

The Power of Different: The Catalyst of the Creative Economy

The *Race* to Bridge the Gap

January 29, 2010

PCPI

PROGRESS CAREER PLANNING INSTITUTE

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Agenda

- **Background and Purpose**
- **Research and Observations**
- **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Background and Purpose

- To assess the recent experience of IEP's when integrating into the GTA Labour Market at a level (self-defined) appropriate to their qualifications
- To build upon two previous PCPI commissioned studies
 - Strategic Workforce Planning and Internationally Educated Professionals: An Employer Perspective, 2007
 - Best Practices: *Employers and IEPs speak about Strategies for Integrating Internationally Educated Professionals into the Canadian Labour Force 2009*
- To conduct primary research with IEPs (120+), companies and service providers
- To review other relevant research
- To determine what has changed and what has not
- To make recommendations to further the broad objectives
- To enable PCPI to apply this research, resources and expertise to help overcome the remaining barriers and bridge the remaining gaps

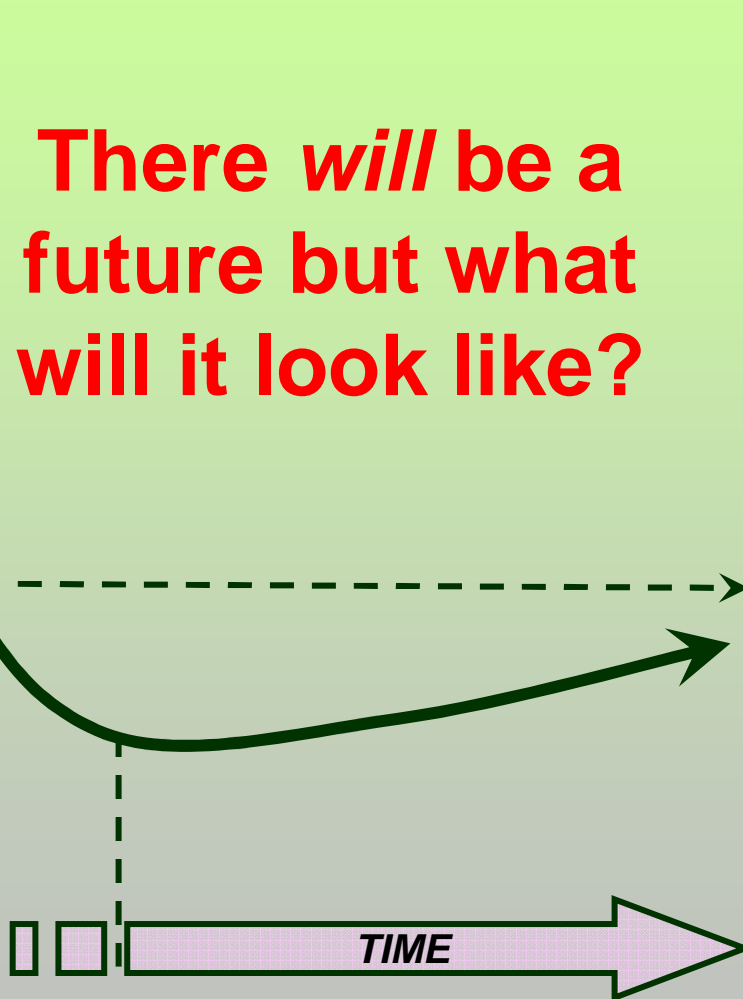
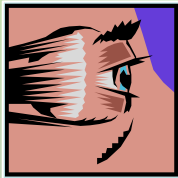
IS and is NOT

- *This is NOT* a plea for fair and equitable treatment
- *This IS* driven *entirely* by the competitive needs of the Economy and, by extension, the needs of Businesses that comprise the Economy
 - If IEPs are *not* valuable to the economy, then why encourage them to come?
 - If IEPs *are* valuable, then effective and rapid deployment of this asset is paramount
- *This IS* a call for **even more coordinated action** to uncover and solve ALL barriers – **AND RAPIDLY**

"There is a bulldozer of change sweeping the planet; if you don't become part of the bulldozer, you become part of the road"

Frank Ogden, Futurist

There will be a future but what will it look like?



Requiring higher levels of education

Requiring higher levels of certifiable skills

Requiring broader range of certifiable skills

Requiring adaptability and flexibility

"Those who turn Challenge into Opportunity, Win"

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Economic Development Perspective

- Economic Development is about the most effective deployment of **ASSETS** in order to create **PROSPERITY**
- **Once, assets were:**
 - Land
 - The “Three R’s”: Rivers, Roads and Railways
 - Raw materials
 - Access to markets
 - Geographical positioning
 - Low cost

Economic Development Perspective

- **Today, and from now on, the MOST adaptable asset is a person**
 - **They learn, they grow and they create**
 - **They are self-improving**
- **An inadequate supply of the right asset is a detriment to prosperity**
- **An ineffective deployment of the right asset is a waste of an opportunity**

Are these true statements?

- It is vital to our future to have the most capable people working in our economy to meet the needs of the future
- Higher levels of education and skills are indicative of that capability
- Projections for our indigenous population growth indicate that our demographic profile is becoming older, with insufficient children being born to assure a strong future workforce
- IEPs represent a vital part of the solution to this dilemma
 - Fully credentialed or not, they are the ‘cream’ of their original population, and ‘ready-made’
 - The act of emigrating is in itself indicative of high risk tolerance and entrepreneurship characteristics – ***business creating characteristics***

Primary Research and Observations

- A sample of 120 skilled and educated New Canadians working below their self-identified capabilities
- They report acceptance of credentials as their overwhelming frustration
- They report an insurmountable financial barrier to gaining acceptable credentials
 - “I work for little pay due to the type of work I must take”
 - “I cannot afford the fees to gain credentials and to support my family”

Yet much *is* being done in many areas

- To understand the gaps
- To bridge the gaps
- To create an appreciation of the differences and to promote them as an advantage
- Larger businesses are responding to the advantage
 - Tend to be more internationally focused
 - The culture of the larger organization is already diverse and more accepting
 - The 'risk' is diluted
- The 'SMEs' are slower on the uptake
 - Tend to be less internationally oriented
 - Often hire people who 'know their existing employees'
 - Perceived higher proportionate risk compared to existing employee numbers

Analogy: Manufacturers solved the 'silo' decades ago

- Formerly, a solution implemented at the start of the production line would take weeks to 'emerge' at the end of the line.
 - Due to the uncoordinated process of production
 - Due to the 'silos of responsibility' at each production stages
- Today, the same improvements are noticed in hours
 - Coordinated, cooperative processes driven by the demand
 - Silos HAD to be removed
- In the IEP 'process'
 - Despite the improvements being made at the front of the line...
 - ...the end of the line is yet to see the results
 - **Is this a guide to potential solutions?**

Different is GOOD

Closing “the learning recognition gap” among immigrants would add tens of thousands of skilled workers to the labour force resulting in a \$4 to \$6 billion boost per year if these positions are filled.

Conference Board of Canada

– *“Findings from Securing Our Future Case Studies”,
June 2008*

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THE most vital asset

- If Canada does not fully deploy *IEPs*, it will not only be a waste of human resources, but will also send a message overseas that Canada is not hospitable to *IEPs*
 - *Bad news travels fast*
- It is not, and never should be, a matter of lowering the bar of Canadian standards to admit people who, in another country, met different standards. It is a matter of *providing support to capable and experienced people to meet the standards*

An Opinion

“Immigration is one of the most pressing issues facing the labour market today. Canada's population is not increasing naturally, and our employees are aging. Immigrants have the skills and expertise to enhance and expand our labour market, and it's critical that we **break down** any barriers to this integration.”

- Dominic D'Alessandro, CEO and President of Manulife Financial and Co-Chair of TRIEC
- <http://www.torontoalliance.ca/media/quotes/>, taken from the TRIEC website on June 11, 2009.

USE our advantage, do not SQUANDER it

- Canadians have very positive attitudes toward diversity. We can widen this advantage in the current economic downturn, as US attitudes toward skilled immigrants may harden.
- If Ontario businesses do not hire these skilled workers – many of which have more education and experience than Canadian born – you can be sure that competing jurisdictions *will*.

Recommendations for our businesses

- Regard IEPs as a competitive advantage WHERE IT MAKE SENSE TO THE BUSINESS
 - *Appreciate* the differences to *leverage* the advantages
- ‘Share’ this competitive advantage with colleagues
 - Suppliers
 - Customers
 - Sector Associations
 - Chambers of Commerce
- Use innovative means to ‘take the risk’ – a trial
 - Hire on a contract basis for 6-12 months
 - Pay 20% more to cover benefits
 - Permanent position if things work out

Take the risk

The Sailor's Dilemma

**“One does not discover new lands,
without consenting to lose sight of
shore for a very long time.”**



ANDRE GIDE



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Recommendations for those 'smoothing the path'

- Sometimes it is better to tear down the old house, rather than use it as the base for the new dwelling
 - The 'Mike Holmes' approach
 - Silos
 - Turf
- Take the 'zero-based' approach
 - Assume that there is no 'system' today
 - What are the NECESSARY steps to enable the IEP to help **our** economy to prosper?
 - How do we bridge the gap and **RAPIDLY? The RACE!**
 - Economic Development is an INVESTMENT, not a cost
 - How do we invest?
- Tear down the **BARRIERS**, leave the **HURDLES**

A tough sell in hard economic times

The majority of the public who are uninformed
may not appreciate the critical need

*“Leadership is doing
always what is needed,
not always what is popular”*

Leadership *IS* needed

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