. You will find the policies on the Ministry website and on the school board web sites.
www.edu.gov.on.ca

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Healthcare Sector

Facilitated by Cathy Tait – Western Management Consultants
Panellists: James Fehrenbach - University Health Network
Brenda Lewis – College of Nurses of Ontario
Dean Miller – Canadian Association of Chain Drugstores
Nira Sharma – AIPSO (Assoc of International Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario)
AnaMaria Revilla – Care for Nurses
Stuart McAslan – IMG-Ontario
Dr. David K. H. Lee - NoAb BioDiscoveries
Amy Go - Yee Hong Centre for Geriatric Care
Lourdes Vicente - Skills for Change

Do my skills fit the biotech industry?

You may have the biotech skills relevant for the industry. It's the soft skills (communication, creative thinking and problem solving) that are very important.

How can I find a job?

First try your best to get interviewed. Answer the following questions?

- Who am I?
- What can I do to help?
- What can I bring to the company?

Learn to effectively write your cover letter and resume.

Employers are looking for those who have creative thinking and problem solving skills. If you lack these essential skills, you won't get the job!

We advise you to brush-up your interview skills, learn to present yourself well.

What is the future of biotech?

The aging population is booming... the future is tremendous, if you have the scientific skills – it's good.

Could you provide more information on the pharmaceutical industry in future conferences?

We will recommend that the Pharmaceutical Sector be covered in next year's IEP conference or organize a special conference that will address key issues regarding this sector.

How many positions are available for IMGs (International Medical Graduates)?

There are 200 positions a year. It's divided between the family sector and the specialized sector. There is a process that you must go through, to be eligible to practice medicine in Canada. Visit IMG site (www.oimgc.utoronto.ca) for more details, regarding the exams, fees, etc.

Can a Doctor become a Nurse?

To work as a Nurse. You must graduate as a Registered Nurse. Those interested must go the Universities that are providing nursing programs and have their previous medical courses credited.

York University has an excellent program. You can complete the Bachelor of Science Degree in 18 months time frame.

Could I work as a Personal Support Worker while my credentials are being assisted?

You have to obtain a PSW Certificate.

What volunteer work is available for IMG doctors in UHN (University Health Network)?

They can work in various departments in the UHN and also be as observers in the research clinics, but are not permitted to practice medicine, that is until they get the license.

Volunteer work will help you:

- Learn how the medical system in Canada functions
- Get references
- Network

How do we apply to UHN?

To apply to UHN, please apply online by completing the application form. Indicate in objective what you want to volunteer for. (<http://www.uhn.ca/careers/volunteer/index.asp>)

Is communication skills a barrier for applicants not getting accepted by UHN?

It is a barrier if an applicant does not speak English well. Communication skill is vital.

Since English is not your first language, practice your communications skills by expanding your network of people. Don't exclude your communications with family and your community members only, that won't give you much progress.

Those who specialize in physiotherapy and Psychology could they apply to at UHN?

Check for job opportunities on the websites of Toronto General Hospital or Toronto Western Hospital in the Department of Rehabilitation Services - physiotherapy and the Department of Psychology.

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Information and Communications Sector

Facilitator: Pierre Lacroix, Fusion Learning Inc.

Panellists: Dan Eng – CIPS (Canadian Information Processing Society)

Kyle Benham – Economic Development, City of Toronto

Abhilash Bhachech – Indo-Canada Chamber of Commerce

Denyce Diakun – The Software Human Resource Council

Denise Woods - CompTIA (Computing Technology Industry Association)

Ferris Eng - Bell Canada

Jim Drohan - CDI Computers

Joy McKinnon - George Brown College

The focus of this session was to allow the audience an up-close-and-personal opportunity to ask panelists how to succeed in the Information and Communications Sector. Facilitator Pierre Lacroix introduced an interactive exercise to those in attendance. The objective was to divide the audience based on having a common key issue that was of paramount importance to them with respect to their job search challenges. This led to nine smaller working groups, with each group given four separate opportunities to speak directly with a panelist in a more informal setting to get more detailed answers.

Sample Questions and Answers:

What skills do employers look for when they consider hiring applicants?

Employers are looking for a balanced combination of technical and interpersonal and communication skills on your resume and in-person when they interview you.

Should I include Canadian experience in a survival job on my resume?

Yes, having any Canadian experience at all and indicating this on your resume demonstrates to prospective employers that you are familiar with working in a Canadian team environment.

How can I get into my profession in Canada if I lack relevant Canadian experience?

There are a number of ways you can possibly achieve this; Join a co-op or work placement program, volunteering, accessing a government sponsored wage subsidy incentive program for employers, job shadowing, enroll with employment agencies that cater to your specialization or even consider going the self-employment route.

If I don't know anyone in Canada, how can I network?

Sign up for a part-time course that is relevant to your area of expertise. Also consider joining a related professional association and volunteer to assist on any of their volunteer committees. Many professional associations offer ongoing professional development workshops, courses, seminars. Sign up for some and make connections with other participants, as well as the instructors. Finally, attend relevant industry trade shows and conferences to learn more about current events in your field and to network with all attendees and exhibitors.

Summary Points:

Jim Drohan:

- Key is English communication. A great way to learn quickly... to take on a part-time job at Tim Horton's.
- Work on and improve your soft skills - these are highly valued by Canadian employers.
- Assess your skills and identify your transferable skills to help you look for "fit" on a team.

Ferris Eng:

- Communications and teamwork skills are key.

- The future of the ICT - telecommunications sector in Canada is all about Broadband IP. If you don't know it, you will need to update your education in this area.

Abhilash Bhachech:

- Think beyond your core skills – ask yourself: what sort of value can you add to a targeted company.
- Find out who your target audience really is, and then proactively pursue them.
- IEPs should be targeting companies that service overseas markets.
- In any relocation such as moving into another country it is realistic to expect a 3-4 year settlement phase where one has to either work in jobs not commensurate with your professional background - in terms of your previous seniority, level or responsibility. Alternatively you have to spend time re-training with some local qualification or accreditation. Things work out but it takes time.
- In many instances - more so in ICT, the challenges of not having appropriate (to a prospective employer's requirements) experience are related to global aspect of technology changing very rapidly and not related to the fact of having an international qualification. Make sure you prepare and position your background to prospective employers' needs rather than your own past experience.

Denyce Diakun

- Don't just hand in your resume. Get to know the sector and what they are into. Then figure out where you can best fit into it.
- Communicate to these employers that you can understand and address their needs

Dan Eng:

- Networking is the key.

Kyle Benham:

- The Toronto market currently is strategically well positioned, and being here actually is being in the right spot at the right time for the ICP sector.

Denise Woods:

- Networking, volunteering, and communications are key.
- Look beyond the main players. Technology is now prominent everywhere in every sector, which means there are plenty of less obvious employment opportunities out there for job seekers.

Joy McKinnon:

- Don't discount other professional work experiences that you have. For example, civil engineering combined with IT would give you a very unique combination of core skills that would be attractive to many employers.
- Look for the right "fit" and how you can present yourself to best communicate this.

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Accounting Sector

Facilitated by Heather Turnbull – Turnbull Consulting Group
Panellists: Mariana Todorova – Global Educational Marketing Corporation
Puru Grover, formerly at Dun & Bradstreet
Cary List - Financial Planners Standards Council
Carol Tristani - Certified General Accountants
Santha Tsang - CMAO (Certified Management Accountants of Ontario)
Edwina McGroddy -ICAO (Institute of Chartered Accountants of Ontario)
Jeff Holloway - Robert Half Canada Inc.

Repore- be genuine with others

Information- seek to get to know others and vice versa

Solutions- seek answers to information you are seeking

Ethics- be credible

(RISE)

An important element of networking is sharing strengths and showing appreciation.

What are the key obstacles to finding employment in accounting?

Jeff Holloway- It can be very frustrating for highly educated people. It is important to manage expectations, expertise, and abilities to a job that matches in a new country with a different system. It takes more than 1-2 phone calls of employers. My advise is to get your “foot in door” and though this may seem less than what background and credentials are, it greatly helps you in obtaining employment.

My field is administration, will this session in some way?

Jeff Holloway- Get your “foot in the door” in an organization. If company is well recognized and opportunities exist to excel in the role, take it and develop network with others to Canadianize yourself. One can learn how to be pre-active and cold call with organizations.

How do I improve my communication skills in Canada?

Mariana Todorova- If you speak with an accent, it does not mean you think with an accent. You bring a lot to Canada and Canadians benefit from having you here. Be confident, assertive and genuine when networking. It is important to ask “What do you do?” This opens communication with others.

Carol- You can communicate better by joining a Toastmasters organizations to improve english speaking and presentation skills.

What can we do as newcomers to obtain accounting related experience in Canada?

Puru Grover- Difficult question to answer. As an aside, practice the question “Tell me about yourself?” and record this and play it back to determine if your are conveying your answer clearly. To answer this question, you must choose the company first to determine if it will provide the experience you are seeking. Employers try to guage if you are a team player and can fit in with the organization so the key is to convey how your experience will meet your career objectives.

Is it necessary to get Canadian experience as a volunteer?

Carol Tristani- Volunteering is a great way to get experience. It gives you opportunity to develop and fit-in culturally in Canada, communicate with others, and develop other “non-accounting” skills or soft skills. It is not always necessary, but it has advantages to develop these other skills by volunteering.

How can I start a business as a newcomer?

Puru Grover- There is a website by Ministry and Consumer Affairs (provincial) and Industry Canada (federal) and information there on how to start a company. Also, on www.bbc.ca you can download your business plan and you can determine financial assistance available. If you have an idea and you can demonstrate that you can generate cash flow, find organizations that have venture capitalists to obtain financing.

As a newcomer to country, you don't have experience and you need credentials, where do you start?

Mariana Todorova- Email resume to me. I can make a referral for you, if necessary to suitable resources and/or information. The future belongs to those who are focused, bold, and can build alliances or network- opportunities are endless.

Final thoughts from panel

Puru Grover- This opportunity is very inspiring as I could see myself in you 15 years ago. Believe ignorance, confidence, and success is on the way.

Jeff Holloway- 2 things- Acct'g and finance roles are key to meet the demands of employers. Opportunities won't come to you, you need to go out and sell yourself and develop your network and be professionally aggressive and strategically select companies to pursue opportunities.

Santha Tsang- I echo Jeff's comments. Read the book- Make People Like You in 90 seconds or less (by Nicolas Boothman).

Carol Tristani- If you keep seeing the obstacles, you won't see the opportunities that present themselves. Plan to pursue an accounting designation for more accounting and finance opportunities.

Mariana Todorova- Believe that the word "impossible" is not in my dictionary.

Edwina McGroddy- Do your research to determine the most suitable opportunities for you.

Cary List- The questions you have are no different than those of native-born Canadians. Spend as much time as possible from those outside of your culture.