

CONFERENCE REPORT 2015

12th Annual

IEPTM



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CONFERENCE

A UNIQUE FORUM FOR
Internationally Educated Professionals

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THE IEP CONFERENCE REPORT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preamble	1
About PCPI and the IEP Conference	2
Executive Summary	4
Key Themes and Observations	6
Delegate Feedback.....	8
Delegate Profiles & Demographics.....	10
Conference Proceedings	
Welcome and Opening Remarks.....	13
Keynote Speaker.....	16
Panel: IEPs' Journeys to Success	20
Concurrent Sessions—	
Morning Sector Hub Presentations: <i>Regulatory, Accreditation, Academia & Associations</i>	25
Engineering and Related Professions	26
Finance & Accounting.....	32
Healthcare and Related Professions.....	38
Information Technology	44
Sales, Marketing & Communications	50
Skill-Building Presentations	
Speaking With Confidence.....	54
Concurrent Sessions—	
Afternoon Sector Hub Presentations: <i>Employers and HR Professionals</i>	57
Engineering and Related Professions	58
Finance & Accounting.....	64
Healthcare and Related Professions.....	74
Information Technology	80
Sales, Marketing & Communications	86
Thank You to Sponsors.....	91
Acknowledgements.....	92

PREAMBLE

The intent of the conference report is to accurately represent the discussions and activities that occurred on the day of the Conference and to share the themes and feedback expressed by the various speakers, panellists and delegates who attended the 12th Annual IEP Conference on Friday, February 27, 2015. The conference report author and sector hub scribes have taken the utmost care to detail the Conference's proceedings as authentically as possible. Advice provided by the keynote speaker, guest speakers and panellists as well as comments from delegates are completely unabridged and the author, Progress Career Planning Institute (PCPI) and conference sponsors accept no liability for any errors that may be contained herein.

ABOUT PCPI AND THE IEP CONFERENCE

Progress Career Planning Institute (PCPI) is a not-for-profit, business-focussed organization. Its mission is to offer career development services for people to realize their full potential.

Located in central Scarborough, under the name of Progress Career Planning Centre (PCPC), the organization was established in the fall of 1996. It was born out of a school-to-work transition program at Centennial College. Today, the organization, now called Progress Career Planning Institute (PCPI), acts as a hub between education and employment, business, government and community providing career development, employment and training services. It also collaborates with the business community as part of its mission to get Ontarians working.

The *IEP (Internationally Educated Professionals) Conference* is PCPI's distinctive contribution to assisting skilled immigrants achieve success in their Canadian career journey. PCPI is the founder of the IEP Conference and has been delivering it since its inception in 2003. Six hundred delegates attended the very first Conference and since 2005, closer to 1000 delegates benefit from the Conference's offerings annually. The IEP Conference brings together government representatives, regulatory bodies, educational institutions, professional associations, business professionals and IEPs in a single forum to connect and discuss strategies on how to best assist IEPs to integrate seamlessly into the labour force. PCPI has also commissioned five research studies on the experience of IEPs in the Canadian workplace as well as best practices for their integration.

The Conference is built on hope and possibilities. As such, the Conference is guided by key principles of valuing IEPs' experience, showcasing them as leaders, as well as providing them with opportunities to network and gain access to information. IEPs have an opportunity to engage with and hear from a broad range of subject matter experts including representatives from licensing bodies and professional associations as well as successful professionals including IEPs and skilled moderators. Throughout the event, delegates are encouraged to ask questions, connect with professionals in their field and to persist in looking for opportunities to forward their career in Canada and realize career success.

Conference highlights include:

◆ KEYNOTE SPEAKER

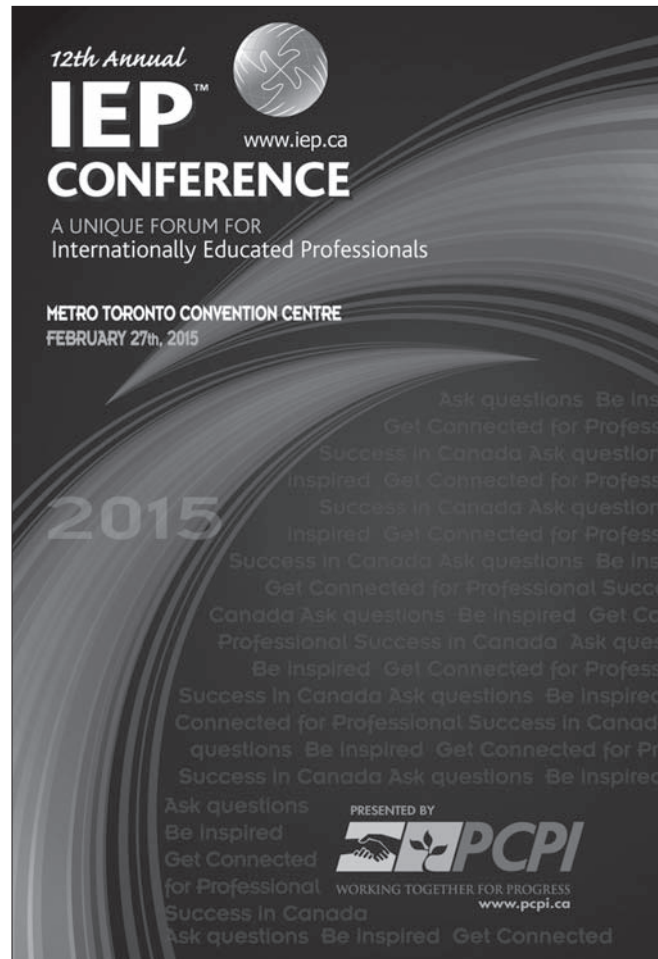
An accomplished Canadian professional, often an entrepreneur and/or an IEP, tells his/her career story sharing the steps taken to achieve success, the challenges faced in pursuing their dream and their unique contribution to Canada's economy.

◆ SUCCESSFUL IEP PANEL

Immigrants, representing the sectors highlighted at the Conference, who have successfully integrated into the Canadian labour market, describe their career journeys and the obstacles they have overcome to get to where they are today.

◆ SPOTLIGHT ON FIVE OCCUPATIONAL SECTORS

Engineering and Related Professions; Finance & Accounting; Healthcare and Related Professions; Information Technology and Sales, Marketing & Communication.



◆ **SECTOR HUB SESSIONS**

Panellists from academia, regulatory bodies, professional associations and industry share their tips for accessing the Toronto job market and succeeding in the workplace.

◆ **CONCURRENT SKILL-BUILDING SESSIONS**

Skilled facilitators make short presentations in each sector hub session to help IEPs build skills for advancing their career in Canada. Topics have included networking, social media and communication skills.

◆ **INFORMATION & RESOURCES MARKETPLACE**

Exhibitors representing accreditation services, education and training as well as employment provide information and are available to answer delegates' questions.

◆ **IEP DIRECTORY**

An Employment Resource Guide – A listing of networks and associations; regulatory bodies; bridging, mentoring and training programs for each of the five sectors highlighted at the Conference as well as other services beneficial to newcomers to Canada. A printed copy is provided in each delegate's bag.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Hope, perseverance and the spirit of giving

The 12th Annual IEP Conference was held at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre in Toronto on Friday, February 27, 2015. A big thanks to the more than 100 volunteers who staffed the event alongside the event's organizing team.

One thousand six hundred and eighty-seven IEPs registered online and there were an estimated 919 delegates who checked in at registration on the day of the event. Although the day of the event absenteeism rate was just under 50%, it is not unusual for a free event. Based on the online registration statistics, 115 countries of origin were represented with the Asian continent representing 61% of delegates (same as last year) while Europe and Africa each represented 8% of the attendees. Thirty percent of registrants reported themselves as employed. Fifty-nine percent of online registrants identified as male. Similar to previous years, 71% of registrants indicated they were Permanent Residents, 24% were Canadian citizens and only 5% identified as refugees. Sixty-eight percent of delegates were between the ages of 30 and 49 and 20% were over the age of 50. Fifty-seven percent of registrants had been in Canada for less than three years, with 24% having arrived in the last six months. The hub sessions for Engineering and Healthcare & Related Professions combined, had 49% of the registrations. The Sales, Marketing & Communications hub sessions had 20% of the registrations with the Finance & Accounting and Information Technology hubs receiving 16% and 15% of the registrations, respectively. Lastly, 24% of online registrants responded 'yes' to the question, "Have you ever had a mentor in Canada?"

Since 2003, Progress Career Planning Institute (PCPI) has worked collaboratively with strategic partners, *City of Toronto* and *Metroland Media Group Ltd.* in presenting the IEP Conference in Toronto. For the second year in a row, the Government of Ontario has provided partial funding for the Conference. The Conference has been bringing IEPs from Engineering; Information Technology; Finance & Accounting; Sales, Marketing & Communications; and Healthcare & Related Professions together with stakeholders to get career advice, discuss labour market information and provide an orientation to the Canadian workplace and Canadian job search practices. Stakeholders include government, business professionals (HR and technical managers) from both regulated and unregulated professions, regulatory bodies, credentialing and accreditation services, educators, as well as community-based organizations serving newcomers and skilled immigrants.

A Grammy-nominated Ojibwe drum group, *Bear Creek*, opened the Conference with an energizing performance. Opening remarks included an address from Toronto City Mayor John Tory, who heralded Toronto's diversity as its greatest strength. Founder of *Second Cup*, Frank O'Dea shared his story from skid row to a celebrated businessman and philanthropist. He received a standing ovation for his presentation, '*Spirit of Innovation and the Entrepreneur*' and his message of 'Hope. Vision. Action.' was echoed throughout the day's proceedings. Both Tory and O'Dea spoke proudly of their commitments to giving back to the community and encouraged delegates to both seek out a better life for themselves in Canada and to extend a helping hand. The Successful IEP Panel hosted by *CBC Metro Morning's* Matt Galloway featured IEPs from the five

1,687	115	68%	30%	24%	95%
Number of IEPs registered online	Countries of origin represented	Of delegates between the ages of 30 and 49	Of delegates reported as employed	Answered "YES" to having had a mentor in Canada	Of delegates would recommend the Conference to others

* Based on responses from both online registration and questionnaires



Top row: Grammy-nominated Ojibwe drum group Bear Creek; delegates engaged in discussions. **Middle row:** Toronto Mayor John Tory; delegates at plenary session; Keynote Speaker, Frank O'Dea. **Bottom row:** Successful IEP Panel hosted by CBC Metro Morning's Matt Galloway; the Information & Resources Marketplace providing delegates the opportunity to connect and network with other professionals.

sectors highlighted at the Conference. This component of the Conference, introduced several years ago, is an important one; delegates appreciate and respect the advice of people like them who have successfully faced similar challenges in integrating into the Canadian labour market. For the third year in a row, the format for the day consisted of morning and afternoon sector hub discussions. The morning sector hub sessions provided an opportunity to hear from sector-specific panellists representing regulatory, accreditation and academic bodies and incorporated a short presentation on 'Speaking with Confidence'. The afternoon session focussed on job search practices and accessing the hidden job market with technical and HR managers represented on the panel. For the most part, sector hub sessions were well attended; in fact, demand for two sector hub sessions - Healthcare & Related Professions and Sales, Marketing & Communications - exceeded the seating capacity.

The Information & Resources Marketplace had 53 exhibitors who promoted their products, programs, and services providing delegates with opportunities for connecting with hundreds of professionals and networking with other community stakeholders. It was also remarked that PCPI has increased visibility and delegates readily identified PCPI as the founder and host of the Conference. The conference program included designated time slots for delegates to explore the offerings in the Marketplace. Delegates highly valued the networking opportunities the Marketplace provided and their only criticism was that they hoped for more time there.

Messages of hope and the topic of networking continued to dominate the Conference. Based on results from the conference evaluation forms, the overall satisfaction with the Conference merited a rating of 4.5 and 95% would recommend the Conference to others. Communication skills were also a hot topic; but this year, it seemed more focussed on the specific applications of those skills including teamwork, conflict resolution and problem solving.

The day ended with evaluation forms being collected and prizes being awarded in each of the sector hub sessions. Some panellists were seen after 4pm responding to delegates' questions.

KEY THEMES AND OBSERVATIONS

Now that the Conference is in its 12th year, it is rare to find a completely new topic emerge as a theme. However, there are noticeable differences in emphasis from year to year. Similar to last year's Conference, language skills, Canadian experience and English as a Second Language are no longer the big topics of conversation they once were in the sector hub discussions.

The predominant themes that emerged from the Conference this year were:

- Volunteering
- Giving a helping hand to others
- Persevering/never giving up
- Developing soft skills including problem solving, conflict resolution, time management and presentation skills
- Being in the driver's seat of one's own career

Volunteering

Volunteering has gained more importance in recent years and IEPs seem more receptive to taking on volunteer opportunities. In fact, some of the panellists, IEPs themselves, shared the difference volunteering made to them and encouraged others to do the same. Two of the panellists on the Successful IEP Panel endorsed volunteering for the experience and networking prospects it provided. It also offers the opportunity in a structured environment to demonstrate skills as well as gain new ones, enhance networking, build relationships, and be on a team. Lastly, it was promoted as a way to get new references and opportunities that could lead to paid employment. Delegates were encouraged to volunteer on committees and with associations.



Giving a Helping Hand to Others



Frank O'Dea's speech promoted the spirit of giving and suggested that IEPs consider giving a helping hand to others, particularly those who are newer to Canada than they are. He shared his own story of the difference a dime made: the cost of a phone call and a fresh beginning without alcohol. He also described the steps he took in giving back to the community through service to charities and not-for-profit foundations including co-founding two organizations to help homeless children and to dismantle minefields. Mayor John Tory also spoke to his own extensive background in volunteer community service. Panellists

throughout the day, many of them IEPs, encouraged delegates to help each other out. They acknowledged their own gratitude for the people who helped them out when they first arrived and were looking to get into their field.

KEY THEMES AND OBSERVATIONS

Persevering/Never Giving Up

IEPs were advised to maintain hope, 'adjust and adapt', and to keep focussed on their goals. More panellists advised against taking just any job and recommended holding out for a suitable job in one's field. As one panellist put it, "You need to stick with your field. Once you have been away from it for several years, you won't be able to get back in."



Developing Soft Skills



Although communication skills never cease to be a predominant theme at the Conference, this year's discussion seemed to go beyond simply emphasizing the importance of communication skills. The discussion at this year's Conference seemed more complex and focussed on the applications of communication skills to problem solving, conflict resolution and presentation skills. Presentation skills were highlighted as essential to effective interviewing, networking, and teamwork. In IT, engineering and accounting, communication skills were seen as important to explaining highly technical terms and concepts. Being able to

articulate one's technical and soft skills as well as one's value to an employer in an interview was also emphasized. Other skills deemed necessary for the Canadian workplace were strong time management skills and punctuality.

Being in the Driver's Seat of One's Own Career

IEPs were encouraged to follow their passion and to take on being the 'CEOs of their destiny.' Panellists urged delegates to bone up on their self-awareness and to move out of their comfort zones. When looking for a job, panellists recommended that they also be looking for a right 'fit' in an employer and not simply waiting for an employer to find them as the right 'fit'. One panellist encouraged them to 'keep evolving and to be on a path of continuous learning.' After expending some efforts and things aren't working out as planned, 'be prepared to reinvent yourself', recommended one panellist.



Other themes that came out of the Conference related to differentiating one's self in the job search process and feeling fortunate to be living in Canada. Having a positive online presence, particularly on *LinkedIn* and *Twitter*, and being active online was important. Preparing for interviews by practicing behavioural questions and researching the company as well as accessing the hidden job market were also discussed in all of the sector hubs.

DELEGATE FEEDBACK

The following summarizes the results from the evaluation forms completed and submitted onsite and online. The conference organizers and advisory committee carefully review the evaluations; some of the changes to the Conference have been a direct result of feedback received from delegates. For example, the decision to hold sector hub discussions in both the morning and afternoon was in response to requests for more time with the employers.

For the 12th annual IEP Conference, there were 652 surveys submitted; this accounts for approximately 71% of attendees. IEPs or delegates accounted for 88% of respondents. A total of 74% of attendees found out about the Conference from either an organization or a personal contact – friend, family member or work colleague. An impressive 87% of attendees found the advance publicity of the Conference adequate. This was the first IEP Conference for 79% of participants who attended. Engineering and Healthcare & Related Professions combined, accounted for 50% of the evaluations submitted.

Delegates also had the opportunity to rate the sessions on a rating scale of 1 to 5, 1 being low and 5 being high. The keynote speaker, Frank O'Dea, was given a rating of 4.05. The importance of his speech and his message of 'hope, vision, and action' was also referenced frequently when participants were asked (on the evaluation form), "What was the most important thing you have learned at this Conference?"

Ratings reported for the morning and afternoon sector hub panels are as follows:

- ◆ **Usefulness of the information provided by the Morning Sector Hub Panel – 3.8**
- ◆ **Usefulness of the discussion opportunities in the Morning Sector Hub Panel – 3.79**
- ◆ **Usefulness of the information provided by the Afternoon Sector Hub Panel – 3.92**
- ◆ **Usefulness of the discussion opportunities in the Afternoon Sector Hub Panel – 3.92**

Some comments noted in the evaluation forms can help to explain these ratings. Delegates consistently rate the afternoon hub sessions slightly higher than the morning sessions because the afternoon sessions include HR and technical managers on the panel and questions posed to the panel are related to job search. Additionally, the usefulness of the Marketplace (exhibits/information) was given an overall rating of 3.65 – the lowest rating in the evaluation form results. Although this Conference is marketed as an opportunity to network, ask questions and learn new information to support better integration of IEPs in the Canadian workplace, many delegates have an expectation that employers will be actively recruiting at the Conference. This recurring feedback will be discussed further below.

Conference delegates also reported on the most important thing they learned at the Conference. According to the responses provided, two things stood out: networking and keeping a positive mindset/never giving up. For some, it was learning or relearning the importance of networking in one's job search over simply submitting online applications while others appreciated the networking opportunity of the Conference: "meeting like-minded people, friends and high-profile people." The most popular phrase reported on the evaluation forms was 'never give up!' The push to persevere and not lose sight of their goals proved to be very valuable: "Successful entry into the job market is an uphill task. However, with proper guidance and persistence, professionals can find their way into their field of choice or a related field." For many delegates, the encouragement, motivation and recognition that they were not alone were the most important things they gained. As one respondent aptly remarked, "I've learned that I'm not alone and there are thousands of others like me

DELEGATE FEEDBACK**OVERALL CONFERENCE SATISFACTION RATING (OUT OF 5)**

looking for opportunities. Listening to the panellists from some of the top organizations sharing their own experiences was indeed motivational and educational.” Other highlights from respondents included learning how to present themselves to employers, understanding the employer’s point of view as well as tips on cover letters, resumes and interviews and the importance of honing one’s soft/social skills.

Participants were asked: ‘How will your job search strategy change based on the information you learned at this Conference?’ The top responses pertained to expanding one’s network, being more effective at networking, as well as increasing one’s networking and direct connections with employers. A second way delegates saw that their job search strategy would change involved updating their resume and LinkedIn profile as well as spending more time researching the companies and positions they were interested in. The third most popular response was that participants were more hopeful and felt they would be more proactive in their job search going forward. One participant expressed, “I am willing to push myself forward as I am the only representative of my skills and value.” Other responses included being more focussed, strategic and specific and upgrading their skills – English language, technical and soft skills.

To improve future IEP Conferences, the majority of respondents offered one of two responses: 1) They thought the Conference was excellent and only wanted to thank the organizers, or 2) They would like a job fair component where employers would be onsite to actively recruit IEPs. Related to this last point, delegates wanted more interactivity with the panellists particularly in the sector hub discussions.

Other suggestions made, but to a far lesser degree were to:

- ◆ **Include more diversity among the panellists (some requested an equal number of women and men on the Successful IEP Panel as well as greater diversity in terms of ethnic background)**
- ◆ **Highlight different (or more) sectors – where respondents named the sectors, the most common responses were the scientific fields**
- ◆ **Increase time in the Marketplace**
- ◆ **Have two separate lunch times or areas to better accommodate the crowds**

On the whole, respondents were very satisfied with the Conference, giving it a rating of 4.5. Ninety-five percent would recommend it to others. The conference location/meeting rooms and overall conference organization were given the highest ratings, at 4.76 and 4.72 respectively. The central downtown location conveniently located on the subway line continues to be popular with conference attendees. The suitability of the conference day, time and length was given a rating of 4.59; a one-day Conference early in the first quarter is the preferred option of delegates.

DELEGATE PROFILES & DEMOGRAPHICS**NORTH AMERICA**

Canada	230
Mexico	25
United States	6

CARIBBEAN

Barbados	2
Cuba	4
Dominican Republic	2
Grenada	1
Jamaica	13
St. Lucia	2
Trinidad & Tobago	8

CENTRAL AMERICA

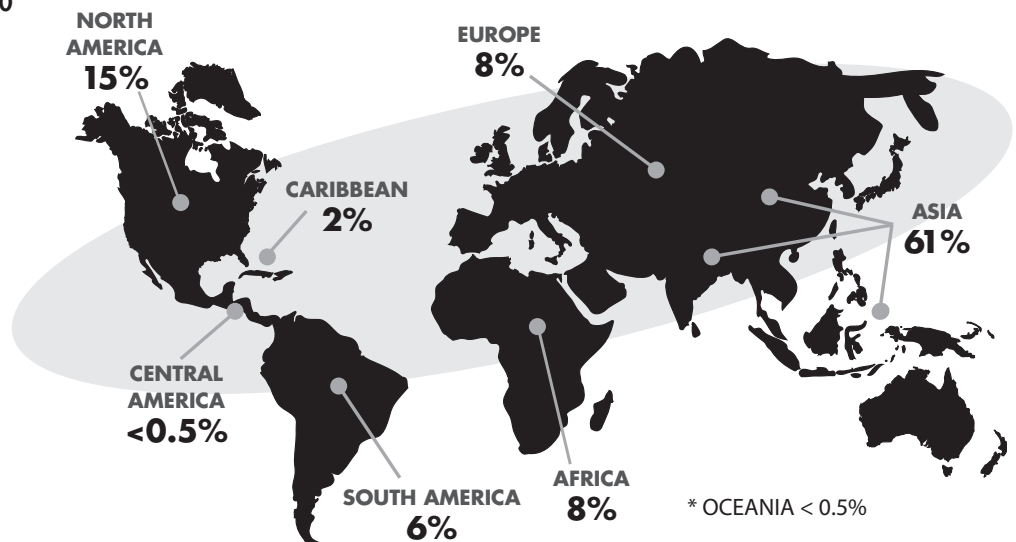
El Salvador	2
Nicaragua	2
Panama	2

SOUTH AMERICA

Argentina	1
Bolivia	1
Brazil	23
Chile	1
Colombia	37
Ecuador	2
Guyana	11
Peru	9
Venezuela	14

EUROPE

Albania	3
Armenia	6
Belarus	3
Belgium	1
Bosnia & Herzegovina	1
Bulgaria	2
Croatia (Hrvatska)	1
France	13
Germany	3
Georgia	1
Greece	5
Ireland	1
Italy	2
Kosovo	1
Lithuania	1
Macedonia	2
Moldova (Republic of)	3
Netherlands	1
Poland	6
Portugal	1
Romania	8
Russian Fed.	17
Serbia & Montenegro	1
Slovakia	3
Spain	7
Sweden	3
Ukraine	29
United Kingdom	8

DELEGATE REPRESENTATION BY CONTINENT**AFRICA**

Algeria	2
Benin	1
Botswana	1
Cameroon	2
Congo (Democratic Republic of)	1
Côte D'Ivoire	3
Djibouti	2
Egypt	35
Ethiopia	22
Guinea	2
Kenya	6
Libya	2
Mauritius	1
Morocco	4
Nigeria	24
Rwanda	1
Senegal	1
Sierra Leone	1
Somalia	4
South Africa	1
Sudan	8
Swaziland	2
Tanzania (United Republic)	1
Togo	2
Tunisia	1
Uganda	1
Zimbabwe	1

ASIA

Afghanistan	18
Azerbaijan	2
Bangladesh	93
Bhutan	2
Cambodia	4
China (Peoples Republic)	123

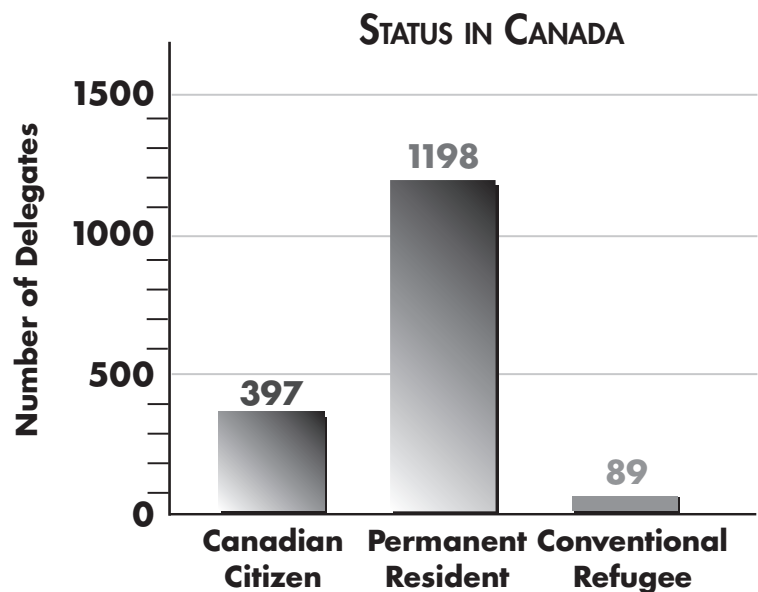
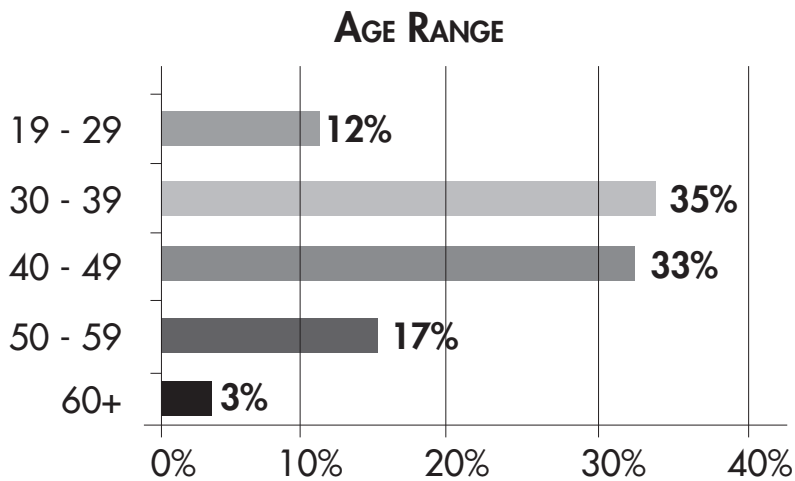
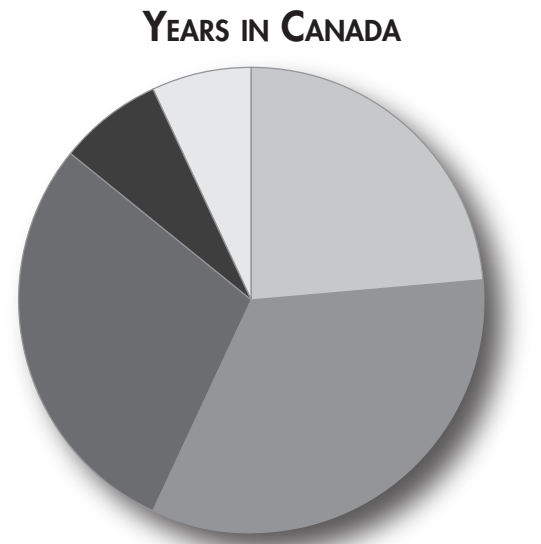
Hong Kong	4
India	209
Indonesia	4
Iran (Islam Republic)	245
Iraq	16
Israel	1
Japan	4
Jordan	17
Kazakhstan	5
Korea (Republic of)	11
Kuwait	6
Kyrgyzstan	1
Laos	1
Lebanon	9
Malaysia	4
Mongolia	1
Myanmar	1
Nepal	20
Pakistan	96
Palestine	2
Philippines (Republic of)	46
Qatar	1
Saudi Arabia	12
Sri Lanka	19
Syrian Arab Republic	13
Taiwan	4
Turkey	8
United Arab Emirate	1
Uzbekistan	6
Viet Nam	9
Yemen	3

OCEANIA

Fiji	1
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The data represented above reflects information collected of the 1,687 registrants who completed our online survey.

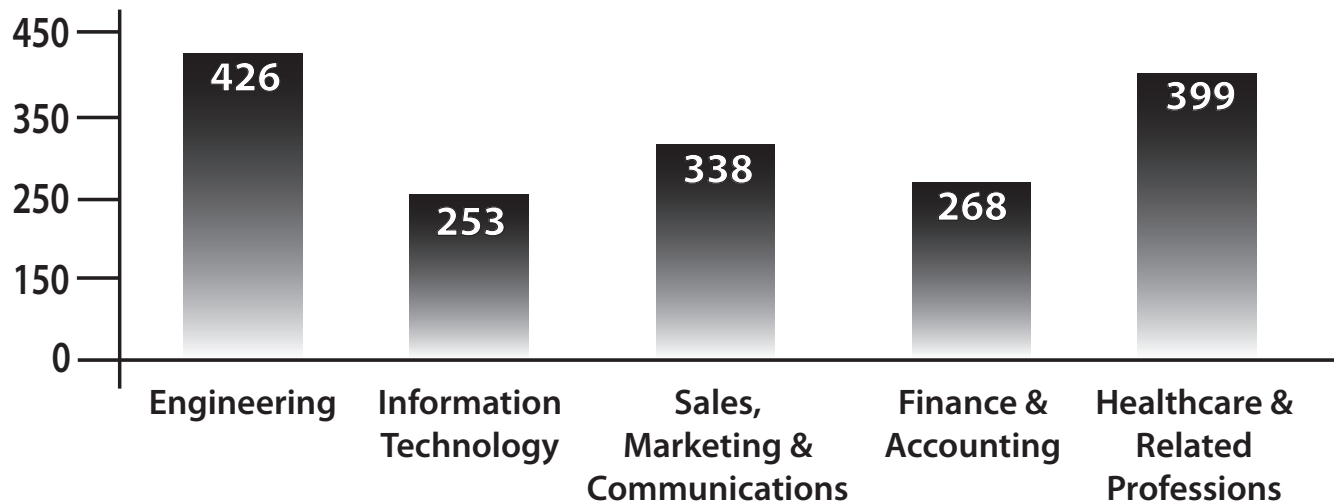
DELEGATE PROFILES & DEMOGRAPHICS



The data represented above reflects information collected of the 1,687 registrants who completed our online survey.

DELEGATE PROFILES & DEMOGRAPHICS

SECTOR HUB SELECTIONS



The data represented above reflects information collected of the 1,687 registrants who completed our online survey.

WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

Elijah Stevens and Nathan Roy, of the Grammy-nominated Ojibwe drum group, *Bear Creek*, based out of Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, opened the Conference. They raised the energy in the room and drew delegates and other guests into the room.

When Silma Roddau, the IEP Conference Chair and President of Progress Career Planning Institute, stepped up to the podium for introductory remarks to the 12th IEP Conference, there were well over 500 delegates in the audience. She expressed her wishes that the events of the day would pave the way for their career success in their adopted homeland. She praised attendees for braving the cold, which was no small feat. Incidentally, that morning, Environment Canada had issued an extreme cold weather warning. She then invited delegates and other guests to stand for the National Anthem, a video presentation of *'With Glowing Hearts'*, a tradition at the Conference since its inauguration.

Following the anthem, she gave thanks to the sponsors including the *Ministry of Training, Colleges & Universities (Employment Ontario)* remarking on Steven Chaves' attendance in the audience, strategic partner *Metroland Media*; media sponsor *CBC*; platinum sponsor *CPA Ontario*; and silver sponsors *York U's IEP Bridging Program*; *City of Toronto*; *The Canadian Institute of Financial Planning*; *George Brown College*; *Seneca*; *YPITData* and *Aldgate Group*.

Marivel Taruc, host of *Our Toronto* on *CBC Television*, provided a warm welcome to delegates, panellists and other attendees. She marvelled at the line-up of impressive speakers in attendance to inspire IEPs on their journey. She gave a brief history of the IEP Conference and how it has grown immensely over 12 years to more than 1200 delegates



City of Toronto Mayor John Tory spoke to delegates of the opportunities in Canada and noted Toronto's greatest strength is in its diversity.

registered for this year's Conference. She explained the diversity of roles the panellists occupied including representatives from regulatory bodies, professional associations, academia and various levels of government as well as employers. She hoped that delegates would be able to benefit from the tips provided throughout the day to obtain professional success. She also acknowledged IEPs for the cultural richness of talent they add to the city of Toronto.

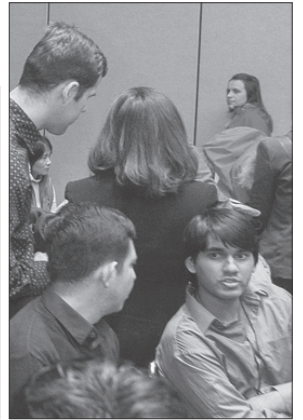
She introduced the 65th mayor of Toronto, John Tory. It is estimated that just fewer than 1100 guests were seated when the Mayor approached the podium. As a Torontonians who has spent his career giving back, his community work is widely recognized. He is a strong advocate for 'one Toronto', which includes the former boroughs of Etobicoke and Scarborough. He believes Toronto's greatest strength is its diversity.

The Mayor opened his remarks with congratulations to *CBC News: Toronto* for Best Local Newscast at the *Canadian Screen Awards*. He introduced himself as a father and grandfather of almost 61 years of age.



Conference Emcee/Host Marivel Taruc of CBC Television's *Our Toronto* engages with the audience at the Conference's opening.

IEP CONFERENCE



WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

"...there is still a lot of work to be done so that every resident could be a full and complete member of Toronto and make his/her desired contribution to the city... I challenge attendees (and presumably decision-makers) to engage their critical thinking skills in determining what about the qualifications of skilled immigrants needed 'Canadianization'..."

— MAYOR JOHN TORY



He considered himself lucky to be living in Canada and commented on the profound good fortune of opportunities in Canada. He recognized that the move to Canada was about realizing one's full potential as well as those of our children. He also voiced his recognition of the tremendous efforts of PCPI and described Toronto as an 'epicentre of diversity'.

He recounted a recent meeting with the CEO of Cisco, who had remarked on how 'amazingly diverse Toronto was with people from every corner of the globe working together as a peaceful constructive team.'

The Mayor conceded that all the chapters of Toronto had not yet been written and that there was still a lot of work to be done so that every resident could be a full and complete member of Toronto and make his/her desired contribution to the city. He also admitted to a need for an increase in visible

minorities in the leadership ranks at the City. As an example of harmonious diversity to the rest of the world, he is aware that the world is watching. As an advocate for 'one Toronto', he feels it a 'foolish waste of time' for Etobicoke and Scarborough to be fighting over who gets what. He feels that Toronto has a moral obligation to better integrate IEPs given that they have been invited to Toronto after their qualifications have been reviewed and accepted.

He also noted the work he did with the late David Pecault with *CivicAction* starting in 2003. As part of *Career Bridge*, they recruited companies to hire skilled Canadians for internships. As they filled positions, employers were impressed with how outstanding the candidates were and asked: "Where did you find them?" Tory was delighted to tell them, "They're right here." He lamented the fact that literally thousands of Torontonians who arrived intending to be productive members of the city and its workforce were still not reaching their potential. He described them as 'looking in from the outside.'

As someone who has worked very hard to sell Toronto as one of the most attractive places in the world, he acknowledged a need to recruit risk-takers and innovators and to support them in making their ideas a commercial reality. He acknowledged a job-matching problem in Toronto, one where the challenge is in connecting the people with the skills to meet employer requirements. He challenged attendees (and presumably decision-makers) to engage their critical thinking skills in determining what about the qualifications of skilled immigrants needed 'Canadianization'. He acknowledged both the need for better recognition of foreign credentials and the efforts of some professions to make this a reality. He envisions a city of everyone working together, not on separate agendas, where no one is on the outside looking in.

He refuses to accept the status quo and called for all hands on deck to address the challenges and realize Toronto as an admirable example to the rest of the world. Jobs, investment and doing a better job of connecting people to jobs have to be priorities.

Silma returned to the podium to thank the Mayor for his address to the delegates and for recognizing the importance of better integrating IEPs. She invited delegates to make the day a priority taking advantage of the Marketplace and the advice of the panellists. She also acknowledged the value of the skills and experience IEPs brought to the city.

Marivel described one of the aims of the CBC is to further Toronto on the international scale. She then introduced the keynote speaker, Frank O'Dea, who founded *Second Cup*, the first-ever coffee chain in Canada. He is also the author of the best-selling book, *When All You Have is Hope*.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

FRANK O'DEA SPIRIT OF INNOVATION AND THE ENTREPRENEUR

Frank O'Dea lived a 'lonely, dirty and violent existence' 40 years earlier at the corner of Shuter and Jarvis Streets - not one of Toronto's better neighbourhoods. In those days, he was panhandling to get 99¢ so he could buy a bottle of wine. He recalls thinking: "Tomorrow, I'll quit drinking, tomorrow I'll get a job..."

Fast-forward to only a few short years ago where he finds himself on the red carpet at *Rideau Hall*, the recipient of the *Order of Canada*, surrounded by family and friends. He expressed his good fortune to be living in a great country and a great city.

He asked the audience a rhetorical question: *How do you go from skid row to being here today?* He summarizes his response in three words: Hope. Vision. Action. He further explained how he realized that with a little bit of hope, he could have a vision. But vision without action is simply a dream.



In his presentation, Spirit of Innovation and the Entrepreneur, Frank O'Dea shares his experiences and the lessons learned on his rise from being a homeless person to starting several successful national businesses.

He then told a story about George; the hero of his story is always George.

It turned out that George was in very difficult shape. He lived in New York. It was 1930. He had lost his job and was running out of food. At the end of two days without eating, things had become very desperate. That evening, as luck would have it, a man in a suit came by and told George, "I can get you a job". It turned out there was a small church around the corner that was looking for a bookkeeper.

So the very next morning George went and rapped on the door. The pastor came to the door. George said, "I understand you are looking for a bookkeeper." The pastor said, "Yes, what are your qualifications?" He said, "I don't have any qualifications. I can't even read or write. I thought just perhaps there might be something else I could do because I haven't eaten in two days and perhaps I could just earn enough to get something to eat." The pastor said, "We are very, very poor. I'm sorry we don't have anything else for you to do and we couldn't afford to pay you in any event." He was just about to close the door but said, "Just a moment." He went back into the kitchen and came out and gave George an apple. He said, "I don't have a job but at least here is something to eat."

George went to the corner of the street and he was just about to take a bite out of the apple when a guy in a suit went by and said, "I will give you a dime for that apple." Now in the 1930s, a dime was a lot of money and George was very hungry, but

KEYNOTE SPEAKER - FRANK O'DEA

he looked at it and he made the exchange. He got about halfway down the block when he saw a sign in the window: two apples for a dime. He became an instant entrepreneur.

He went back to the corner and he was selling apples and going back and forth and after a while he had a stand on the corner. Then he had stores, he franchised, and then apple orchards. He eventually moved to Los Angeles where he had one of these wonderful offices on top of one of the great buildings in Los Angeles.

He had just had an executive committee meeting. He was thinking about his life with his feet up on the desk when he thought, *"What I have is quite a story. Somebody ought to write a book"*. Living in Los Angeles, he called a famous author. The author came in, George told him the story and the author said, *"You tell that so well, George. Why don't you write your own book?"* George looked at him and said, *"You don't understand. I don't read or write."* The writer said, *"Imagine if you had gone on to high school, college and university, what might have become of you?"* *"I would be a bookkeeper in a broken-down church."*



Conference delegates had a chance to get some one-on-one time with keynote Frank O'Dea following his inspirational speech about hope, vision and action.

Frank returned to the telling of his own story as a 13-year-old boy growing up in Montreal. It was around this time that Frank discovered alcohol. At 21, he was kicked out and was instructed by his father not to be in touch with the family until he got cleaned up: *"For the good of the family, you have to go."* He was destroying the family.

But, there was a silver lining. His father had arranged a job for him as a salesperson in the paint business. Frank was thinking about the new job and hoped that this new job in Oakville would work out. He was going to be the best salesman there ever was. But after a few months, he lost that job and was drinking again. He ended up in a flophouse.

Frank found another helping hand, a Toronto paint store retailer, *Exclusive Paint*, near the intersection of College and Spadina. If he showed up, he would get \$5 a day for stocking shelves and cleaning up but never more so he couldn't hurt himself. Many new Canadians came to that paint store. On the days he did show up for work, he would listen to the radio; that radio played only one station. One day, he heard an ad about quitting drinking. He didn't remember exactly what the message was, but the tagline was: *"If you're having a problem with alcoholism, call us. We're in the book."* He realized he needed to die or change. Suicide was a constant thought. With a dime in his pocket, he made a call at the corner of Yonge and King Streets and never had another drink. That stranger changed his life. It was the beginning of the rest of his life. That was 1971.

For the next six months, he was unemployable. Everything he owned was on his back. He was living at the *Salvation Army* but he had hope. A social services organization helping him to get ready to work bought him a suit at an *Ex-Toggery*

KEYNOTE SPEAKER - FRANK O'DEA

on Merton Street. He had no phone and no address but he would take any job. He was full of fear and self-pity. Things continued to improve for him and, by 1974 he was selling construction equipment. He also worked on a federal election campaign as a campaign manager for the Liberal Party. It was there that he met Tom Culligan. They worked well together and decided to go into business although all they had was \$1000 in Canada Savings Bonds.

They first started a mail-order business selling plastic coin sorters for \$39.95. It didn't take long for them to figure out that "the market for coin sorters was Catholic churches." Neither of them had a background in bookkeeping. Their system was very rudimentary; if the fridge was empty, they needed to send out more mail to generate more business.

Tom and Frank decided to go into the coffee business. In the mid-70s, coffee consumption was only 14%. They looked for space and found the best price per square foot was in the *Scarborough Town Centre*. They were selling coffee beans. And without a bookkeeper, they opened another two stores. They realized they were naïve about building a business; they were losing money hand over fist.

What's an entrepreneur to do?

They went for a scoop at *Baskin-Robbins* in the mall. It was there that they decided to get a coffee maker so that people could taste the coffee prior to buying the beans. They could charge for the samples. They also thought, "Why not charge more so people will know it's a good cup of coffee?" Once they priced the coffee at a premium, people started seeing it not as a beverage but as a treat.



Frank O'Dea encouraged delegates to help each other out, to suggest things and to keep going.

Before long, they were ready to open their seventh store, the second one at the *Toronto Eaton Centre*. According to the bank, at six stores, they had already saturated the coffee store market in North America. The bank denied them financing, a devastating blow to these entrepreneurs. They networked with people who had supported them and found a bank manager – Bruce Mackenzie at *RBC* – who loved their model.

Frank shared with the audience what he learned from this experience. He encouraged delegates to never give up. If they had an idea they needed to grow, they needed to know that there will be supporters but there will also be naysayers, people who will say it can't be done. For Frank, it was a colleague from the construction business: "Tell me again how you're going to make this a million dollar business." As an entrepreneur, one needs to adjust and adapt.

As his businesses grew, he also began contributing his time to charities and other non-profit organizations. Representing *War Child Canada*, he travelled with Lloyd Axworthy, Minister of

KEYNOTE SPEAKER - FRANK O'DEA

Foreign Affairs, pleading with foreign governments to release teens back into society. He recounted stories of travelling to Freetown, Sierra Leone where he met a woman whose daughter's arm had been cut off. At that time, the election slogan of the eventual winner was "The future is in your hands", so the rebel army would sever the hands of civilians to prevent voting. Frank was however full of hope and felt that working together, they could make a difference. This eventually led to Frank founding the *Canadian Landmine Foundation*.

He feels very grateful to be living in Canada. He recalls how at 25, he would have thought his life was over. But citizens had given him a hand. He was able to build his business and help to create "a better community, a better country and a better world." He told the audience: "I'd like to leave you with the dime. Whatever I give out comes back in spades."

He encouraged delegates to help each other out, to suggest things and to keep going. He acknowledged that many of them were on a difficult journey, something that he knew something about. He warned them that it doesn't happen overnight. As *Winston Churchill* once said in a commencement address at *Oxford University*: "All I have to say to you is summed up in these three words: "Never give up".

In closing, he borrowed words from the poem *Desiderata* by *Max Ehrmann*:

"Beyond a wholesome discipline be gentle with yourself. You are a child of the universe, no less than the trees and the stars; you have a right to be here. And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should. Therefore be at peace with God, whatever you conceive Him to be, and whatever your labours and aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life keep peace with your soul. With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world. Be careful. Strive to be happy."

Omar Choudhry, P.Eng., President, CEO and Co-Founder of *YPITData*, one of the keynote sponsors, expressed gratitude for Frank's story and presented him with a small token. He thanked the audience for coming out and shared: "It doesn't matter where you start. It's where you end that counts. Strive to be better and better." His own father, a farmer, had stepped off a plane 50 years ago this summer in Canada. He commended the delegates for making a move to improve their lives. *YPIT Data* is a digitization and data capture firm that according to their website, 'enables young professionals to gain exposure to different types of jobs, earn a disposable income, gain work experience and set them on a path for a successful future in business.' They employ over 80 tech-savvy young professionals to review, validate and test mobile applications and software.

SUCCESSFUL IEPs PANEL



Moderator/Host:

Matt Galloway of CBC's Metro Morning

Matt Galloway welcomed delegates to the Conference and reminded them that one of the aims of the Conference was to network and at the same time, brush up on their networking skills. He asked the panellists to introduce themselves and to share something that they liked about their work, perhaps a strength or how they are an asset. He also asked them to disclose the challenges they faced and how long they had been in Canada.



Representing Finance & Accounting

**Rauf A. Jan - Manager,
Financial Services at Ernst & Young LLP**



Representing Information Technology

**Sukhjot Singh, CIRS, CEIS, MBA –
Newcomer Settlement Program, Settlement Worker
at Peel Multicultural Council, Mississauga**



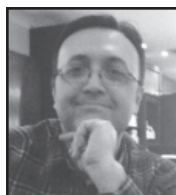
Representing Engineering

**Kevin H. D'Souza - Executive Coach,
Speaker & Leadership Trainer at Kevin2Coach**



Representing Sales & Marketing

**Ajai Datta - Technology Sales Specialist in the Controls,
Security and Audio-Video Systems and Solutions field**



Representing Healthcare

**Ehsan Adiban - Patient Care Manager at
Mackenzie Health Richmond Hill Hospital**

SUCCESSFUL IEPs PANEL

Opening Statements by panellists

- Rauf:** I have been in Canada for only 18 months. Immediately, my qualifications were not recognized and I noticed the cultural differences. I realized I needed to understand the regulations affecting the workplace and my occupation.
- Sukhjīt:** For me, it was the difference between 'real life' and what I saw on websites prior to arriving in Canada. My perception changed upon landing. I had a very positive experience of being welcomed to Canada. Many of the blogs I read prior to arriving here led me to believe that it would be challenging. I had been teaching in a private university in my home country. When I got here I had to change everything – my resume, my cover letter. Listen to what people are telling you. They want to help.
- Kevin:** You have to volunteer in order to gain Canadian experience.
- Ajai:** My challenge was my own mindset. I had to learn how to act like I had been here a while rather than feeling that I was new. Everyone had a different accent anyway.
- Ehsan:** I came to Canada with a healthcare background and once I got here, I needed to familiarize myself with the regulatory body and prove my credentials. It took me a year and two months to get my licence.

Matt: *How did you change your mindset?*

- Ajai:** Ajai advised IEPs to follow his example and get out there: "Mix and mingle. Talk to people. Go to Christmas parties. You'll see you're not so different."
- Kevin:** Networking. Build your resume.
- Rauf:** Connect with other professionals related to your background. New regulations can be a barrier. Come out of your comfort zone.

Matt: *Were there moments when you thought, "Why have I made this decision?"*

- Sukhjīt:** I had been five months in Canada. I felt I was in the wrong business and at the wrong intersection. I was working a labour job but I had hope. 'There is something out there for me.' I sensed that God had something else in store for me. And then I was offered a paid job while volunteering.
- Ajai:** I remember walking from *Walmart* in the cold and thinking, "What am I doing here?" I realized it was a passing phase. I just needed three months. I had my G1 and just needed to get a car.

SUCCESSFUL IEPs PANEL



Panel moderator Matt Galloway engages Successful IEP panellists, Rauf A. Jan, Sukjit Singh, Kevin H. D'Souza, Ajai Datta and Ehsan Adiban in a question and answer round focusing on their personal journeys to employment. The panel members talked about their strengths and assets, what they liked about their jobs and the challenges they faced when they entered the Canadian workforce.

Ehsan:

During the immigration process itself, I thought that. I knew this move would mean a change in job, possibly a change in profession but I had immigration experience in other countries.

Matt:

What would have helped you?

Sukhjot:

A strong belief and support from family. Volunteer work gave me hope. I knew I had strong academic knowledge and experience. The volunteer work helped me to understand the workplace culture in Canada. I was drinking Second Cup coffee and feeling more Canadian.

Kevin:

Volunteering helped me to support my children and others. I recognized the value of it. I saw people had passion for it and were always giving back.

SUCCESSFUL IEPs PANEL**Matt:** *What would you do differently?*

Rauf: I would have done more networking, gotten my credentials assessed sooner and done some online courses.

Ajai: I would have come in the summer for one. Maybe I would have gotten more of a sense that people are here to help you. I didn't know that. I didn't know anyone when I came here. I hope more people will see that. It makes me feel I am wanted.

Ehsan: Find work and get my credentials assessed ahead of time. Find people to help you, like the people I found at Woodgreen. George changed my life. He was the first person I met. He showed me the door. He had me see the pathway and the steps to get there. We are still friends to this day.

Sukhjīt: I became George. For the people who helped me, I asked: "How can I become you?" They told me that I have all of the ingredients. For me, it was the best example of plan B.

Kevin: Just knowing and accepting that there would always be change. With a career in sales, takeovers are to be expected. I did not invest in myself for personal growth and development, as I should have. This would have better prepared me for changing my career at any time. Always keep an open mind. Never say 'no' to professional development.

Ajai: It's how the system works. People ask me for help. All I can do is make introductions. You have to do the rest.

Matt: *There is a roomful of people who want to be on this stage next year. What do you want to say to them?*

Ehsan: Attitude. It opens up a lot of destinations for you. Take the hands of others. That can make a huge difference.

Ajai: Mix and mingle. Get out there and network.

Matt: *How can people get over that hurdle?*

Ajai: Coming today is a huge step. That was the biggest step. Ask and you will hear something that makes sense.

Kevin: A positive attitude. It's the key to success. Don't be afraid to start at an entry-level position. We came here for a reason. The journey is important. Every step you take will add to your credibility.

Sukhjīt: Believe in yourself and your ability. You need not invent something new. Follow examples of people who came before you. Believe in a supernatural power.

Rauf: Focus on your objective. Think of what brought you here. Just get into the market: volunteer or take an entry-level job.

Conclusion: Matt thanked the panel for their contributions.



MORNING

SECTOR HUB PRESENTATIONS

REGULATORY, ACCREDITATION, ACADEMIA, ASSOCIATIONS
SKILL-BUILDING PRESENTATIONS

As an essential and popular component of the day's proceedings, the morning sector hub discussions are dedicated to representatives from regulatory, accreditation and academic bodies. The 12th IEP Conference attracted more than 1000 delegates to the sector hub discussions.

As in previous years, delegates had one of five sector hub concurrent sessions to choose from: *Engineering; Information Technology; Sales, Marketing & Communications; Finance & Accounting; and Healthcare & Related Professions*. For the third year in a row, the skill-building sessions were integrated into the morning sector hub presentations. The facilitators worked with the panellists to ensure a smooth information exchange. Each speaker made a short introduction, provided advice for delegates and participated in a Q & A session.

Delegates consistently report each year that these sessions are the most important component of the Conference. This year, 96% of delegates who completed an evaluation form rated the information provided by the morning sector hub panel as Somewhat Useful to Highly Useful. Ninety-five percent rated the usefulness of the discussion opportunities as Somewhat Useful to Highly Useful.

Scribes assigned to each sector hub recorded panellist introductions, delegates' questions, panellists' responses, trends identified within the sector and career tips to assist IEPs with integrating into the Canadian workplace.

ENGINEERING AND RELATED PROFESSIONS



MORNING SECTOR HUB
PRESENTATIONS

REGULATORY, ACCREDITATION
AND ACADEMIC BODIES

Facilitator:

Mark Franklin, M.Ed., P.Eng., CMF
President & Practice Leader at
CareerCycles Associates

Welcoming Remarks:

Christopher Alexander, MBA, Chair of *PCPI*, provided welcoming remarks for the Engineering sector hub discussion. Christopher is the President and CEO of *Zhoosh Service Enterprise* as well as the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) for the *Festival Management Committee*, the organization responsible for the *Scotiabank Toronto Caribbean Carnival*.

ENGINEERING AND RELATED PROFESSIONS

MORNING SECTOR HUB PRESENTATIONS • REGULATORY, ACCREDITATION AND ACADEMIC BODIES

PANEL MEMBERS

Mark Franklin, M.Ed., P.Eng., CMF – President & Practice Leader at *CareerCycles Associates*

Mark leads *CareerCycles*, a career management social enterprise with clients across Canada and a team of career professionals. *CareerCycles* (www.careercycles.com) is the career advisory firm for members of *Ontario Society of Professional Engineers*, *University of Toronto Alumni Association* and other leading professional associations. Mark had to learn to adapt his engineering career to a different culture. He has worked with close to 300 people helping them adapt their careers. As the host of *Career Buzz*, a radio show, he hears a lot of stories about how people create opportunities.

Rick Esselment – President and Founder at *ESSE & Associates Inc.*

Rick Esselment is an entrepreneur who owns companies in waste management. He would like to see Ontario advance to world-class wastewater treatment systems.

Aarthi Vig – Program Development Manager at *Ontario Society of Professional Engineers (OSPE)*

Aarthi Vig's role at *OSPE* is to raise awareness of the role of engineers in Ontario. *OSPE* has both advocacy and professional development departments. It also offers a number of professional development courses including bridging programs for internationally trained engineers.

David J. Thomson – Executive Director at *Ontario Association of Certified Engineering Technicians & Technologists (OACETT)*

David J. Thomson is the Executive Director of *OACETT*, which offers a vast chapter program for networking. He emphasizes the importance of networking. He also advised the audience that there are currently six IEPs sitting on the board for elections.

Peter Gacuk, P.Eng. - Program Manager, Engineering Sciences and Technology at
Sheridan's Faculty of Continuing and Professional Studies

Peter Gacuk works in the Faculty of Continuing Studies at Sheridan College. He has held technical, management and leadership roles in the Canadian aerospace industry, e.g., worked on the Canadarm, and a few start-up companies. He has also delivered training internationally.

Moody Samuel Farag, M.Eng., P.Eng. – Manager, Admissions at *Professional Engineers Ontario (PEO)*

Moody Samuel Farag works for PEO, the regulatory and licensing body for engineers in Ontario. Last year, 830 licences were given to IEPs.

ENGINEERING AND RELATED PROFESSIONS

MORNING SECTOR HUB PRESENTATIONS • REGULATORY, ACCREDITATION AND ACADEMIC BODIES

QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION

Delegates were asked to discuss questions in groups of two to three and write down questions for the panelists.

Q. What kind of volunteering work would be the most useful? Do you offer opportunities in your organization?

Rick: You can register as a member of the organization and you can also volunteer for any of the committees. Remember, you're interacting with company owners and that can help you enhance your networking and skill set. There are no restrictions for volunteers on committees. It's a recipe for success! You should also consider networking through individual associations.

David: We train you and you get the experience to volunteer. You should also volunteer in the community. Everyone is looking for a holistic employee.

Aarthi: Sometimes you can't work directly within your industry. It's good to work in a structured environment to get experience. Being able to speak to what a team-oriented workplace looks like is good.

Rick: If you decide to volunteer, you must fulfill that obligation. Once you have volunteer experience, you can get references from everyone on that committee.

Mark: Employers look favourably on volunteerism.

Q. So many people have professional jobs without a licence. Why is this?

Moody: Licences and jobs are not as connected as you think. In Ontario, you can work under the supervision of an engineer. Forty-eight months of engineering is required in order to get a licence. A licence may or may not get you a job.

David: Professional engineering requires a licence. Only 10% of engineering requires a signature. The job process is very informal for a lot of small companies. Employers recognize certification but it doesn't guarantee a job. Underemployment and unemployment is common but there are engineering technologists and technician jobs out there.

Q. What courses are available for people interested in project management?

Peter: Sheridan has programs that allow you to get a professional designation. People want an education that can meet their needs. More blended-type training is coming out especially for project management and engineering. People want the flexibility to be able to meet online and in person.

ENGINEERING AND RELATED PROFESSIONSMORNING SECTOR HUB PRESENTATIONS • **REGULATORY, ACCREDITATION AND ACADEMIC BODIES****ENGINEERING SECTOR HUB PRESENTATION****Q. Does your company provide professional development and networking opportunities?**

Aarthi: They offer workshops to help prepare you for an interview, e.g., how to describe your experience. Various versions of preparatory courses are offered. A bridging program helps train engineers to be able to take the exam. There's a two-day program for those who don't want to do the 36 hours. There are also employment events for engineers open to members and non-members.

Peter: Preparation courses are offered for Microsoft Technical course.

Q. How can you make the integrity you achieve profitable?**Can you comment on the requirement of one year of experience?**

David: One year of experience was initially implemented so that people could demonstrate competence, but other ways of evaluating IEPs need to be looked into. Taking a code course counts for six months of experience. Cultural training will be addressed as well by year's end.

Q. Are there any government incentives for employers to hire IEPs?

Peter: Yes. Two-thirds of the costs of training can be reimbursed to the employer. The employer can consider training the whole team and not just one person (*Canada-Ontario Job Grant*)

ENGINEERING AND RELATED PROFESSIONS

MORNING SECTOR HUB PRESENTATIONS • REGULATORY, ACCREDITATION AND ACADEMIC BODIES

Q. Is there a way to get an entry-level job in your organization?

- Rick:** A lot of opportunities are not posted. Sometimes they come from associations. Some positions are for technicians and technologists. You don't have to necessarily be involved with a college or university program either.
- Mark:** *Career Edge* works with people to get them paid internships. Organizations like this can help with getting an entry-level position.
- Peter:** Entry-level positions are usually linked to undergraduate studies. Education not only gives you knowledge but helps you expand your networking skills.

Q. Can you join PEO and OACETT at the same time?

- David:** Yes, you can be a member of both. Many licensed engineers require a CET (Certified Engineering Technologist). Technician status helps increase your odds tremendously.
- Moody:** It depends on the job you want to do. There are different ways to practice engineering, different than a technologist. You graduate from engineering but work in technology. Can you work your way up? Yes. Can you join both? Yes. Identify what you want to do.
- Peter:** The trend is growth in smaller companies and a more holistic approach, meaning you are representing many things with a lot of responsibilities, e.g., customer management.
- Mark:** Job postings are either listed through *PEO* or *OACETT*.
- Aarthri:** In a survey of 75 employers, 76% of employers said a P.Eng. designation is important or very important. Employers were also asked to rate soft skills; all soft skills were rated 90%+. Soft skills are very important. Technical skills are important but soft skills make the difference.

Q. How can I network and find networking opportunities?

- David:** *OACETT* is into social media and they have a site dedicated to women in technology. Women can network on these sites.
- Aarthri:** Look for networking events on job boards. There is a wide range of opportunities from entry-level on up.
- Moody:** Chapter events and social events.
- Rick:** Check out regional events and conferences. For example, March 22-24 in Niagara Falls. It's on our website.
- Peter:** We have a job opening for a CAD instructor.

ENGINEERING AND RELATED PROFESSIONS

MORNING SECTOR HUB PRESENTATIONS • REGULATORY, ACCREDITATION AND ACADEMIC BODIES

Q. What's the future of engineering? What will it look like in 20 years? How is your organization changing?

- Rick:** Technology and knowledge in Canada is 50 years old. World-class perspectives are needed.
- Aarthi:** A wide range of skills will be needed in addition to the technical elements. It's a global economy and we see this increasingly. Companies are going to be more diverse.
- David:** Untold opportunities will be available. Why? Running short of oil, water and talent.
- Peter:** Trends in health care and technology will expand. We will have robot cars and electric cars quickly. There is a mandatory future development in technology.

Key Tips for Delegates**ENGINEERING**

- Rick:** Don't be afraid to ask for help.
- Aarthi:** When you are applying for a job, mention what stage you are at with regards to the licensing process. Also, mention if you have Canadian experience.
- Mark:** Spell out acronyms on your resume.
- David:** Stay close to your family.
- Peter:** You can get a job but you need a network in order to build a career. Keep networking even if you don't feel they're helping you. It will pay off in the end.
- Moody:** Stay focussed on what you want to achieve. Know your ultimate goal. A lot of people are successful who remain focussed.

FINANCE & ACCOUNTING



MORNING SECTOR HUB
PRESENTATIONS

REGULATORY, ACCREDITATION
AND ACADEMIC BODIES

Facilitator:

Joyce Kaplan, B.C.L, LL.B., A.C.P.C.

Business and Career Coach and Legal Consultant
Kaplan Coaching

Welcoming Remarks:

Vicki Liederman is the Director of Student Recruitment at the *Chartered Professional Accountants of Ontario (CPA Ontario)*. She welcomed the attendees on behalf of *CPA Ontario*, a proud platinum sponsor for the IEP Conference. She explained that this support is part of *CPA Ontario's* commitment to supporting accounting professionals and protecting the public interest. She assured the audience that the accounting profession has always sought out bright and talented people and that *CPA Ontario* is there to support internationally trained professionals who want to acquire the CPA designation every step of the way with specifically designed programs. *CPA Ontario* can open doors for internationally trained accountants in Canada. She invited delegates to contact *CPA Ontario* or drop by the booth to find out more.

FINANCE & ACCOUNTING

MORNING SECTOR HUB PRESENTATIONS • REGULATORY, ACCREDITATION AND ACADEMIC BODIES

Introduction

Joyce thanked PCPI for hosting the 12th annual IEP Conference and welcomed delegates to the Finance & Accounting sector hub. She also expressed gratitude to the Hub Champions, Devi Arssanayagam and Carmen Jacques, for their work and their presence at the Conference. Joyce shared her story of moving to Toronto from Montreal; she admitted that this culture shift only gave her a slight idea of the courage it took for IEPs to start again in Canada. Professionally, she started out as a business lawyer, and then moved into management until she found herself in her present position doing business and career coaching. She reminded attendees that in today's economy, no one stays in a career for life.

She also acknowledged the IEP Conference volunteers, the sector hub scribe and the AV Technician for his support. She prepared attendees by reviewing the morning's schedule including a special presentation on "*Speaking with Confidence*" at 11:45am. She advised audience members to use the cards provided to write down questions for the panellists, which would be collected by volunteers. She would strive to get to as many questions as possible. She invited panellists to make their introductions.

PANEL MEMBERS

Carmen Jacques, CPA, CGA - Student Recruitment at *Chartered Professional Accountants of Ontario*

Carmen Jacques expressed gratitude to PCPI for the privilege of being part of the panel. She arrived in Canada in 2004 and was able to identify with delegates. She promised to share more about how to move forward.

Samky Mak - Industry Director, Risk Management & Compliance, Centre for Financial Services at *Seneca College*

Samky Mak landed in Canada on Christmas Day in 1989. He was looking forward to sharing his experience.

Garth Gibbes - Associate Director and Relationship Manager, Financial Services Training and Certification at *Moody's Analytics/CSI (Canadian Securities Institute)*

Garth Gibbes was pleased to be invited to participate on the panel. He is a banker by trade. Garth remembers his first introduction to Canada: Winnipeg in the middle of winter. He arrived as an international student to pursue a B.Sc. in Math and Economics.

Dr. Catherine Chandler-Crichlow - Executive Director at *Centre of Excellence for Financial Services Education*

Dr. Catherine Chandler-Crichlow, originally from Trinidad, shared the frustrations she hears from both employers and graduates: companies tell her "I can't find talent" and graduates exclaim, "I can't find a job!" Catherine asked the audience, "Where is the disconnect here?" She then promised to make the links between these two challenges over the course of the morning's discussion.

Trevor Buttram, MEd, CDP - Career Connections Program Manager at *Insurance Institute of Canada*

Trevor Buttram has worked on professional development for financial professionals wanting a career in the insurance industry. He defined property and casualty insurance as "everything without a pulse".

Graham Sogawa - Director of Recruitment & Strategic Alliances at *Career Edge*

Born and raised in Toronto, Graham Sogawa was employed at CMA of Ontario for a number of years. He currently works at Career Edge, a self-sustaining not-for-profit organization that places paid interns with top employers. He let delegates know he was looking forward to their questions.

FINANCE & ACCOUNTING

MORNING SECTOR HUB PRESENTATIONS • REGULATORY, ACCREDITATION AND ACADEMIC BODIES

QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION

Delegates were asked to discuss questions in groups of two to three and write down questions for the panelists.

Q. How should we deal with the issue of Canadian experience on resumes and in interviews?

- Catherine:** Applicants often approach a position as "I am an X." You need to broaden how you label yourself. Look at skill sets to break down the barriers and don't approach it as an economist or accountant. It is all about positioning.
- Trevor:** It is about your general experience as well. Do your research and figure out where your skills fit. Don't discount your survival jobs.
- Graham:** During interviews, share your skills as well as information about the international companies you have worked for, what they do and how large they are. Recruiters do not know all companies worldwide and may not be familiar with your former employer.
- Carmen:** Focus on and share your soft skills that are valued in the Canadian workplace. Be more flexible.
- Samky:** New jobs that we have never heard of before are coming up all the time. Keep a positive attitude.
- Garth:** You moved here for new opportunities. There were still networking and employment stresses that happened in your former country; they happen here too. Based on my international experience, I know these challenges exist everywhere.
- Joyce:** Even Canadian-born and educated individuals must look at links and connections in their career, not just their certification.

Q. When it comes to work experience vs. education, what should we focus on in our resumes and on our applications?

- Carmen:** Make sure you include any designations. Both are equally important.
- Graham:** Are you going to hit enough key words? As a recruiter, I usually search education first, designations next, and then industry sector. This helps sort people quickly. I then search for technology competency. You must insert these competencies, mentioning specific software programs, etc.
- Catherine:** I will be controversial now. Focus on your accounting and financial experience. Typically recruiters will open a job posting for 24 hours, get 1,000 applications, of which 800 will be accountants. They are scanned first and then reviewed for 13 seconds. List experience in the first line so that a person reads it.

Q. Are all searches done using software technology?

- Graham:** Yes. Apply early when positions are posted. These programs use scanning after the first 12 to 24 hours to set up interviews for the rest of the week. Do not wait to research and customize for too long.

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Q. What are your recommendations for key skills and competencies?

- Carmen:** Communication. Focus on soft skills that are transferable.
- Samky:** Relationship management. You can learn from everyone. Work harder than everyone else.
- Garth:** Interpersonal skills. Knowledge of the economy and the industry sector you are getting into will help you to provide feedback and ideas when you are asked for input. Communications.
- Catherine:** I have worked with many executives. The most critical competency is knowing when to be silent: just shut up and listen effectively, so that you actually hear what is being said. Strategic thinkers hear what is being said and then figure out how to get to the result requested.
- Trevor:** Be able to quantify the reasons for the recommendations. Be adaptable to your organization.
- Graham:** Sales skills are important; everything is sales to get approval in the boardroom. Even getting a job is sales; you need to be marginally better than your competition consistently. Be whatever your employer is looking for, not what you are looking for.

Q. Can you recommend any new jobs that IEPs may not have considered?

- Trevor:** Risk Manager for a company.
- Garth:** Wealth management field: this will grow as baby boomers age.
- Samky:** Fraud prevention and fraud mitigation is a growing sector.
- Graham:** Accountants are moving into marketing and management; they are able to communicate what the numbers actually mean.
- Carmen:** Once you have a designation, you can move into any role.
- Catherine:** Financial oversight, compliance and regulation need accountants. People are being hired before they finish their program. Industry-specific learning from your previous country will get you hired directly from school
- Joyce reminds IEPs of the importance of a designation to move into new sectors.
- Trevor:** You can get a job and then see what designation you need. See if there is employer support for continuing education or your certification.
- Catherine recommends a web site that is not aligned with any specific educational organization:
www.explorefinancialservices.com
- Garth:** Business-specific education is important. Check out www.csi.ca/student/en_ca/home.xhtml

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Q. Please share one piece of advice that you wish you had known earlier.

- Graham:** Networking. I wish I had known how to build relationships earlier.
- Trevor:** Networking. Realize that you have something to give and how to articulate what it is. Learn how to weave it into a conversation.
- Catherine:** Trinidad has a British-style education system with limited presentation skills being taught. You must learn to speak and communicate what you know; it is not all about the grades.
- Garth:** Break out of your shell. Network with important people whenever possible.
- Samky:** Stop feeling sorry for yourself. Never mind what you used to do. Move on.
- Carmen:** Seek out a mentor. They can help with career progression.
- Joyce:** Trust yourself.

Audience questions were collected. Joyce said questions about financing your business would be addressed in the afternoon session.

- Joyce:** I have just seen a study indicating five key competencies for hiring: speaking; writing; oral comprehension; reading; and, understanding workplace ethics and norms.
- Garth:** Writing is critical. Poor email skills lead to misinterpretation. Be clear.
- Trevor:** Every opportunity that you have to communicate with a client, use the method that they prefer. Would you want to receive this information in this way?
- Graham:** Verbal articulation of what the numbers actually mean. Being able to present financial information and making it accessible is important.
- Catherine:** Understand the culture of the organization that you are working in. Limit comparisons with “back home” and how it is better or different there.

Q. How much is age a barrier to employment?

- Carmen:** I am an eternal optimist. Sell your expertise and experience as an asset. Retired police officers and nurses are getting positions in claims adjusting.
- Trevor:** Insurance is trying to retain the expertise and ethics of experienced workers. Your experience needs to be relevant and you must demonstrate how you are learning and adding to your knowledge.
- Catherine:** Why does everyone want a bank job? In Canada, financial service positions are mostly not in the banks.

Questions for Carmen Jacques:

Will reciprocity between countries help in getting a job?

Answer: A designation is more helpful for 9 out of 10 positions. Accounting is a regulated profession here and designation proves continuous improvement and progression.

Once I have the CPA designation, what kind of help can I expect?

Answer: Career development, resume review, interview preparation and many other things in professional development through CPA Ontario.

Catherine added there are certifications other than CPA. Pick one that is related to a job that you want. Then you can do the full CPA once you have that first job if you decide you need it.

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- Garth:** You have to do what it takes to move forward. I arrived after high school. I got to my current position due to networking and sales skills.
- Carmen:** Knowledge of the Canadian workplace is essential. Employers here are not as direct; it is your responsibility to learn what you need to know. Be more proactive. Make more eye contact. Learn how it is done here. Research the employer and industry sector. Find a mentor.
- Samky:** I agree with the others. I have adapted twice, first from Hong Kong to Britain and then to Canada. Most people will pay attention when you speak despite your accent. It is better here than in other countries; people are nice and patient. Fraud and risk management are the biggest growth areas.
- Trevor:** Current employment in insurance is 63% female, with a large portion in management and 14% are visible minorities. This is a great industry that reflects Canada. It allows you to use all of your soft skills.
- Graham:** You need to be marginally better than your competition consistently. Your voicemail recording must be clear and you should return calls promptly with a specific message in response. You are the world's leading authority on yourself. Update your LinkedIn profile, as it will be visited to learn more about you.
- Catherine:** List all the skills you have used since you arrived to boost your resume. Research where you want to go and get the designation. Stop apologizing for what you lack; sell what you do have. Instead of "I don't speak English well", sell how many languages you do communicate in.

HEALTHCARE AND RELATED PROFESSIONS



MORNING SECTOR HUB PRESENTATIONS

REGULATORY, ACCREDITATION AND ACADEMIC BODIES

Facilitator:

Cathy Tait, B.Sc., CMC, Principal,
Western Management Consultants

Welcoming Remarks:

Cathy Tait greeted the IEPs emphasizing the importance of networking and congratulating them on their participation in knowledge-oriented conferences such as the IEP Conference. She encouraged them to connect with the Canadian professional networks to help equip themselves with the required skills for their occupations. She commented on Frank O'Dea's speech and the role hardships played in his own life helping him to achieve success.

HEALTHCARE AND RELATED PROFESSIONS

MORNING SECTOR HUB PRESENTATIONS • **REGULATORY, ACCREDITATION AND ACADEMIC BODIES**

PANEL MEMBERS

Barbara Watson - Founder, *IAABY Logistics and Support Services Limited*

Barbara Watson, Founder of IAABY Logistics and Support Services Limited navigated the healthcare system and the services within the community and figured out that there was a group of senior people who seriously needed a support system in a healthcare-related environment, like easy access to a long-term senior care home. She is working with regulatory bodies and, with her best organizational skills is striving to improve the quality of life for senior citizens.

Elinor Larney, MHSc. OT Reg. (ONT.) – Registrar, *College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario*

Elinor Larney is a Registrar at the regulatory body for occupational therapists in Ontario. She provides assessment tools based on competencies for internationally qualified occupational therapist professionals in most parts of Canada.

Susan James - Manager of Projects and Registration Programs, *Ontario College of Pharmacists*

Susan James has 20 years of experience with great diversity in her professional networks. There are over 6000 international pharmacists and technicians in Canada.

Nick De Groot, ND – Dean, *Canadian College of Naturopathic Medicine*

Nick De Groot is a specialist in the naturopathic medical program, which consists of three major subject areas: naturopathic medicine, clinical studies and biomedical studies. He specialized in educational setup and related programs in botanical medicine specifically.

Loy Asheri, BSc, RN - Case Manager, *CARE Centre for Internationally Educated Nurses*

Loy Asheri is an internationally skilled and trained nurse, working in *Sunnybrook's Cardiovascular Intensive Care Unit*. This international centre is government-funded and equipped with more than 1500 trained professionals. She faced a countless number of challenges, worked hard and joined *CARE Centre for Internationally Educated Nurses* in 2003. In this working environment, she found confidence, self-esteem and resilience. Her struggle, honesty in her profession and skill were recognized and she was honoured with the *Joan Lesmond IEN of the Year Award* in 2011.

Tracy Bardell, B.A. (Hons.) - J.D Entry to Practice Coordinator, *College of Nurses of Ontario*

Tracy Bardell was a key instrumental member in laying down the foundational work for the College and Council review for registration requirements and necessary approval of changes to the nursing registration and regulation. She is a highly professional lawyer by training. She is responsible for processing applications from international applicants who want to start a career in nursing. She deals with fairness in labour mobility and privacy.

Caroline Morris - Director of Professional Practice College, *Medical Radiation Technologists of Ontario (CMRTO)*

Caroline Morris has six years of experience as a panellist at the IEP Conference. She performed a key role in the development of the *Medical Radiation Technology Act* and legislative framework in 1991; this was a model for legislation to self-regulate practice. One of the key components of self-regulation of the profession of medical radiation technology in the public interest is the quality assurance (QA) program. The purpose of the QA program is to assure the quality of practice of the profession and to promote continuing evaluation, competence and improvement among members. Caroline's focus has been on self-regulation in the interests of the public.

HEALTHCARE AND RELATED PROFESSIONS

MORNING SECTOR HUB PRESENTATIONS • REGULATORY, ACCREDITATION AND ACADEMIC BODIES

QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION

Delegates were asked to discuss questions in groups of two to three and write down questions for the panelists.

Q. What are the critical skills and how are they important?

Elinor: Communication skills. When working with patients and people, in occupational therapy, it is very legal. What you are writing is a legal document. You need to have a very high level of communication skills particularly when you are problem solving, where you need to ask questions to understand the problem. In order to properly address the problem, it will take excellent communication skills.

Tracy: Client-centred care is also critical: putting patients first. In Ontario, the patient is part of the team. The team is critical to the workplace in healthcare. Like Elinor said, communication skills are important for a nurse to be able to contribute to a care plan. Nurses need to be prepared to challenge a care plan and advocate for the patient.

Nick: It should be emphasized more in professional areas where you have to deal with patients. It is very important when developing relationships with patients.

Q. What are the key opportunities available to internationally trained physicians with five years of experience?

Nick: Seek different practice situations. Find opportunities in different government and public sector departments with an awareness of the needs of patients and healthcare, e.g., educational colleges, the College of Medicine, medical diagnostic laboratories and botanical medicine colleges.

Q. How can internationally skilled pharmacists find jobs and a compatible working environment in Canada?

Susan: You must understand the upcoming opportunities and demands in Canada. Here is a link that will be helpful: <http://www.pharmacistsgatewaycanada.ca/>. There are great opportunities out there. Align yourself through licensing and regulatory policies and professional competencies. Details and information about rules and regulatory bodies can be accessed through the above-mentioned site link.

Q. What will be the main focus of the healthcare system in Canada in coming years?

Caroline: Any professional is here with knowledge and in the healthcare system, individual members bring their expertise to the table; it's all about sharing. It's important that if others do not have that knowledge, that you make sure to bring your skills to the table. This is the importance of the team. Focus of the health care system in the next few years in Canada will be putting patients first.

HEALTHCARE AND RELATED PROFESSIONS

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Q. What are the necessary requirements for medical technicians facing competency challenges?

Caroline: Medical technicians need proper communication skills and technical knowledge. Changes in technology are rapidly advancing. Medical technicians need to be able to adapt to the changing and advanced system. Self-assessment tools are available to check practice in Canada.

Q. What is the demand for occupational therapists?

Elinor: There are plenty of opportunities all over Ontario, just not in Toronto. Don't limit yourself to a specific area. You should go where the opportunities are. Other areas have many more opportunities than Toronto.

Q. What is the importance of learning skills related to the working environment?

Susan: You must understand what's happening here in Canada. You should know and have a clear-cut understanding about how technicians work differently here. Here they are working as an expert on a team with physicians. So working environment is a key component of professional skills.

HEALTHCARE AND RELATED PROFESSIONS

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HEALTHCARE & RELATED PROFESSIONS

Key Tips for Delegates

Barbara:

- Don't get stuck in a situation. Get to know yourself. Don't be afraid to try.
- There will be more jobs to support seniors in a healthcare-related environment. Focus your job search in this area.
- Help others.
- Get involved and do something different. Get out of your comfort zone.

Elinor:

- There are opportunities all over Ontario; don't just limit yourself to Toronto. Include other areas in your job search.
 - Don't be afraid to change course to move your career forward.
 - Never give up.
 - Find a proper helping community. Making connections are really important to help understand what's happening in the sector.

Susan:

- You must understand upcoming opportunities and demands in Canada. Check out this link: www.pharmacistsgatewaycanada.ca/
- Understand the working environment.
- Network.
- Don't be afraid to set high goals but know that it will take time. Don't rush and don't seek short-term paths. Think about success in the long term.

Nick:

- Be passionate with a strong willingness to practice.
- Hone your communication skills.
- Sharpen your professional skills.
- We are entering a different age of economy. People need to create their own future.

Loy:

- Find support and acknowledge the richness of experience with team members.
- Realize what skills you have and get inspired to achieve the next level!

HEALTHCARE AND RELATED PROFESSIONS

MORNING SECTOR HUB PRESENTATIONS • REGULATORY, ACCREDITATION AND ACADEMIC BODIES



- Continue to network and attend career-building conferences.
- Create a support group and seek reliable information. Work hard.
Don't get attached to how things may look; the path may be different.

Tracy:

- Professional requirements and course knowledge are important.
- Communication skills are essential.
- Assessment is a key component of competency and adaptability.
- Be curious and informed. Prepare along the journey and don't be afraid to take some risks.

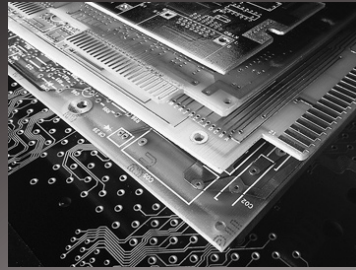
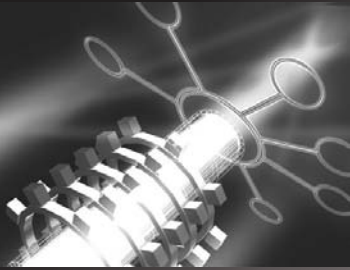
Caroline:

- Equip yourself with advanced Medical Radiation Technologist skills.
- Learn proper communication skills.
- Go through self-assessment tools available in Canada.
- Imagine a chameleon; be very adaptable.

Closing Remarks

Cathy closed the session reminding delegates that Canada is the best place for professionals because it offers such a variety of opportunities. It just requires some adjusting and adapting.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY



MORNING SECTOR HUB PRESENTATIONS

REGULATORY, ACCREDITATION AND ACADEMIC BODIES

Facilitator:

Nadeem 'Ned' Hashmi - VP of Engineering & Strategic Business Accounts at GeoViz Inc.

Sector Opening Remarks from the Guest Speaker:

Stephen Chaves, a Service Delivery Manager with *Employment Ontario* at the *Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU)* for the Government of Ontario, was pleased to be invited to share on the IT platform. The Ontario government is a proud sponsor of the Conference. He referenced Frank O'Dea's speech from earlier that morning and reminded delegates of the need to stay positive and to be ready to embrace change. He told delegates, "It is necessary to move out of one's comfort zone and to access the support, which is available through many organizations like PCPI and Woodgreen." He encouraged attendees to network with other people and organizations that provide employment services. This will provide a greater opportunity for success. Steven is a first-generation Canadian and for his family, it has been a positive experience. He is a proud Canadian who feels there is something special about Canadians – how we approach people and just how welcoming we are. He rationalized that the province of Ontario and its technology sector rely on IEPs to drive the economic growth in the sector as the population growth is close to zero. He also mentioned that the Toronto-London corridor is looking to fill 280,000 jobs, of which 162,000 are in the technology sector. The governments of Canada and Ontario have invested \$50 million in training and wage subsidies. Private companies are pushing the envelope and the international stage is open. His hope was that delegates would see the 'something special' that is in each of them and with that realization, would position them for success. He extended his best wishes and encouraged the IEPs to stay focussed and to tap into the resources that are available.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

MORNING SECTOR HUB PRESENTATIONS • **REGULATORY, ACCREDITATION AND ACADEMIC BODIES**

PANEL MEMBERS

Nadeem ‘Ned’ Hashmi - VP of Engineering & Strategic Business Accounts at *GeoViz Inc.*

Ned Hashmi holds a degree in engineering from Pakistan. He was a software developer in the early years and now is selling the programs. He currently works in business development. Ned welcomed all of the participants and the panel and on behalf of PCPI wished them every success.

Blake Witkin - Chair of the Board of Directors at *The Network of Angel Organizations – Ontario*

Blake Witkin is a business professional who attended Western’s Ivey School of Business. Blake’s grandparents were born in Canada. He works in the commercialization of technology in IT and helps start-ups. His expertise has been in high tech start-ups. He travelled for 15 years in Europe, Asia and South America. He is currently in a volunteer role. He stressed the importance of understanding the mindset of people and different cultures in order to be successful in business. He also drew a parallel between the skills used to sell business ideas to those used in marketing oneself to employers.

Maureen Ford - Program Manager, Talent Innovation at
Information and Communications Technology Council (ICTC)

Maureen Ford works in Toronto managing two bridging programs. She helps internationally trained IT professionals to understand business, communication and workplace culture in Canada. Her organization is helping IEPs to make the transition to the Canadian workforce.

Sam Fareed, CCIE #17117, CCNP, MCSE, MCT, TTT - President at *CISNET*

Sam Fareed came to Canada 20 years ago. He got tired of looking for work so he opened his own business and was very successful at it. He did some upgrading in Canada and graduated as a programmer. He wasn’t too enthusiastic about it so in 1998, he became CISCO certified. He owned and operated one of the largest CISCO training centres but has since sold it. CISNET is now his focus.

Meena Dowlwani, CHRM - Careers Professor / Job Developer, School of Media Studies & Information Technology
at *Humber College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning*

Meena Dowlwani works with newcomers to Canada and IEPs. She reminded attendees that they are the CEOs of their destiny. She welcomed them to Canada and told them they all have what it takes to be successful.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

MORNING SECTOR HUB PRESENTATIONS • REGULATORY, ACCREDITATION AND ACADEMIC BODIES

QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION

Delegates were asked to discuss questions in groups of two to three and write down questions for the panelists.

Q. How is learning and development important in the IT organization?

Sam: Mobile applications are the future. In IT networking, there are many emerging technologies especially cloud computing and voice IP. Obtain additional skills to open doors.

Blake: In building technology start-ups, none of it would have been possible without the work of IEPs. *Atra Vision* partners are from Europe and Central America. At *Unified Corporation*, all except one staff member were immigrants. My previous company was staffed with internationally trained professionals. I referred to them as the *UN* because of the international flavour of the staff working there. Look for the right fit. Be persistent and be patient.

Maureen: Updating your skill set is very important as is a focus on your job search. What that means is being able to share your work experience in such a way that the employer will be able to see that you have the skills to do the job. Employers look at fit: whether you are able to fit in with the team, readily become an asset to the organization and have the personality and experience that is a good match. Strategy is critical in becoming successful at interviews.

Q. What kind of impact will a contract job have on my resume?

Meena: It will add to your resume as experience. It gives you a good start in Canada as well. A full-time job can change rapidly. It may add stability but that can change quickly, so don't dismiss contract positions; they will help one to progress as well.

Maureen: Contract jobs generally pay more because they do not provide benefits. A full-time job sometimes does not get you past your probation so if you get the opportunity for full-time, then that is great. Toronto is the greatest (read: very competitive) market for IT so you have to be prepared and dress the role from suit to shoes. Ensure your presentation is great.

Q. What are the current trends?

Meena: I work with a bridging program at *Humber College* called .NET, where 98% of our graduates are now employed as software developers, systems programmers and business analysts within six months of graduation. The program is for internationally trained IT professionals with education and experience in computer programming. We bring in about 200 students annually and the success rate is about 180. The trend really is about your passion and enthusiasm; that will help you to be a part of the trend.

Ned: ABC Corporation may be bought out by *Google* so look at the smaller companies as well. It is important to understand where technology is going but look at your passion to find your niche.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

MORNING SECTOR HUB PRESENTATIONS • REGULATORY, ACCREDITATION AND ACADEMIC BODIES

Q. What is your perspective on investment in technology?

Blake: Investors look at where the share price is at and what is going to be their return on investment. They want to know the culture of the firm providing the investment opportunities, how it is run, etc. before making a decision. The investor's perspective is focussed on WIIFM (What's In It For Me).

Q. What can you tell me about behavioural-based interviews?

How should this be looked at since there are interviews but no job?

Maureen: It's a very broad question but everything comes down to one's story. Your passion also must be shared. Know the names of the people and the responsibilities of the people on the panel so you can prepare thank you letters. Know something about the company and ask questions around that.

Q. Should education or experience come first on a resume?

Meena: The priority is on the job posting, so look at the posting and prepare your resume accordingly and do the same in the interview. Sometimes there is a 'disconnect' between the resume and the initial interview. You need to be able to interpret what's on your resume for the employer and if that's a challenge, you need to enhance your language skills. Remember the interviewer is just as nervous as you are so please ensure that you reach the interviewer with your response for the job.

Ned: Be prepared to make a good first impression and be ready with your elevator pitch.

Meena: That brings up a past experience where I was teaching about first impressions and dressing for success. A student challenged me saying that dressing with a suit for a job at Google would not be a good move. It just so happened that the question was posed to a senior staff member at Google. The response was that each interviewer at Google has his/her own personal bias. Even though it is not a big thing, wearing a suit would not have you rejected during the interview stage.

Maureen: I agree with Meena regarding dressing for an interview. When you're on the outside, you need to get in. It is always advisable to wear a suit or dress better than expected. When you are in the job, you will dress like the staff. Regarding the elevator pitch, be very careful with overspeaking. Ask for informational interviews to help you to formulate strategies for a successful interview. Don't be too direct. For example, don't ask: "Can you get me a job? I have a lot of qualifications." The right way to go about it is to build a relationship first. Look at the requirements on the job postings. Analysis is critical in IT so ensure your resume speaks to that. Write a little story for your example and be sure to share that at the interview.

Q. What about IT professionals who do not find jobs in their field because of no IT experience?

Also, what is the social culture in organizations in Canada?

Maureen: Both those with and without experience find success in their field. In my program, we coach our participants to say: "I understand I have no Canadian experience but you have me here for the interview so I know there is something you saw on my resume that had you interested in bringing me here, so why don't we talk about those skill sets?" Women occupy 25% of the jobs in IT.

Meena: 24,000 jobs were unfilled last year because they could not find the right fit in Canada (put out by *Stats Canada*). People overseas were sourced and that has created a huge problem. This year, there will be over

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

MORNING SECTOR HUB PRESENTATIONS • REGULATORY, ACCREDITATION AND ACADEMIC BODIES

162,000 jobs in IT so look at all companies, not just Google. Everyone is fixated on brands. Every company has IT so you can look for opportunities in any company. Focus on your skills and show your passion.

Maureen: IT is in the entire organization; there is no longer a silo. I agree with Meena. Start a conversation with every company you meet about their IT department.

Q. What is the interviewer trying to assess in terms of behaviour? Please give an example.

Maureen: Give an example of how you dealt with a difficult person. Give an example of a project that went off track. Your response should be the situation, what you see as the difficulty or challenge, and a solution of how you corrected it.

Q. How do I respond to questions about age and experience?

Meena: Really it is about passion. Check to see what you have and what the company is looking for and go after it. Go after the positions and what you bring to the table.

Maureen: If you are senior, don't start with your education. If you did the job over 10 years ago, be prepared to do the testing. If it will be a challenge, don't apply for the job.

Ned: (to Maureen) Speak more about changing professions and if you have stepped out of your profession (even before coming to Canada).

Maureen: I indicated that stepping out of your profession could mean you take a longer time to get back into it (IT) or perhaps never. It might be necessary then to take a lower position just to get the experience in Canada.

Q. What about angel capital start-ups? What is the common mistake people make when investing in angel capital?
What is a common mistake people make in entering into partnerships with start-ups?

Blake: Companies will need money to survive so if you are speaking with CEOs, that is what they will be looking for. If you are speaking to someone at this stage, they are not in the mindset to look at others' careers. They have no immediate interest in helping others to grow. Simple and clear is good so show them how you can help them to get to that place where they can make money. If you want to invest, pick one you see growing because most don't continue; it is easy to fail. Ensure you have the experience to know whether the whole business is a good investment or not. Good angel investors invest in companies they have experience in. Do not just get involved in anything you are not going to see success in. Use your experience and negotiate, if possible.

Q. What are good sources for finding the right job?

Meena: Eighty percent of available jobs are not posted. The 20% posted receive over a thousand resumes for each position. My suggestion is: pick the five top companies you would like to work for, prepare suitable resumes, ask for informational interviews, prepare your elevator pitch and go after them.

Maureen: I agree with Meena. Do your homework and find the companies in your field. The players and companies change so don't rely on a list. Target the companies you are interested in and go after them. I applied to Manulife after college. I loved to look at Manulife and applied for all of the jobs I was qualified for. I had a big file before finally getting an interview and getting selected for a job at Manulife.

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Key Tips for Delegates

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Panellists were asked to name the top skills that got them to their current position.

Blake: Being persistent and trying to understand the mindset of others. If you have an opportunity to meet someone for an interview or to gather information, give yourself an extra hour to get there to account for traffic or adverse weather conditions. Be on time. Build yourself a buffer so that you can be effective in what you are expected to do.

Sam: Being tech savvy, having the right training, being confident, working hard. Dedication and focus.

Maureen: Confidence. Stay focussed on what is right for you. Do not listen to others' perceptions. Tune out the negative and create your future with what is right for you.

Meena: Social skills. Smiles and handshakes.

Closing Remarks

Ned closed the session thanking panellists for their contributions. He acknowledged all of the IEPs as risk takers, as people who had taken a big chance and made a choice to be in Canada. He encouraged them by saying a breakthrough is possible and asked them to hang on to their dreams, play the numbers game, stick to their passion and believe that the right opportunity is out there waiting for them.

SALES, MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS



MORNING SECTOR HUB
PRESENTATIONS

REGULATORY, ACCREDITATION
AND ACADEMIC BODIES

Facilitator:

Wendy Woods, MBA –

Founder & Principal, *Watershed Training Solutions*

Welcoming Remarks:

Wendy Woods moved from Quebec to Ontario 30 years ago. She has specialized in corporate training and coaching with an emphasis on leadership and resilience. She understands the challenges that one has to face when moving to another country. She believes that greater opportunities can be created through networking. After giving a brief introduction of her background, she introduced Cheryl Phillips to deliver the opening remarks.

Cheryl Phillips is the Regional Director of Advertising at *Metroland Media in Toronto*, the number one media sponsor for this event. Cheryl believes in setting goals, following prospects and never giving up on achieving one's goals.

SALES, MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

MORNING SECTOR HUB PRESENTATIONS • REGULATORY, ACCREDITATION AND ACADEMIC BODIES



PANEL MEMBERS

Patricia McQuillan, MBA - President & Founder at *Brand Matters Inc.*

Patricia McQuillan had 15 years in the workforce before she started her own business. An expert in brand building and marketing, she has also worked with large financial corporations.

Patti Pokorchak – Small Business Consultant & Founder at *Small Biz Sales Coach*

Patti Pokorchak knows what it feels like to be an immigrant with an educational degree that isn't recognized. She shares her expertise with entrepreneurs helping them be more confident and better in the services that they offer.

Hyacinth Campbell, MBA - Project Manager at *ACCESS Employment*

Hyacinth Campbell has worked over seven years with IEPs helping them find fantastic opportunities in their respective fields. She considers it a blessing to work with IEPs.

Karen Sinotte – Principal, Marketing Strategist at *CRM Consulting*

Karen Sinotte is an expert in customer information management for integrated sales and marketing strategies. She was born in Winnipeg but grew up in the Congo. She is glad to be sharing her experiences in hiring and entrepreneurship.

Dave Holt, CSP – Facilitator and Sales Performance Coach at *Dave Holt Sales Coaching*

Dave Holt is an expert in customer relations, sales development, sales leadership development, team building and presentation skills.

Murali Murthy – Author, Speaker & Transformational Coach

Murali Murthy shares this quote with the audience: "We are all born twice on this planet. The first is the day we were born, and the second, is the day we realize why we were born. The purpose of life is life with a purpose." He is always willing and looks forward to helping new immigrants.

SALES, MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

MORNING SECTOR HUB PRESENTATIONS • REGULATORY, ACCREDITATION AND ACADEMIC BODIES

QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION

Delegates were asked to discuss questions in groups of two to three and write down questions for the panelists.

Q. How do I start a small business?

Patricia: Make a plan with the help of a coach and see how you can live with it. Know what kind of work you want.

Karen: To learn how to setup a consulting business, check City Hall and Google.

SALES, MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

Key Tips for Delegates

Patricia:

- Follow the labour and market trends. Look for the right resources by joining associations like CMA, AMA, etc.
- Look for networking opportunities. Attend meetings in different associations. Not all jobs are advertised. Follow your passion and make it realistic. Get a job that you can be good at.
- Be active on social media like LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook.
- To gain Canadian experience, join a local chapter of your home country and start networking.
- Volunteer. Being a part of different organizations is also a way to network and learn other skills.
- Make use of your skills and find a way to transfer those skills to another job.

Patti:

- Networking is very important. Know your target market and be good at selling yourself in a job interview. Personality counts a lot; be at your best and know how to carry yourself.
- Stay focussed. Never give up. Just start somewhere and stay until you get better at it.

Hyacinth:

- Do not shy away from big job descriptions. See how your skills can match the requirements.
- To get fit for a job, practice your skills. Learn how to be confident and find ways to improve your skills.
- To gain Canadian experience, volunteer in local organizations. This will give you an opportunity to use and demonstrate your skills taking the focus off of your education (or at least where you earned it). It is also illegal now for employers to ask if you have Canadian experience (see Ontario Human Rights Code).

SALES, MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

MORNING SECTOR HUB PRESENTATIONS • REGULATORY, ACCREDITATION AND ACADEMIC BODIES

SALES, MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

Karen:

- Don't underestimate the importance of good communication skills. Be creative with how you sell yourself in relation to the job description.
- Network globally and make connections with various organizations.
- Volunteer your talents and services with professional associations.
- Find a mentor, engage in a relationship with that mentor and learn the ways to improve your skills.

Dave:

- Recognize your talent. Learn how you can sell your skills and how you are different from others.
- Sales professionals have that strong ego drive. Have strong confidence in yourself.
- Strong communication skills are important. Be prepared with why you want to apply for a position. Know the key points about the organization you are interviewing with.
- Be active on social media like LinkedIn. Have a purpose when sending messages on LinkedIn.

Murali:

- List your skills, listen to yourself and have confidence in your capabilities.
- Be knowledgeable about the labour market trends and multicultural landscape in Canada.
- Be active on social media like LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter.
- Join organizations and volunteer at events.
- Get familiar with behavioural interviews. Focus on yourself, know how to dress up and walk with confidence.
- Match your skills to what you see in job descriptions. As a newcomer to Canada, you can apply your soft skills that you have gained from previous jobs to other (newer) positions.

Closing Remarks

Wendy ended the morning session thanking all of the panellists for their valued time, effort and contribution throughout the session. She acknowledged the fact that it was a great learning experience for everyone in the room. She also thanked all of the participants in the session and invited them to come back in the afternoon after the lunch break.

Her three concrete tips were: **Hope, vision and action.**

SKILL-BUILDING PRESENTATIONS:

Speaking With Confidence

The presentation '*Speaking With Confidence*' was delivered in each of the five morning sector hub sessions by one of the three presenters from *Voice to Word Consulting*. The key points of the presentation are summarized below. '*Speaking with Confidence*' focussed on strategies to be clear and effective in presentations. It plays an important role in job interviews.

The presenter shared an example of a friend who had some difficulties speaking at events and invited her to give him some feedback; he was concerned that he was not reaching his audience effectively due to his accent. It turned out that there were many other things he could do to improve his communication and have the desired impact. His accent was not the problem. An accent is never an issue as long as one is clear.



ENGINEERING • HEALTHCARE SECTORS

PRESENTER: **Heather Chetwynd, MBA—Founder, *Voice to Word Consulting***

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY • FINANCE AND ACCOUNTING SECTORS

PRESENTER: **Mark Prince Voice, Speech and Accent Coach, *Voice to Word Consulting***

SALES, MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS SECTOR

PRESENTER: **Julie Cohn Speech Therapist; Grammar, Voice and Accent Coach, *Voice to Word Consulting***

SKILL-BUILDING PRESENTATIONS:

Speaking With Confidence**Emphasis was on the following areas:****VOICE**

Learn to use one's voice while in conversation with someone. Slow down, take time to pause, group one's thoughts and give people time to absorb what is being said. Pay attention to phrasing, pacing, speed and intonation. One's voice should go up and down. The techniques of speaking and wave pattern add meaning and help the listener to understand and absorb what is being said.

Uptalk: The presenter also cautioned the use of uptalk in professional settings. Uptalk or upspeak is using a rising intonation at the end of a phrase or sentence, as if the statement were a question. It's okay in the friend zone. People perceive uptalk as appearing less confident and insecure about what one is saying and ultimately may cause the listener to give less credibility to the speaker.

Volume: Volume is also important when speaking. Volume does not mean yelling but supporting the words with one's breath. It is culturally specific but if people need to struggle to hear someone speak, then they probably won't bother with them. The volume appropriate for speaking in a group is different than speaking to one person.

BODY

Body posture: Focus on having good (proper) body posture. Raise the head and chest; this demonstrates confidence. Avoid unnecessary movement of body parts like hands, e.g., jerky hands. Use smooth, varied movements. Move hands above the waist. There are cultural norms when presenting to an audience.

Eye Contact: Look at everyone while talking, not too much and not too little. Command the audience by making appropriate eye contact. If using notes, look up from the page. Eye contact is important before proceeding; it gives visual feedback from the audience.

FEEDBACK

Every culture has its own range of permissible and not permissible feedback. Each also has its own degree of collectivism vs. individualism. Status is not important in Canada; what's important is the individual. When talking about providing feedback, it is important to know the appropriate level of directness. It is affected by cultural expectations. Compared to other societies, Canadians tend to be less direct and softer in their approach to providing feedback. What this means in the Canadian context is you will want to choose your words carefully. Be a good listener so you can respond to questions appropriately. Be prepared to speak in a polite manner being careful not to use words that may seem too harsh.



SKILL-BUILDING PRESENTATIONS:

Speaking With Confidence



You can get every kind of feedback, e.g., good and bad feedback. Sandwiching negative feedback between two positive pieces of feedback is important. Before providing feedback, preface the listener; prepare them to receive it. There is a need to practise words and vocabulary. It shows a professional attitude. Providing feedback is a professional skill that needs to be considered and practiced. You can soften what you are saying by using modals (modal verbs) such as could and may, phrases like a bit and not really, asking questions or making suggestions. Note the difference between "May I make a suggestion?" and "Can I give you some advice?" They are perceived very differently. How you structure the question can request agreement with an idea instead of a fresh opinion. These specific choices will help refine one's communication skills.

Finally, to learn and utilize these skills in one's speech, always be aware of repetition. In short, *practice, practice, practice.*

Q&A

Q. Is there something in spoken communication that is more Canadian?

Presenter: We use our voice with confidence and that may come across as loud or aggressive to some people.

Q. Are employers coming to you for advice?

Presenter: Yes. For example "You should do it this way" comes across as a moral imperative instead of a helpful suggestion to most Canadians.

AFTERNOON

SECTOR HUB PRESENTATIONS

REGULATORY, ACCREDITATION, ACADEMIA, ASSOCIATIONS
SKILL-BUILDING PRESENTATIONS

As an essential and popular component of the day's proceedings, the afternoon sector hub discussions highlighted speakers representing employers and HR managers. The 12th IEP Conference attracted more than 1000 delegates to the sector hub discussions.

As in previous years, delegates had one of five sector hub concurrent sessions to choose from: Engineering; Information Technology; Sales, Marketing & Communications; Finance & Accounting; and Healthcare & Related Professions. The facilitators worked with the panellists to ensure a smooth information exchange. Each speaker made a short introduction, participated in a Q & A session and offered advice to delegates.

Delegates tend to rate these afternoon sector hub presentations slightly higher than the morning sessions and this year was no exception. Based on other qualitative feedback received from delegates through the evaluation forms, conference organizers are aware that delegates appreciate the opportunity to speak to employers about job search related issues, a topic reserved for the afternoon sessions.

Scribes assigned to each sector hub recorded panellist introductions, delegates' questions, panellists' responses, trends identified within the sector and career tips to assist IEPs with integrating into the Canadian workplace.

ENGINEERING

AND RELATED PROFESSIONS



AFTERNOON SECTOR HUB
PRESENTATIONS

REGULATORY, ACCREDITATION
AND ACADEMIC BODIES

ENGINEERING AND RELATED PROFESSIONS

AFTERNOON SECTOR HUB PRESENTATIONS • EMPLOYERS AND HR PROFESSIONALS

Facilitator**Mark Franklin, M.Ed., P.Eng., CMF** – President & Practice Leader at *CareerCycles Associates*

Mark leads *CareerCycles*, a career management social enterprise with clients across Canada, and a team of career professionals. *CareerCycles* (www.careercycles.com) is the career advisory firm for members of *Ontario Society of Professional Engineers*, *University of Toronto Alumni Association*, and other leading professional associations. *CareerCycles Associates* have helped empower the careers of over 3500 clients from 80+ countries. A licenced professional engineer, Mark earned the Career Management Fellow from the *Institute of Career Certification International*. In the community, Mark hosts *Career Buzz* radio show, Wednesdays at 11am on *CIUT 89.5 FM*.

PANEL MEMBERS

Mark Hughes – Senior Engineer at *City of Toronto*

Mark Hughes is a civil engineer with the *City of Toronto*, an organization that provides diverse services. He described difficulties he encounters hiring for management positions. At the City, they are currently in the process of reducing the technical staff and increasing the engineering staff.

Moli Malichi – Talent Acquisition Specialist at *HATCH*

Moli Malachi, herself an IEP, is a Talent Acquisition Specialist for *HATCH*, an employee-owned, multidisciplinary professional services firm that supplies engineering, project and construction management services, process and business consulting and operational services to the mining, metallurgical, energy and infrastructure industries. *HATCH* employs 9000 people around the globe and has \$35 billion in projects.

Randy Sinukoff, M.A.Sc., P.Eng., EP, EP (CEA), EP (EMSLA) - Senior Consultant at *Stantec Consulting Ltd.*

Randy Sinukoff is a chemical engineer by trade who holds a professional designation for engineering consulting. *Stantec Consulting* is a broad publicly traded company that takes a different approach; according to their website, they collaborate across disciplines and industries and design with community in mind.

Paula Calderon – Talent Management Solutions Consultant at *Drake International*

Paula Calderon works for an HR consulting firm on a talent management solutions team. She has been in Canada for 14 years. Her focus has been on training and development. She specializes in psychometric assessments and has developed a personal brand training program.

Manan Raval, MEng., EIT - Project Coordinator at *AECOM Canada Ltd.*

Manan Raval holds a Master of Civil Engineering from the *University of Ottawa*. He is pursuing his P.Eng. designation. He has six years' experience as a civil engineer and is currently working at *Aecom* as a Project Coordinator on rail projects for *Metrolinx*.

ENGINEERING AND RELATED PROFESSIONS

AFTERNOON SECTOR HUB PRESENTATIONS • EMPLOYERS AND HR PROFESSIONALS

QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION

Delegates were asked to discuss questions in groups of two to three and write down questions for the panelists.

Q. Are there any non-traditional ways to job search?

- Paula:** A large percentage of jobs are filled through non-traditional means such as networking. Join a network or affinity group. Studies corroborate this.
- Moli:** Know your strengths and where you can add value to the organization for your benefit. Employers are more open to being contacted directly because they know it's a competitive job market. You can do cold calling but make sure you're prepared.
- Manan:** Use *LinkedIn*; it can be helpful in getting you out there.

Q. Is the PEO licence a must-have?

- Randy:** For certain regulatory requirements, yes, you need a P.Eng. It helps to have a P.Eng. when you're working on a team. Know how it works so that you know what your objectives are when speaking with an employer.
- Mark H.:** Senior engineers need to be professional engineers.
- Paula:** It depends on the company, the role and the requirements for the role they're trying to fill.

Q. In addition to licensing, what are other requirements for the job?

- Moli:** Employers look for an all-in-one employee, i.e. a business leader with technical skills for a long-term cultural fit. They look for people who are innovative and flexible self-starters who can work on a team. A lot of projects are team projects.
- Paula:** Soft skills are at the top of employer's lists. They are very, very important.
- Randy:** I ask mentees, "Do you know yourself?" You need to be able to translate your soft skills.

Q. Is there any chance for newcomers to join the City of Toronto with no engineering experience?

- Mark H.:** No, because you need experience to get your licence. You can apply for a different position to try and get your foot in the door.
- Randy:** Most companies will not allow people to volunteer due to liability concerns.

ENGINEERING AND RELATED PROFESSIONS

AFTERNOON SECTOR HUB PRESENTATIONS • EMPLOYERS AND HR PROFESSIONALS

Q. What do you look for in a resume and cover letter? What are the characteristics of a winning resume?

Moli: Know the value of a strong cover letter. Use it to tell us your story – what you're passionate about. Use non-traditional ways to apply for a position. Be pro-active!

Paula: "Know Yourself to Sell Yourself" is a personal branding workshop I developed. Consider your cover letter as a tool for branding yourself. Your unique stamp needs to stand out to employers. Make sure it is consistent and clear. Highlight what makes you different from the competition.

Q. How long do you keep information on file?

Mark H.: The *City of Toronto* does not keep things. Check for errors or your resume will get thrown out. Give us context to your experiences instead of just dates. During interviews, talk about failures if you have learned from them.

Moli: Once your resume is in our database, chances are I will come across it if you've properly classified your information.

Randy: Only specific positions require an online application. Usually it's a position they are having a hard time filling. Many companies have bonuses for referrals, so word of mouth is a good method for finding a job. There are some good positions that aren't posted.

Q. I applied for a job and no one contacted me. Why?

Moli: Technology is used to launch these experiences. Many resumes are received. Therefore, it is important that yours stands out. It is impossible to respond to everyone who applies for a position.

Q. Does age affect recruiters' decisions? Names?

Paula: It's really all about "fit".

Q. What does "fit" mean?

Manan: Companies are looking for specific skills.

Paula: Job seekers are also responsible for finding a job that is suitable for them. It's not just about having technical skills. If you're not a people person and you're applying for a customer service job then it won't be a good fit.

Q. How do you get around Human Resources (HR)?

Randy: Get to know people. Learn how Canada works. Getting to know people is how you get around HR.

ENGINEERING AND RELATED PROFESSIONS

AFTERNOON SECTOR HUB PRESENTATIONS • EMPLOYERS AND HR PROFESSIONALS

Q. How do you respond when asked about your salary expectations?

Moli: It's important to make sure that we're aligned to get an appreciation of your expectations. Don't be afraid of this question. Do your research and know the market. Don't be afraid to show the employer data to demonstrate you know your data and your worth.

Paula: That's why networking is good, because you get to know the answer to these types of questions.

Q. How can you get around not having any experience in Canada?

Randy: Volunteer. Even though it is not paid, it is still experience.

Paula: The value of volunteering is something that we do not realize. Building on skills is highly valued by employers. Good to always build on skills. No one believes in words until they are demonstrated. When formatting your resume, think of everything that you have done. Many times we forget about some of the things we have done.

Moli: Use your resume to show initiative so that an employer can see what you're working on. Include not just what you've done but also what you're working on.

Facilitator Mark Franklin announced to attendees that there were sheets of paper posted around the room indicating different engineering areas including Aerospace; Civil; Chemical; Environment; Metals, Mining & Materials; Computer Software; and Industrial. He asked delegates to locate their engineering discipline and to work in pairs to answer the following questions:

- *What did you like most about your recent job?*
- *What three skills did you use most to be successful?*
- *What made you choose your engineering discipline?*
- *What did you do right after you graduated?*
- *How did coming to Canada affect your career?*
- *What's one thing you've learned about making important life and career choices?*

After giving delegates time to interview each other, Mark did a quick debrief on the interviews. He then opened the floor to some last questions.

Q. How do you get that first experience?

Various: Volunteer to get experience. Work on a committee. Volunteering builds on the skills you want to develop, not just as a job seeker. It is a great way to always be doing professional development. You can also meet people through courses you take. This can help you to find work and fill in the gaps in your skills. Volunteering is important for hard skills but more important for developing soft skills, e.g. communication skills.

ENGINEERING AND RELATED PROFESSIONS

AFTERNOON SECTOR HUB PRESENTATIONS • EMPLOYERS AND HR PROFESSIONALS

ENGINEERING

Key Tips For Delegates

- ◆ Do more networking. Be patient.
- ◆ Check out Prepare for Canada on *LinkedIn*.
Register for *Know Yourself to Sell Yourself: In-Depth Personal Brand* training.
- ◆ Know yourself. Get excited about yourself.
- ◆ Be daring. Initiate meaningful conversations.
- ◆ Personal development is a continuous process.
- ◆ Find out what you love to do and go do it.
- ◆ The HATCH CEO started out as a new graduate.

Closing Remarks

Facilitator **Mark Franklin** closed the session expressing: *"It was an enlightening afternoon with great panellists."*

FINANCE & ACCOUNTING



AFTERNOON SECTOR HUB
PRESENTATIONS

REGULATORY, ACCREDITATION
AND ACADEMIC BODIES

FINANCE & ACCOUNTING

AFTERNOON SECTOR HUB PRESENTATIONS • EMPLOYERS AND HR PROFESSIONALS

Facilitator

Joyce Kaplan, B.C.L., LL.B., A.C.P.C. - Business & Career Coach and Legal Consultant at *Kaplan Coaching*

Joyce expressed her appreciation to the afternoon panellists, all representatives from the business sector as well as recruiters. She reminded delegates to fill out the evaluations in their package before leaving for the day. She also extended thanks to all the sponsors for the event.

PANEL MEMBERS

Jodie Lobana, CPA, CA, CPA (US-IL), CIA, CISA, PMP - Managing Director at *Lobana Consulting Group Inc.*

Jodie's business, *Lobana Consulting Group*, serves Fortune 500 companies. She is currently teaching at three universities and sits on several advisory boards. Jodie wears her CPA designation with pride.

Pankaj Mehra – Director, India, South Asia & Philippines Markets at *ScotiaBank*

Pankaj Mehra shared the story of the mnemonic device he used to help people remember and pronounce his name when he arrived; he asked people to imagine him with punk rocker hair. He suggested others are welcome to use this idea. He arrived in Canada in 1996 and told delegates they were lucky to have these sessions as well as settlement services for immigrants, which weren't available when he arrived. His current employer *Scotiabank* has also developed an immigrant settlement program.

Kamal Hassan - CEO at *IncMind*

Kamal Hassan was born in Canada and educated in Europe and Canada with both an MBA and bachelor degree in engineering physics. Following corporate and management roles, he has spent more than 15 years as an entrepreneur and truly enjoys teaching and mentoring other new entrepreneurs.

Maysa Hawwash - National Manager for Talent Management Solutions at *Drake International*

Using a consultative approach, Maysa Hawwash helps companies and individuals manage the full life cycle of their careers. Her current employer, *Drake International* has a special sector for IEPs. Maysa enjoys identifying talent by tracking and measuring performance indicators.

Krish Gupta, CPA, CGA, MBA - Head of Finance at *Dufferin Construction Company*

Krish Gupta has worked in Canada and internationally in various roles including finance, budgeting, strategic planning and accounting. Krish has been with Dufferin Construction for over 17 years. His designations include CPA, CGA and an MBA from the *University of Toronto*.

Upkar Arora - Managing Director at *Illumina Partners*

Upkar Arora came to Canada initially to study accounting at the *University of Waterloo* in London, Ontario. Previous corporate work includes *KPMG* and *Trizec Corporation*. Currently Managing Director of *Illumina Partners*, he advises companies on operational, financial and strategic planning and also teaches at the *University of Waterloo*. His volunteer commitments include *Big Brothers* and *Big Sisters* and Chair of the Board for the *McMichael Canadian Art Collection*. He wanted to know who was represented in the audience. He let delegates know that panellists had created a list of questions to which the answers could be customized according to the people in attendance.

FINANCE & ACCOUNTING

AFTERNOON SECTOR HUB PRESENTATIONS • EMPLOYERS AND HR PROFESSIONALS

Facilitator Joyce Kaplan asked IEPs for a show of hands as to how many have been in Canada less than 10 years; more than half of the room raised their hands. About 40% have been in Canada less than five years. By a show of hands, 20 people have a foreign equivalent of CGA, eight people already have a CPA designation and 20 more are currently working on a CPA designation.

First Role Play Demo: NETWORKING

Kamal and Jodie volunteered to demonstrate a networking introduction between strangers.

Stranger 1: *"What brings you here?"*

Stranger 2: *"Joyce Kaplan invited me here. What do you do?"*

Stranger 1: *"I am currently teaching at a couple of universities. I have taught myself. I am currently mentoring entrepreneurs."*

This back and forth discussion leads to an agreement to meet for coffee, to discussion and to possible collaboration at an upcoming event for students.

Jodie: Successful networking is being able to articulate who I am and what I have to offer.

Maysa: For networking you need to be able to explain what you are looking for, and the ability to articulate the specifics. Do not focus on generic *"What I do"*. Speak confidently about what you would like to do and ask to speak further at a future time. For example, *"I would like to work as a controller in a food and beverage company."*

Pankaj: When networking, you cannot say that you are looking for a job in banking. Make sure you are familiar with the skills required for the positions being offered.

Jodie: I recommend asking, *"What CAN I do for you?"* even if a position is filled. Then you will be right there when something else comes open or they will recommend you to another firm that is hiring.

Kamal: I became employed on a paid contract, following a volunteer position.

Jodie: Volunteering is valuable. All three university positions came from volunteering on an auditing committee, and then chairing the committee.

Upkar: I recommend looking up author *Malcolm Gladwell* on the strength of weak ties. Referrals will come from others connected to your network. Consistent interaction with the network will lead to more opportunities than interactions with your closest friends and family. Start with giving; this will lead to your own success. If you give first, people will be more likely to reciprocate.

Krish: Someone from last year's Conference continued to keep in touch with me monthly, even though I initially did not respond. Then when a position became available that was a good match, I called him back with the information. The one-minute speech is important.

FINANCE & ACCOUNTING

AFTERNOON SECTOR HUB PRESENTATIONS • EMPLOYERS AND HR PROFESSIONALS

- Kamal:** Associations are valuable networks for volunteering as well.
- Pankaj:** I started off in Canada in my mid-40s and volunteered in the neighbourhood to get information on local customs and work culture. These topics need to be worked into your conversations.
- Jodie:** We are all tuned into one radio channel: "WIIIFM" - what's in it for me? You have to tune in to this channel. What's in it for them (employers) can become discussion topics.

Second Role Play Demo: INTERVIEWING

Panellists Maysa and Upkar performed an interview simulation. The interviewer asked the candidate to explain why he is suited to this position. In his response, he included a few industry challenges and explained how these problems were solved.

- Upkar:** Weaker candidates answer more generally while good candidates answer more specifically with examples from their past experience. This was the problem, this is how I tackled it and this was the outcome. This is how I saved the company money. Explain in a way that has tangible meaning to the prospective employer.
- Maysa:** Have good questions prepared to ask about the company, not ones that can be easily researched online. For example: What is your leadership style? What is your staff turnover rate? What is your preferred investment style? Let's fast forward one year and you are telling me that I have done an outstanding job. What is it that I have done to get this positive review?
- Kamal:** Work on your *LinkedIn* profile and continue to work on it. Keep it fresh.

FINANCE & ACCOUNTING

AFTERNOON SECTOR HUB PRESENTATIONS • EMPLOYERS AND HR PROFESSIONALS

QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION

Delegates were asked to discuss questions in groups of two to three and write down questions for the panelists.

Q. How do I find a mentor?

- Pankaj:** There were no immigrant networks when I came to Canada. Many options exist now. Scotiabank even has a version of settlement support, networking, and mentoring.
- Krish:** When looking for a mentor, know what you want to get out of the relationship. Do not expect to be told what to do.
- Jodie:** Mentoring is a two-way relationship. You cannot just take. Be willing to share some of your skills and talents.

Q. What are the key skills and competencies that got you to where you are today?

- Jodie:** Work hard at whatever project is in front of you. Become a big light by working the hardest. Keep shining your star and someone will notice. A designation gives credibility and gives you more employment options.
- Pankaj:** Focus is important. I worked toward what I wanted to do and worked on my communication skills, networking etc. Have commitment and do not take just any sort of job. Perseverance is important. I made a commitment to myself to wake up and make contact with at least one new person each day. Research the company and the contacts that you need to speak with there, and then reach out.
- Kamal:** Before getting my MBA, I would not have started my own business. Networks are critical. Ethics lead to trust and ethics are key to entrepreneurial success.
- Maysa:** I have had a diverse career path. Being flexible and open-minded enough to look at all opportunities that come across your path. Have integrity in your work and find ways to add value or to bring a service orientation to all your jobs. Then people will vouch for you. Exceed their expectations.
- Krish:** The day after I arrived in Canada, I realized that I had to enrol in a CPA certification program. Once you get the first job, use your creativity to prove yourself. You are always there to help the company and solve problems. When I was feeling discouraged before I got my designation, my boss said, "If you want to raise the flag to the top of the pole, you must see the job through."
- Upkar:** Curiosity and a passion for life-long learning are essential. Commitment to excellence for myself and others is also important. Integrity leads to trust and reliability and these lead to business success.
- Joyce:** Build your personal brand, as it is the only thing you can rely on.

FINANCE & ACCOUNTING

AFTERNOON SECTOR HUB PRESENTATIONS • EMPLOYERS AND HR PROFESSIONALS

Q. How important is the CPA certification?

- Pankaj:** It is not always, absolutely, required for every position.
- Krish:** Sometimes the resume does not get to me if there is no designation. It is a sign of commitment to keeping up-to-date.
- Maysa:** A designation shows broad exposure. It shows you are a well-rounded professional in the field and have multiple skills that will help you progress.
- Kamal:** HR departments in large companies care about the designation. With foreign credentials, go for smaller companies while you are working on your Canadian designation.

Q. What are the current market trends?

- Upkar:** Market trends are generally good right now. The nature of finance work is changing. Most work is in teams and becoming less technical. The cultural fit is really important; companies do not want to babysit new hires.
- Krish:** I can only speak to the construction industry. Accounting and finance is more complicated than it used to be. Construction projects are moving away from the traditional bidding process and getting more complex. The construction business is pretty stable right now.
- Maysa:** Strength in soft skills is a growing trend including problem solving. You need to be highly articulate in business situations. Analytics and risk work are growing a lot so check out education in these areas to increase your skill sets.
- Pankaj:** I did not really know what “risk management” was when I was appointed to global risk management for Scotiabank. I did understand however what the challenge was and could put the team together to solve the problem.
- Jodie:** Specialize in only a couple of business sectors and not too many broad categories. SAP & Oracle technical skills are important; keep current.

Q. How can I raise money for my business?

- Kamal:** Banks are not interested in risk. They are supposed to look after their clients’ money. You are looking for an investor and not a loan. If you are not willing to invest in the business and you cannot get anyone else you already know to invest, it will be difficult to convince a stranger to help. To get outside investors, you must prove that you and others you know believe in the business. Make sales and reinvest the

FINANCE & ACCOUNTING

AFTERNOON SECTOR HUB PRESENTATIONS • EMPLOYERS AND HR PROFESSIONALS

money. There are really only three angel investor groups in this area. Remember that 99% of investing is outside these angel groups.

Angel One Investor Network: <http://angelonenetwork.ca/>

Maple Leaf Angels: <https://www.mapleleafangels.com/>

Golden Triangle Angel Network, in Waterloo: <http://goldentriangleangelnet.ca/>

Q. What is a good fit and how can you show it?

Maysa: We define the required behavioural competencies and have the tools to assess emotional intelligence. We work to find the best fit of core competencies. Be prepared with scenarios that are specific and then you can drill down to show what you have done. Ask questions about who else is on the team.

Kamal: The right person trumps the skill set. Do you care about what we (the company) are doing?

Jodie: Look for key words in a job posting and highlight related experience using these key words. Use key words early on in your documents, i.e. near the top.

Maysa: Recruiters are lazy. Have the key words upfront to make sure they are read by the reviewer.

Q. Rate the importance of the cover letter.

Kamal: The cover letter shows your intentions. The resume is for the facts.

Upkar: The cover letter gives you more opportunities to articulate the connections and show what you know about the company and their situation. Communicate what you bring to them.

Jodie: Sometimes, the cover letter will not be read. Some hiring managers will say they don't have the time while others admit they do not like cover letters. Make sure all keywords are in the resume.

Joyce: List your interests in your resume.

Maysa: Some employers are looking for a passion or outside interests.

Kamal: Interests make an easy start to an interview. Most like discussing interests and they must be truthful and provable. Your LinkedIn profile should include your interests.

Q. How do I get into banking?

Pankaj: Each different sector and HR division has their own pool of applicants. Make applications for multiple positions to get into each pool.

Jodie: Some special settlement services provide internships (the government pays all required registration fees including WSIB, etc.). Banks are not allowed to have volunteers; there are privacy and liability issues.

FINANCE & ACCOUNTING

AFTERNOON SECTOR HUB PRESENTATIONS • EMPLOYERS AND HR PROFESSIONALS

Krish: *Dufferin Construction* tries to help new immigrants with internal programs.

Upkar: Eighty percent of new jobs in Canada are created by small to medium-sized businesses with less than 100 employees.

Q. How do you get connected to small and medium-sized businesses?

Kamal: There are a few business incubators around. I recommend the *Toronto Business Development Centre* and *MaRS Discovery District* in Toronto. There is a self-employment option for those who qualify for EI.

Pankaj: Talk to a small business advisor at the banks about starting a business and building your business plan.

Q. Using LinkedIn, how do you approach and ask to have coffee with someone you do not yet know?

Kamal: Check the contacts of your connections and ask to have a proper introduction.

Jodie: Create a connection. For example "I was at the IEP Conference and you mentioned X. I would like to discuss this more. Can we meet for coffee?"

Maysa: Make sure your profile looks good and keep it current.

Pankaj: I am more open to phone meetings. "When is the best time to call you for a brief chat?" No need to travel to another location and 10 – 15 minutes maximum for the call.

Jodie: Suggest three different specific times to have the call. Then they can pick or come back with alternate suggestions that work for them.

Kamal: Never contact someone twice in the same week. A reminder a week or 10 days later is often appreciated. Make your requests very simple and easy to comply with.

Jodie: In the second email, mention their recent blog post, and renew the request. Do not just forward the original email as a reminder.

Note: Some panellists preferred a forwarded email as this linked everything together. There is no single correct answer on this issue; it's a matter of personal preference.

FINANCE & ACCOUNTING

AFTERNOON SECTOR HUB PRESENTATIONS • EMPLOYERS AND HR PROFESSIONALS

FINANCE & ACCOUNTING

Key Tips For Delegates

Joyce asked the panellists to share their best tips for IEPs to better position themselves with employers.

Maysa:

- ◆ Analytics and risk management are huge demand areas. Volunteer for a specific project in this area and then have real experience to discuss.
- ◆ Have a clear vision of what your value is and what you bring. Be able to articulate what it means to you.
- ◆ Do not be afraid of saying 'no' to a job. The fit must align for you as well as the employer. Do not sell yourself short, as another opportunity is just around the corner for your dream job.

Jodie:

- ◆ Enroll in CPA certification and indicate that you are pursuing the CPA designation.
- ◆ Every moment and every person you meet is an opportunity to give. You cannot take anything from someone that they do not want to give. Do your best and leave the fruits to the universe. To illustrate this, let me tell you a story about a recent trip I made. While I was in Dublin, I decided to talk to the taxi driver. During the discussion, he found out that I was in training and he told me about an Education Expo in Dubai in 2020. As a corporate trainer, he recommended that I attend. This is something I would never have known about had I not decided to talk to the driver.

Pankaj:

- ◆ Differentiate yourself; be who you really are by being genuinely interested in other people.
- ◆ Build on the insights from the beginning of this session. You are all entrepreneurs. You will all be successful in getting here.

Krish:

- ◆ Include your soft skills in your professional profile and put them at the top.
- ◆ Define what work you want. Then define three options to get you to that goal. Then start on the best path for yourself knowing that you have other options.

FINANCE & ACCOUNTING

AFTERNOON SECTOR HUB PRESENTATIONS • EMPLOYERS AND HR PROFESSIONALS



FINANCE & ACCOUNTING

Kamal:

- ◆ Proceed with your resume and a mock interview with a friend. Practice and request feedback; you will get better by doing it at least once per week.
- ◆ Find a way to do what you stand for. What will your legacy be? And then find a way to get paid for it. It can be tax policy or loss prevention: whatever you are passionate about.
- ◆ You have an opportunity to recreate yourself here in Canada. Really think about what you want to do.

Upkar:

- ◆ Some people do not understand what soft skills they have. Examples are: facing challenges and solving problems (these are applicable in any work position). Haven't you been doing that since you immigrated? Reframe your skills and your passion.
- ◆ Define success in your own way. External measures that you bring to Canada may no longer apply here. Be patient and learn from the challenges you face.

HEALTHCARE

AND RELATED PROFESSIONS



AFTERNOON SECTOR HUB
PRESENTATIONS

REGULATORY, ACCREDITATION
AND ACADEMIC BODIES

HEALTHCARE AND RELATED PROFESSIONS

AFTERNOON SECTOR HUB PRESENTATIONS • EMPLOYERS AND HR PROFESSIONALS

Facilitator:

Cathy Tait, B.Sc., CMC, Principal, *Western Management Consultants*

Cathy welcomed the delegates and invited them to stay for the session. She referred to *Frank O'Dea* as an exemplary role model, as someone who had learned to adjust and adapt in his career and who had ultimately taken his wealth to create social enterprises. She encouraged IEPs to give each other a hand up and to help people in their career circles.

Like *Frank O'Dea*, it was a dime (something small and seemingly insignificant) that changed his life to build a billion dollar enterprise. She suggested that they adopt the mantra: "*You have a right to be here.*" She provided encouragement to the skilled immigrants in attendance emphasizing that the choice to come to Canada was the right decision and that the IEP Conference was the right place to start an initiative toward building a successful career.

PANEL MEMBERS

Kate Wilson, RN, EdD - Consultant, Leadership & Organizational Development at *St. Michael's Hospital*

Kate has professional working experience in different departments, all in a hospital environment, including clinical work educator and patient education specialist. She has now found herself in a management role hiring internationally skilled professionals.

David Denov - Senior Manager, National Health Services at *Deloitte*

David is a certified Healthcare Information and Management Systems professional, with 17 years' experience in a diverse range of healthcare programs and strategic planning. Core focus areas of his specialization are enterprise architecture, mHealth, information management, data governance, methodology/process documentation and development, project management, team and staff management.

Naseem Somani - President and CEO at *Gamma-Dynacare Medical Laboratories*

Naseem is the current Chair of the *Ontario Association of Medical Laboratories* and a board member with the *Toronto East General Hospital* and *Impact Genetics*. She is working in the clinical laboratories/medical lab business with over 28 years of professional experience. She led the consolidation of *Dynacare* with *Gamma* creating the largest laboratory of its kind in Ontario. She has then taken it from an Ontario company to a business with national presence fully diversified in clinical testing, insurance testing and paramedical services, corporate wellness and healthcare logistics. She is also a key participant in government advisory committees to improve healthcare policy.

Heather Shantora - Chief Operating Officer at *Quindell Health*

Heather currently serves as the Chief Operating Officer of *Quindell Health*. She successfully deals with landscape-changing legislative developments and the consequent operational challenges taking into account her leadership skills. Heather has served prestigious positions such as Director of Communications, Director of Business Development, and Director of Marketing and New Ventures. Her professional experience brought increased revenue and diversified funding streams to the Canadian health business.

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HEALTHCARE AND RELATED PROFESSIONS

AFTERNOON SECTOR HUB PRESENTATIONS • EMPLOYERS AND HR PROFESSIONALS

PANEL MEMBERS

Vija Mallia - Director, *Long-Term Care Homes & Services (LTCHS) Division* at *City of Toronto*

Vija has held various positions in her professional career including Acting Director, Administration & Support Services (LTCHS), and Administrator of *Castleview Wychwood Towers*. She also has a wide range of nursing experience at various posts such as Director of Nursing at *York Central Hospital* in Richmond Hill, Ontario; Director of Nursing at *Kristus Darzs Latvian Home*, Woodbridge, Ontario; Nursing Coordinator at the *Addiction Research Foundation* in Toronto, Ontario; and Nurse Manager of the ICU, medical/surgical unit, and the emergency department at the *Northwestern General Hospital*. Just last year, she became the recipient of the *2014 Leadership Award* for her demonstrated exemplary leadership within the long-term care sector presented by the *Ontario Association of Non-Profit Homes and Services for Seniors (OANHSS)*. In her current role, she is working to advance the Toronto Seniors Strategy.

Monica Edwards - Recruitment Team, *Long-Term Care Homes & Services (LTCHS) Division* at *City of Toronto*

Monica is working on human rights, recruitment for long-term care and the hiring process for IEPs in the public health sector at the *City of Toronto*.

Aakilah Ade RN, AFCN, LNC - Co-Founder & CEO at *iNtel Health Services Inc.*

Aakilah works as a healthcare consultant, an educator and instructor for *Personal Support Worker* and *RPN programs*. She has 30 years of nursing experience in a hospital environment. She is involved in nursing instruction programs in various institutions like *Seneca College* and *Centennial College*.



HEALTHCARE AND RELATED PROFESSIONS

AFTERNOON SECTOR HUB PRESENTATIONS • EMPLOYERS AND HR PROFESSIONALS

QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION

Delegates were asked to discuss questions in groups of two to three and write down questions for the panelists.

Q. What is the importance of volunteering?

David: Volunteering will provide the professional experience of the working environment and it's also a beneficial edge for skill improvement. Through volunteering, one can access networking opportunities and understand the upcoming needs and opportunities in the Canadian healthcare system.

Kate: I recommend volunteering opportunities. Don't hesitate to make contact. Set up an appointment with the hiring manager. Volunteering will give you the opportunity to integrate with the diversity that is here in Canada. Check out the Marketplace here today to see if you can volunteer at any of the organizations represented there.

Q. What are the areas, where Canadian experience isn't necessary?

Vija: Get registered as an internationally trained nurse. It doesn't need Canadian experience. In other related fields, Canadian experience can be obtained by volunteering in healthcare related professions.

Q. How does the hiring process in Toronto work?

Monica: Human resources management representatives post and carry out the hiring process. They evaluate resumes for long-term recruitment; sometimes it takes up to six months. They will keep resumes for six months to be considered for future job compatibility and openings. Be hopeful and continue to apply to different opportunities. Keep being consistent in your job search. Opportunities do exist in the public health sector in Toronto. Evaluate the job competition. I recommend checking out the City of Toronto's job board.

Q. What is the appropriate process for finding and getting connected with job opportunities?

Heather: Search for companies and make contacts with consultants to start your research. Find recruiters, meet them and check out the job requirements and qualifications. Check out the competencies and your compatibility with different jobs.

Q. How are job seeking opportunities increased with multiple experiences?

David: It depends on the area and the market you wish to get into. When jobs pop up at companies you are interested in, even if it is not the right position, understand who is hiring and find recruiters. Do your research and find the opportunities. Figure out your experience.

HEALTHCARE AND RELATED PROFESSIONS

AFTERNOON SECTOR HUB PRESENTATIONS • EMPLOYERS AND HR PROFESSIONALS

Q. Where are the job opportunities for biotechnology professionals?

Naseem: Scope of practice is now changing with integration of diverse services and demands, so there are upcoming opportunities including Physician Assistant, Pathologists' Assistant and Histology Assistant. Communication skills are essential. Take an inventory of your knowledge and brand yourself. Redo or reshape your resume to enhance your opportunities.

Heather: Job opportunities as Physician Assistant and Dental Assistant offer a very good salary. The same goes for Dental Hygienists, Dermatologists, Rehabilitation Assistants, Orthopaedic Assistants, as well as Certified Nutritional Practitioners and Therapists. Going to the relevant association is a good thing. Jobs in biopharma include managing data and understanding the clinical aspects. Clinical trials need biotechnology as a specialization.

Q. How can internationally trained medical lab technicians find appropriate jobs?

Naseem: Yes. It's a great business in healthcare. There is a huge repository of samples and inventories. Seventy percent of decisions are based on laboratory experiments. You get to work with physicians and patients. You have to be very, very flexible about opportunities. Experience at large laboratories can provide insight as to how we can properly manage healthcare and its demands as well as proper usage of resources. Reinventing yourself is an important key.

Q. Does Canada have a job market for Medical Lab Technicians?

David: Yes, absolutely. There is a big market in clinical data management (handling) and analysis. Other competencies needed are healthcare IT, knowledge of advanced symmetrical features as well as professional skills.

HEALTHCARE AND RELATED PROFESSIONS

AFTERNOON SECTOR HUB PRESENTATIONS • EMPLOYERS AND HR PROFESSIONALS

Key Tips For Delegates

Kate:

- ◆ Continue on your path with consistency and passion. *"We are entrepreneurs of our own careers."*
- ◆ Search for job openings in critical care.
- ◆ Hone your communication and conflict resolution skills.
- ◆ Apply for healthcare programs with a good financial plan.
- ◆ Keep networking.

David:

- ◆ Be innovative, creative and offer up great ideas. Execute your skills and knowledge.
- ◆ Clinical data handling and analysis is a big up-and-coming job market.
- ◆ Work and practice in family care hospitals.
- ◆ Network, network, network. Listen first to understand your contacts. Make your conversations productive.

Naseem:

- ◆ Reinvent yourself.
- ◆ Look for opportunities in entrepreneurship.
- ◆ Get involved with a personal support worker program.
- ◆ Know your strengths; be a strength finder.

Heather:

- ◆ Search for jobs in the pharma and clinical sectors such as monitoring treatment plans.
- ◆ Get trained.
- ◆ Find alternative ways to get onto your career path. Get work experience as an allied health professional.
- ◆ Go around and create relationships with people and their cultural heritage.

Vija:

- ◆ There are opportunities in long-term care for registered nurses.
- ◆ Diversify your resume and strengthen it.
- ◆ There is no requirement for Canadian experience.

Monika:

- ◆ Search the City of Toronto's job board.
- ◆ Be consistent.
- ◆ There are opportunities in the public health sector.
- ◆ Don't give up.

Aakilah:

- ◆ Bring knowledge and skills; market yourself properly.
- ◆ Just navigate.
- ◆ Learn the culture of the health care environment in Canada.
- ◆ Don't treat culture as a barrier; consider it an asset!

Closing RemarksFacilitator **Cathy Tait** completed the session with these words of wisdom:*"On your journey to success, you need a clear goal, vision and determination."*

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY



AFTERNOON SECTOR HUB
PRESENTATIONS

REGULATORY, ACCREDITATION
AND ACADEMIC BODIES

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

AFTERNOON SECTOR HUB PRESENTATIONS • EMPLOYERS AND HR PROFESSIONALS

Facilitator:

Nadeem 'Ned' Hashmi - VP Engineering & Strategic Business Accounts at *GeoViz Inc.* welcomed the panellists.

PANEL MEMBERS

Gunjan Syal - Strategy Consultant at *City of Markham*

Gunjan started as an undergraduate student as a software engineer. She started working at Accenture and enjoyed being on the software side. She completed her master's degree and worked with IBM as an Accounts Manager. She also has experience in start-ups.

Shahid Mithani - Manager, Product Development at *Rogers Communications*

Shahid works for Rogers Communication in Technology as a Product Development Specialist. He is also an IEP.

Aneela Zaib – CEO at *emergiT*

Aneela is a proud IEP with a Masters in Computer Engineering. She currently works for emergiT. She is responsible for securing space in the market for new customers. She is a go-getter person and helps businesses with start-up and building the business.

Mohan Gulati - Manager, Mobile and Web Development at *Armstrong Fluid Technology*

Mohan was born in Canada to parents who emigrated from India. He completed his studies here and then moved to Austria for eight years. When he came back, he worked in the technology field with Armstrong Fluid Technology as a Project Manager. Now, he works as the Manager of Mobile Development and is focusing on the new buzzword, 'the internet of things'.

Maureen Ford - Program Manager, Talent Innovation at *Information and Communications Technology Council (ICTC)*

Maureen works for ICTC managing two bridging programs. She previously worked with Manulife and owned a logistics company. She then went back into IT and managed an aspect of IBM before joining ICTC over four years ago.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

AFTERNOON SECTOR HUB PRESENTATIONS • EMPLOYERS AND HR PROFESSIONALS

QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION

Delegates were asked to discuss questions in groups of two to three and write down questions for the panelists.

Q. How important are soft skills in the IT sector?

Aneela: There is a bridge between the employer who is looking to hire the right fit and the client who is looking for a job. IT professionals know their stuff and some believe that if you have the right skills, you will get the job. That's simply not true. In North America, it is different. They need people who are well integrated into the culture and environment along with the technical skills. Soft skills probably account for 50%. Fit is very important. Try to understand the organization. Observe and see how things work to be successful at the interview. Making eye contact in some cultures would be considered rude but in Canada, they are inclined to think you're hiding something if you avoid it.

Shahid: Soft skills play an even bigger role as you move up in the organization. If you are going to do well in Canada and want to advance in your career, you need to give it a lot of importance. Time management is also very critical in Canada and it is not treated the same as many countries overseas would treat it.

Q. Where does one begin if you want to improve your soft skills?

Shahid: Start with eye contact, which is very important. Then focus on time management. Watch when others go. If they leave early, then you leave as well because otherwise, you may seem incompetent. Participate in social activities. This is very important as well. For developers, they are not seen as having the ability to ask questions about their activities at work. In Canada, it is encouraged and expected to not only do the work but to ask questions as well.

Ned implored participants to ask questions that can bridge the gap between where they are now and how they can prepare for their next job. He encouraged them to ask questions that can help them with their focus and their job interview skills.

Q. What are the market trends? What is hot and what is not?

Aneela: IT jobs are always available and more and more are becoming available. New technologies are coming on board and there is a need for appropriate skills to fill the positions. IT and telecom space indicate that there are always jobs.

Q. Software and Cloud is a new platform. How is AngularJS ramping up to serve customers?

These questions can be dealt with separately.

Mohan: Technology: Where are the opportunities? Where is the demand? In the back end, there is lots of work. Today, the front-end skills are more difficult and therefore need a lot more training. You need to start thinking with that mindset and look at jobs in Quality Assurance.

Aneela: Where can you find the users experience in the marketplace? Google it and you will find all of the information. Look at Mobile Live site and you will see how the trend is changing.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

AFTERNOON SECTOR HUB PRESENTATIONS • EMPLOYERS AND HR PROFESSIONALS

Mohan: Go to *UXmag.com* and see the trends.

Aneela: Go to magazines that are focusing on IT.

Shahid: All the areas that are improving in IT need specific skill sets so you need to understand that you will gradually move away from technology and into areas such as project management, business analysis, etc. There is a great start-up in Toronto that reads brains and controls things. There are many different areas in new technology coming in. Focus on the changes and get into that vertical and navigate yourself into the organization.

Q. What is wrong that we cannot get the job even though we are getting interviews?

Aneela: The general tendency for IEPs is to highlight what they have done. The better thing to do is to identify what the employer is looking for and give them that in a solution-focussed resume. Explain how you can give value to what they are looking for. Employers' focus is the fit and therefore anyone who can deliver in that way will be given the job. (Aneela gives clients an opportunity in her organization through mock interviews).

Shahid: There are two things that will get you the job in Canada: resume and interview. Ensure your strengths are communicated in both. Utilize the space in your resume to communicate your key skills in relation to what the job requires.

Aneela: The resume must tell a cohesive story. Make sure you understand the company so you can prepare your resume and cover letter accordingly.

Q. How do I become an extrovert?

Maureen: Move out of your comfort zone and ask questions. Practice asking questions and doing research, creating reports as well.

Gunjan: Join social groups and participate in programs and conversations that will assist.

Aneela: It will take time to become an extrovert so don't be hard on yourself. It will take time to get to that stage.

Maureen: Practice, practice, practice and remember to smile. Come up with questions from your mock interview and practice, practice, practice so you can be fluent and consistent.

Mohan: Create a connection to open up a conversation. Try to find a connection with someone you can relate to. Find something you are comfortable talking about so you can also relax. Networking is already boring but also very important. Use the opportunity to get to know people in your work. Consider that the people who are successful have had to make these connections before.

Gunjan: Try and find out who will be doing your interview. If you can find out what their passions are, you will have a place to connect well in the interview.

Ned suggested an hour a day should be spent on *LinkedIn*.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

AFTERNOON SECTOR HUB PRESENTATIONS • EMPLOYERS AND HR PROFESSIONALS

Shahid: There are a lot of start-ups that cannot pay right now because they are new. Reach out to those businesses and volunteer. You will be on their radar when the time for employment comes around.

Maureen: No company will give a new person volunteering in their IT department because of security reasons. Volunteer in any organization and then identify your skills. That can push you forward.

Q. What are the skills and competencies that got you to where you are today?

Shahid: I asked a lot of questions of the panel. I was interested in the job I was hired for but I wanted to do bigger things. I had to figure out what my growth plans were. Being able to work well with others and on a team gave me an edge. I was a go-getter who was focussed.

Aneela: Soft skills, especially communication skills, along with technical skills will get you where you want to be. You need very good people skills. I eventually started a new company since the technology was available and that helped to develop a very successful business. Problem solving is also critical; you need to be able to convey the big picture to the employer. Employers are interested in technology skills but need someone who can ramp up to new technology. You must be able to evolve in the organization. Hence, the need for the behavioural questions.

Gunjan: Make sure you highlight your passion to your manager. Show your cross-functional skills. Seek out opportunities within the organization. Be forward thinking and don't be afraid to show that. I started in Accenture as an Analyst. I thought about being a partner but things changed and my passions changed as well. But, it is necessary to learn how money works, how it grows and understand marketing and sales work to learn from businesses. IBM provided that opportunity. They made companies understand what is in it for both sides. My passion changed to non-profit because they focussed on developing people. A business and technology strategy was the next move and I combined it with the needs to private sector. Risk taking is very important. It may not always work out but one needs to take risks, as it is what is needed to help one get to their goals.

Mohan: Faith takes one certain places as well. I evolved in my career because I was authentic. I moved around various countries and still tried to be real. One thing that sets me apart is my authenticity. I do so in a respectful way. I moved from software to telecommunications to manufacturing.

Maureen: For me, it was being outgoing and curious. I sought out IT because it provided more diversity. Tenacity and believing in myself was also important.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

AFTERNOON SECTOR HUB PRESENTATIONS • EMPLOYERS AND HR PROFESSIONALS

Q. When you are hiring, how important is the elevator pitch?

Shahid: You want to articulate who you are in 30 seconds or less. Speak to what the employer is looking for and highlight that in your 30-second elevator pitch. Try and focus on what the employer is looking for.

Aneela: In general terms, it should be very brief. Pay attention to what will be delivered in 30 seconds. For job seekers, focus on education – what were your areas of comfort and where did you achieve the most success? Learn it through practice so you can be fluent.

Mohan: The elevator pitch should be tailored to your audience. Practice it and deliver it confidently.

Maureen: Remember to deliver it authentically. Create a connection and be comfortable when delivering.

Key Tips For Delegates

Gunjan:

- ◆ Seek out mentors and contacts outside of your profession.
- ◆ Network. Look at TV shows to understand Canadian language and the way things are done. Talk to people all over.

Shahid:

- ◆ Keep your resume up-to-date. Keep networking. Always be in a position to stay on top of things.
- ◆ Do what you enjoy doing.

Maureen:

- ◆ Be flexible. Remain open.
- ◆ Customize for each new opportunity.
- ◆ Keep your job descriptions and performance reviews; take them home. Maintain your portfolio.
- ◆ Make sure you put things on your resume that you can defend. Make sure it represents you and you can defend that. Positive energy is important.

Aneela:

- ◆ Never stop learning. Set small goals for yourself. Constantly evolve yourself.
- ◆ Ask questions in a polite way. It shows interest.

Mohan:

- ◆ Put yourself out there and find a way to stand out.
- ◆ Don't play down your strengths or what you have to offer.

SALES, MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS



AFTERNOON SECTOR HUB
PRESENTATIONS

REGULATORY, ACCREDITATION
AND ACADEMIC BODIES

SALES, MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

AFTERNOON SECTOR HUB PRESENTATIONS • EMPLOYERS AND HR PROFESSIONALS

Facilitator:

Wendy Woods, MBA – Founder & Principal, *Watershed Training Solutions*

Wendy Woods welcomed all the panellists and delegates to the afternoon session. Noticing that attendees looked sleepy after lunch, she introduced an activity to energize the group. She asked everyone to stand up and stretch. Then, she invited attendees to practice networking with the person seated beside him/her; she instructed them to shake hands with one another and to make introductions. Following these paired discussions, she addressed the audience letting them know that she has a tremendous respect for everyone and that she understands the challenges that one faces when moving to another country. She shared her belief that greater opportunities can be achieved by means of networking.

PANEL MEMBERS

Marcus Paul - President & CEO at *Blixitt*

Marcus runs an environmental technology company. He was born in India and immigrated to Canada as a teenager after living in Europe for several years. His tips to delegates emphasized the important ways people could bridge their skills from their home country to the labour market in Toronto.

Sherry-Anne Bedminster - Sales Manager, Small Business for the Mississauga Markets at *RBC*

Sherry-Anne came to Canada from Trinidad & Tobago as a child. She leads a diverse team in sales at *RBC*.

Majid Kazmi – Senior Product Manager, Project Delivery, Consumer Deposits, Retail & Business Banking at *CIBC*.

Majid is a mentor, speaker and writer. He is also an expert in the development of sales strategies.

Jawwad Khurshid, MBA – Business Manager at *London Honda*.

Jawwad is a business strategist professional and an expert in sales, business development and customer service.

Bob Lank - Group Leader at *CEO Global Network*

Bob is responsible for executive development and peer mentorship at *CEO Global Network*.

Hemanth Thiru, B.Eng., MBA - Manager, CRM/ Customer Analytics at *Holt Renfrew*

Hemanth has spent six years in the Toronto loyalty program. He is an IT engineer from Finland who earned his MBA here in Canada. He reminded delegates to bring the right perspective for the interviewer.

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QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION

Delegates were asked to discuss questions in groups of two to three and write down questions for the panelists.

Q. Are you comfortable offering a job to someone whose experience is not in line with the role?

Sherry-Anne: Train the person first. Then they become an option for the right job. Small things make a big difference.

Marcus: We are looking for a potential fit.

Majid: I wouldn't object if it were the right fit.

Key Tips For Delegates

Marcus:

- ◆ Recognize the importance of job interviews; be prepared to share examples of problems you have solved.
- ◆ When looking for work, consider deleting your current title or position if it's not a good fit for what you're looking for.
- ◆ Consider carefully whom you would like to have as a mentor but take the risk. Your personality has to fit as well.
- ◆ Volunteering is a good idea to demonstrate your skills to the employer.
- ◆ Networking will help enhance your skills.
- ◆ You can also try to start your own business.

Sherry-Anne:

- ◆ She stressed the importance of behavioural interview questions like: "Tell me how you can take care of irate customers." She encouraged delegates to be prepared for these types of questions in an interview.
- ◆ Employers check the LinkedIn and Facebook profiles of prospective employees.
- ◆ Be open to having a mentor and to finding one in unlikely places. Pay attention to what they have accomplished; work with ones who have already achieved what you are aiming for. You can have more than one.
- ◆ Hiring is mostly internal. Look at how you can get referred by someone you know.
- ◆ Volunteering is a great way to get involved with organizations and associations and, to get connected to the right people.
- ◆ Job searching and networking go hand-in-hand. Check all possible listings and contact friends in the industry.

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Majid:

- ◆ It is important to always stay positive.
- ◆ When it comes to personal branding, know yourself and how you can transfer and apply your skills to a job description.
- ◆ Get involved in organizations/associations even as a volunteer and interact with people. This may help you find a mentor. This is often the key to success in job hunting.
- ◆ Because 80% of hiring is internal, you want to be a part of that internal pool. Look at how you can be referred to these positions.
- ◆ Research prior to the interview. Learn about the company and how the role you are interviewing for fits in with the organization.
- ◆ Volunteer. It will help you gain Canadian experience and it's also good for the resume.
- ◆ When applying for jobs, where possible, send an email to the hiring manager.

Jawwad:

- ◆ Consider how your skills are transferable to other jobs and be open to applying outside of your industry.
- ◆ Find volunteer opportunities where you believe in the organization. You want to demonstrate passion for what you do and what you want to do.
- ◆ Think of yourself outside of the box.

Bob:

- ◆ Be prepared for behavioural interview questions: "Tell me about the time when you had the..." and "When is the right time to lie?"
- ◆ Leadership skills are an important requirement for most jobs.
- ◆ When creating your LinkedIn profile, personalize it and yet make it professional. Modify it according to a SWOT analysis. Employers Google you first.
- ◆ Mentoring is a relationship between an individual and a person who has run the track. You get to benefit from others' opinions and different people's perspectives. Consider a mentor like an advisory board for your personal brand.
- ◆ When it comes to hiring, it's whom you know and what they know about you.
- ◆ Conduct informational interviews. Review your LinkedIn profile for opportunities for informational interviews. Learn from the individual you are interviewing and about the strengths required for the positions you are interested in.
 - He had three recommendations to wrap up the meeting:
 - Ask for feedback on how the meeting went.*
 - Ask, "Is there anything I can do for you?"*
 - Ask for referrals.*
- ◆ He offered up a potential question that might be asked at the end of an interview: "Imagine that it is a year from now and I am successful in this office. What are the three things that had me get to the top?"

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Hemanth:

- ◆ Stay active on social media: LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook. List your strengths. These are great opportunities for branding.
- ◆ Mentoring is an effective way to get connections finding a job. Grow your network.
- ◆ Much of hiring is done through referrals so figure out how you can be referred.
- ◆ Volunteering adds value to a resume. Membership in various clubs and organizations like CMA is also beneficial.
- ◆ Your LinkedIn profile should be updated all of the time. It is a great marketing platform.

Wendy:

- ◆ Be creative and recreate yourself in another industry.
- ◆ Always ask the question: *"Do you know of a job or do you have a job for me?"*
- ◆ Keep track of your contacts.
- ◆ If there is a chance for career development, take it!

Closing Remarks

Facilitator **Wendy Woods** ended the session with a raffle to give away prizes donated by panellists.

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