

8th Annual

IEP CONFERENCE



www.iep.ca

A UNIQUE FORUM FOR
Internationally Educated Professionals

Metro Toronto Convention Centre
January 14, 2011

CONFERENCE REPORT

Funded by / Financé par



**Citizenship and
Immigration Canada**

**Citoyenneté et
Immigration Canada**

Canada

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Preamble	1
About PCPI and the IEP Conference.....	2
Minister Jason Kenney's Message.....	4
Executive Summary	5
Key Themes and Observations.....	7
Participant Profiles & Demographics	9
Welcome and Opening Remarks.....	13
Keynote Speaker.....	14
Panel: IEPs' Journeys to Success	16
Concurrent Sessions – Sector Hub Presentations	18
Engineering & Related Professions.....	19
Information and Communications Technology	22
Business Services (HR/Legal/Sales/Marketing).....	29
Finance and Accounting	36
Healthcare and Related Professions.....	43
Employer Luncheon	48
Keynote Speaker.....	50
Concurrent Sessions – Workshops	51
Debunk the 'No Canadian Experience' Myth.....	51
Canadian Workplace Culture: Why You Need to Understand It to Get and Keep Meaningful Employment ...	52
Get Motivated and Stay Motivated.....	53
Starting a Small Business – for Immigrants.....	54
Borderless Leadership: Encouraging Leadership From Within.....	54
The Strategic Networker: Getting Comfortable with Networking	55
Closing Remarks	56



Preamble

This report intends to reflect and consolidate the themes, ideas, discussions and recommendations captured from the various presenters and attendees who participated in the 2011 IEP Conference held at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre on Friday January 14th. Throughout this report both the author and conference organizer have taken the utmost care to record and represent the proceedings as accurately as possible. Delegate feedback and information is completely unabridged and we accept no liability for any errors that may be represented herein.



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

The Internationally Educated Professionals ("IEP") Conference is PCPI's distinctive contribution to assisting skilled immigrants achieve success in their Canadian career journey. Since its inception in 2003 (supported by partners City of Toronto and Toronto Community News), this conference has been built on the following 'Ten Conference Principles':

- 1** Value the person
- 2** Include IEPs and the community in the planning of the conference
- 3** Use a systems approach to engage the stakeholders
- 4** Have politicians from each order of government honour the delegates at the conference
- 5** Give permission to network through practice
- 6** Showcase IEPs as leaders
- 7** Provide information to take away
- 8** Use evaluations to hear IEP voices
- 9** Provide additional resources through an information fair
- 10** Communicate with delegates and others after the conference





Ministre
de la Citoyenneté
et de l'Immigration



Minister
of Citizenship
and Immigration

Ottawa, Canada K1A 1L1

Greetings from the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism

On behalf of Prime Minister Stephen Harper and the Government of Canada, I am pleased to extend my best wishes to the organizers and attendees of the 2011 Internationally Educated Professionals Conference.

I would like to commend the organizers for their continued efforts to help newcomers put their professional and technical skills to use in our labour market. By connecting newcomers with Canadian employers, this conference opens the door of opportunity.

Every year, Canada welcomes thousands of newcomers for their potential contributions to our economy. The success of Canada's immigration system is ultimately determined by the ability of these newcomers to integrate into our labour force and broader society. Much of their personal success will be defined by their ability to find employment in the fields in which they are trained.

Governments, professional organizations and employers all have a role to play in helping newcomers transition into our workplaces and succeed in Canada. Since last year's conference, I'm pleased that the Government of Canada has achieved much progress with Ontario as well as the other provinces and territories to accelerate foreign credential recognition.

For example, under the Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications, all governments have committed to improve pre-arrival services for newcomers, and to provide them with skills assessments that are fair, consistent and timely across Canada. Under this new Framework, 10 regulated occupations are now developing and implementing clear and improved foreign credential recognition processes that will enable us to provide a decision within a year as to whether qualifications can be recognized.

This is an important milestone, but we must all continue to help address the barriers that prevent newcomers from entering their chosen profession in Canada. Through initiatives such as the Foreign Credentials Referral Office and events such as this conference, we are making great progress towards achieving our goal to help internationally-trained workers put their training and knowledge to use sooner.

As Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, I'd like to thank the conference organizers once again for their efforts in helping newcomers to find meaningful employment. I look forward to partnering with you in the near future.



Sincerely,

The Honourable Jason Kenney, PC, MP

Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism



Executive Summary

Ask questions. Be inspired. Get connected for professional success in Canada.

The 8th Annual IEP Conference was held at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre in downtown Toronto on Friday, January 14, 2011. A record-breaking 1772 IEPs registered online and there were close to 1300 delegates throughout the day of the event. Based on the online registration statistics, over 120 countries were represented. 28% of registrants reported themselves as employed while only 18% were working in their field of choice. Men represented 57% of online registrants. 70% of delegates were between the ages of 30 and 49. One-third of registrants had arrived in Canada within the last 6 months and two-thirds had entered the country within the last 3 years.

Founded in 2003 by Progress Career Planning Institute (PCPI), and enhanced by strategic partnerships with City of Toronto and Toronto Community News, the IEP Conference brings IEPs together with other stakeholders for a day of information-sharing, practical advice, networking contacts and motivation. These stakeholders included all levels of government, business professionals from both regulated and unregulated professions, educators, community organizations serving newcomers and skilled immigrants, regulatory bodies, credentialing services, and accreditation bodies.

The 2011 research on employers' best practices and the experiences of IEPs in the workplace (presented at the Conference's Employer Luncheon) and the forum for IEPs to network with stakeholders in the labour market to enhance their job search strategies in Canada are projects funded by the federal government to contribute to the successful integration of IEPs into the Toronto labour market. While talent shortages due to declining birth rates and an aging population have intensified the demand for skilled immigrants, there are growing numbers of unemployed skilled immigrants and Canadian employers with unmet labour market needs.

The program schedule for the day took aspects from previous IEP Conferences in response to delegate feedback and suggestions from both volunteers and others who participated in the planning of the conference. This year Tarek El-Hennawy, Regional Program Advisor, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, welcomed the delegates on behalf of CIC. He highlighted the various programs funded by CIC and recent initiatives, i.e. the extension of work permits to international students, to assist newcomers in their successful integration into Canadian society throughout the day, in his address to the employers and in his closing remarks to the delegates. After his speech he remained on stage with the Conference Chair to assist with door prize draws and presentation.

Following the welcoming speeches from dignitaries was the inspiring keynote address by the Maytree Foundation's President Ratna Omidvar; it was a heartwarming account of her reconciliation with her new home based on her *Letters to Canada*. The successful IEPs' panel first introduced at the 2010 conference, also returned on the program this year. The morning concurrent sessions of sector hub panels took into account the diversity of different sectors and to that end, some sector hubs retained the panel format while others chose the smaller group discussion circles so as to provide further flexibility to those sectors covering a wide range of occupations. As with previous conferences, the findings of PCPI's commissioned research, *Winning Strategies for IEPs' Success in the Workplace: Employers' and IEPs' Perspectives* were presented at the Employer Luncheon. Concurrently IEP delegates gathered in the John Bassett Theatre to listen to the afternoon keynote, Sherali Najak, Hockey Night in Canada producer who captivated the audience with his career journey and his passion for the world of hockey. Afternoon skill-building sessions were also reintroduced this year providing practical advice on networking strategically, starting up a business, getting and staying motivated, building leadership skills/finding one's own leadership and understanding Canadian workplace culture.



There were some important additions to this year's conference offering: French translation services making the programming available to francophone IEPs; an online searchable database of the IEP Directory (a compilation of online resources including settlement services, regulatory bodies, professional networks and associations, accreditation services, as well as bridging, mentoring, certification and other training programs); as well as a revamped website (www.iep.ca) with photo gallery.



Key Themes and Observations

- Both IEPs and panelists acknowledge the gap between the English language skills required for entry into Canada and the linguistic capacity called for in interviews and workplace conversations.
- Delegates were encouraged to find aspects of Canadian culture that they liked and to find ways to participate in related activities.
- Some IEPs expressed their frustration at being caught between lacking Canadian experience and being overqualified.
- IEPs were reminded to focus on their transferable skills in identifying possible career/job opportunities, and to highlight them on their résumés and in their conversations with employers.
- Many more delegates now understand the importance of networking and fewer are resisting it; they realize it is the strategy used by jobseekers in Canada to find meaningful employment and not a strategy exclusive to immigrants.
- Attendees appreciated the perspectives of fellow IEPs participating in the conference as keynote speakers and panelists.
- Questions posed and opinions shared by IEPs revealed two opposing perceptions on the job market in Canada (even within the same field): some were aware of opportunities available that just seemed beyond their reach while others saw a lack of jobs.
- Fewer skilled immigrants are downplaying the importance of soft skills in their job search and job retention (as evidenced in the research study)
- The 'Canadian experience' conundrum provoked a variety of responses (that ultimately painted a clearer picture of what employers are looking for):
 - Some IEPs were looking for ways to get around it or avoid it and preferred to know advice on how to sell their international experience in order to find a job in their field
 - Others eagerly asked for suggestions on how to gain it and wanted to know if it needed to be in their chosen profession or not
 - Panelists and other presenters provided explanations as to what employers were really saying or asking, i.e. deciphered the code:
 - "We want to know that you can work with us and communicate with us and that you are familiar with the culture of how we do things in Canada."
 - "I don't know who you are; you need to tell me who you are and what you can do."
 - "I don't know you and I don't want to take a chance on you."

Key Themes and Observations



- Accreditation continues to be a source of frustration for immigrants in regulated professions: their questions were mostly concerned with the necessity for the process at all and, the time and costs associated with it.
- The importance of developing an online profile, i.e. LinkedIn, and engaging in other social media like Twitter and Facebook, was also emphasized for all professions.



Participant Profiles/Demographics

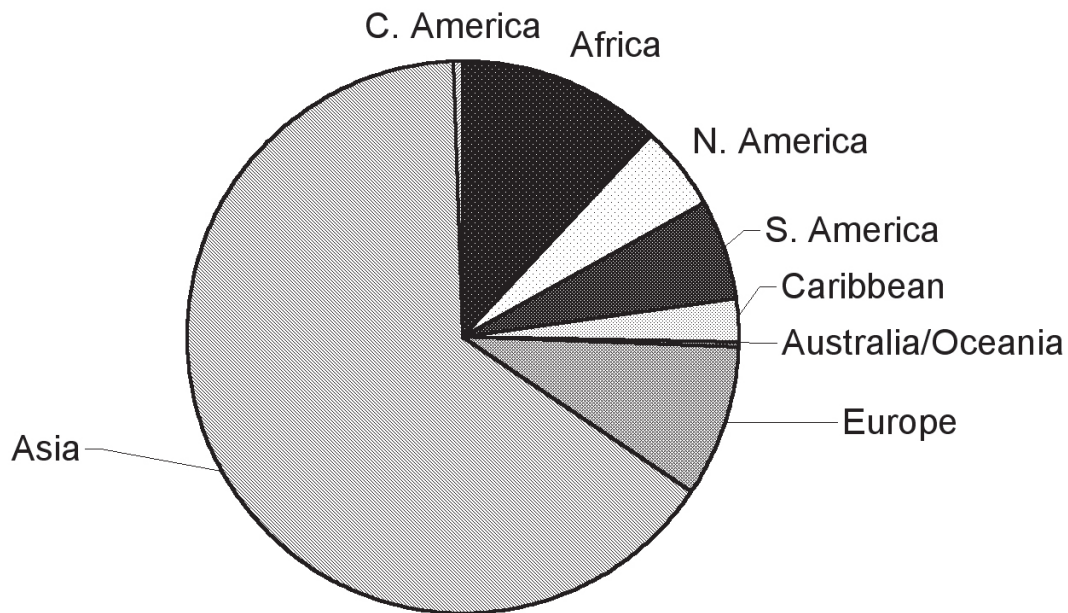
Country of birth (top 25)

Country of Birth	Number of registrants
India	267
China	154
Iran	128
Philippines	101
Pakistan	90
Bangladesh	81
Canada*	62
Nepal	53
Nigeria	50
Colombia	40
Egypt	37
Russian Federation	37
Sri Lanka	34
Ukraine	31
Mexico	26
Brazil	25
Jamaica	24
Iraq	21
Romania	19
Korea (South)	18
Albania	16
Turkey	16
Ethiopia	15
Syria	14
Germany	12

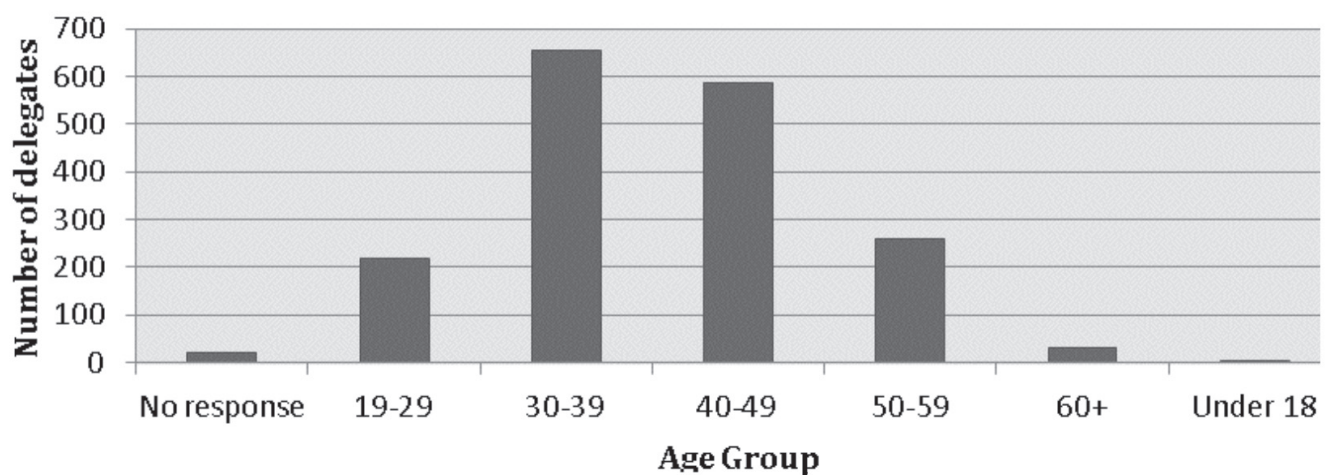
*This number represents Canadian-born professionals who completed postsecondary education outside of Canada.
The data cited above reflects information collected from 1772 online registrations.



Continent of Origin



Age Group Report

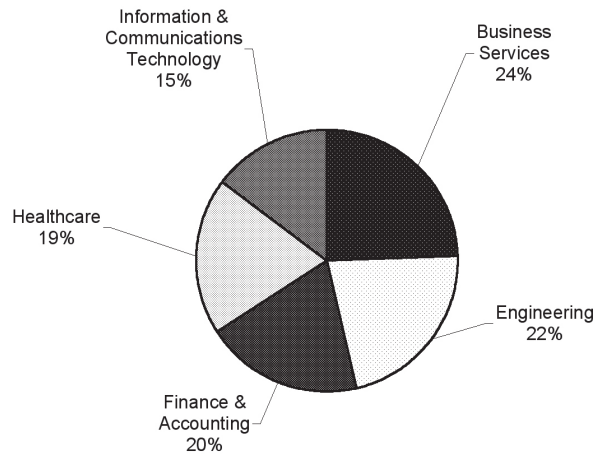


The data cited above reflects information collected from 1772 online registrations.

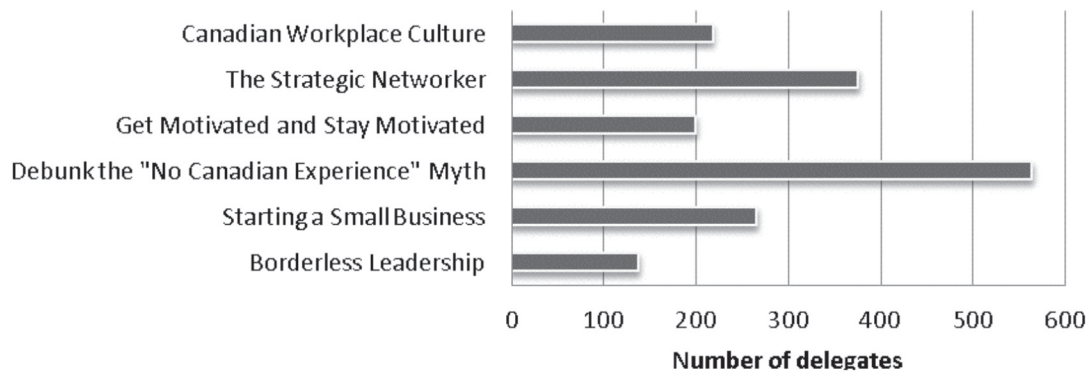


Participant Profiles/Demographics

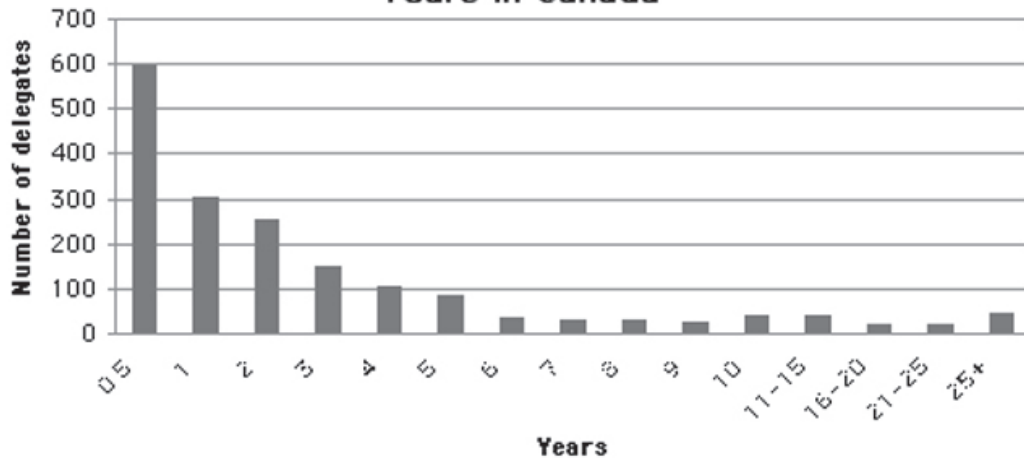
Sector Hub Selected



Workshop Selected



Years in Canada

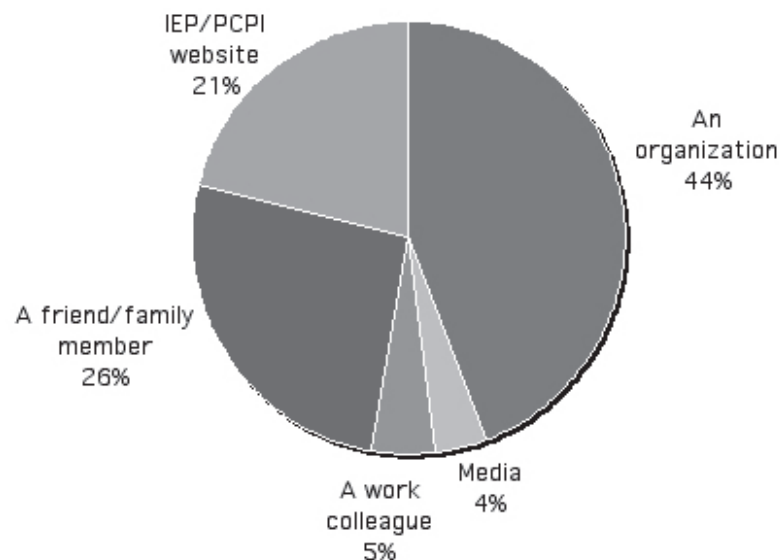


The data represented here reflects information collected from 1577 online registrations.



The following data is based on evaluations submitted on the day of the conference. 83% of attendees indicated this was their first conference. When asked to rate the different components of the programming for the day and their satisfaction with the venue, promotional materials, registration process and overall organization, no topic was rated lower than 4/5. When respondents were asked, 'What time of year would you prefer the IEP conference to be held?', the majority at 31% preferred winter while the least popular response was fall at 18%.

How delegates learned about the conference



Attendees also reported on the most important thing they learned at the conference. The most popular responses related to the importance of: networking effectively; staying motivated (don't give up!); being open-minded (to other careers that require a similar skill set); learning the system and the workplace culture in Canada in order to find meaningful employment; following up (after making a new contact, after an interview, etc.); showcasing one's skills and experience (modesty doesn't pay); diversifying one's work search strategy; developing soft skills particularly communication skills; showing passion for what one does; and being persistent.

Delegates also described the changes they would make to their job search strategy based on the information learned at the conference. The comments repeated most often were: being more focused, disciplined and passionate in one's job search/interview; networking; following up on job applications; setting goals; being more proactive/motivated; being open to other opportunities (other opportunities that could use their skill sets, taking a lower level job first with a view to working one's way up); being more strategic (targeting one's résumé, doing more research on the companies one is interested in, brushing up on interview skills); volunteering; learning how to promote one's self to employers; using social media; diversifying one's job search; focusing on what value one can contribute to the employer; and, improving soft skills.



Welcome and Opening Remarks

The conference opened in the John Bassett Theatre with more than 1000 attendees rising for the National Anthem presentation 'With Glowing Hearts'.

Following the anthem, the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto, an organization committed to sharing the teachings and traditions of Indigenous Nations to foster a greater understanding of Native Peoples, took the stage with a flute player followed by a drumming and dance presentation. As Ron, the flute player described, the piece he played was of 'the journey from your thoughts and your head to your heart'. Dave, one of the Centre's cultural educators explained that the drumming mimicked the heartbeat of Mother Earth and the dancing was to honour and show respect for her. He also welcomed the audience to Canada.

Silma Roddau, the President of PCPI and Conference Chair, gave a warm welcome to delegates inviting them to use the day to focus on developing an action plan for getting work in Canada. She thanked the conference funder, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), the strategic partners, City of Toronto and Toronto Community News as well as the private sector sponsors for their generous contributions to the conference.

Christopher Alexander, Chair of the Board of Directors for PCPI greeted the delegates and acknowledged the contributions of IEPs and their skills to the growth of the Canadian economy. He also thanked the federal funder for their generous support. He shared the conference's intention to create a smooth transition to employment for all IEPs. Much information would be available over the course of the day and, he encouraged delegates to participate. Attendees were also reminded to follow the Conference website after the conference for a webinar.



Tarek El-Hennawy, Regional Program Advisor, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (Ontario Region) welcomed the delegates and spoke to the work of CIC in ensuring that newcomers have access to programs. He emphasized the importance of networking, getting to know the labour market in Canada, knowing how to conduct one's job search but also how to navigate life (of which employment is only one aspect) in Canada, i.e. understanding the housing market, figuring out the healthcare system and learning the educational system, and how to enroll children in school. As a representative of the federal government, he acknowledged the contributions of immigrants to the economic, social and cultural fabric of Canadian society. For Canada, immigration was the pathway to future prosperity. He then outlined some of the initiatives designed to improve the job prospects of skilled immigrants including occupation specific language training through Enhanced Language Training programs and the extension of work permits for international students to 3 years.

Marg Middleton, General Manager of Toronto Community News, introduced Michael Williams, General Manager, Economic Development and Culture, City of Toronto. He talked about the importance of economic growth for the city of Toronto. He then asked for a show of hands of entrepreneurs or aspiring entrepreneurs, and approximately 20% of hands were raised. He spoke confidently about the exiting recession (as the unemployment rate starts to fall) and the role of small businesses in driving economic growth.



*'My story is
your story and
your story is
my story'.*

Amal Mirghani, staff member at PCPI, introduced Ratna Omidvar, President of Maytree as an inspirational leader. She acknowledged her many accomplishments and disclosed to the audience the personal wisdom she had gained from Ratna:

*'Standing in
the sidelines
is not an
option.'*

'A Canadian in the Making: Letters to Canada'

Ratna shared a personal account of her journey to Canada through letters she addresses to Canada. She explained that her story is no different than that of the hundreds of thousands of immigrants who choose to make Canada their home. As she described it, 'we all have a starring role in the same reality show which runs roughly along the lines of exile, endurance, awakening and redemption.'

In the first letter, she shared her story of her arrival in Canada in 1981 after initially being rejected. What she knew of Canada was Pierre Elliot Trudeau, The Hudson's Bay Company and what she learned through a school project on lumberjacks!



In her second letter, she reflected on her life after almost 5 years in Canada. She shared freedoms and privileges enjoyed as well as hard years filled with disappointments.

Ratna revealed the difficulties she had in trying to make sense of unwritten rules hard to decipher and invisible barriers that she needed to learn to navigate. She described the politeness of Canadians: how she learned not to be too curious for fear of being 'taken for a busy-body' and to keep her distance for fear of 'infringing on their personal space.' She related her surprising discovery of one very safe topic of conversation: the weather. She had no idea that there could be so much to talk about!

Finding work proves to be far more daunting than anyone had prepared her for; Canadian work experience is 'a magical dust' that cannot be bought. It has impacts on her own family as well as other immigrants in her social circle. As a woman of colour with a name unfamiliar to many Canadians, she encounters many people that assume she does not speak English. This letter ended on an uplifting note with news of her first paid job in Canada.

This third letter is written ten years to the date after her arrival in Canada.

*I realized long ago
that nobody in their
right minds in Toronto
would want to learn
German from an
Indian from Iran.*

Things have started to turn around; both her and her husband have found meaningful work and are working in careers that have a future. She finds herself making connections with people, finding commonalities across differences and joining other mothers making **'a very strange Canadian culinary confection from hell called peanut butter and jelly sandwiches.'** She spoke admiringly about these collectivist experiences in a society that is highly individualistic. The best part of these years was acquiring her Canadian citizenship in 1987. She ponders the Canadian identity and its willingness to redefine itself and concludes Canada is **'always a work in progress.'** She marvels at her own children who take for granted the freedoms they enjoy, who question everything and who will grow up hanging out with and working with people from all backgrounds.



Keynote Speaker

In her final letter, she celebrates almost 30 years in Canada. Appreciative of the freedom she enjoys and the life she lives, she is left with an overriding sense of belonging. ***'When I come back to Canada from overseas, and I check in with a customs officer, who looks like me, I know I belong... and when my heart stopped as Sidney Crosby put the puck in the goal in overtime for Canada, even when I understand little of hockey, I know I do belong.'*** The problems she has inherited from her new home have become her issues, i.e. reserve and off-reserve aboriginals, the squabbles with Quebec, poverty, injustice, healthcare and education. She readily accepts that she has a role to play in helping to resolve these issues. ***'I think we stand a much better chance building a nation on the hockey, cricket and football fields in Canada, cheering our kids along, as they play with others, than we can in lonely ESL classes.'***

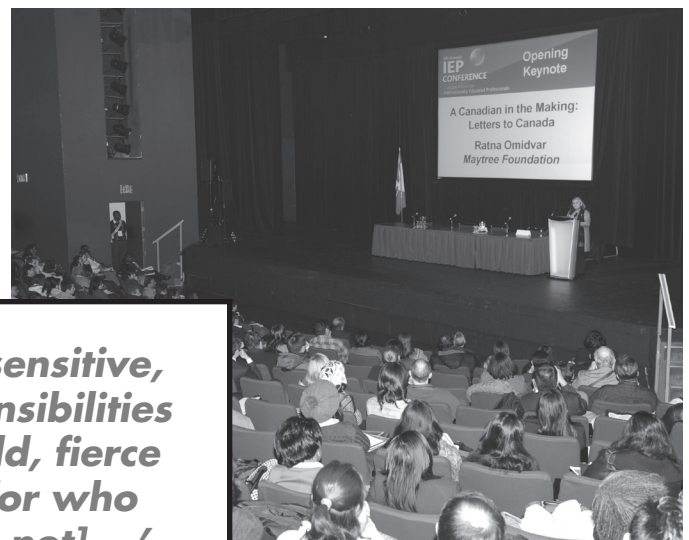
Ratna's advice to new immigrants:

- Don't change your name.
- Work hard, learn the language, make new friends, be open to new ideas
- Get involved - join associations, clubs, etc.
- Vote – 'democracy belongs to all of us'
- Pay it forward

'...the Canadian-ness in me is accentuated more so when I am not in Canada'

She described the characteristics of Canadians that she now sees in herself:

slightly insecure, overly sensitive, anxious about our responsibilities and our place in the world, fierce about being recognized for who we are [and who we are not] ...'



Panel: "IEPs Journeys to Success"



This panel moderated by PCPI staff member Chanelle Linton, was first introduced at the 2010 IEP Conference. The panel, consisted of three successful IEPs who shared their stories of both achieving success and overcoming adversity.

Nava Israel, PhD, Founder, Fusion Global Education



Nava described how she reinvented herself from scratch after coming to Canada 'the country of promise' 9 years ago. She describes feeling at home soon after arriving. She has a PhD in epidemiology and sport nutrition and 18 years of experience as a dietician. However, to practice in Canada, she was required to do an internship. She was registered as a dietician after only 18 months and later learned that she was considered one of the 'lucky ones'. She knew she needed 'a foot in the door' and yet she found herself frequently straddling the paradox of both lacking Canadian experience and being overqualified. Nava relayed that her first big opportunity came when she was discovered by Ryerson University and hired to help develop a

new certificate program in dietetics and kinesiology and subsequently to develop a bridging program for internationally educated dietitians. In 2007, approximately 2 years later, she landed the role of Program Manager for the Workplace Communication in Canada (WCC) program at Ryerson University. After a successful tenure at Ryerson, she left to found Global Fusion Education, where she now helps fellow IEPs to successfully integrate into the Canadian workplace.

Her advice:

- Get into action – volunteer, attend conferences, etc.
- Work hard

Nataliya Dardan, Account Manager and Mutual Funds Representative, RBC Royal Bank



Natalia Dardan, an account manager at RBC, got her break when she attended the last year's conference as a delegate and met RBC at the conference. She began her speech thanking everyone who helped in organizing the conference. She described the weather as her biggest fear when she decided to come to Canada; however, not long after she arrived she wished it were the only challenge. A corporate lawyer from the Ukraine, she shared her frustrations about attending job fairs where employers didn't hire anyone and her lack of connections. She shared a story of a friend who received an email inviting him to an interview. Shortly afterward, he received an email informing him that the first email was a mistake. Undeterred, he followed up and got an interview.

Her advice:

- Follow up on every contact made
- Get to know people at the conference
- Create a profile on LinkedIn
- Stay positive



Panel: "IEPs Journeys to Success"

Rukhsana Syed – Manager, Teleweb Customer Support, IBM



Rukhsana Syed, of IBM, recounted her story of becoming a Canadian 'by choice' 18 years earlier. She was 6 months pregnant with her third child, 'the brat', when she arrived. Her husband still has copies of the 3 000 résumés he sent out when he first came to Canada. She says it serves as a constant reminder to them of where they came from. Her first job was at H & R Block and, her career at IBM began in the call centre. More recently, she was the diversity officer at IBM for 5 years where she led camps for students to promote careers in IT. She challenged the audience to try to beat her record of the number of places she had visited in remote parts of Canada. She also encouraged delegates to visit the IBM website to find out more about the *IBM's 5 in 5 – Five Innovations in 5 Years*.

Her advice:

- Be consistent
- Volunteer (something she didn't see as a necessary thing or a worthwhile pursuit at the time)
- It is important to follow up
- Be persistent: you're interested, you have the skills
- Upgrade your skills; don't get complacent
- Create an online profile and engage in social media like Facebook and Twitter



This 90-minute segment is both an essential and popular component of the day's proceedings. Delegates selected from one of 5 sector hub concurrent sessions. While the selection of industry sectors varied very little from the last conference, the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) hub was reintroduced based on labour market demand and replaced the Professional, Scientific and Technical Services sector which was introduced last year. The facilitators, many of them veterans of this conference, followed one of 2 formats: a panel presentation or a panel presentation followed by smaller group discussion circles. This flexibility allowed the facilitators to accommodate the number of attendees based on the size of the room to ensure a productive discussion. Some facilitators felt that the questions posed by delegates this year were more thoughtful and insightful. Many delegates recommended that more time be allotted to these sessions in order to allow for more discussion and interaction with panelists. Scribes assigned to each sector captured feedback for this report including delegates' questions, panelists' responses, trends identified within the sector and career tips for IEPs to facilitate their integration into the Canadian workplace.

Some of the questions common to the sector hub sessions were:

- ***What makes it so difficult for IEPs to find employment here in Canada? (compared to other countries)***
- ***How can I find a job related to my education and experience? What are successful job search strategies?***
- ***Why is Canadian experience so important and how do I get it if no one will hire me? How can I sell my international experience?***
- ***What do the statistics say about the probability of immigrants achieving career success in Canada? Which programs have been successful in finding jobs for skilled immigrants?***
- ***What are employers' expectations of IEP employees?***
- ***Do all newly landed immigrants have to settle for entry-level positions initially regardless of their previous education and experience?***
- ***What financial assistance can be provided to IEP in their quest to obtain designations/certification/licensing?***



Sector 'Hub' Concurrent Sessions

1 Engineering & Related Professions

Facilitator

Mark Franklin, M.Ed. (Counselling Psychology), P.Eng., CareerCycles Practice Leader & President

Panelists

Mike Fanjoy, B. Eng. - General Manager, Educational Program Innovations Center (EPIC)

Romesh Ahuja - Project Trainer, HR Connections Program for Internationally Educated HR Professionals

Pauline Gavilanez - Manager, Corporate Human Resources at Wardrop Engineering

Randy Sinukoff, M.A.Sc., P.Eng., CEA, CEAS - Senior Consultant, STANTEC

Rakesh Shreewastav, P.Eng., AVS - Lieutenant Governor appointee to the Council of the Professional Engineers Ontario (PEO)

Dr. Fuad Sultanov - Principal, EPIC College of Engineering Technology

Edward Hoskin - Director, Cold Section Module Centre, Pratt & Whitney Canada Corporation (P&WC)

Victor R. Blandon, P. Eng. - Muiskem Inc.

John J. Penaranda Velazco, MBA, P. Eng - Hydro One Networks Inc.

Lee E. Weissling - Business Development Officer, Ontario Society of Professional Engineers (OSPE)

Jag Mohan - Dean of Engineering Technology and Applied Science, Centennial College

Panelists responded to questions from delegates primarily in the following areas: gaining Canadian experience, getting a first engineering job, obtaining a professional designation, recognition of foreign credentials and being successful in getting interviews. Delegates were encouraged to target their résumés for each specific job, focus on their transferable skills, talk to people in companies they were interested in and to volunteer at a nonprofit organization or the Engineering Association. The areas cited by panelists with available jobs are: geological and geotechnical engineers, water and waste water treatments, other technical engineers, project managers, civil engineering projects with the province, as well as green energy and environmental engineering.

Delegates interested in the Engineering sector hub posted questions online prior to the conference asking for advice on finding a job, strategies to overcome 'no Canadian experience', specific career opportunities in the field and expressed frustrations with their international experience not being recognized/valued.



Questions asked by IEP participants, with panelist responses

- Q** **What jobs are available for new engineers? How does a new graduate gain experience?**
- A** It is easier because new graduates are fresh and don't have any baggage. Go on Telecom websites. Focus on specialties and on websites with a high number of job postings. Look at what employer wants and fit résumé to suit. Take bridging courses.
- Network, talk to people, find out what skills are most needed and highlight those skills you have on your résumé.
- Take your transferable skills and put them on your résumé.
- Q** **How do I get a job?**
- A** Do research and see what specialization is in demand. Refocus résumé.
- Q** **How can I speak to someone and get information?**
- A** Call the company, introduce yourself and get information. Check out the website.
- Q** **What are the chances for Chemical Engineers in the environmental field?**
- A** There are a lot of jobs in that field: Geological and Geotechnical Engineers, Water and Waste Water Treatments...
- Q** **What about jobs for Technical Engineers?**
- A** There are a lot of jobs in this field due to the advances in technology.
- Q** **Are there many project manager jobs?**
- A** Many project management jobs are available due to government funding. There are big jobs and small jobs available.
- Q** **Do you have available volunteer opportunities at your company?**
- A** To gain experience, people will volunteer and network. Go to a school or community organization, or the Engineering Association, not the business. There are a lot of free government programs. Try to focus on your transferable skills (leadership, social skills).
- Q** **Which sector of the economy is increasing in Ontario?**
- A** Government, sewers and roads, electrical, fixing things that are broken, civil engineering, environmental, cleaning up contamination, electrical and technology, solar and green energy.



Sector 'Hub' Concurrent Sessions

TIPS

- *Research the companies you want to work for/you have interviews for*
- *Outline specific skills on your résumé*
- *Focus on résumé and cover letter – target them to the specific position*
- *Network*
- *List transferable skills (leadership, teamwork)*
- *Upgrade your skills (be a lifelong learner)*
- *Have a good plan*
- *Be realistic*
- *Prepare for interviews*
- *Always have multiple résumés (for different companies)*
- *Gain experience by volunteering and obtain opportunities for leadership and teamwork*
- *Sell yourself- show how your skills can fit into the job market*
- *Gain a solid understanding of the Canadian labour market*





2 Information and Communications Technology

Facilitator

Louisa Jewell, Co-founder, Whydido.com

Panelists

Nava Israel, PhD - Founder, Fusion Global Education

Ian Langdon - Network Administrator, Gesturetek

Martin Jones - Professor, Computer Science, Seneca College

Ifoma Smart - Principal Consultant, SMARTsquared

Rukhsana Syed – Manager, Teleweb Customer Support, IBM

Robert Pope, MBA, CMA - Director, Information Systems & Technology Services at Certified Management Accountants (CMA) of Ontario

Maureen A. Ford - Program Manager, Integrated Work Experience Strategy (IWES) Program - Information and Communications Technology Council (ICTC)

This sector by its very nature is changing rapidly and radically. It includes telecommunications providers, the information technology sector, wireline/wireless services, new media, website development, graphic design services, and others. Panelists advised delegates to write a tailored résumé that is easy for employers to follow with relevant skills included, use social media in their job search, particularly LinkedIn, and be up-front about where they worked, i.e. company, country, etc. The importance of knowing the rules of working in Canada and presenting one's self at an interview as someone that the employer could see on their team was also highlighted. In pursuing 'Canadian experience', the emphasis was on having a good experience for the purposes of gaining a good reference.

Questions posed online prior to the conference were mostly concerned with the following topics: finding work/getting hired in one's field at the same level as one experienced in one's country of origin/getting frustrated at how difficult this seems to be, how to gain Canadian experience and bafflement at why it is so important to employers if IT is common all over the world, the mismatch between the expectations they had before arrival and the reality once they got here, how to network/meet the right employers and, how to sell their international experience.



Sector 'Hub' Concurrent Sessions

Questions asked by IEP participants, with panelist responses

Q

Does IBM hire co-ops?

A

Yes...but only from universities since it is very complicated to hire from other organizations (e.g. newcomer centres, not for profit groups). There are many legal complexities around hiring for co-op placements and organizations will undertake activities that are revenue producing / profitable. To be blunt, if there are too many costs to administer special situations, it is not going to be done.

Q

What is better for a résumé, chronological or functional?

A

I like chronological better. But I need to spot key characteristics (e.g being able to speak French). I need to see a clear list of skills so I can match our needs. There are other hiring managers who will have a different preference...the key is that the person needs to understand things clearly and quickly without having too many gaps or things that raise questions and confusion.

Q

What is looked at more with IEPs, educational background OR experience and past roles?

A

Bachelor's degree is a minimum...I typically do not consider any candidate with a lower level of education since we need that foundation of knowledge and level of study. I can teach you any skills and teach you the specific systems that we use...but I need to know you have a good foundation. Of course experience is also important and what you have done in the past is a good indication as to whether you may be a good fit for the role.

Q

How valuable is LinkedIn? Can it help?

A

Yes, it's another channel to help with a job search. You should be complete and accurate in your profile and show a professional web personality. This is important since recruiters will look you up with search tools (LinkedIn and Google).

It's also good if you can get someone to recommend you. When you meet people and connect with them, send them notes on LinkedIn to grow your network and expand your contacts. You can send notes to gain information from both that direct contact and with other people in their network.

You can also use the contacts to gain information about companies. For instance, if you see a job posting, you can see if anyone in your LinkedIn network is working there or was working there. You can ask about the company and find out what it is like to work there and if it may be the right fit for you.

From my perspective, I also want to see candidates who are using the tool since it shows that you are familiar with new information tools. I want to see that you are using all the tools available in a professional manner. You can also put your LinkedIn profile link on notes and your résumé to invite people to look you up.



How do you negotiate salary?



You want to be in a position to understand how your skills match up. Use the Workopolis tool (Salary Calculator) to see a general range of what you can expect.

Say something like "I'd like to make sure this job is a right fit...I'm sure you would like a range and you'll be fair"

Don't start with the salary discussion before getting to know quite a bit about the job.



Does joining a professional association help with your job search?



Yes. Networking and career support is really important. If you can connect with a professional association like CMA Ontario or other trade associations, you can meet other people and not only use the contacts for job / career leads, but the association can also help keep you connected with information about your field. You can learn from others by asking them about their roles, their companies. You can gain information without the initial intention of asking for a job...this will help you become more familiar with what is going on in your field and provide useful information to help expand your expertise and level of knowledge.



What else can you recommend regarding résumés?



Don't have one generic résumé. Be sure to tailor your résumé to specific jobs. Change the highlights section so that it lines up with some key points from the job description. Look at other résumé examples and see what is the most 'catchy' way of wording your qualifications.

Make sure you don't have any spelling or grammatical mistakes in your résumé. Spell check will not catch all the errors (e.g. 'but' and 'bud' are both words so this error would not be caught). Ask someone else to read the résumé for you.



How important is Canadian experience? What about past experience...what is the best way to bridge the gap?



This is a frustrating issue. The reason why some employers look for it (Canadian experience) is that this is code for saying: "we want to know that you can work with us and communicate with us and that you are familiar with the culture of how we do things in Canada". This issue can mean a company wants to know that someone else has taken a risk with you.

If you don't get an interview, there is not much you can do about it. If, however, you get into the interview, regardless of your experience (Canadian or not) you need to paint a picture of why you should work there. They need to imagine you working with them...that you can connect with them...that they can trust you.

People like to work with people like themselves. Can I imagine you working on my team? Can I see the value this person can bring to the role? I need to be comfortable about bringing you into my organization. You should learn about body language (e.g. leaning forward or back). You need to know the RULES of working in Canada without maybe having experience. Get honest feedback from someone and then work on it yourself to better understand what is expected here in Canada.



Sector 'Hub' Concurrent Sessions

Q

If someone has given you a referral for someone to fill a role, what do you do with that information? Do you give any preference to the referral OR would you just go based on résumé and education of other candidates?

A

Canadians are generally afraid of taking risks...they are risk averse. So, if you know someone and trust them, and if that person recommends someone, you are likely to at least meet that person since you trust the referral. Each person (hiring manager) will have a different approach...some may only look at technical skills and experience ... others may give someone a chance if they have a strong recommendation, even if that person may not have the same level of experience / education as another candidate. Each decision is unique.

Remember: The harder you work, the luckier you get!

Q

Is it necessary to have Canadian experience in the same field as the one you want in a future job?

A

No...you can have ANY sort of Canadian experience. Companies want to know if the person can fit with them. Are you reliable, trustworthy? Can we work well together? Are you prepared to work in Canada?

TIP: Getting your first experience can be through volunteering or doing a job that you may not really want ... you need to start somewhere. You should DO YOUR BEST...don't have a bad Canadian experience. When you go to your first placement, be PREPARED: you need to be excellent since you need the references from that experience to help with future job opportunities. If you did not have a good and positive experience somewhere, you should not even list it since the next hiring person may want to speak with someone at that past employer / volunteer position. Thus, be sure to always do your best, always care to do a good job even if it is not the one you ultimately want...because if you can show what you are capable of, you will get the chance to have more and better experiences.

Q

Can you suggest whether I should put all the information about where I worked on my résumé...the name of the company, the city / country, etc. ?

A

I personally like to see information that is transparent. I don't want to see that someone may be trying to hide something. I am very fair and I look at people without pre-judging.

...follow-up

Q

But maybe an employer is biased and will not read more if the person is from some part of the world they do not like?

A

I am not racist but there are some folks who are going to discriminate and it is too bad. If that is the case, however, you don't want to work there anyway. If you put all your information, the person who calls you is doing so with full information and you can feel confident that there will be hiring people who understand that great talent can come from all over the world and that candidates should not be discriminated against because of their background.



Trends

- Companies want to keep costs down by using more open source server technologies (Linux)
- Web environments and wireless / mobile integrated applications
- Data warehousing for sharing of information across the organization
- Healthcare management is growing; legacy systems need to be supported.
- There are plenty of opportunities in Ontario but you need to really sell your skills; the competition is stiff.
- Current growth areas are in the Prairies, Manitoba, Alberta, and Saskatchewan.
- You need to bridge technology and business knowledge: the better you understand the business process and have business analyst skills, the more this sets you apart.

TIPS – résimés

- ***Most importantly, when you put a résumé in the hands of an employer, use catchy words that attract the attention of the reader. Put soft skills in the Highlights section, e.g. Project management skills.***
- ***While having many lines with degrees and past companies/experiences is fine, you need to also have a compelling message about why I should pick you. What soft skills do you bring? What makes you the best choice?***
- ***There are resources on-line / websites that can help you build a strong résumé.***





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TIPS - interviews and the importance of soft skills

- *There are some cultural differences that you need to understand and manage. For example, being humble, making no eye contact, using reserved body language...you need to drop those attitudes! You need to look people straight in the eye, be confident and speak directly to them.*
- *I notice that some IEPs are shy to give their ideas and thoughts. Don't be shy, we want to hear from you with your ideas...don't be afraid to share.*
- *Despite the fact that you chose a very technical profession, which some select because they would rather communicate with a machine vs. other people, we underestimate how soft skills and communication skills and cultural understanding make an impact. But so many other people have technical skills AND are from Canada. Why will they hire you? Not just technical skills but your ability to SELL your skills ... not just on your résumé and in your interview. What will keep you in the job and help you progress is your communication skills and how you get along with others.*
- *Communication is critical: how you deliver, how you interpret and understand what others are saying to you.*
- *Soft Skills – analytical skills, resourcefulness, initiative, your research skills. Did you take time to learn about the company? the role?*
- *Active listening and communication skills are critical, as are interpersonal skills.*
- *You need a great attitude, don't be stone-faced serious, smiling is helpful. Have a good handshake.*
- *People will pay attention to small things.*
- *When I interviewed people for our team...communication was key. If they could not describe skills and strengths, I could not hire them.*
- *It's also best to use real world examples...not just vague descriptions. Interpersonal skills are key: can you (have you) built trust and good relationships?*
- *Self motivation – I want someone who has enthusiasm, who shows passion for what they do. What magazines do you read? What websites are you looking at? What are you going to bring to the table? You need to bring personal initiative and insights. I'm looking for someone with something extra-special.*



GENERAL TIPS

- **Adapt! You need to take a multi-faceted approach. Leverage your personal network. Do your homework. Research the companies and roles you want to have. Leverage search firms / help centres – they have resources available...use them! Establish yourself as some sort of 'expert'. Make sure you have a presence online (e.g. LinkedIn, a personal website). Resilience...keep at it! Don't give up.**
- **We are mostly IT professionals here...you need a website for yourself. Keep your résumé there (on your website) and add extra information to support your résumé.**
- **If you have a thick accent, use a library and get audio books to help with speaking: copy the voice and keep practicing.**
- **Stay positive and keep a smile on your face. You had to jump through hoops to get here and you may feel somewhat misled with the rosy picture that was painted ("Canada needs your skills") but even though a job was not handed on a platter to you, don't lose hope.**
- **As much as you are looking for a job, employers are looking for your help; you need to have the 'right fit'. Employers put lots of effort into their job descriptions so be sure that you do your homework and respond to jobs that fit your skill set.**
- **Networking and associations - be sure to join an association in an area of interest to you – database, web, social media - meet people and ask questions to learn more about that field and make new contacts.**
- **Demonstrate that you are passionate – e.g. Databases. What are you learning? What are you reading? You need to bring that EXTRA EDGE.**
- **The harder you work, the luckier you get. What happens to IEPs when the honeymoon is over? What hits us is that things don't happen as fast and as glorious as we hoped. We lose our hope, lose our confidence. You need to stay positive; don't be a miserable person who pities yourself. Don't believe the negative thoughts you have. You are as good as you know you are!**
- **If you have an internal feeling of confidence, you will be able to portray that and you'll be fine.**
- **Persistence is key...don't give up! Network and volunteer so you can connect with others, and then follow-up with people. You need to build references. Keep at it and know that it is a process...not a one-time thing.**
- **How do you answer the question: "Do you have Canadian experience"? You need to understand the "fit" required for a role and if it is the right fit. You need to say: "Based on my experience, I have "this" skill, I understand "this", and I can bring you "this"...wouldn't that be an asset to your organization?" Don't say "No" right away; you need to keep the conversation going. Give them something to think about. Don't just give up. Let them know why you would be valuable to them. I guarantee someone will eventually listen to you.**
- **Don't do it alone! To be strong, we need to seek support from other people. If you have a bad day, call someone and talk about it. You'll see that you can learn something and be stronger and better with each new day.**



Sector 'Hub' Concurrent Sessions

3 Business Services (HR/Legal/Sales/Marketing)

Facilitator

Belinda Fernandez

Panelists

Claude Balthazard, Ph.D., CHRP - Director, Human Resources Professionals Association (HRPA)

Gautam Nath, MBA, RHB - IEP Batch of 2008

Tom Kaufmann

Keith Hernandez – Director, Boards of ACCES Employment, Big Brothers and Big Sisters (Ajax/Pickering) and Community Development Council of Durham (CDCD)

Marcel Strigberger - Lawyer/Advocat

Karen Hiltz – Manager, Human Resources at Christie Digital Systems Canada, Inc.

Questions posted online as part of the registration focused on: acquiring Canadian experience (frustrations with the need for it and strategies for obtaining it), how to get a job/be successful in Canada, employer/workplace expectations, finding meaningful employment in one's field of choice, information about the services and financial assistance available to IEPs/newcomers, starting up a business, frustrations with the credentialing/accreditation process, how to network and best market one's self to an employer, the difficulties faced with finding work in fields where they have relevant/similar experience and where they had been led to believe jobs would be available, and locating the job opportunities available both generally and in a specific field.



Questions asked by IEP participants/ Answers from panelists:

Q **I want to start my own business. I'm working on market research. How can I get updated statistics?**

A Depends on what business info you need. Connect with me one-on-one to get details.

Q **Is there a difference between an employer and an agent? Can I have an example of how you present yourself when you first network?**

A You should know who the employer is. In many organizations, HR is not the hiring manager but they are motivated to find the best candidates for the employer. Your strategy is to get out of the pile (of résumés). You need to have it on hand but don't rely on it solely for connecting with employers. Networking is a great way to do this. Recommendations help in getting you out of the pile and getting a chance first. HR is not separate from the employer. Treat them as part of the employer.

Find out through LinkedIn or cold calling the contact you should be talking to. See if you can get a hold of him through a phone call. Talk to him. Ask for his email and HR. Send out 2 résumés. One of them will pick you up. Thank him for taking your call.

It's about developing relationships long term. Do this with your career development and advancement in organizations.

You got to know people who may not help you today but may in the future.

I have cards with my information. I send cards out to people I meet within 24 hours of meeting them.

Get to know who your competition is. How can you be unique?

Q **Why did you not make survival jobs a career?**

A Survival jobs are taken to pay the bills; it's not their original career choice. But don't let them stop you. Don't sacrifice yourself by doing what it takes, i.e. taxi driver/doctor etc. You have to have goals. Put goals up on a wall where you see them everyday. Success is a habit you develop.

Q **Survival jobs – what is the employer thinking of someone who is applying with larger skills and other employment goals?**

A Small business owners want staff who are the same background as their customers. These people will help them identify with the community.

A lot of youth want to travel after school leaving vacancies amongst businesses.

These business owners accept that there's a lot of turnover amongst staff.

Some employers over hire staff for certain roles in acknowledgement of the turnover, understanding that they may leave.

Retailers expect staff to flip within 3-6 months.

Employers look favourably on people who take survival jobs.



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- Q** **Evaluation of your credentials. I applied 7 months ago for this. It is delaying my job search. How can I track this?**
- A** We know it's uneven out there in terms of getting documentation. It can be hard to get a transcript from certain parts of the world. Talk to the HR department.
- Q** **I am ready but still not getting the job or breaking the ice.**
- A** It's hard and time consuming. Volunteer in areas to gain experience and continue networking in a different way: business associations, etc. Look at preferred employers; see if there is any work that you can do unpaid for them.
- Q** **Networking when you have a job – please discuss.**
- A** Absolutely – continue networking. You can find out what kind of customers you have. Develop relationships with your peers. Let your manager know you want their job and ask what it takes to get it. Talk to other managers in other departments. They got to know who you are but they'll hire you. Read "You're Hired, Now What?" It's about the next step in the journey. Always a continuum.
- Engagement and loyalty are different things. Employers want people who are engaged. They understand that staff may move on.
- Q** **Knowing what you now know, how long will it take for us to be in your place and make a million?**
- A** Making the first million is the hardest. You've got to set a goal and take on a millionaire's thinking and attitude. Focus on what you have and not what you don't have. Put your goal down specifically – date and how much. Goal setting is critical.
- Don't think "failure"; they're "results you don't like".
- Revisit your goals – they're a work in progress. It's incredible what can happen when you put goals down (on paper).
- Q** **How do you treat survival jobs on your résumé? How will the recruiter look at it?**
- A** Put the job in and shorten the information. People recognize what these jobs are; they speak to your motivation and willingness to do what you have to do.
- HR looks for things in résumés that don't line up and then pass on them. You can be less descriptive for these types of jobs but keep all the chronology. Don't hide anything. It'll put you on the wrong side of the pile.



TIPS TO OFFER IEPs TO HELP POSITION THEMSELVES FOR SUCCESS IN THEIR CAREER JOURNEY:

Claude:

- *For HR positions – Most HR professionals don't know what HR is like in other countries. Make them understand your experience is exactly the experience potential employers are looking for; HR is generally the same everywhere – good HR professionals are good HR professionals – need to break this down.*
- *Get a solid foundation in HR – keep working on this foundation of knowledge.*
- *Get the designation - an indication to employers that you meet the Canadian standard.*

Gautam:

- *We are newcomers to Canada; we fought to get here. Lack of Canadian experience really means "I don't know who you are; you need to tell me who you are and what you can do."*
- *We came here quite a few years after working in our field; we're not newbies. Remember there are people already here looking for the same jobs so you have to work that much harder.*
- *Survival jobs – don't feel bad about having to take one; it's a tactical move on your way forward. Keep your eye on your goal.*
- *Volunteer – all you have to do is offer; let them see what you can do so you can move ahead.*
- *It doesn't happen overnight; it takes time. You're not the odd one out. It takes 2-3 years to gain traction; part-time jobs, temporary jobs, etc. are all part of the strategy.*
- *Soft skills – Canada has a different culture. Learn about it: listen, watch people, imbibe in the Canadian culture.*
- *Slow down: do one new thing per day, write an email to a contact, pick up the phone, etc. In one month you'll have done 30 new things; that's a powerful thing.*
- *Sun down concept – respond to your emails before the end of the day. Be sure to move the ball forward even if it means that you're looking into something.*



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TIPS TO OFFER IEPS TO HELP POSITION THEMSELVES FOR SUCCESS IN THEIR CAREER JOURNEY:

Keith:

- *Treat job hunting as a project with a goal of landing the job. Mentoring, networking, résumé preparation is all part of the project.*
- *Network for the future: networking is better than sending out résumés. Stay away from saying "Are you guys hiring?" It's a turn off.*
- *List job accomplishments on your résumés. Job duties don't say what you've done and what impact you've made on the company.*
- *Communicate at the interview that you're a team player.*
- *Make the interviewer feel that you will fit in with their multicultural environment.*
- *LinkedIn is highly recommended. Use it professionally. It's not Facebook.*
- *Get a mentor before sending out résumés. They're there to guide and coach you.*
- *Make use of settlement service agencies.*
- *Put aside your experience and degree. Instead, be there open to learn.*
- *Demonstrate passion in everything you do. Focus on high performance no matter what job you do. You need that reference.*





TIPS TO OFFER IEPs TO HELP POSITION THEMSELVES FOR SUCCESS IN THEIR CAREER JOURNEY:

Karen:

- ***Be ready. Understand the company and position. Be prepared to prove what's on your résumé. Practice interviewing. Be prepared with questions. Be prepared for technical competency tests. Have your education accredited. Have the appropriate language skills. Do what you need to do to be ready to work. Global references are expected. Have your personal life organized so you're ready to go to work right away. Be positive. Smile. This is very important. We're looking for transferable skills. Know what transferable skills you have.***
- ***Be self-directed.***
- ***Register with the appropriate regulatory agency.***
- ***Network, network, network. It's essential to success and career development. Look for mentors who have similar career paths. Do it! It will open doors.***
- ***Volunteer!!! It's a good way to network. It's not easy for everyone but do it because you have to. TRIEC and Maytree can help with this.***
- ***Regulatory boards offer ways to network: dinner meetings, educational opportunities etc.***



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TIPS TO OFFER IEPS TO HELP POSITION THEMSELVES FOR SUCCESS IN THEIR CAREER JOURNEY:

Tom:

- *You're competition. You're always selling*
- *Networking – 80% of jobs are not posted; they're hidden. Contacts that you make are critical: when you meet someone, get their card and respond within 24-48 hours. Be an extrovert: practice introducing yourself. You're an interruption until you prove who you are and what you can do*
- *97% of all business is small business. What is your unique sales position? Prove this in your interview. You invite people to you when you smile. Answer questions in strictly short sentences: if they want more, they'll ask. Remember you're interviewing the company too: bring questions to ask, rehearse your script and practice your interview.*
- *Make your job hunt a priority. You're selling yourself; you're in the solution business. What is their problem? What do they need? Ask questions about them. Have a card prepared with your name, contact information and what your specialty is.*
- *Don't be discouraged or give up. You're sales; it's a numbers game. When they say no, it's not to you personally: it's no to your skills. Be professional about it; your attitude will determine your success*
- *Network as much as you can with people you know. Talk to people in the doctor's waiting room. Ask questions about them; they love to talk about themselves. Listen: ask a question to control a conversation. You learn everything when other people talk.*
- *Get language training and help*
- *Have a value statement of yourself: short, 5-7 seconds. Be different: what's unique about you?*
- *Don't be timid in an interview*
- *Do your research on a company; there is so much information on the Internet. Know the language, acronyms etc. of the company before you go the interview.*
- *Posture yourself! Don't be desperate for a job.*
- *Promote your skills, not yourself!*
- *LinkedIn and Scott's Directories are great resources*

Elizabeth:

- *Opportunity for growth in companies – they're looking for new talent*
- *Be persistent; you will get in the door. Email them, drop by to say 'hi', don't give up on your job search.*
- *Be adaptable to change. Companies are always looking for new ways to do things; they want to know you can adapt as well*
- *Study the company first before meeting them at the interview. When you know about them, they'll listen to you.*
- *Continuous education – things are always growing and changing. Consider part-time courses; companies expect fresh new ideas. Join industry specific groups.*
- *Network using LinkedIn and Facebook: many companies use them for recruiting.*
- *Use your international experience and language skills to help companies bridge global business barriers.*



4 Finance and Accounting

Facilitator

Heather Turnbull, Owner, Turnbull Consulting Group

Panelists

Vincent G. Dong, C.A. – Founder, Language Education for Accounting Professionals Inc. (LEAP)

Salman Kureishy - Program Manager of the International Accounting and Finance Professionals (IAFP) program at the G. Raymond Chang School of Continuing Education, Ryerson University

Dr. Catherine Chandler-Crichlow – Executive Director, Centre of Excellence for Financial Services Education

Melissa Gansham, CMA – Regional Marketing Director, GTA West – Certified Management Accountants

Franklin Garrigues – VP Branch Services, TD Canada Trust, Operations and Technology

Carmen Jacques, CGA – Business Development Manager, Certified General Accountants of Ontario

Barbara Kiss – Operations Manager, Morgan International Canada Inc.

Toronto is the financial services capital of Canada. Barriers faced by IEPs are language skills, context of experience and credential recognition issues. Talent shortages and gaps in leadership talent (middle and senior management) are also significant issues in this sector.

Questions posted online as part of the registration focused on the following topics: getting a job that matches one's skills and experience (What does it take? Why is it so difficult?), overcoming the dilemma of 'no Canadian experience' (Why is it so important to Canadian employers? How can I get a job without it?), networking (How do you do it effectively? Why is it necessary to find work in Canada?), and the lack of recognition given to international experience (Why must skilled immigrants always start at entry-level jobs or unskilled labour before hopefully progressing to a job in their field?).



Sector 'Hub' Concurrent Sessions

Questions asked by IEP participants/ Answers from panelists:

- Q** **I am volunteering at a non-profit organization, doing work not related to my office job. So, what's the benefit I can get from this volunteering job?**
- A** **Vincent** – Volunteering: most people do it because they enjoy it, it feels good, but it is one way of learning the system as well. It also gives you the ability to communicate with people you don't know, or have access to people you would not otherwise have the opportunity to meet. It provides good networking opportunities.
- Carmen** – Volunteering provides an opportunity to make mistakes, learn about Canadian workplace culture, learn about other individuals, and make important connections.
- Salman** – The skills you use and learn through volunteering are transferable and lots of those skills you learned while volunteering can be used in the workplace, like communication, teamwork, conflict resolution etc.
- Franklin** – From a business standpoint, volunteering is where the networking happens, this is where business leaders network so it provides a good opportunity to meet important people in the industry. Volunteering can be relevant - you can find non-profits to volunteer at that are relevant to finance as well.
- Q** **Can you advise me on helping to get a job without scaring away employers with my degree level (perception of being overqualified)?**
- A** **Salman** – Try to get into an organization with ladders (the ability to move to a higher position). Make sure that you don't lie about or hide your qualifications. Don't water down your résumé: from personal experience, I did it and it didn't work. Be open and honest, join an organization where your experience and education would be valued and that gives you opportunities to grow.
- Catherine** – Your qualifications are a good thing. The problem is, we don't discuss our achievements; we discuss our levels of education. Focus on achievements, projects that you have done. Communicate your experience and achievements effectively; being overly qualified is a myth.
- Vince** – Robert Half Management Resources published a report talking about traits that were valued in the hiring process. Integrity was the number one trait for hiring. If you lie about your background it puts into question your integrity, which directly goes against what employers are looking for.
- Carmen** – If you can convince the company that you can make their company better, they will want to hire you. Again, focus on achievements and accomplishments, showcase what you have and be authentic.
- Q** **How can I get into the Canadian banking sector considering my previous banking experience?**
- A** **Franklin** – Focus on your soft skills. If you have Canadian experience, you can use this to market yourself. Think of your skills that are relevant to the trends, pick one skill, network on it, make it known and reinforce that skill, eg. being a small business advisor.
- (Follow up question asked by Heather): Is it possible for a newcomer to start in a non entry level position in banking?
- Franklin** – I entered into a non-entry level position because I could show a level of experience and skills. So it is possible.



Salman – I would like to share some experiences in the Ryerson programs. When they started the bridging program, we assumed that we would be helping them find jobs at a similar level, but 90% of the jobs they were getting were entry-level positions. It was a problem, and placing someone in an entry-level position can be problematic as CSR roles require different skill sets, and put people through a bad experience. People took the job because they needed a job and thought they could work their way up, but often this doesn't happen. Ryerson has an online tool that can help with identifying your skills set and competencies.

Catherine – IEPs, in my experience, have been able to enter their professions in higher levels, but they took the time to find out what careers would be suitable for them and then what skills they needed. Take the time to understand the rules and qualifications. Get into a network to get the information you need. Learn the system and what they are looking for.

Q

What are some of the co-op programs offered in Ontario to gain Canadian experience in this sector?

A

Catherine – There are all types: a number are available. I like co-op programs as they help with workplace culture and help to learn about the institutions.

(Follow up question asked by Heather) What is the value to the employer?

Catherine – Employers like co-op placements because the co-op employee learns the specific workplace culture, their culture.

Barbara – You can also use them for references in the future so it's a good opportunity.

Vincent – I have co-op students from The University of Waterloo. Students are beneficial to help with tasks at the startup of files; they can help a lot.

Salman – Co-op programs might not work for everyone. The programs look attractive to IEPs but evaluate the programs before you attend; a number apply and find it is not a good match for them and that bridging programs might be better.

Franklin – It all depends on where you are in your integration into Canadian society; know yourself and do your own assessment as to what you need at this stage.

Q

What finances and loans are available for academic upgrading?

A

Carmen – For those wishing to pursue their CGA, there is an arrangement they have with the Bank of Montreal for up to a \$20,000 line of credit.

Melissa – CMA also has an arrangement with Bank of Montreal for a similar line of credit.

Vincent – The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities has a section about bursaries for IEPs; there is one currently available, which expires in March 2011, so look to see if it's available and if you qualify.

Salman – The bursary that ends this March is an attractive one - up to \$5000 for tuition as well as \$500-600 for books; we are hoping to have it extended. You can also always apply for OSAP (Ontario Student Assistance Program).



Sector 'Hub' Concurrent Sessions

Q

Why are new immigrants not always provided volunteering in financial/banking?

A

Catherine – Not being able to volunteer is not only an issue exclusive to IEPs, but to all people wanting to volunteer due to the regulatory and privacy issues in certain positions. It's not the institution that has the issue, but it is a system issue. It is everyone who is excluded, as these positions have regulatory provisions by the government.

Carmen – Bridging programs, those that help towards certification - the whole goal is towards employment. Take a moment and look at their websites. There are many of those programs suited towards the CGA route.

Q

What are some of the organizations that value IEPs?

A

Franklin – TD is dedicated to IEPs and diversity. TD is interested for business reasons, as 25% of Canadians identify as a minority. So from a customer service experience, we want to be diverse, we want the best talent. In the rankings for top employers for newcomers, most large financial institutions want to be at the top.

Catherine – Many financial organizations have started departments for recruiting IEPs; Rogers and other tech firms are interested in hiring IEPs.

Vincent – Starting in 2012, public companies must report in internationally reporting standards (IFRS), so what a perfect opportunity to bring your experience with this as IEPs to organizations that have not yet or are just starting to use IFRS.

Q

Partnership between IEPs and stakeholders - what could stakeholders be doing better?

A

Catherine – Government areas like the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities need to provide funding and training. More organizations need to be open and real as to what they are looking for: be more transparent, more open. This forum is an excellent opportunity to find out, and educators changing as well.

Vincent – Both federal and provincial governments need to do more. For example, they have put a lot of money into programs; however these don't hold any incentive for small and medium-sized businesses. They could offer a tax credit for them if they hire IEPs as they don't have the necessary training budgets that larger companies do.

Franklin – Workplaces should be more comfortable and forthcoming to all.

Carmen – Employers need to work with government more closely.

Salman – Employers need to be more honest with what they need. Make the screening process as transparent and honest as possible. Organizations expect you to be able to be open to diversity as well.



TIPS TO OFFER IEPs TO HELP POSITION THEMSELVES FOR SUCCESS IN THEIR CAREER JOURNEY:

Vincent

- *Focus your efforts on having excellent communication/soft skills.*
- *Hiring prospects are good due to the aging population of accountants in Canada.*

Franklin

- *There are new functions in risk and compliance.*
- *Where there are new investments in technology, look for opportunities.*
- *Banks are back lending, so small business advisors are needed.*

Salman

- *Skill shortages happen in specific areas; look at those skills that they are looking for and then look at yourself in terms of competencies, not experience.*
- *Employers hire for technical skills and fire for soft skills; do not underestimate the importance of soft skills.*
- *There is no such thing as the one path. Use a variety of strategies: networking, mentoring, applying online. All can be useful; you should not reject any option.*

Melissa

- *During the recession, the people who kept their jobs were those who had Canadian experience, MBAs or a designation.*
- *Employers want the best talent: people to help drive their business forward, i.e. Financial Analyst type roles.*
- *Canadian Gap to International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) – the people who made up these teams were mostly IEPs.*
- *There is a void in middle management due to aging baby boomers; there are not enough Canadians in the accounting profession to fill those jobs.*

Barbara

- *Think about how you can differentiate yourself.*
- *Morgan International is worldwide and new to Canada: it offers training preparation courses for CFA and CPA – both are in demand. Becker CPA and Stalla CFA are intensive training courses; these courses are available online, through self-study and in class.*



Sector 'Hub' Concurrent Sessions

TIPS TO OFFER IEPS TO HELP POSITION THEMSELVES FOR SUCCESS IN THEIR CAREER JOURNEY:

Carmen

- *Believe in yourself, be determined.*
- *CGA is a self-governing body that grants the CGA designation. Trends indicate a good outlook for the sector.*
- *Employers of accounting professionals want people who are well-rounded with hard (technical, business software) and soft (communication, interpersonal) skills; use IFRS to your advantage.*
- *Emphasize your achievements on your résumé.*

Catherine

- *Get to learn the system, not so much what your designation is.*
- *Network, find mentors and find sources of information about careers.*
- *Accountants have a technical designation high in demand, but it is not all about technical skills, it's soft skills as well.*
- *The Centre for Excellence is funded by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU). We work with colleges, universities, banks, and other financial institutions. Part of what we do at the Centre for Excellence is to share the information. For trends in the sector, go to the website and it will tell you all the 'in demand' jobs, security firms, pension organizations etc. People get hooked on the word "accountant" but your designation allows you to do so much more. Find out what you bring to the table other than the designation. Our website can help decide what career track you could be on and you can learn the terminology.*





Catherine – ‘My best advice is to learn the system’

Carmen – ‘Believe in yourself and stay positive’

Barbara – ‘Be positive, be flexible, network, and don’t wait for opportunities to come to you’

Melissa – ‘Stay positive: everyone gets their break’

Salman – ‘Keep learning about the system and yourself, be open and don’t lose faith’

Franklin – ‘Be aware of your strengths and translate them into the Canadian landscape’

Vincent – ‘Spend time working on the soft skills; your technical skills are not in question’

What will IEPs do differently?

- ***“I would open up myself more, and find out what more my skills can do”***
- ***“Learn the system to position myself at the forefront of my job search”***
- ***“Initiative: I am going to develop my soft skills, and network”***
- ***“Do research, and learn the system”***
- ***“I want to change track of my profession. I will go for bridging program”***
- ***“Commitment to meet people, connect, and evaluate skills”***
- ***“Catherine’s advice to learn the system appealed to me very much, to focus on achievements and on what one can contribute to an employer instead of highlighting qualifications”***



Sector 'Hub' Concurrent Sessions

5 Healthcare and Related Professions

Facilitator

Cathy Tait, CMC, Principal at Western Management Consultants

Panelists

Brian Verrall - Executive Director, Ontario Occupational Health Nurses Association

Kathy Moscou - Program Manager, International Pharmacy Graduate (IPG) Program at the Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Toronto.

Paul Chiappetta - Senior Human Resources Consultant, Human Resources Division, City of Toronto's Public Health

Erone Newman, RN, MN - Program Director, Heart and Vascular Program, St. Michael's Hospital

Michael Nurse - Director of Admissions, Sutherland Chan School & Teaching Clinic

Tabasom Eftekari - Director of Credentialing, Canadian Alliance of Physiotherapy Regulators

Helen Hayward BA, MA CMC - Partner, Western Management Consultants

There is growing demand for health care services due to an aging population with greater health needs, an aging workforce with high retirement rates and advances in technology. This sector hub discussion concentrated on the following questions:

- What other options are available if not in my chosen field (and if not willing to invest in licensing exam/process)?
- Are there any shortcuts?
- What are the specific options for internationally trained doctors?
- Is there financial assistance available for upgrading credentials?
- What work can I do while going through the licensing process?/Is it possible to have a job related to my field before being licensed?

The professions that delegates' questions revolved around mostly were social workers, doctors, nurses, and public health professionals. Questions posted online prior to the conference pertained to financial concerns associated with the accreditation process and supporting a family, prospects for certain health professionals and length of time needed before practicing in one's profession.



Questions asked by IEP participants/ Answers from panelists:

- Q** **Can you provide information on how to open a private facility?**
- A** Facilities like nursing homes are regulated by the government. You will need to retain a lawyer and have money to invest (\$30 000 per bed). A retirement home might be less regulated.
- Q** **Why do opportunities exist for medical training in Alberta and not in Ontario?**
- A** Medical training requires residency spots and residency spots are funded by the provincial government. You may write to your MP and ask the question.
- Q** **(asked to Erone Newman, St-Michael's hospital) Does your organization have diversity training? Do you have a strategy for IEPs? How do we get an internship?**
- A** Yes we do have a diversity manager and training is available. We have a strategy to source and integrate IEPs; we actually won awards for our approach (see our website). As for the internships, we source our candidates through colleges, mainly the Mitchener Institute and Mohawk College.
- Q** **(asked to Kathy Moscou, U of T Faculty of Pharmacy) Can a pharmacist with a PhD work here?**
- A** You need to have a pharmacy degree (credentials will be evaluated) and pass the PBC evaluating exam. There is a fluency in English requirement as well. To gain experience you may apply or volunteer as a Pharmacy Assistant. Other opportunities are in the pharmaceutical industry (companies which manufacture medications) where positions are available in research and development and representation.
- Q** **How do you get your credentials assessed?**
- A** Every post-secondary institution offers it: colleges and universities offer assessment and bridging programs.
- Q** **Why are salaries hidden here in Canada?**
- A** This may be due to cultural differences, but if you work in the government and earn over 100K per year, your salary is published on the "Sunshine List".
- Q** **How do I get advice on my career on how to apply my expertise and transferable skills? How do I find a mentor?**
- A** Colleges offer career services and so does the United Way. As for mentors, go to the professional association website (in the profession you are trained in); most offer volunteer mentors.
- Q** **(asked to Paul Chiappetta, City of Toronto Public Health) What types of positions are available for IEPs at the City of Toronto? And how do we apply?**
- A** We have every position from clerical to physicians, dental hygienist, policy research, etc. Most are regulated positions but not all. You can look on our website and see available positions, the requirements and the salary. You can apply directly on the website. Soon we will implement new software, Talent Flow, and you will have the ability to store your résumé on our database and reduce the turnaround time for a response.
- Q** **Why are there no doctors here today to answer questions?**
- A** Our doctors are very busy; the demands are huge so they can't be here today.



Sector 'Hub' Concurrent Sessions

Trends

The following two main trends will fuel the growth of this sector:

- Aging population will require more services and more beds
- Many professionals will be retiring in the next 5-10 years: that will create a lot of demand for professionals in the health care sector.

Other trends:

- Many enroll in the health care profession and leave in the first 24 months; that means people who are coming in with experience and credentials will have good opportunities.
- Pharmacy is one of the top 10 professions for job availability; plenty of changes are happening in the role of the pharmacist. Check out the Ontario Pharmacists' Association's (www.opatoday.com) website to find more information
- Massage therapy is another growing field. It is a respected profession expanding exponentially. Many are entering the profession later as a change in their career. Check the website CMTO.com
- There is currently a shortage of nurses and doctors especially in rural areas
- Long-term care is going to explode: social workers, personal care workers will be in high demand.
- Ability to speak different languages will be an important asset due to the diversity of the population.

TIPS

- ***Do your homework: find out about the field you are interested in, find out about the organization, know what you can contribute to the job and articulate it well***
- ***Continue to develop yourself to get licensed in the area of interest and take advantage of assessments and bridging skills program to do so***
- ***Show your capacity in the soft skills: working in a team, show that you are flexible, that you thrive on change and that you can step up to a challenging situation and get the job done***
- ***Consult the websites discussed here today***
- ***Get a mentor from one of the associations to help you***
- ***Be flexible: look at new opportunities where the demand is growing, consider public and private sector, urban and rural settings;***
- ***Articulate your unique attributes and how it contributes to the organization; make sure your English is good as it is very important in the health care field.***
- ***Show your proficiency in mission critical skills such as information technology***



Other questions asked on paper but not answered during the session:

- Q** How do you get into Biotech research in Canada? Do hospitals have R&D?
- Q** Is it possible to volunteer in a research lab? What courses or steps does an IE master's degree holder need to do to get a job in Biotech? A mentor?
- Q** (directed to Michael Nurse) Pros & cons of working in private health care vs. government health care.
- Q** I am a biophysicist educated in Israel, accredited by U of T. I have no experience in my field only in administration and clerical work. I am enrolled in Humber College in the part time clinical research program but they don't offer a co-op program. How can I acquire the relevant experience to apply for a job in my field of interest (regulatory process of clinical research), which always requires a minimum of one year of experience?
- Q** I am a medical graduate and I have a master's degree in medical pharmacology. How can I find pharmacology related jobs?
- Q** I am an RN in the process of obtaining my license from the College of Nurses of Ontario. Can you suggest healthcare related jobs I can get in the meantime?
- Q** Can I apply for a public health job having only a work permit? (not a work visa, not a resident, not a citizen).
- Q** I am a dentist. I need to get some help to prepare to pass the NDEB examination. What to read, do I have to go to school? How do I get in touch with people in the same situation as me?
- Q** Can we work as community health workers or health researchers if we have certificates from a recognized European University?





Sector 'Hub' Concurrent Sessions

Websites noted on flipchart during the session

Pharmacy

Canadian Pharmacists Association – www.pharmacists.ca
Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy at the University of Toronto – www.pharmacy.utoronto.ca
National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities (NAPRA) – www.napra.org
Ontario College of Pharmacists – www.ocpinfo.com
Ontario Pharmacists' Association – www.opatoday.com
The Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada – www.pebc.ca

Nursing

Health Canada - www.hc-sc.gc.ca
Ontario Occupational Health Nurses Association – www.oohna.on.ca
Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO) – www.rnao.org

Massage Therapy

College of Massage Therapists of Ontario - www.cmta.com

Public Health

Toronto Public Health - www.toronto.ca/health/
City of Toronto Careers - www.toronto.ca/employment/

Private Clinic

AIM Health Group - www.aimhealthgroup.com

Other

Ontario Colleges – www.ontariocolleges.ca
Western Management Consultants – www.wmc.ca



Running parallel to the conference proceedings for IEP delegates was a luncheon for employers hosted by PCPI. Employers, representatives from community organizations and government, panelists and advisory committee members were invited. The luncheon's main objectives were to recognize employers that have successfully integrated IEPs into the Canadian workplace and to reveal the findings of the latest research study commissioned by PCPI, *Winning Strategies for IEPs' Success in the Workplace: Employers' and IEPs' Perspectives*.

Silma Roddau, PCPI President and Conference Chair, welcomed guests and introduced Emcee Angie Seth – Anchor and Reporter with OMNI News: South Asian Edition. Angie gave a warm welcome to attendees and her commentary kept the mood light and funny.

Tarek El-Hennawy, Regional Program Advisor with Citizenship and Immigration Canada, acknowledged employers who have been successful in integrating IEPs. He spoke to the negative impacts of unemployment including downward social mobility and loss of skills. He also stressed the need for partnership with employers.

Michael Thompson, Chair of Toronto's Economic Development and Culture Committee and City Councillor who has built his reputation as a community-focused census builder, commented on the long collaboration between his office and PCPI. He acknowledged several of his City Hall colleagues in attendance and Conference Media Sponsor, Toronto Community News. He delivered a message from Mayor Rob Ford highlighting the city's pride in being one of the Conference's founding members and its commitment to the Conference's goals and objectives. He acknowledged the importance of immigrants to Toronto's economic growth and vitality. Immigrants now account for more than 50% of the city's population and hail from more than 200 countries. Speaking multiple languages, they supply ties to markets and personal networks around the globe while attracting foreign investment. Traits used to describe immigrants were talented, loyal and highly motivated. He also emphasized the need for talented immigrants to be brought into the Canadian mosaic and for Canada's transformation into an international marketplace.

Angie Seth then announced the winners of TRIEC's Immigrant Success awards which recognized 4 companies and one individual for their commitment to recruiting and integrating skilled immigrants into the labour market: Pitney Bowes, Fraser Milner Casgrain (FMC) LLP, Samtack, St. Michael's Hospital and KPMG's Michael Bach.

"I can say that in working with people from different cultural backgrounds, we do not only teach them about our culture, we also learn from them; so it's a win-win situation."

(Grant Simons, RBC)





Employer Luncheon

Researchers Dr. Jonathan Lomotey and Liliana Araujo of Centre for Community Based Research revealed the research findings. The goal of the research commissioned by PCPI was to investigate employers' and IEPs' perspectives on IEPs' integration and advancement in the workplace. Using a case study approach, the research developed 4 case studies with IEPs and their employers/mentors; two online surveys – one each for employers and IEPs - complemented the case study interviews. The study found that the following qualities characterized IEPs who successfully integrated into the workplace:

- Highly motivated
- Open-minded
- Able to seek and listen to advice
- Willing to improve language and communication skills
- Skilled networkers that "put themselves out there"

"I was just shocked at how much more I needed to learn in terms of language... In speaking with clients and consulting, understanding the nuances of what [people] are saying was a whole different level of language that I had to learn and practice." (Nava)

IEPs found success in environments that were supportive. These employers understood the value that skilled immigrants brought to the workplace, and were willing to help them adapt their skills and experience to the Canadian context. The strategies that successful IEPs used included mentoring/coaching, improving their language and communication skills (to the point that they could understand the nuances of what people were saying), networking both within and outside the workplace and actively looking for ways to enhance their knowledge of the job. Employers applied several strategies that contributed to the successful integration of IEPs: providing strong support from the start of employment, assisting them in understanding Canadian culture, supporting their networking and exposing them to professional development opportunities, providing them with open and honest feedback, supporting them to manage their work-life balance and building reciprocal learning relationships with them.

"I explore with the individual, his work-life balance to help him to determine what that means and what makes sense" (Grant)

Inclusive work environments were identified as key in IEP integration/success in the Canadian workplace.



Emcee Angie Seth – Anchor and Reporter with OMNI News: South Asian Edition



Sporting a Toronto Maple Leafs' jersey, PCPI staff member Neva Kotsopoulos, introduced the afternoon's keynote speaker Sherali Najak, Senior Producer/Director, Live Remote Productions for CBC's Hockey Night in Canada. His presentation 'The Usefulness of Networking Reference From Sports' outlined his career path, revealed his passion for his career and the secrets behind his success.

Sherali talked about his arrival in Canada at an early age and growing up in Hamilton, Ontario with 7 sisters. At about 14, he knew he wanted to work in television and at 16, he discovered he wanted to sit in a TV mobile. He shared his strategies with balancing work and school; while studying broadcasting at Hamilton's Mohawk College, he landed a job at CBC Newsworld as a camera technician but after a year, his marks were suffering and he took on directing overnight shows on Fridays and Saturdays so he could finish school successfully. He joked it was a job his teacher wanted! When he graduated, he joined the network full-time in the news department.



Sherali asked the audience: "Have you got into the DNA of the company?" He credited his success to getting to know the CBC and how it operates, asking many questions, and ultimately figuring out what their needs were. He was then able to fill a need he knew they had. He encouraged delegates to research the companies and positions they were interested in so that when they approached employers or attended interviews, they could say: 'I know everything about you and I just want this little piece.'

Citing sports psychologist and author Terry Orlick of *In Pursuit of Excellence: How to Win in Sport and Life Through Mental Training*, he encouraged the audience to 'learn from every experience, every opportunity, every challenge, every day. Act on those lessons. This is the path to personal excellence.' Sherali challenged attendees to create 10 goals or 10 new possibilities

He also praised Jarome Iginla, the first black captain in NHL history and one of a small minority of black players in the NHL, who was interviewed in *Peter Mansbridge One on One: Favourite Conversations and the Stories Behind Them*. He described him as a hard working blue-collar individual who beat the odds.

He finds he is drawn to people who are passionate about what they do: 'passion is true power.' Sherali asked the audience for a show of hands of people who were familiar with Don Cherry and only a few hands were raised. As a video of Don Cherry was presented, Sherali informed the audience that he was formerly Don Cherry's boss. 'Nobody tells Don Cherry what to do', he told the audience. The video highlighted Don Cherry's flamboyance, outspokenness and some of his more outrageous outfits. He went on to say, 'Like him (Don Cherry) or not, you had to admire his passion for the game.'

In Sherali's final thoughts, he remembered wanting a lot of acceptance and then discovering how acceptance needed to come from both sides; it's not a one-way street. He promoted unconditional acceptance: getting to know Canadian culture (watch Hockey Night in Canada) and accepting it.

- **Don't underestimate the power of listening: the person in the room who listens the most attentively has the most power.**
- **Get into the DNA of the company. Know what their needs are. Be able to approach employers with the confidence that you know everything about them and that you can articulate what piece you are interested in.**
- **Be unreasonable. Get out of your comfort zone.**
- **Treat yourself as if you have something to offer. Then you will act accordingly.**

"Acceptance and tolerance is a big part of who I am. I think people relate to that."



Debunk the 'No Canadian Experience' Myth

Published author and certified career management coach Daisy Wright opened her presentation with a reminder to attendees to google the companies they are interested in working for, the names of people they are going to meet and their own name to be aware of what potential employers might see when they Google their name. Daisy recounted her own funny experience of sharing the same name as actor Jude Law's nanny. She relayed the story of her own family coming to Canada: how her husband arrived and took a job in a factory where he worked for a year before she emigrated. She instructed the audience to adopt the mindset 'failure is not an option' and demanded that they rise above their current circumstances.

What does 'No Canadian experience' really mean? Daisy suggested that what employers are really saying is: 'I don't know you and I don't want to take a chance on you.' She reminded IEPs that they were successful in their home country.

Advice to IEPs:

- Hone your soft skills
- Observe and learn how things are done in the Canadian workplace by taking advantage of bridging programs, volunteering, and informational interviews
- Don't be shy

She recommended the following strategies to IEPs for overcoming the barrier of 'No Canadian experience':

- ***Leverage your international experience***
 - Know what you have to offer
 - Maximize your strengths
 - Accentuate what makes you different
- ***Block out negativities***
- ***Develop CAR stories/value-based scripts***
 - Challenges, Actions, Results
 - "I" versus "We" – focus on your role in past work accomplishments
- ***Create a personal brand – focus on how you stand out***
- ***Utilize social media in your job search***
 - Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, ZoomInfo and various blogs



Canadian Workplace Culture: Why You Need to Understand It to Get and Keep Meaningful Employment

Terry Compton, Lead Instructor, Canadian Workplace Culture and Communication for University of Toronto's School of Continuing Studies, was the facilitator for this workshop. She focused on the typical ways in which Canadians perceive certain actions and how they usually respond to specific behaviours. She provided recommendations to help IEPs negotiate the subtle and often unspoken rules, values and assumptions of the Canadian workplace in order to achieve professional success. She also reminded delegates that 'soft skills are culturally prescribed and arbitrary' and that culture may even be specific to a department within an organization; this is what makes learning about workplace culture so complex.

Some of the insights she shared with attendees about Canadians in the workplace were:

- Canadians will not point out differences; most will avoid conflict
- Canadians are trained to be politically correct
- Most use an indirect style of communication; instead of telling someone what they don't like about their behaviour, they will say things like: "You might want to think about..."

She also shared some of the complaints/comments that Canadian employers had about the behaviours of skilled immigrants in their workplace:

- They (IEPs) ask managers 'too many questions'.
- They want to work more closely than we're comfortable with.
- They are too direct with their opinions.

She commented on the challenges IEPs face when their behaviours are received negatively and they are not made aware of the impact; the perceptions of these undesired behaviours will probably never be voiced by their employers. She also empathized with their situation: the challenge of figuring out what to say/what not to say and what to do/what not to do.

She also contrasted Canadians' perceptions of behaviours with those of IEPs:

	IEPs	Canadians
Silence	Seriousness or professionalism	A lack of soft skills and even hostility
Smiles	Foolishness or lack of intelligence	A positive attitude or job satisfaction

Terry also shared some practical tips for résumé and cover letter writing including the need for individual accomplishments, recognizable formats and job search documents free of spelling and grammatical errors. Emphasis was also put on setting the right tone in a cover letter, i.e. not too polite and yet not too aggressive/demanding.



Concurrent Sessions – Workshops

Feedback from delegates:

"I must say that it was probably one of the best seminars I have attended and also very informative."

"Thank you for your presentation. It was extremely useful to me. I found some new information and the answers to my numerous questions."

"Thank you for giving us a very good presentation. I think it was very helpful to us for improving our Canadian workplace communication"

"It was really nice attending IEP Conference and Canadian Workplace Culture Workshop on January 14, 2011. I really enjoyed it and your topic was very interesting and helpful."

"Thank you for your wonderful presentation and feedback today at IEP Conference."

Get Motivated and Stay Motivated

Motivational Specialist Emmanuel Lopez/Motivatorman delivered a lively and engaging presentation using interactive exercises (What are you celebrating on the Oprah show?) and group discussions. He used popular movie examples to help professionals become unstuck in their life or workplace. He encouraged attendees to focus on 3 things:

- Passion – your energy and fuel
- Relationships – that support and encourage
- Optimism – that is indestructible

Attendees at this session came away with:

- Strategies, resources and cinematic solutions to motivate self
- Ways to transform a "crisis mindset" to an "opportunity focused mindset"
- Methods to cultivate supportive relationships



Starting a Small Business – for Immigrants

Winston Ramjeet delivered an informative session for newcomers interested in starting up their own business. He is the President of Step 1 Solutions, which specializes in helping new businesses access funding for their projects.

Winston outlined the top 10 businesses new immigrants start in Canada:

- Retail apparel
- Import
- Website development
- Construction/home renovation
- Franchise businesses
- Export of Canadian products
- Settlement services
- Vocational training
- Restaurants
- Other retail

In his '8 things to a good start-up', he emphasized the importance of researching the trends, potential competitors, etc., understanding the target market and having the financial resources to launch the business. Planning to make a profit and establishing clear timelines were part of developing a viable business plan. Connecting with a business coach was considered one of the more important resources for aspiring and new business owners to tap into. Lastly, he reminded attendees that success is a result of the time and effort put into business activities and encouraged them to engage support along the way.

Borderless Leadership: Encouraging Leadership From Within

President of Gaski Performance Group, Joe L. Gaskovski facilitated this session. Overall, he emphasized the potential of anyone to be a great leader.

He identified 6 key points to Borderless Leadership:

- Commitment ... Fighting the temptation to compromise
- Honesty ... Building a reputation of one who tells the truth
- Accountability ... Taking ownership for one's actions
- Respect ... Treating others with dignity
- Courage ... Following your conscience instead of the crowd
- Integrity ... Choosing rightness over ease and convenience

He shared the ideas and research of Jim Collins, author of Good to Great, including the qualities of a Level 5 Leader. He described leadership as 'walking the talk' and outlined several points in the transformation from talk to walk (the leadership journey) including: leaving the world of certainty, facing new problems that require new ways of thinking and continuing to reinvent the 'self'. In closing, attendees were reminded to stay true to their core principles, create a clear vision of what they want and share their vision to inspire others.



The Strategic Networker: Getting Comfortable with Networking

John-Paul Hatala, director at the Social Capital Development firm Flowork International and a university professor, gave participants practical examples and advice. Based on his book, *The Strategic Networker: A Learner's Guide to Effective Networking*, John-Paul recommended the following actions to participants in his workshop:

- Become clear about our goals
- Identify what we have to offer the network
- Know who is in our network
- Develop a connection strategy for each contact
- Communicate our goals clearly
- Create mutually beneficial relationships

John-Paul also had these tips to share with the audience:

- When applying for advertised positions, call the hiring manager before sending out your résumé
- In informational interviews, tell potential employers you are conducting a job search rather than looking for a job
- Use high risk and low risk requests based on the strength of the relationship/tie
- Set small goals, i.e. target one's résumé for a specific position and create a 30 second commercial
- Expand your network – meet new people



Silma Roddau, President of PCPI and Conference Chair, summarized for the delegates, the findings from the research presented at the Employer Luncheon earlier in the day. Based on these results, she recommended that IEPs join professional associations, learn the Canadian context of using the English language and seek out coaching and mentoring opportunities in their job search. She then introduced Rahul Bhardwaj, President and CEO of the Toronto Community Foundation, the same organization that publishes the annual Toronto's Vital Signs® report, to deliver the closing remarks.

Rahul opened his address promising to provoke our thinking and to keep it brief. He summarized some of the findings from the Toronto's Vital Signs® report: 25% of the population has arrived since 1990, almost half of the city's population is foreign-born (2nd only to Dubai), over 140 languages are spoken and over 200 countries of origin are represented. Toronto led the pack in livability and ranked 17th out of 221 countries in terms of purchasing power. However, he added that increasing numbers of IEPs are left out of this positive experience of the city. He called for a change in attitudes. Newcomers in the last 15 years have doubled the unemployment rate and at half the salary of their Canadian-born counterparts. He encouraged all attendees to see the glass as half full rather than as half empty: to see experience in a foreign market rather than lack of Canadian experience. He recommended that Canadians teach newcomers how to be more Canadian and newcomers teach Canadians how to be more international. He sees Toronto as a neighbourhood of the global community.

He had these tips for IEPs to get connected, develop trusting relationships and collaborate with people:

- 1** Have a clear purpose in mind. Listen twice as much as you speak: "There's a reason why we have two ears and only one mouth."
- 2** Remember the art of triangulation – if you want to meet someone, find someone who knows that individual to introduce you. (don't cold call them)
- 3** Treat everyone you meet as a potential partner. Be nice when you do all of this. When building a network, it is better to give than to receive.
- 4** Keep your word and manage your expectations: "if you can't do it, say so upfront."
- 5** Sandbox rule: Everything you learned in life, you learned by the age of 5: how to get along with others and how to say thank you

The hardest ship to sail is a partnership.

In his final comments, he quoted Seattle Seahawks coach, Pete Carroll. When asked, "What do you think of your career ups and downs?", Coach Carroll responded, "I live my life thinking something good is just about to happen to me." Rahul invited IEPs to focus their thoughts on things turning good.

Tarek El-Hennawy of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) reminded delegates of the government-funded services available to IEPs and newcomers including assistance with language skills, orientation and access to jobs. He encouraged attendees to talk to someone if any of their needs have not been met.

Tarek's message to delegates: It's not who you know; it's who knows you.

In closing the conference, Silma Roddau then announced that completed evaluations would be drawn for prizes. Evaluations had been gathered from delegates throughout the day and additional ones were collected from IEPs in attendance at the closing remarks. Silma and Tarek drew the evaluations for prizes; among them were books, a digital camera and Hockey Night in Canada swag including Toronto Maple Leafs' jerseys.





Recommendations

- **Choose the sectors that the conference will address based on the sectors that are currently hiring**
- **Make sector hub discussions and workshop presentations available after the conference or design the conference so that delegates can attend more than one sector hub discussion or workshop**
- **Bring on panelists that can answer more of the recruiting questions that IEP delegates have**
- **Specify whether the conference is for those who have been in Canada for less than 3 years or more – needs are different**
- **Add a job fair component to the conference**
- **Set aside more time throughout the day exclusively for the Marketplace**
- **Allot more time to the sector hub discussions**
- **Recruit more panelists who are successful IEPs themselves and have been through the process**
- **Add sector hub for environmental professions (renewable energy, etc.)**
- **Add sector hub for the teaching profession**
- **Increase promotion of the Foreign Credentials Referral Office; it is evident that many skilled immigrants are not aware of this website**
- **Increase number of spots available for paid internships, bridging programs and other programs that provide work experience to IEPs**

Acknowledgements



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The IEP Conference would not have been possible without the support of partners who shared our commitment to the successful integration and improved employment outcomes for IEPs:

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Acknowledgements

Advisory Committee

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For more information on the IEP Conference, please contact: info@iep.ca

Sector Hub Scribes

Stacy Williams – Engineering & Related Professions

Mira Sirotic – Information and Communications Technology

Sarah Crossley – Financial Services/Accounting

Violette Lareau – Healthcare & Related Profession

Cynthia Toniolo – Business Services

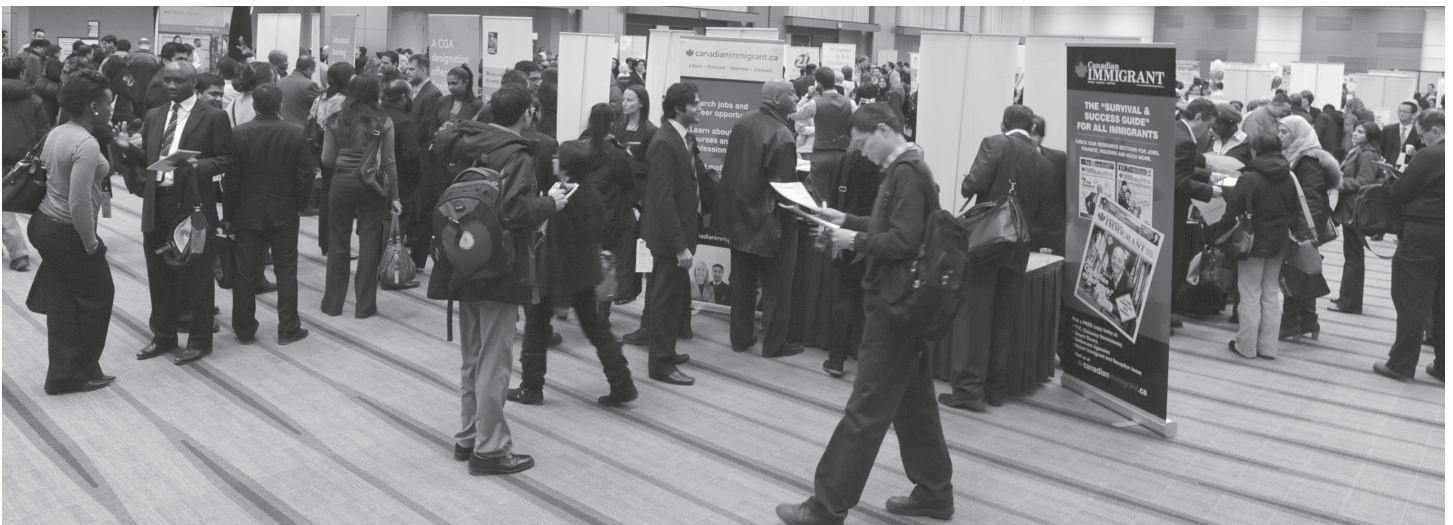


Acknowledgements

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Alternative Youth Centre for Employment (AYCE)
BioTalent Canada
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Canadian Immigrant
Catholic Immigration Centre
Centennial College
Certified General Accountants of Ontario (CGAO)
City of Toronto/Enterprise Toronto
Certified Management Accountants (CMA)
COSTI Immigrant Services/Job Search Workshops (JSW) program
EPIC College of Engineering Technology
Findhelp Information Services
Foreign Credentials Referral Office/ Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC)
George Brown College Immigrant Education
Global Experience Ontario (Ministry of Citizenship & Immigration)
Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC)
Humber College – Community Outreach
Immigration Northern Ontario

Institute of Chartered Accountants of Ontario (ICAO)
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International Credential Assessment Service of Canada (ICAS)
International Medical
Investors Group
Job Skills
JobStart/CASIP (Consortium of Agencies Serving Internationally-Trained Persons)
JVS Toronto
Multilingual Community Interpreter Services (MCIS)
Mennonite New Life Centre of Toronto
Microskills
Morgan International
Newcomer Centre of Peel
Niagara College
Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI)
Ontario Institute of Agrologists
Occupation Specific Language Training (OSLT)
Ontario Society of Professional Engineers (OSPE)





Marketplace Exhibitors Cont'd.

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Progress Career Planning Institute (PCPI)

Polycultural Immigrant and Community Services

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Ryerson University

Seneca College

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Statistics Canada

Sutherland-Chan School

TD Bank

The Career Foundation

Toronto Community News

Toronto District School Board (TDSB)

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