

9th Annual

IEP



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CONFERENCE

A UNIQUE FORUM FOR
Internationally Educated Professionals

Metro Toronto Convention Centre

February 2012

Conference Report

Presented by:



WORKING TOGETHER FOR PROGRESS

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THE IEP CONFERENCE REPORT



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Preamble



This report intends to accurately represent the themes, discussions, activities and feedback expressed by the various speakers, panelists and participants who attended the 2012 IEP Conference held at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre on Friday February 10th. The author with the support of the scribes has taken the utmost care to detail the conference's proceedings as authentically as possible. Advice provided by keynote speakers and panelists as well as comments from delegates are completely unabridged and the author, presenter of the Conference *Progress Career Planning Institute (PCPI)*, the conference sponsors and the funder accept no liability for any errors that may be contained herein.

About PCPI and the IEP Conference



Progress Career Planning Institute (PCPI), presenter of the Conference, is a not-for-profit, business-focused organization established in the fall of 1996. Its mission is to offer career development services for people to realize their full potential. Located in central Scarborough, the organization was born out of a school-to-work transition program at Centennial College. Today, the organization acts as a hub between education and employment, business, government and community.

The Internationally Educated Professionals (IEP) Conference is PCPI's distinctive contribution to assisting skilled immigrants achieve success in their Canadian career journey. Now in its 9th year, the conference is made possible through funding from Citizenship and Immigration Canada and the strategic partnerships of the City of Toronto Economic Development and Toronto Community News.

The 2012 IEP Conference brings together government, regulatory bodies, educational institutions, settlement service providers, businesses and IEPs in a single setting to connect and discuss strategies to transition IEPs into the labour force. Additionally, the conference highlights five sectors: Engineering, Healthcare, Finance and Accounting, Business Services and Information and Communications Technology. Each year, since 2005, the conference has been complemented by a research study on IEPs' labour market integration experiences in relation to the needs of employers in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).

The conference is built on hope and possibilities. As such, the conference is guided by key principles of valuing IEPs' experience, showcasing them as leaders, as well as providing them with opportunities to network and get access to information.



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 again this year to the organizers and attendees of Toronto's Internationally Educated Professionals (IEP) Conference.

Canada is proud to attract the best and brightest talent from around the world, and yet many immigrants face challenges obtaining meaningful work that corresponds with their skills and education. We know this has been a problem for far too long, and that's why we've worked to address the complications that newcomers face in order to get their credentials recognized.

Under the Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications, and as mentioned last year, a number of regulated occupations are taking steps to improve their processes for assessing and recognizing international qualifications. Now, skilled immigrants in these occupations will be advised within one year on whether their qualifications will be recognized. I am pleased to report that by December 31, 2012, six more targeted occupations will be added.

Through the Foreign Credentials Referral Office, the Government of Canada offers a number of tools to help newcomers get their credentials assessed and enter the labour market more quickly. The Planning to Work in Canada: *An Essential Workbook for Newcomers* offers immigrants information about settling in Canada, getting their credentials assessed, and creating a job search plan. In addition, the FCRO offers brochures with important information on select occupations to help newcomers learn about their occupation or sector in Canada. Ten new brochures – including ones for Chartered Accountants, Optometrists, and Pharmacists – were launched in 2011.

In addition, the International Qualification Network (IQN) website was recently launched to promote innovations in the assessment and recognition of foreign worker qualifications. The IQN website, administered by the FCRO, serves as a virtual space for employers, regulatory bodies, governments and organizations serving immigrants to capitalize on promising qualification assessment and recognition practices.

The Government of Canada is committed to helping immigrants integrate into their new communities more quickly, and giving them greater opportunities to find jobs. That's why we continue to introduce initiatives through the FCRO and invest in important events like the IEP conference.

Our work on this issue is paying off, and we will continue to work with our partners and build on our successes to ensure that skilled and professional immigrants are working in their fields of training as soon as possible when they arrive in Canada.

As Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, I would like to commend the organizers of this conference for their ongoing efforts to provide a venue for internationally-educated professionals seeking practical career advice, and, in turn, to open doors of opportunity for newcomers to Canada.



Sincerely,

The Honourable Jason Kenney,

PC, MP Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism



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

The 9th Annual IEP Conference was held at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre in downtown Toronto on Friday, February 10, 2012. A total of 1703 IEPs registered online (only a small drop from last year's record-breaking 1772) and there were close to 1350 delegates throughout the day of the event. Based on the online registration statistics, over 120 countries were represented. Twenty-eight percent of registrants reported themselves as employed. While gender was not tracked this year, Canadian status was: 75% of registrants indicated they were Permanent Residents and 21% reported they were Canadian citizens. Seventy percent of delegates were between the ages of 30 and 49 and 18% were over the age of 50. When comparing the representation from different continents year over year, Asia represents approximately 2/3 of the delegates (65% last year and 66% this year) while both Europe and Africa each represent 8.5% of the attendees. More than 100 volunteers from the City of Toronto and non-profit/community organizations staffed the event.

Unique to this year's conference was the increased online presence and promotion leading up to the day of the event. The conference was announced online through various organizations' calendars and lists of upcoming events with links to the registration page. It was also featured on select blogs and the top social media sites, LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook. As a result, the number of delegates who reported learning about the conference via the media increased from 4% up to 10%.

Since 2003, Progress Career Planning Institute (PCPI) has been presenting the IEP Conference in Toronto bringing IEPs from Engineering, Information & Communications Technology, Finance and Accounting, Business Services and Healthcare professions together with stakeholders for labour market information, career advice and orientation to the Canadian workplace and Canadian job search practices. Stakeholders included all 3 levels of government, business professionals (HR and technical managers) from both regulated and unregulated professions, educators, community organizations serving newcomers and skilled immigrants, regulatory bodies, credentialing services, and accreditation bodies. The conference is made possible by funding from Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) and through strategic partnerships with City of Toronto and Toronto Community News.

The Conference was complemented by the research study, Progress: IEP's Experience Matters, funded by CIC and commissioned by PCPI. The study focused on getting a better understanding of the experiences of mid-career IEPs and the unique challenges they face in finding work in their field as well as the relevance of their pre-immigration experience. It was presented to the business community at the Conference's Employer Luncheon and to the IEP delegates during the closing remarks. The research revealed that the skills that contributed to the successful hiring of IEPs were strong communication skills followed by technical skills, computer skills and business etiquette along with a high level of cultural competence. While most IEPs got work due to their pre-immigration work experience and qualifications, the majority did not hold jobs similar to what they held prior to immigration.

Emcees Anne-Marie Mediwake and Dwight Drummond, hosts of the CBC evening news, greeted delegates and welcomed presenters to the stage. All 3 levels of government were represented: Citizenship & Immigration Canada, Employment Ontario and the City of Toronto. Delegates heard from two experts, Lionel Laroche and Donna Messer, on the importance of soft skills, particularly the making of good presentations and the art of networking. The panel of successful IEPs returned for its third year in a row in response to strong support from delegates. There was no change to the sectors represented at the conference: IEP delegates valued the expertise of panelists and their only complaint was that there was not more time to interact with them during the 90-minute session. Afternoon skill-building sessions rounded out the program with informative and practical presentations on labour market information, conducting an effective job search for professionals, and starting a successful business.

Key Themes and Observations



- More IEPs seem to be embracing networking as a necessary and worthwhile job search practice.
- Making good presentations is essential to moving up in a Canadian organization.
- When employers comment on a lack of Canadian experience, they may just be referring to a lack of 'cultural fit', i.e., a lack of the business etiquette or communication skills sought by Canadian employers. They likely want to know that prospective employees understand the nuances in communication and are comfortable taking initiative.
- Panelists and keynote speakers reiterated the importance of focusing on what sets you apart from the next candidate and having that uniqueness evident on one's résumé and in one's conversations with employers.
- Newer immigrant professionals appreciate learning from immigrants who have come before them and who are now successful.
- Job search tools (résumé, cover letter) and practices (networking, cold calling, etc.) need to be targeted – specific to the profession, the industry, the organization and the position.
- Lionel Laroche reminded IEPs that they need to identify both their occupation and their industry when networking. This is the 'common ground' to which Donna Messer referred.
- When newcomer professionals network outside their ethno-specific (and other new immigrant) communities, they realize that some of the challenges they face as jobseekers are shared by all Canadian jobseekers, i.e., discomfort around networking, needing to keep their job search targeted, etc.
- Networking is not just about what you can get but also what you can offer.
- The weighting of soft skills increases as you move up the corporate ladder.
- The challenge for skilled immigrants entering the Canadian labour market is that they don't understand the criteria by which their performance is being measured.
- Delegates were encouraged to maximize their social media presence and to go beyond Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.

Participant Profiles & Demographics



Top 15 Countries Represented	
India	256
China	160
Iran	143
Philippines	89
Canada	70
Pakistan	68
Bangladesh	61
Colombia	50
Sri Lanka	44
Iraq	43
Nepal	41
Russian Federation	38
Nigeria	36
Venezuela	26
Egypt	26

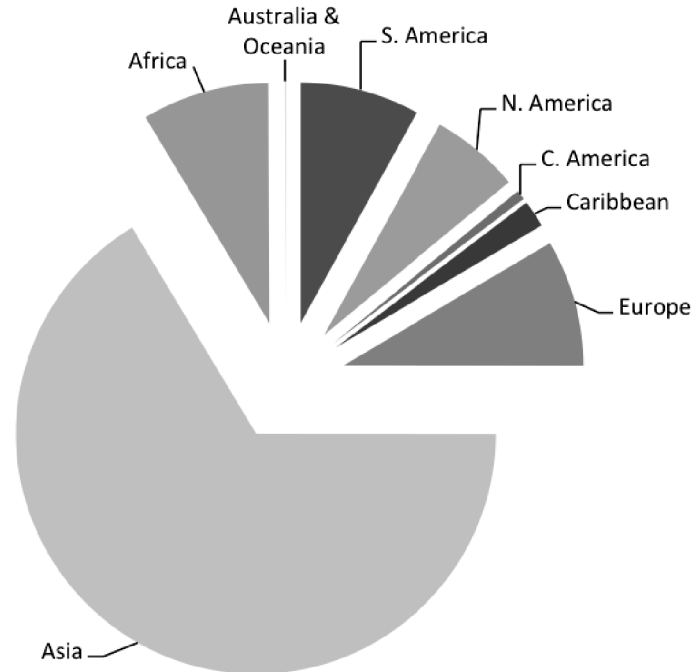
By number of delegates, the Asian continent represents 82% of the top 15 countries.

The total number of delegates represented on this list accounts for 68% of the delegates who registered online for the conference.

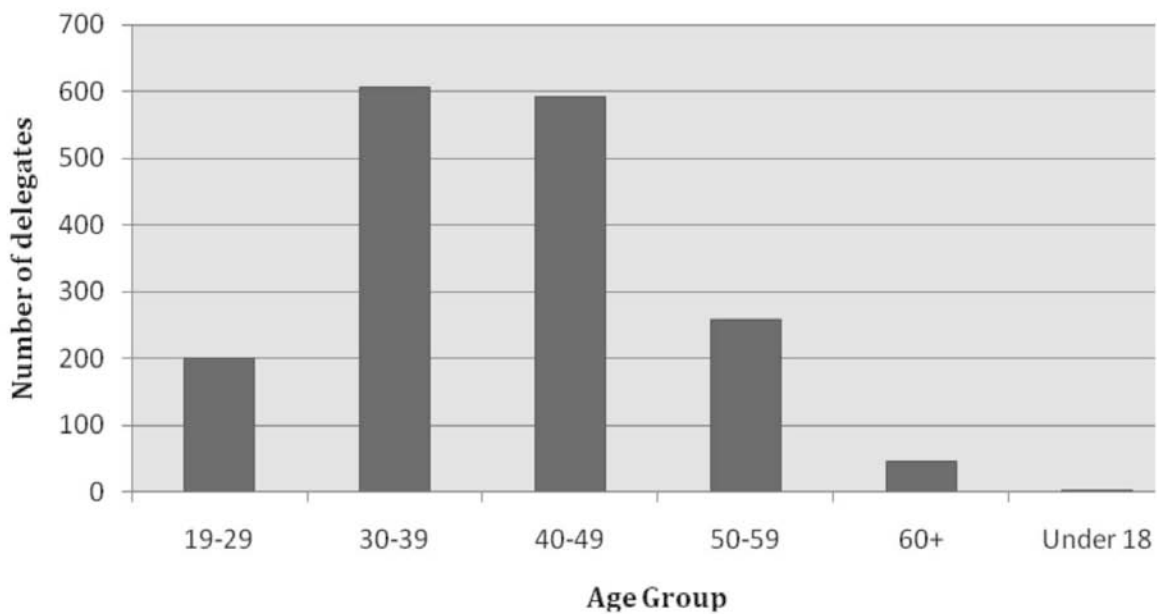
The data cited above reflects information collected from 1703 online registrations.



Delegate Representation by Continent



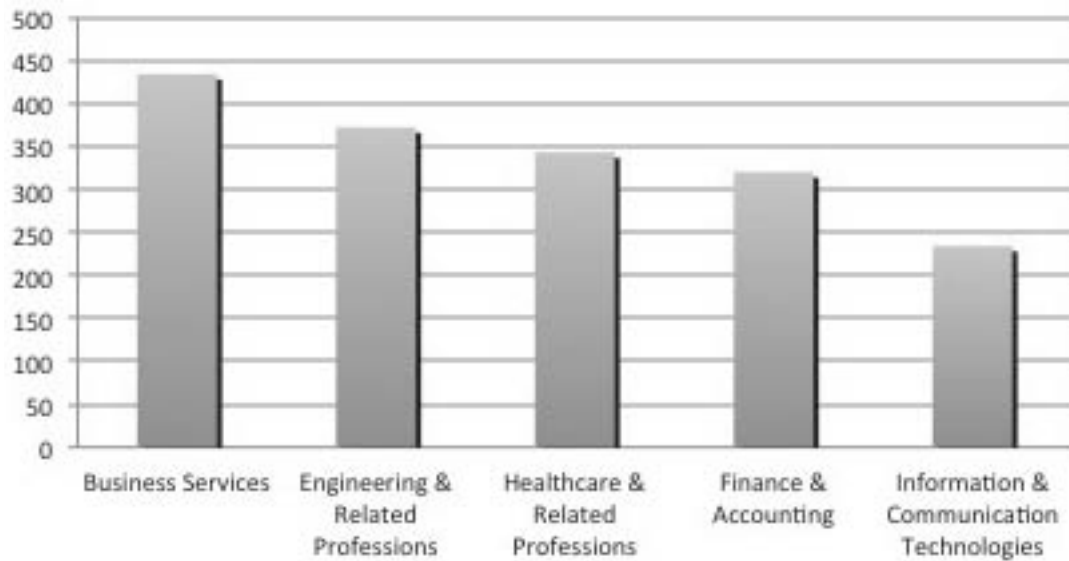
Age Group Report



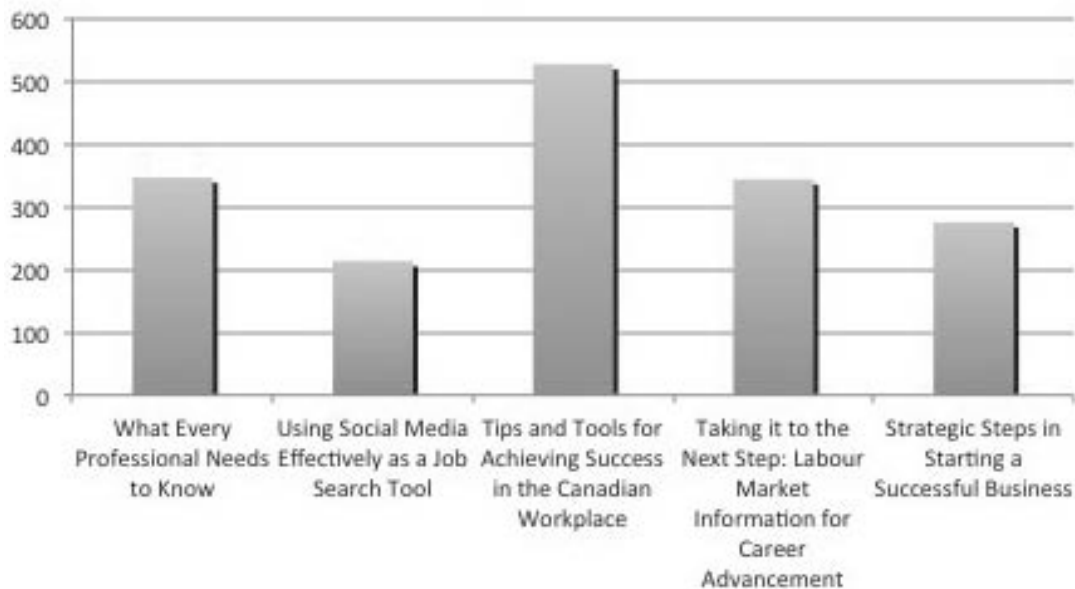
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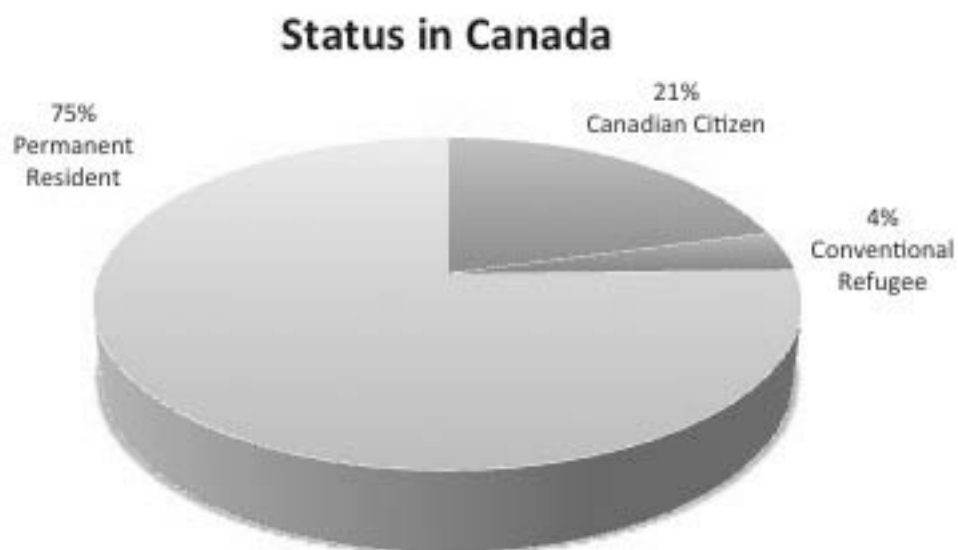
Sector Hub Selected



Skill-Building Session Selected



The data cited above reflects information collected from 1703 online registrations.



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Delegate Feedback



Evaluations collected on the day of the conference revealed the following data. For the second year in a row, 83% of attendees indicated this was their first conference. Compared to last year's conference, scores related to the usefulness of the Marketplace, the value of the conference for networking/sharing information and the overall conference organization were higher this year. The areas that rated lower than last year included: the usefulness of the information provided by the sector hub sessions and the suitability of the conference regarding day, time and length. The components that scored 4.5/5 or higher were:

- a) the morning keynote speaker Lionel Laroche's presentation
- b) the conference registration process and promotional information
- c) the suitability of the conference location/meeting rooms, and
- d) overall conference organization.

Conference delegates also reported on the most important thing they learned at the conference. 60% of respondents mentioned the word 'network' or 'networking' in their response. 12% made comments related to being positive, staying motivated and persevering while 6% mentioned the importance of soft skills and/or communications skills and another 5% talked about social media or mentioned LinkedIn.

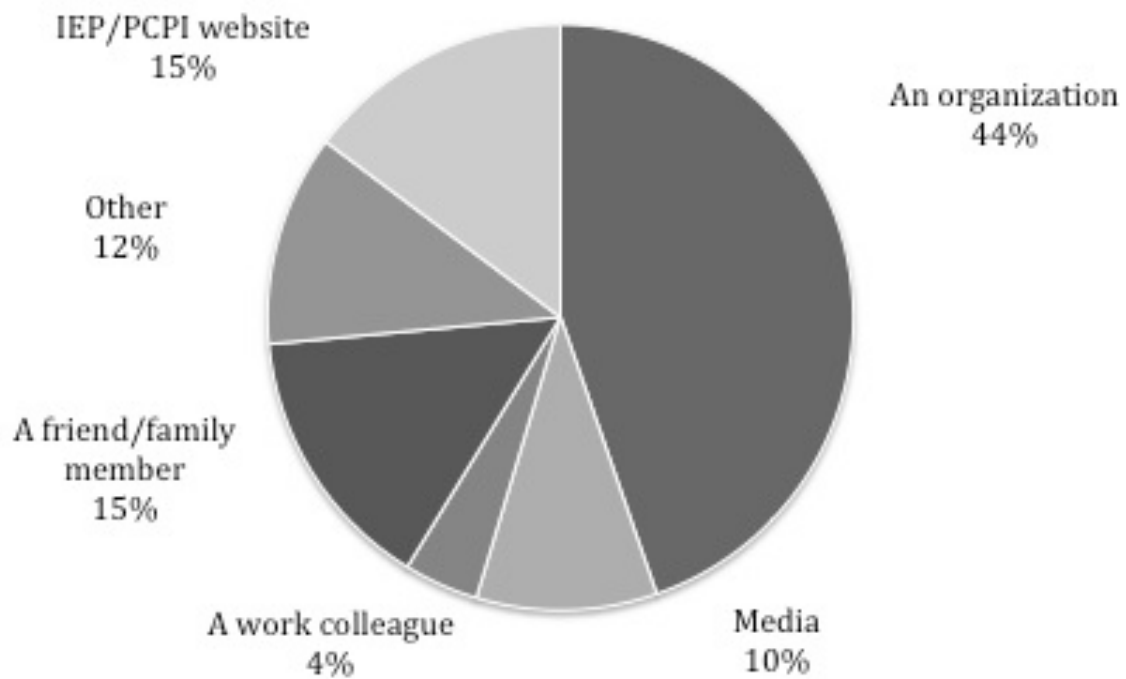
In response to the question, 'How will your job search strategy change based on the information you learned at this conference?', 64/198 comments or 32% would incorporate more networking and connecting with people in their job search. 12% will conduct a more targeted job search. Other strategies included making better use of social media, revising their résumé and approaching the job hunt with more confidence.

To improve future IEP conferences, the most popular suggestions were to:

- Invite more employers
- Include employers from sectors outside of the 5 represented
- Make more time for Q & A
- Increase the number of successful IEPs featured at the conference, and
- Provide more advanced notice in order to make it easier to spread the word



How delegates learned about the conference



Welcome and Opening Remarks



The day began early at 7:30am. There was already a buzz of excitement in the air as volunteers anticipated the morning rush; the result was instead a steady flow of IEPs into the early afternoon. The registration tables were ready to receive IEP delegates and distribute the mail courier bags that have now become a popular IEP Conference souvenir. Exhibitors were setting up their booths in the Marketplace in preparation for the more than 1350 attendees that were to descend upon them.

Shortly after 8:30am, as delegates, employers, speakers, members of the conference organizing team and other attendees rose for the national anthem, a video presentation of 'With Glowing Hearts', the John Bassett Theatre, the 'main stage' of the conference, was half full.

Hosts of CBC NEWS TORONTO's supper hour newscast, Annemarie Mediwake and Dwight Drummond emceed the morning's agenda. Both had immigrated to Canada in the early 70s as children with their parents. Their introduction dubbed the conference, "Canada's largest networking event" with 120 business leaders and more than 1000 IEPs. They were delighted that CBC was a media sponsor for the conference.



Welcome and Opening Remarks



The diverse news anchor team then introduced the Conference Chair and President of PCPI, Silma Roddau. Now in her fourth year providing leadership to the Conference, the career development executive has expertise in performance management systems, training, coaching and assessment of the career needs of diverse jobseekers. She addressed the delegates and provided a brief history of the conference from its modest beginnings to its current evolution, with over 120 countries and 75 languages represented. Highlighting the conference principles on which the IEP Conference was founded, she invited attendees to actively participate, practice networking, and take advantage of the additional resources in the Marketplace. Canada, she explained, is fortunate compared to Germany and Sweden where new immigrants typically do not speak the official language of their new home country. She acknowledged the current skill gaps and the importance of integrating IEPs to address those shortages and to ensure prosperity for the city of Toronto. She thanked the funder, Citizenship & Immigration Canada, the sponsors (naming each one of them), the Conference Advisory Committee and the more than 100 volunteers who made the day possible.

Chris Alexander, Chair of PCPI and President and CEO at Zhoosh Service Enterprise, welcomed IEPs to the conference noting the importance of utilizing the skills of IEPs and acknowledging their contribution to Canada's prosperity and development. He applauded their courage, patience and tenacity. Delegates were encouraged to participate in the day's events and to connect with as many employers as possible.

Anton Suphal, Director of Settlement Operations for Toronto and York at Citizenship & Immigration Canada (CIC) spoke directly to delegates, alternating between Canada's official languages, describing the work of his department in addressing the needs of new immigrants. In addition to employment, he acknowledged that the integration process also included finding appropriate housing, accessing healthcare services, registering children in school, and acquiring a driver's license. He also recognized the 440 regulatory bodies governing 55 professions across Canada. In integrating into the Canadian workforce, the current challenges were foreign credential recognition, language proficiency, Canadian work experience and understanding the intricacies of life in Canada. His department recognizes that immigration is key to Canada's economic and population growth. He explains that since 2005, CIC has tripled settlement funding to Ontario and since April 2011, it has funded the (provincial) Ministry of Citizenship & Immigration under the bridge training programs. He invited delegates to note programs of interest and to visit CIC's website. Programs of interest to IEPs included the free OSLT (Occupation-Specific Language Training) courses offered through 13 Ontario colleges (FLAP for francophones), ELT programs (job-specific, advanced-level English training to adult newcomers) and other bridge-to-work programs.

Acting Director of Strategic Growth & Sector Development at the City of Toronto, Randy McLean thanked the emcees for their kind introduction. He acknowledged the full agenda and promised to keep his comments brief. As a results-oriented conference, it was his favourite conference. He thanked Metroland Media and most of all the delegates for the knowledge and skills that they bring. 'Our city, our strength.' He described Toronto as a city of immigrants with more than 50% born outside of Canada and another 22-25% who had at least 1 parent who emigrated from another country. He urged IEPs to find out about the networks of the people they were connecting with today: 'Everybody here can help you.'

Keynote Speaker – Lionel Laroche



Lionel Laroche, Ph. D., P. Eng. and President at MCB Solutions, delivered a dynamic and all too timely presentation on succeeding in the Canadian workplace based on his many years of experience as an IEP himself in Canada. IEPs never tire of Lionel, an IEP Conference favourite who has spoken at the Toronto conference previously as well as at other IEP Conferences across the country. An internationally educated engineer who immigrated to Canada from France more than 10 years ago, he has made his living in Canada orienting newer immigrants to the Canadian way of networking and finding meaningful employment.



High Technical Skills vs. Low Soft Skills

According to Lionel, the challenge new immigrants face has to do with technical skills (skills specific to one's occupation typically learned through school or formal training) vs. soft skills (skills he defines as those used in working with people, managing one's self, resolving conflicts, etc.). What is typical is that newcomer professionals arrive with high technical skills and low soft skills according to Canadian standards. (Laroche clearly defines a professional as 'one requiring a (minimum) Bachelor's degree in order to do their job.')

This set of circumstances can be directly attributed to CIC's point system, the process by which newcomers are admitted to Canada and which measures technical skills only. As Lionel points out, it would be pointless to measure soft skills, which are culturally-specific, as part of the immigration process. A newcomer's soft skills may range from outstanding to terrible by his/her home country's standards, but once he/she arrives in Canada, his/her soft skills are judged to be insufficient or 'at the low end of the spectrum' when measured against Canadian standards.



Based on his research and experience in Canada, he estimates the relative weights placed on technical skills and soft skills to be 50/50 on average across all professions compared to 90/10 for many of the countries where Canada's immigrants originate. Unlike Canada, a PhD always beats a Bachelor's degree by French standards. And in terms of soft skills, the delivery of French negative feedback seems 'blasting' by Canadian standards. He then asks the audience: "How does the weight on soft skills change as you move up in an organization in Canada?" He responds with "The importance of soft skills goes up." The higher you are in an organization, the more important soft skills become to your success.

He explains that the way to identify the soft skills that are important to a culture is to look at what age children start learning that soft skill. For Canadians, making good presentations is essential to success in Canada: the teaching of this soft skill begins with show and tell in kindergarten. "You won't make it beyond entry-level positions in Canada without making good presentations." He contrasts this with the typical age many immigrants make their first presentation; for some it's high school and for many others, it's university (for his wife from China, it was defending her thesis in university). He uses the example of Chinese children being able to 'take Canadians on in Mathematics any day' to demonstrate that each country's educational system is set up to teach its children what parents think is important for them to know to be successful.

Know How Your Performance is Being Evaluated

Frustration for skilled immigrants stems from their not knowing how their performance is being evaluated. He uses the example of two candidates competing for a job: candidate A, a recent immigrant, with a PhD and candidate B, who was either born in Canada or who has been in Canada much longer, with a Bachelor's Degree. If candidate B gets the job, many immigrants would see this as unfair based on the technical competencies but if they understand the importance of soft skills in the Canadian context, they will be able to focus their energy on improving their soft skills. For many new immigrants, the number one reaction to being bypassed for a job is to go back to school. The problem is this doesn't work because it doesn't address the weakness in soft skills. He urges all IEPs to learn how to make good presentations by Canadian standards: 'Even if you made good presentations by your home country's standards, it does not necessarily translate into good presentation skills in Canada.'

Job Search: 4 Fundamental Questions

When looking for a job in Canada, there are four fundamental questions to consider:

- 1. *What problem are you good at solving?***

Employers are looking to solve a particular problem and to make money. They are not looking to hire people.

- 2. *Who has that problem AND is willing to pay money to have it solved?***

- 3. *How do you make them know you exist?***

Lionel comments that many immigrants jump to #3 and 'broadcast' their résumé, i.e., send it out to hundreds of employers without focusing on the specific needs of employers. In his experience, that approach doesn't work because Canada is a land of specialists. It is important to identify the real targets. Unfortunately, in Canada, less than 20 companies can use the skills of a PhD graduate and pay them what their skills command.

- 4. *How do you convince them that you are the best at solving this problem for them?***

You need to give people numbers to convince them you've done something good. There is no such thing as one size fits all.



Canada is a Land of Specialists

Canada is a land of specialists. Many immigrants come from cultures where the best person for the job is a generalist. 'Telling Canadian employers you can do anything will get you nowhere', he declares. Canada is so specialized because they are so close to the U.S. Canadian companies cannot compete with U.S. companies on price; they can only beat them on specialization or niche marketing. He cites the example of a family doctor in the UK who is known as a GP or General Practitioner; he contrasts this example with what is found in Canada: a family doctor specializes in pediatrics or family medicine. He stresses the importance of defining one's specialization. He uses the example of an IEP who trained as an architect in his country of origin. He was having no success in finding work until someone pointed out to him that architects in Canada design buildings. This IEP was in fact considered an urban planner in Canada because he was designing environments or how land was to be used. For networking purposes, it is important to 'network with people within your field and not with people within your own ethnic community.' Canadians network with people in their profession and/or in their industrial sector. 'To network with anyone else is a waste of time.' He invites delegates to use the conference as an opportunity to network.

Take Ownership of Your Job Search

He commands delegates to take ownership of their job search. As he explains, plenty of stakeholders can improve things but in the end, it is your job search. Furthermore, he recommends focusing one's job search on what one can influence and control and limiting one's thoughts in the areas where one has little to no control, i.e., the state of the economy. However, by networking extensively, one can influence how quickly one finds a job. And, 'what you do you have control over,' he advises, 'is how you use your time.' 'If you put energy into your job search, you can increase your chances.' One can work hard to get a job and ensure one's time and energy are spent on high-payoff activities. It is ineffective to send one's résumé to 500 places. It is essential to target one's résumé for each application. He also suggests becoming active in professional associations to build one's network and increase access to available opportunities.

Succeeding in Canada: 5 Suggestions

Lionel offers 5 suggestions to succeeding in Canada:

- 1. Focus on continuously improving the communication of your technical skills; this is a critical soft skill.***
- 2. Define clearly your specialization, i.e., don't tell employers you can do anything.***
- 3. Conduct an extensive labour market survey specific to your skills (referring both to your profession and industrial sector)***
- 4. Network by profession and industry.***
- 5. Focus on the part you control – your time.***



Q & A

Q

What is the biggest hesitation for any employer looking to hire new Canadians?

A

The biggest hesitation for any employer is getting anyone who will create headaches. If the person they hire requires way more attention or lacks initiative, then the employer might feel they may as well do the work him- or herself. Because many new immigrants come from hierarchical cultures, they are accustomed to asking the boss how he/she wants to have something done when assigned a task.

Follow-up question:

Q

How do I convince the employer that I am not that person (who will create headaches) in an interview?

A

You need to pass the duck test. If you think, walk, and quack like a duck, then you are probably a duck. In other words, if you are looking for a job as an Engineer, you want to convince the employer that you are a Canadian engineer by the way you think, speak and behave in the interview.

Panel: IEPs' Journeys to Success



This panel, now in its third year, consisted of three successful IEPs who shared their stories of making connections in a new country and finding meaningful employment.

Samuel Vuillaume - Systems Engineer at Radware

Samuel, who holds a Doctorate in Mathematics, immigrated to Canada from France in May 2007. His expertise is in Network Engineering Operations. He arrived here with a temporary work permit and his intention was to try it out for a year. Improving his English language skills was his first goal. He had no job, no family, no friends, no home, and no English. What he did have was a big suitcase, a few thousand dollars, 11 years of work experience in France and fear that his money would run out before he found a job. Nobody knew who he was or what he could do. He thought, 'What can I do to make myself more visible?' With the help of a local community centre, he got assistance with writing his résumé for a job in Canada, an opportunity to learn and practice his English and an opening to develop a social life. After 3 months in Canada, he had his first interview with a recruiter. He made use of LinkedIn and after 6 months with improved communication skills, he landed his first job as a Senior Network Engineer. Grateful to that first employer who gave him a chance, he encouraged fellow IEPs to do the same.

His advice:

- ***Build network.***
- ***Be visible.***
- ***Keep up certifications.***



Panel: IEPs' Journeys to Success



Gautam Nath, MBA, RHB – Partner, Research and Agency Branding at Monsoon Communications and Founder of Multicultural Marketing Society of Canada

'Each one of us is a winner.'

Previously a panelist for the Business Services sector hub at the 2010 and 2011 IEP Conferences. Son of a Czech mother and Indian father, Gautam decided with his wife to move to Canada in November 2008. His specialties include Consumer Product Marketing, Change Management and Multicultural Marketing. He shared with the audience, "As a tourist, we saw lovely things. As immigrants, we saw the cracks in the sidewalk." Not known in Canada, he knew he needed a plan. What he did know was that he was smart and he would figure it out: "One wealth that cannot be restricted is the wealth you have up here (pointing at his head)." In the first month, he had everything essential set up. Over the first 90 days, he focused on getting to know the lay of the land: he traveled the TTC, observed people and learned the network. He used the internet to find networking groups and companies in Canada focusing on who he was most interested in. Within a month of joining Canada's largest networking group for executives in transition, HAPPEN, the group's President offered him his first volunteer opportunity as a Marketing Advisor.

In response to the objection, 'You lack Canadian experience,' he advised delegates to not process it literally but to hear it as "I don't know who you are." According to Nath, 'if you're not on LinkedIn, you're not in the game' reminding fellow immigrants of the hidden job market. In 2011, he was among the winners of the Top 25 Canadian Immigrants Awards.

His advice:

- *Don't keep quiet.*
- *Put your hand up in response to volunteer opportunities.*
- *Keep busy (as he lists off the events in his calendar for the coming week). We don't have the luxury of time.*
- *Visit the TRIEC booth.*
- *View (examine) your mindset. The country, the game, the rules are different. Don't just focus on permanent, full-time jobs.*
- *Appreciate the support of your partner and children.*
- *Stay positive: The glass is half full, not half empty.*

Panel: IEPs' Journeys to Success



Vindo Bonthala – Senior Manager at Deloitte Consulting

When he first came to Canada in the mid 90s at the age of 20, he was staying at a hostel with no friends and no family. He remembers walking out on a cold morning ill-prepared for the weather. He applied to large consulting companies and met with the objection of 'no Canadian experience.' He figured out early on that it referred less to his lack of work experience in Canada and more to the employers' concern for 'cultural fit', i.e., communication skills and business etiquette practiced in Canada. He credits Seinfeld with teaching him techniques for communicating. He focused on universally recognized certifications like PMP and learned to articulate to employers his unique skill set. Based on his experience, employers wanted to cross train him. In this way, he could show them his ability to adapt beyond his specialization.

His advice:

- *Show connections to Canadian companies, organizations and clients (on your résumé).*
- *Focus on networking.*
- *Take advantage of two to three degrees of separation on LinkedIn (he has over 600 contacts and regularly connects with 40-50 of them)*

Sector 'Hub' Concurrent Sessions



This 90-minute segment is both an essential and popular component of the day's proceedings. Delegates had one of five sector hub concurrent sessions to choose from: Engineering & Related Professions, Information & Communications Technology, Business Services, Finance & Accounting and Healthcare & Related Professions. While feedback from past conferences indicates an interest and need for other sectors to be represented, there continues to be more than sufficient demand (from delegates, based on labour market demand) for the current selection. Due to space limitations at the current venue, 5 is the optimal number of sectors. The facilitators, all veterans of the conference, worked with panelists representing employers, regulator bodies and academia, who made short presentations prior to a Q & A session. Delegates find these sessions to be the most useful aspect of the conference and as a result, there is always demand for more time to be allocated to these sector discussions. Scribes in each of these sector breakout rooms recorded delegates' questions, panelists' responses, trends identified within the sector and career tips for IEPs to facilitate their integration into the Canadian workplace.



1 Engineering & Related Professions

Facilitator:

Mark Franklin, M.Ed., P.Eng., CMF – Practice Leader at CareerCycles

Panelists:

Hira Ahuja, M.ASC., FCSCE. P.Eng. – President at Educational Program Innovation Center (EPIC)

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

Jose Garcia, P.Eng., Ph.D. – Program Manager, Gateway for Internationally Educated Professionals at The Raymond G. Chang School of Continuing Studies at Ryerson University

Pauline Gavilanez - Manager, Corporate Human Resources at Tetra Tech

Donna McNeely, B.A.S. (York), MBA (Phoenix) - Global Talent Acquisition Lead, Technology & Engineering at AMD

Randy Sinukoff, M.A.Sc., P.Eng., EP - Senior Consultant at STANTEC Consulting Ltd.

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

Gordon A. Onley – Business Development and Environmental Education at Fisher Environmental Ltd.

Richard Stamper – Manager, Business Development at OACETT

Lee E. Weissling - Advocacy Development Officer at Ontario Society of Professional Engineers (OSPE)

Jag Mohan, Ph.D - Dean of Engineering Technology and Applied Science at Centennial College

Information and advice shared by panel members: Share a bit about your current position and 2-3 employment trends you see within the industry, and how these trends impact the labour market

Gordon offered the following job search advice:

- In addition to using traditional job search techniques, consider using “information interviews.” An information interview involves doing some research to identify companies and positions within those companies that are of interest to you. Then contact employees within the company directly to request a 15-20 minute information interview to learn more about that individual’s role and their views on the industry. Information interviews are a very good way to build your professional network, which can ultimately lead to a position that is well-suited for you.

Pauline offered the following tips for internationally trained engineers:

- Recognize that companies are using Applicant Tracking Systems to handle job applications and to screen résumés. Your résumé should include industry or common buzz words. By adding buzz words to your résumé, the Applicant Tracking System will pick up your résumé. Buzz words can be found on job postings related to your occupation or on the specific job posting you are responding to.



- Know your skills and rather than focus on your lack of Canadian work experience, try to focus your résumé on the skills that you feel are transferable, i.e., project management. If the experience you have is very specific to a certain market, industry or project, try to present it on your résumé in a way that makes it easy for potential employers to understand what you can do for their company.
- Take advantage of all avenues when looking for a new job:
 - o Create your profile on LinkedIn – recruiters actively use this social media site to find candidates so let it do the work for you
 - o Use professional associations and employment agencies to look for postings
 - o Enroll in an outreach/bridging/pre-employment/mentoring/enhanced language training (ELT) program for New Canadians; this helps to promote the idea that you are job ready after completing one of these programs
 - o Use electronic job boards (Workopolis, Monster, Wow Jobs, government sites, i.e., Job Bank, etc.)
 - o Reach out and build your network of contacts
 - o Most companies have an Employee Referral Program in which the employee gets paid if one of their referrals gets hired – see if anyone in your network can refer you through their Employee Referral Program
 - o Job markets in certain provinces, cities and rural areas are hot right now; apply to jobs that are located in the areas where it is more difficult to hire employees into, i.e., Saskatoon, Sudbury, Thunder Bay, etc.

When pursuing your engineering career in Canada, **Hira's** advice is very practical:

- An engineering license is not the first thing that you need. Employment in technical areas is available at technologist levels without a license. Your urgent need is to support your family. Networking is very important for finding employment. It is better to contact immigrants you know who are already employed. Companies that are already used to working with immigrants employ them. There are more chances of getting employment through immigrants working in companies such as these. Getting a license is only important in getting you to the income level that you deserve. You should apply for it soon after you accept a job to support your family.





Moody provided information on the work of Professional Engineers Ontario and how it helps internationally educated engineers:

Professional Engineers Ontario licenses Ontario's 72,000 professional engineers. Close to 40% are International Engineering Graduates. Last year, about 700 P.Eng. licenses were issued to International Engineering Graduates.

In addition to P.Eng. licenses, PEO grants temporary, limited and provisional licenses to practice professional engineering, and authorizes businesses to provide engineering services to the public. It sets standards for and regulates engineering practice. Under the Professional Engineers Act, its statutory mandate is to serve and protect the public interest where engineering is concerned. PEO has initiated many activities to help International Engineering Graduates meet the licensing requirements.

1. How does PEO help International Engineering Graduates?

- PEO waives the application fees for recent immigrants under the FCP program;
- Prospective immigrants may apply before they actually land in Canada;
- PEO supports immigrant-serving organizations by:
 - o Conducting information sessions; and
 - o Taking an advisory role on International Engineering Graduates programs that are sponsored by the federal and provincial governments; e.g. Engineering Connections, Internationally Educated Engineers Qualification Bridging (IEEQB) Program, New Canadian Program; Professional Access and Integration Program (PAIE).
- PEO provides individual assessments for licensure;
- PEO accepts documents submitted directly by the applicants and works with applicants who cannot provide official documents

2. What is professional engineering?

Professional engineering is any act of planning, designing, composing, evaluating, advising, reporting, directing or supervising that requires the application of engineering principles and concerns the safeguarding of life, health, property, economic interests, the public welfare or the environment, or the managing of any such act.

3. Who can practice professional engineering?

No person shall engage in the practice of professional engineering unless that person is a holder of a licence OR a professional engineer assumes responsibility for the services within the practice of professional engineering to which the act is related.





4. What are the requirements for a licence?

You must:

- Be at least 18 years of age
- Be of good character
- Have a bachelor's degree in engineering
 - o About 70% of International Engineering Graduates meet the academic requirements without the need to write any technical examinations.
- Have successfully completed PEO's Professional Practice Examination
- Have 4 years of engineering experience, one of which is verifiable by a Canadian P.Eng.

5. How does PEO assess applicants?

The current licensing module is based on individual assessments. Even though two applicants may seem to have the same engineering knowledge and experience, in fact their knowledge and experience are not identical.

It is important to know that when PEO assesses an applicant, they look at whether he/she meets the requirements and not where the individual comes from or where the individual gained his/her academic knowledge and practice. This applies to International Engineering Graduates as well as Canadian engineering graduates.

Richard invites immigrant professionals to proactively address the gaps in their job search strategies:

- Understand what you have to offer prospective employers; understand how you "fit" into the organizational culture
- Evaluate where the gaps are, particularly if you are not receiving positive responses after submitting your application
- Conduct information interviews with employers to find out what is missing or what it is that you are doing that is not helping you
- The 3 most common gaps are in the areas of: 1) communication skills, 2) adapting to corporate culture and 3) technical skills
- Proactively address the gaps by taking advantage of the many resources available to offer support: settlement services, educational institutions, professional associations, etc.
- OACETT membership offers:
 - o Excellent networking opportunities through chapter meetings and events
 - o Professional recognition which can lead to employment opportunities and upward mobility in the workplace
- Set up a profile on LinkedIn and join the OACETT group – recruiters search LinkedIn



2 Information and Communications Technology

Facilitator:

Louisa Jewell, MAPP - President, Positive Matters

Panelists:

Karen Bennet – VP of Technology at Trapeze Media Ltd.

Ian Langdon - IT Administrator at Trapeze Media Ltd.

Djoume Salvetti – Technical Team Lead at FreshBooks

Nora Priestly - Project Manager, Bridging Programs for Business, IT and Human Resources Professionals at York University

Ned Hashmi – VP Operations, Information at Geoware

Robert Tortian – Project Manager, Information Technology Connections at ACCES Employment

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

Pam Price, CHRP - Director, HR Business Partner at MTS Allstream

Andrea Richardson - Manager, Global Human Resources at Infusion Development

Questions posted online as part of the registration process as questions for this sector hub covered the topics of getting a job in the ITC field, paid internships, licensing, language abilities, networking and the age bias.

Questions asked by IEP participants/ Answers from panelists:

Q What are the emerging trends in IT/Communications today?

A Following are the emerging trends in the IT/Communications Sector:

- a) Mobile Device Management (MDM) software
- b) Specialized collaborative tools (instant messaging, wikis, blogs, social network services)
- c) Front-End Technologies
- d) Website Development
- e) Technologies integrated with social media, i.e., Twitter, Facebook, etc.
- f) Web environments and wireless / mobile integrated applications
- g) Data warehousing for sharing of information across the organization



- h) Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)
- i) Customer Relationship Management (CRM)
- j) Supply Chain Management (SCM)
- k) Human Resource Management Systems (HRMS)
- l) Business Intelligence (BI) Systems
- m) Mobile Applications
- n) Enterprise Collaboration
- o) Environmental Management Solutions
- p) Legacy System Renewal
- q) Software as a Service (SaaS)
- r) Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS)
- s) Platform as a Service (PaaS)
- t) Unified Communications (UC)
- u) Desktop Virtualization
- v) Windows 7
- w) Tablet Computers
- x) Increasingly employers are hiring from online sources like LinkedIn
- y) Companies want to keep costs down by using more Open Source Server Technologies (Apache, Java)



What are the 'hot' skills today?



Panelists identified the following 'hot' skills in the sector:

- 1) Development of Ruby, Java, HTML and PHP
- 2) Vendor-Neutral Certifications (Certs), i.e., CIW, CompTIA
- 3) PMP certification – While pursuing PMP certification, mention it on your résumé, i.e., that the certification is in progress. Do not stall your job search waiting to finish. PMP certification is offered by the Project Management Institute (PMI).
- 4) Programming and Application Development
- 5) Help Desk/Technical Support
- 6) Networking skills, especially experience in a virtualized or cloud-based environment



- 7) Business Intelligence
- 8) Data Centre Operations and Systems Integration
- 9) Technical skills centered around social media remain in demand today, as more industries look for ways to integrate Web 2.0 technologies into their infrastructures
- 10) Information security remains a top priority for organizations
- 11) Telecommunications technology especially VOIP



What soft skills are employers looking for?



Panelists identified the following key soft skills:

- 1) Skilled in identifying problems and offering solutions
- 2) A facility for translating IT language into everyday language that makes technical concepts accessible to people who may not have an IT background
- 3) Communication skills
- 4) Team work
- 5) Knowledge about Canadian workplace culture, typically provided by bridge training programs available in the community. These programs can help you identify certain needs that you did not know about.
- 6) Being able to explain what you do in ways that Canadian employers will understand. Employers are looking for a "fit".
- 7) Experience with doing collaborative work
- 8) Strengths in adapting to a new working environment. For example, if you take on a new management job, you are expected to introduce yourself to your co-workers. If you do not introduce yourself, you may be thought of as standoffish.
- 9) Demonstrated abilities to communicate effectively; this skill becomes especially important if you are working with management and external clients.



How do I get Canadian experience?



Panelists responded as below:

- I started my career in Canada by doing consultancy work. I registered a business. There are programs to help you register a business in Canada.
- Take any contract work, even a one-month contract, and do your best even if this might not be the best position for you. This will give you excellent references. When you leave, ask them for a reference.

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- Find community projects that can give you experience and volunteer with them. When you leave, ask them if you can use them as a reference. Don't forget to ask them if you can use their contact as your business contact.
- The person you ask for a reference from must be the one who can give you an excellent reference. If your experience with an organization was not the most positive, do not use them as a reference.
- You should prepare your references to provide a good reference by sending them a copy of the job posting and coaching them on what to say to the employer.



Q **How do I avoid sounding like everyone else on my résumé especially if the job requirements are very standard?**

- A**
- Use your cover letter to make yourself stand out by showing enthusiasm and honing in on very key accomplishments that relate to the posting. Be sure to customize your résumé to include the key requirements listed in the job posting.
 - Your cover letter should not be more than three paragraphs. It should be to the point and zero in on the key accomplishments that relate to the job posting and set you apart from the rest.

Q **As an employer, how do you feel about jobseekers contacting you directly?**

- A**
- As an employer, I welcome being contacted directly. It shows your passion for the organization. But it is important to read the company's website first to get a good understanding of the company's products. Find the HR manager's contact details and email your résumé directly. When you call the company, do not directly say that you want a job but show your interest in one of the company's products and show them how you could make a contribution should you get the opportunity to join them.
 - Some companies actually offer bonuses of up to \$5000 to employees who bring in new talent.
 - More than 50 percent of jobs are not advertised. Contacting employers directly taps into this hidden job market.



Q I have more than one area of specialization. If I am posting my profile online, on LinkedIn, what should I highlight?

A I would list all my skills on the online résumé. When applying for a specific position, I would tailor it to the particular job posting.

Q I have been in the field for a long time and I am not sure whether this increases or decreases my chances of being hired. Does my long experience in the field overqualify me for many jobs?

A

- When applying for a specific job, tailor your résumé for the particular job by only including information relevant to the posting.
- Years of experience may work against you if what you learned many years ago is now obsolete. You need to keep your skills up-to-date especially in the IT field where technology changes rapidly.

Q Who is more likely to be hired between a Project Manager with foreign experience and PMP certification and one with Canadian experience and no PMP certification?

A It does not matter where your experience is from as long as you can translate it into what a Canadian employer can understand. PMP designation is absolutely necessary.

TIPS

- Networking is the key to finding employment.
- Continue to learn new skills.
- Show enthusiasm.
- Speak about your work with confidence and passion.
- Stay positive even though it is not easy. Negative feelings will show up at interviews and work against you.
- Be persistent, have faith and never give up.
- Stay patient because the market is difficult.
- Take advantage of free services and bridge training programs.
- Participate in professional networking groups.
- Attend trade shows and talk about your work with confidence and passion.
- Stay focused on your profession even though you may be doing a survival job.
- 80% of IEPs are underemployed in survival jobs; count yourself in the 20%
- Stay away from people who give you negative energy.
- Meet with people in your profession. Do not stay at home.
- Look at this as a marathon and keep going until you reach the finish line.
- Meet with other people and ask for help with your job search. More than 50% of jobs are not posted. Networking opens up the hidden job market.
- Take care of yourself.



TRENDS

- Employers are increasingly hiring from online sources like LinkedIn. It is necessary to maintain an online presence by posting your résumé online.
- The outsourcing of IT operations means that IT jobs are found all over the world. IEPs must cast their net wider than Canada.
- Companies want to keep costs down by using more Open Source Server Technologies. Skills like Ruby on Rails (RoR), Python, PHP and other open source programming skills are strongly recommended.

Most valuable take away:

"I will keep my skills up-to-date"

"I will join a professional network"

"I will volunteer to get Canadian experience"

"I will contact employers directly"

"I will enroll in a bridge training program to learn Canadian workplace culture and other soft skills"

"I will go out to meet people more often"

"I will keep positive"

"I will work towards my PMP certification"





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

Facilitator:

Maureen McKenna, Innovation Partners International

Panelists:

Kristina Hidas - Vice President, HR R&D at Human Resources Professionals Association (HRPA)

Vinod Bonthala – Senior Manager at Deloitte Consulting

Alex Gallacher – Managing Director at ENGAGE Human Resources Solutions

Sultana Lalani – National Account Manager at Adecco Employment Services Ltd.

Latha Sukumar – Executive Director and Lawyer at Multilingual Community Interpreter Services (MCIS)

Robin Tonna – Senior Associate at ENGAGE Human Resources Solutions

Keith Hernandez – President/Owner, KAH Consultants; Director, Board Director at ACCES Employment

Information and advice shared by panel members: Share a bit about your current position and 2-3 employment trends you see within the industry, and how these trends impact the labour market

Kristina

- HR is not easy to get into so it is well worth your while to join an association and if you're interested in Human Resources opportunities, joining HRPA is helpful
 - Membership will provide you with networking opportunities and access to a great deal of HR opportunities; it is organized by geographical chapters where you will be able to meet people looking for jobs and people looking for employees
- Volunteering is very important to engage in when looking for a job
 - For example, trade shows allow volunteers to commit their time in a variety of positions and it exposes them to thousands of 'brand new' people including employers
- The CHRP (Certified Human Resources Professional) designation is an increasingly valuable designation
 - Criteria for joining:
 - Foreign degrees need to be assessed
 - Foreign experience can substitute for course work
 - Equivalent course work is given full credit
 - Experience doesn't need to be Canadian



- There is a reduced membership fee of \$107 but you must have:
 - Attained professional experience and education outside of Canada
 - Worked in HR for two of the last five years, and
 - Obtained permanent residency status in Canada within last 2 years
- www.hrpa.ca
- Find the certification guide online: <http://www.hrpa.ca/OfficeOfTheRegistrar/Pages/certification.aspx>

Vinod

Arrived in Canada during the mid-90s from India, at a time when social networking was not yet available

Tips based on his experience and perspective as he conducts interviews on a weekly basis:

- Networking — focus on the 20 people you want to network with and that you can actually reach out to; focus on quality (the 700 Facebook friends may not be helpful)
- Look for cultural fit: expand on what you have done in your previous jobs
- Target your résumés to a specific audience, i.e., smaller firms. Start interviewing with these smaller companies ; there may be a higher likelihood of finding work with them. Then, build on the experience from these interviews. Based on the feedback, refine your résumé and interview skills accordingly.
- Large companies use technology/customized software to screen your résumé for key words; however, if you have résumés all over the place then you don't have the option to target them for a specific position
- Send out your résumé only to those jobs best suited for you
- Prepare your speech so that it is crisp and focused; promote your good communication skills. Practice it in English; you should be able to tell employers what you can do in 2 minutes.
- Stay positive: if you go in with a negative mindset, you will come out with a negative mindset and your results will reflect that



Alex teaches at U of T, and Access Employment's HR Connections Program. He also runs an HR consultancy doing work for a vast array of businesses; he calls it 'interesting and exciting work.'

5 Golden Rules

- 1. Skills vs. Competencies.** Understand the skills, education, qualifications and experience requirements and work towards meeting them. Exceed expectations by developing and honing competencies....forever; professional development is a lifelong commitment. Translate your skills and education into competencies for employers so that the employer can say "Hey that's what I need." Let them know how you can make a difference in the organization; Canada needs motivated, creative people to increase the country's productivity so focus on your agility and desire to work hard.
- 2. Know What You Want.** Invest your time and effort in a job that excites you and is enabling your career path. Do you work to live or live to work? Think about what work means to you. Get good, like really good, at something you enjoy to create job satisfaction! Know what you want and invest your time in that; success comes from doing things that you like and working hard.
- 3. Be Realistic.** Think strategically, 'big picture', globally. Be realistic with your needs/demands/requirements. Research and understand market trends, economic conditions and other key information. Recognize your actual value not personal perceived value when negotiating; be willing to make compromises but be careful so as not to appear as if you are all over the place and don't really know what you want.
- 4. Develop Effective Relationships.** Everyone knows everyone else, increasingly and much more easily (the 6 degrees of separation analogy). You will always need a reference, probably several. Remember professional reputation is earned, over time. Nurture effective relationships and engage in networking everywhere, even at the hockey rink!
- 5. Don't Get Stuck in the Dark Ages.** Consistently update your skills, education, qualifications and experience; the key to success is ongoing professional development. Technology is ever-changing and you need to keep up; you can only go so far without updating your skills. Keep the saw sharp and keep up with new technologies.

There is an incredible need for bright, talented and focused professionals: incredible opportunities for Canadians, new and old alike!



Keith

- Treat job search as a project with the goal of landing that job! Being mentored, networking, volunteering, résumé writing, and job interviews are important aspects of the job search process
- Networking is many times more effective than résumé distributing. Do it for the future and not just while job hunting.
- Treat your résumé as a self-promotional document, marketing yourself to get job interviews. Listing job accomplishments is far more effective than just stating a list of job responsibilities.
- What you communicate at interviews lands you that job! Not just saying it but communicating that you are a team player who is cost-conscious while demonstrating your abilities to be positive and to work well in a multicultural environment. Convince them that you are a fit!
- Focus on soft skills while job hunting and for job retention.

Hints and Tips:

- Network and get a mentor before sending out résumés all around town!
- Make full use of a settlement services agency; integrate and learn, while in a comfortable setting
- Put aside years of experience and degrees and be open to learning,
- Demonstrate passion in everything you do and focus on a high performance level, even if it's a survival job; you need that reference!

Websites/Resources

- <http://www.accestrain.com/>
- <http://www.canadianimmigrant.ca/>
- <http://immigrantnetworks.ca/main/summary>
- <http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/audiences/newcomers/business.shtml>
- <http://jobsearch.about.com/cs/interviews/a/behavioral.htm>
- <http://www.settlement.org/index.asp>
- <http://www.skillsforchange.org/mentoring/index.html>
- <http://www.microskills.ca/Index.html>



Sultana

How Utilizing Job Agencies Can Assist in Your Job Search

Headhunter a bad word? Not necessarily. Headhunters can give you access to a variety of jobs in your profession. Different types of agencies are available; go to these resources for help.

Sultana works for a full-time staffing agency that represents the manufacturing and marketing sectors and offers both permanent and temporary positions with no fee to register. She promotes finding work through agencies as 'a great stepping stone for great careers.'

Advantages include exposure to companies that don't typically post jobs, access to valuable information shared by agency recruiters and increased flexibility in job arrangements.

Sultana related her own success story. She started as a temp doing references. Her next role took her to another firm as a recruiter. She joined Adecco as an onsite recruiter and now manages many national accounts across Canada.

Sultana's recommendations for using agencies effectively in your job search:

- Don't limit yourself to one agency; there is no cost and plenty of opportunities
- Look for an agency that specializes in your profession, book an in-person appointment, ask the recruiter to set clear expectations with you
- Please don't give up. There are so many opportunities

Latha

Create Your Own Opportunities

Latha, at 24, was a newcomer to Canada from Malaysia via India. She returned to school and trained as a lawyer. While practicing law, she joined a nonprofit with 2 employees in the suburbs. Today, that nonprofit is a thriving social enterprise, MCIS or the organization that represents the face of Toronto. Its vision is to create a world without language barriers. MCIS offers a whole range of interpretation services in over 200 languages and over 5000 interpreters. It is also the designated service for different levels of government, legal aid, courts, etc.

Latha congratulated IEPs on their decision to come to Canada. She assured them that it was the best decision even if it did not look like it at the moment. She was very conflicted herself. It took her 5 years but is now convinced it was a great decision.

She then applauded them for their courage; she acknowledged it was not an easy decision or road.

'You will make unbelievable discoveries about yourself. Stay focused on your vision of the thoughts you had when you first arrived. We are not here to talk about limitations, discrimination, lack of opportunity, etc. The reality is that you are here now and you need to plod on.'



She offered the following tips to attendees:

- Be open, optimistic and organized. Be proactive, perseverant and positive. Stay engaged and practice being extroverted. Keep networking and never give up.
- Take an inventory of your skills, print out your business cards, create a website and dress in business casual all of the time because you never know when you will run into an opportunity
- Use every opportunity to network as you never know who might be looking
- Exercise, like yoga, helps to keep your spirits up and keeps you centered
- Research, read and ask questions of yourself and others
- Look for opportunities everywhere while keeping an open mind
- Create a vision of your job – the employer that you want to work for
- Take a course, volunteer, do a project for a small honorarium or try an entry level job; create an opportunity within that job and use these opportunities to showcase your competencies
- Consult, collaborate with others and look into the *Investing in Neighbourhoods initiative* (offered through Toronto Employment and Social Services)
- Do multiple things at the same time

She relates a recent story of an immigrant with IT skills who offered to create an Access Database at MCIS. He has since been offered a job managing a large IT project.

She announced that there were currently 3 opportunities at MCIS for a CA, a proposal writer and an IT person. In addition, they train interpreters to do “on call” paid work. For many, it is often their first networking opportunity, experience or chance to obtain a reference letter.

Robin

What does it take to come to this country and start fresh?

Robin has incredible admiration for everyone who has the courage to come here and start a new life. Each and every person who came here has it; it is part of who they are.

Robin encourages IEPs to leverage that courage in one’s job search:

- Network with just about anybody and ask for help. This will lead you to places you never thought you would go
- Introduce yourself—who you are, your expertise, your industry and what you are looking for. Start the conversation; these conversations can bring you new opportunities.
- Ask:
 - o Do you know of someone in this field?
 - o How did you get your job?
- Target where you want to be. Make connections between what you are doing now and where you might like to go. Don’t close any doors.



Questions asked by IEP participants/ Answers from panelists:



What should we consider when thinking about strategies related to the Canadian experience?



Latha – Most people get employed through placement agencies even if it is part-time; others will find work through community colleges like George Brown College where they take courses to develop or build skills to keep themselves motivated

Sultana – We hire a lot of newcomers without Canadian experience; it is important to outline your experience from abroad. Some organizations are already actively promoting diversity in the workplace and others are beginning to adapt that theme; this is a selling feature for you.

Vinod – The faces of employers are changing; IEPs are now in hiring positions and they look at things differently. The world is becoming flat: many international projects and employers need that international perspective and multilingual capacity.

Alex - Interviewers should be asking about the skills, education, competencies and contributions that you can bring that are relevant to the job. Be selective about where you will work: if the employer knows and is able to articulate what they are really looking for, this is a pretty good indicator of a potentially successful organization where you can contribute to its, and your, success.

Robin – Employers are becoming much more concerned about diversity; after all, Canada is founded on diversity. Our infrastructure was founded on immigrant labour. We are rich in diversity of people, experience and thought and that is what has made this country so great. Tell the employer about the richness of your skills and your thinking.



- Q** What does it really mean for Canadian employers when they refer to Canadian experience?
- A** Alex responds with 2 things:
1. Bonafide occupational components, i.e., do you know Canadian tax law if you are applying for a position with a tax firm? In other words, do you know how to conduct yourself in the Canadian business context and culture?
 2. Can you operate effectively in the Canadian environment? For example, do your kids play hockey? Are you able to make connections and hang out with other Canadian parents? Are you able to build social interaction skills, and network while children are having some good exercise and fun?
- Q** Explain why we aren't getting jobs from George Brown College as grads.
- A** Latha - You need to work on your elevator pitch; people are not very good at articulating what they can do and are not able to answer the questions directly on the placement. It is something ingrained in the Canadian educational system: high school graduates are presenting better than those with Ph.D. degrees from other countries. It's a way of presenting one's self verbally or in written format. Agencies are doing a better job preparing professionals to make presentations.
- Q** How do I take the experience I have from my own country and discuss it with an employer in a meaningful way?
- A** Robin
- To operate effectively in the Canadian workplace, your English skills must be good. Get help if necessary; you need to be comfortable in communicating.
 - Take some courses that may be available to help you translate your skills into the Canadian context, i.e., accounting courses, retailing, etc. These courses will give you the vocabulary that Canadian employers will understand.



Q Do you think it is a good idea for someone who has been at the level of VP at home to target this level in the Canadian market? If not, how far backward should a person go?

A Vinod

- When it comes to titles, different companies have different titles; understand the job requirements and necessary competencies and speak from this standpoint.
- You don't want to go back and start from scratch; as long as it is relevant to your respective skills, then fall back on a related position.

Q What are your salary expectations? Is it a good idea to state that you are not going to negotiate the package?

A Alex

- Do your research looking for information on average salaries of the company and keep that in mind. Don't give out the numbers. Most companies have a policy related to salary and are usually happy to discuss it at the time a position is available; say things like "I am sure you have a competitive compensation policy".
- A small to medium enterprise might not have specific policies so do your homework and know the salary range that won't disadvantage you and won't make you look too desperate. Don't peg into a tight number; it tends to close doors of opportunity rather than open them.



4 Finance and Accounting

Facilitator:

Heather Turnbull

Panelists:

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

Karelyn Murray, C. A., CPA (Illinois), B. Comm - Associate Director of Admissions at The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Ontario

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

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

Evert Akkerman, LL.M Eur, CHRP – HR Manager at DUCA Financial Services (Dutch Credit Union)

Cecilia Leung, B. Math, MS - Founder of WizeBiz.ca and CEO / President at Handywise Professional Advisors Inc.

Desmond Alvares, B. Eng, MBA, MBCS CITP, CMA - Regional Director at Risk Management Committee of Ontario - Toronto

Ayesha D'Souza, BA, M. Econ. – Manager, Direct Channel Marketing at Scotiabank

Raul L. Alicaway, MM, CMA – Manager, Corporate Finance at Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC)

Mazen Sharifa, MBA – Manager at CIBC Commercial Banking

Information and advice shared by panel members: Share a bit about your current position and 2-3 employment trends you see within the industry, and how these trends impact the labour market

Vincent

- Relationships are the key to getting hired in your field, not just sending résumés out.
- This morning I was on LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and my company blog. Employers are now using these regularly to search for talent. Blogs also have international scope. Find someone in your industry to follow on Twitter. This action will help you find information on industry trends and challenges that you can use in getting a job. Communicate online all day, or at least daily, as this builds trust. In this way, someone can refer you to other employers or suppliers.

Karelyn

Karelyn's current job helps people who are looking to get a Canadian CA designation. No two days are ever the same and she enjoys the research aspect of her role and learning new things. Karelyn previously worked in Industry and in Public Accounting.

IEPs are getting Canadian designations even if it does not seem like it is happening fast enough. It helps that I saw what my parents went through well over 20 years ago as new immigrants. New immigrants are bridging the gap between international and Canadian skills. With time, things will happen and it is critical that you do not give up or lose focus of why you came to Canada. Hold fast to your dreams.

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Franklin is an Engineer first, then an MBA. He was only planning to stay in Canada for 2 years; that was 9 years ago!

- The global economy and the pressure to reduce costs are currently causing a lot of tension in the banking sector. However, hiring is occurring in several areas: regulatory compliance, technology and face-to-face customer service. Language skills are important for all of these areas. Why not watch a video of yourself? You may be surprised. Is your accent a barrier to getting ahead?

Evert was once refused at a job fair because it was intended only for English as a Second Language candidates, even though he explained he qualified, as a Dutch immigrant.

- Résumés are key for newcomers. My first job at ING came from an introduction by a friend. You still have to prove yourself. (He offered a free résumé review for conference participants; he invited them to see him at the end of the Sector Hub to arrange a meeting.)

Cecilia - Cecilia's company grew into a financial company because of clients' growing needs. Formerly at a large company providing business services, she was frustrated by a lack of promotion. She was told that she could not advance due to "communication issues". Cecilia was raised to be respectful by being quiet and not speaking up with superiors. Because Chinese and English are so different, there were grammar and pronunciation challenges. She wondered: 'How many ESL classes are enough?' Cecilia kept working at it and was finally teaching ESL classes; her employer at the time still told her the same story so she decided to leave.

Now, most of her current clients are from different backgrounds and not one complains about her communications skills now. Patience helps. The small and medium-size business client sector is growing. Accounting and financial services are in demand with new immigrant entrepreneurs.

Carmen - Companies are looking at professional designations; they indicate to employers the technical competencies of candidates. What are the functions you can actually perform? These must be on your résumé. There is also more emphasis on soft skills. Employers are looking for diverse skills on their teams. Keep up with technology developments. Keep your professional network active, volunteer in the community and join professional associations; you can take on volunteer roles here as well.

Desmond - How do you convey Canadian experience on your résumé? In Canada, many more jobs are available through agencies and headhunters. Agency workers can face challenges moving up within the organization. ORBIT does risk assessment. Implementing Basel (Basel III Committee on Banking Supervision) is in demand. Fraud and money laundering assessment skills, risk assessment and language skills are in demand. I have applied for jobs directly online. Your résumé is the key and it must match the skills required directly. Mentoring other people is also a great opportunity to add soft skills to your résumé.

Ayesha - Formerly with Scotiabank, Automotive Finance. Congratulations to everyone on leaving your comfort zones and coming to Canada. I have been here 5 years. There will always be people in your life that will tell you it is not possible. If you dream big and reach big, you will land somewhere that is just a little from the top. Chart a plan after identifying your skills, especially soft skills that you can apply to the current position you are seeking. What is "Canadian experience?" Go ahead and ask this question in the interview to determine if your experience matches what they are looking for. Say that you are willing to learn, as they are looking to see if you have the right attitude. Overqualified? Do not remove credentials from your résumé, or the struggle to move up could be difficult. Use your network to get information; you will be remembered as the person that wanted to find out. I will conclude with one of my favourite inspirational quotes: "If you can dream it, you can do it." ~ Walt Disney.

Sector 'Hub' Concurrent Sessions



Raul – formerly with ICICI Bank Canada as Manager for Business Analytics / SME Relationship Manager and now working as Manager, Corporate Finance at BDC.

Keep focused on your job search. Take stock of your current skill sets, dominant work experiences, and education. The more they are inter-related, the more you can figure out which companies to focus on. In my case, I focused on banks and other financial institutions as I understand my work experiences and education relate well to this sector. I used 3 targeted résumés -- one for branch banking, another for accounting & finance, and another for management positions. You can always try applying online. I got my first two jobs in Scotiabank and ICICI Bank Canada via Workopolis. My current work at BDC was through an online application at BDC's corporate site. I understand networking is hard in the beginning, but it gets easier to build your network as you meet people. I believe you all have respectable IQs and EQs. But it is the AQ that we all must work on. AQ stands for adversity quotient: this is our tenacity to stand up after each and every fall in the form of job application rejections, unsuccessful interviews, etc. Let's keep focused on our goals and continuously pursue them. As IEPs, we're no different. We have conquered challenges before and I believe you all can do it again.

Mazen - Networking, networking, networking. Work out, shower, shave, dress and then work on applications or follow-ups; this effort comes through even on the phone. Continue adding to your résumé qualifications in Canada, take additional courses. Believe in yourself. Banks are looking for newcomers so that they can use this background. International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) are really important now and in the future. My inspiration: I want, I must, I will.





Questions asked by IEP participants online as part of the conference registration process / Answers from panelists:

Q I am a landed immigrant and have transferable skills and knowledge in the accounting and finance field. But Canadian employers want Canadian experience without giving an opportunity to work for them. Why is that?

A **Mazen** - Human nature. Break through their fear. Connect all your experiences and convince them your international experience is relevant.

Ayesha – Ask for a chance to prove your skills: “Is there a way to do an assignment for you?” The principles can then transfer to the Canadian position.

Carmen - Organizational “fit” is the real issue. They want to see you demonstrate the teamwork culture that is important to them.

Desmond – Any experience counts; even Canadian community experience counts.

Evert – All will admire your courage but no one offers you a job. I got my first job through Manpower. Such a huge waste of talent can be very frustrating. Keep trying. It took me 10 years to make the same salary as I had prior to moving to Canada, but I did get it.

Q How can I get my degree recognized in Canada?

A **Desmond** – It is easiest if you have degree-level courses to convert to a Canadian designation.

Carmen – CGA has 3 requirements: Bachelor’s degree; the course must be evaluated and then fill in other missing courses; 2 years work experience before receiving Canadian designation. 1 year foreign work experience can count and then add 1 year working in Canada.

Vince – Check out LinkedIn Accounting Association groups. Canada has 3 separate designations CGA, CMA, CA.

Raul – You must decide which designation matches your current skills and certifications. For CMA, your academic records are evaluated for free and you either qualifies to the Accelerated Program or advised to take further subjects at the university. For CGA, you can also appeal the granting of additional transfer credits should you feel you have taken the same subjects. Be very professional in your approach and get reasonable documents to back up your appeal.

Carmen – Do proper research to get all necessary details regarding the process and documents required before submitting. This will save time and avoid the appeals process.



- Q** **Do seniors have a chance in the Canadian job market? Is it worthwhile for a senior to enroll in a certification program?**
- A** **Franklin** - Canadian employers are really looking at diversity, age included. They try to match employees with their customers. Employers also expect experience in the soft skills with age, because of life experience.

Questions submitted online that were not discussed due to time constraints:

What is the difference between work experience in Canada, and other countries?

What should be done immediately by a new immigrant in terms of training to get a job as soon as possible?

What are some self-employment tips?

What training or guidelines does the government provide IEPs to get employment?

How do I align myself for the Canadian Business environment?

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

What are the things I need to know about accounting subjects to learn to 'level' (or gain equivalency) with my degree here in Canada?

How do I get CGA certification?

Is it possible for us to get a better job in Canada? Why do we have to struggle? Is it because we are (in the) minority?

How can one obtain flexible or part time jobs as a financial analyst?

How (can one) keep moving and growing in one's career constantly?

How does one get into a role that is in line with one's skills sets and experience? I would like to have some suggestions re bridging/closing the gap between the employed and the unemployed/underemployed immigrants, for future newcomers to Canada.

How can I get a job in credit or risk management?

What is the most productive and effective way for job finding? Is it networking?

Could bridging courses be made more meaningful by (combining) the same with paid internships, which could convert theoretical knowledge gained in practice and help new immigrants settle faster?



TIPS

Vince: Never stop networking.

Karelyn: There are No Stupid Questions, so ask.

Franklin: Believe in yourself and know your strengths.

Cecilia: Every rejection leads to a new challenge or opportunity.

Evert: Never give up and always be creating value.

Carmen: Believe in yourself. Set goals for yourself, short, medium and long term then celebrate every completion.

Desmond: Leverage your skills in the community.

Ayesha: You are special.

Raul: Keep focused; keep enhancing your AQs

Mazen: Don't lose hope.

Participants networked directly with panelists following the panelist wrap up for an additional 15 to 30 minutes.



5 Healthcare and Related Professions

Facilitator:

Cathy Tait

Panelists:

Healthcare – Regulators and Academia

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

Michael Nurse – Director of Admissions at Sutherland Chan School & Teaching Clinic

Stuart McAslan – Team Lead, IEHP (Internationally Educated Health Professionals) Advisor Program ACCESS Centre at Healthforce Ontario

Shameem Mohamed – Advisor, IEHP Access Centre at Health Force Ontario

Sheila Heillier – Facilitator/Counsellor, Career Transitions for International Medical Doctors at Skills for Change

Caroline Morris – Director of Professional Practice at The College of Medical Radiation Technologists of Ontario

Norma Tomlin – Case Manager at CARE Centre for Internationally Educated Nurses

Edward Venzon Cruz – Professor and Coordinator, Practical Nursing Bridging Program For Internationally Educated Nurses at Centennial College

Healthcare – Sector Experts

Gordana Atanackovic – Director, Medical Affairs at UCB Pharma

Mark Fam – Senior Manager at Deloitte Consulting, National Health Services

Sivakumar Gulasingam MD – Medical Resident in Rehabilitation Science, Faculty of Medicine at University of Toronto

Gwen Llewellyn – Clinical Coordinator at The Scarborough General Hospital

Ramann Patara – Volunteer Coordinator at Unison Health and Community Services

Heather Shantora – PT Health

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Some of the recurring questions posted online as part of the registration process included:

- How can I get a job in my field? Why is it so difficult?
- What opportunities are there here for internationally trained medical doctors?
- Why are education and work experiences in the US not recognized as equivalent to Canadian ones? What are the workplace cultural differences between in the USA and Canada? Are they really that big that everyone from the USA has to re-adapt to the Canadian culture? What is the unspoken agenda?
- Why is the licensing process so complicated?

Other questions posed online were concerned with credential assessment, networking to find work, bridging programs, Canadian experience and questions specific to the occupations of dentistry, nursing, social work and veterinarians.





- Q Elaborate Mr Fam on on the way health professionals work together with you?**
- A** We work with hospitals, population health needs and how this is going to change by looking at new models, and how we plan to do this. We use professionals in the healthcare field, i.e., clinicians, to give us input.
- Q Clarify – is this a regulatory profession? Medical information, and Clinical trials?**
- A** Sivakumar – You don't have to be licensed.
- Q Is there some sort of program for nurses, after the registration is completed and eligibility for the exam that takes approximately 1 year?**
- A** You can find mentoring programs which can give you opportunities to work in various hospital departments and through CARE runs.
- Work on your language fluency through occupational language enhancement programs.

Question posted to Sivakumar:

- Q In your opinion what skills and competencies got you to where you are today? If you were to share 2 or 3 tips with the audience, what would they be?**
- A BE PREPARED:**
- 1. Prepare more than the requirements:**

There is growing competition whether it is exams, résumés or interviews; thus you will have to read research and reorganize yourself to stand out and be marketable. The program does not look at your 'knowledge & experience' BUT whether you would be a 'good fit'.
 - 2. Always have a Plan B or an alternate plan:**

Try to apply for more than one program; if you were a surgeon, do not limit your applications only to the field of surgery. Maybe Family Medicine is Plan B.
 - 3. Expand your horizons:**

Do not limit yourself to one province. Day by day competition is increasing, but the training positions are limited. So, look for opportunities in other provinces and if necessary to alternative professions too.

"Opportunities come at unexpected times; thus be prepared at all times"



COMMIT:

Commit when you can, but:

1. NOT too early

You do not want to burn out. Remember your responsibilities increase the longer you hang on.

2. NOT too late

You do not want to miss a great opportunity among strict competition

3. NOT beyond your capacity

You do not want to overwhelm yourself. Learn to say NO when your gut instinct tells you it is beyond your usual capacity.

“It is important to know thyself”

FOLLOW UP:

1. Reflection

Reflect on your attitudes and behaviours so you can improve.

2. Communication

Continue to improve not only in spoken language, but also in written, non verbal and internet/email etiquettes. These skills will carry you much further than simply language itself.

3. Capacity Building

Continue to work on areas that would provide you with a competitive edge amongst your colleagues.

“Accomplishments are easiest when we work hardest and hardest when we work easiest”

Edward provided the following tips to delegates:

- Do your own research. Do not rely on secondhand information; the information may be obsolete.
- Obtain current information from university websites
- Prepare yourself for registration and practice
- Know the standards in Canada and within each province
- Attend English fluency courses
- Make sure the bridging programs are reputable, i.e., bridging program at Centennial College
- Help those skilled immigrants who will come after you



Michael covered the following points about the field of massage therapy:

- Now 15 – 18% of the population uses massage therapy services
- Job market is very active: job offers surpass the number of massage therapists available to fill the job
- Massage therapists are now gaining respect from the medical community
- IEPs are welcome; scientific skills are valued
- Language skills and the ability to converse in English is important
- Ask about the entry-to-practice exams at the college
- The College of Massage Therapists of Ontario can do advanced standing exams

Sheila offered words of encouragement and practical advice:

- Sheila reminds IEPs that attitude and initiative are important
- If you are choosing an alternative career, what are your motives?
- Where do you derive satisfaction from in your career?
- Put your best foot forward
- She invites IEPs to interview some of the misconceptions:
 - o 'You are overqualified'
 - o Beliefs that doctors are hard to work with
- Allay the employer's fears
- Market your skills not your title
- What can you do for an employer?
- Talk to an employer so they can hear you
- You need to reorganize yourself to fit into the current marketplace
- You also need Canadian practice



What Norma has observed and recommends as a case manager:

- While some Internationally Educated Nurses (IENs) are eligible to write the exams, they may not be ready or adequately prepared; readiness and preparation are necessary to sit those exams
- Applicants have only 3 tries to write the exam
- She recommends being self-reflective: life circumstances can distract one's focus, concentration and ability to learn
- Build on your prospects while going through the licensing process
- Get non-regulated positions while waiting to write the exams
- Final thoughts: Be determined and be confident.

Shameem's advice was goal-oriented:

- You need to know your profession including the registration and exam process
- Find out what information is right for you
- Make a realistic goal and create an action plan
- Be positive. It is an investment in your future. You can achieve your goal.

Stuart spoke to the concerns of internationally trained physicians:

- He admitted internationally trained dentists and physicians do experience difficulty
- Most IEPs will need to train and finish a residency position; it is very competitive and it typically takes 3 – 5 years to be accepted into residency
- He strongly suggests having other options, not just a Plan A
- He gave an example of an orthopedic surgeon that stayed the course, that started off as a gas station manager, and then volunteered at Sick Kids Hospital. His process: Start to volunteer, find a paid position and then get a position in line with your career goal.

TIPS

- Continue to be active and persistent; volunteer, be flexible and adaptable
- Network extensively
- Be positive



Caroline gave her perspective as a representative from a regulatory body:

- Find out what the requirements are from the college associated with your particular area. Colleges have to publish the requirements.
- Understand what you need to do
- Know who the regulator is; you can find out on the Ontario Access for Regulators website
- Use all the resources available online and network with people who have been successful
- With government-funded programs, timelines are very important so be aware and prepare well ahead of time
- Be creative in your job search and keep an open mind
- You just never know where life will lead you

Kathy addressed the questions of International Pharmacy Graduates:

- Like physicians and dentists, there are difficulties with licensing
- Of 13, 000 pharmacists at University of Toronto (U of T), ½ were internationally trained pharmacists
- The bridging program offered at U of T is one of the oldest
- You need only entry level skills in order to practice; an experiential learning approach is used
- Mentoring will provide you with further exposure to the practice
- There is a maximum number of times that you can write the exam so prepare yourself appropriately; it is costly (\$2 000), takes time and is only offered twice a year
- Don't put your life on hold; use your broad-based skills. Get skills in a non-regulated profession; everything is useful
- The pathway may not be linear

Mark resorted on what is needed in the healthcare field:

- The healthcare field needs international and Canadian professionals
- Look at the career path – from front line practice to management as an example
- Think about applying your skills in different ways
- Look at individual skills and insights
- Ask yourself the following questions:
 - o What additional things have you done to prepare yourself in your career?
 - o Where do you fit?
 - o What makes you attractive to an employer?
- New opportunities will abound as more retirements are expected in the near future
- 6 – 12 months to find a job in a highly educated profession is normal
- Do not dismiss volunteer work; it will provide with valuable resources to get yourself familiar with the Canadian healthcare field as well as the challenges within it



Heather comments on the growing demand for health professionals outside of the OHIP system:

- Use your unique culture and language; the healthcare field needs professionals with other language skills aside from English
- As the healthcare budget increases, there is more collaboration with people outside the OHIP system
- Opportunities in the healthcare field are increasing outside the ministry funded system as consumers are choosing to be more active in their own healthcare
- Being proactive means using chiropractic and naturopathic services; consumers are realizing the benefits of intervening sooner for a better wellness model

Gordana offered support and practical advice:

- Gordana recommends having a plan A and plan B and taking English classes if needed
- Participating in a coop program is also a good idea as physicians are hard to place
- She did research at the Doctor's Hospital, networked extensively and finally got a break; she admits it wasn't easy
- Prepare to write the TOEFL exam
- An alternative, she suggests, is to work with Pharma companies
- At UCB Pharmacy 25% of its medical personnel are IEPs
- There are many jobs in drug safety, information, and as a medical liaison
- Don't give up

Gwen advised IEPs to highlight the benefits they bring, including the language skills that they can use when working with patients. She describes her experience first coming to Canada and not finding any immediate job prospects. She was forced to work in a warehouse. She encouraged IEPs to:

- Take advantage of bridging programs for the many opportunities to network
- Seek out internships which provide hands-on experience
- Gain a good understanding of the Canadian healthcare system



Employers, representatives from community organizations and government, panelists and advisory committee members were invited to the Employer Luncheon; this event ran simultaneously with the lunch break for delegates and the designated time slot for IEPs to visit the Marketplace. The luncheon's main objectives were to share the successes and challenges of integrating IEPs into the workplace as well as the findings from PCPI's research study on the experiences of skilled immigrants mid-career, *Progress: IEPs' Experience Matters*.

Silma Roddau, PCPI President and Conference Chair, welcomed guests and introduced Emcee Matt Galloway, host of CBC Radio's Metro Morning the top-rated weekday morning radio show in the city. Its goal is to 'look and sound like the city we are in right now.' He notes the complexion of the city has changed a lot and that Metro Morning 'goes out of its way to reflect the hyperdiversity of Toronto.' Great Expectations: Immigrant Families Under Pressure, a program on both Metro Morning and CBC News Toronto the week leading up to the conference, contrasted the different experiences of immigrant youth and their parents 'rebuilding/rebooting their lives' broadcast from Thorncliffe Park, 'known as a springboard' for many new immigrants. He announced that they would be broadcasting from Rexdale the following week and that this was important work.

Shana Getty, Operations Manager of Settlement Toronto West at CIC, welcomed guests to the luncheon. As someone committed to the improving the integration outcomes of skilled immigrants, she highlighted CIC's initiatives including the Foreign Credentials Referral Office as well as its commitment to funding settlement services. She also announced a current initiative to engage employers on immigration: CIC would be 'holding roundtable meetings with Canadian employers to seek input that would help inform CIC's economic immigration programs and policies. This 'outreach to employers is aimed at getting a better understanding of their challenges, particularly related to workforce planning, hiring and recruitment, and how they use the immigration system.' (taken from CIC's website). Programs geared towards better supporting newcomers in workforce integration were also listed: free OSLT (Occupation-Specific Language Training) courses offered through 13 Ontario colleges (FLAP for francophones), ELT programs (job-specific, advanced-level English training to adult newcomers), JSW and other bridge-to-work programs.

Vice President of Research and Innovation and founder of the Diversity Institute at Ryerson University, Wendy Cukier, delivered her chockfull presentation, Global Competitiveness and Innovation through Diversity. Cukier draws attention to the fact that Canada is competing with other nations to attract international talent and that in order to compete, a climate of innovation is essential. Highly trained professionals have choices and 'will go where their work is appreciated.' The idea that Canada gets to pick and choose is a myth, particularly when one considers the immigrants who choose not to stay; they are believed to be the cream of the crop. Entrepreneurship is a desired option for some skilled immigrants who see it as a pathway to 'gain acceptance of the established community.' This serves to explain why immigrants are overrepresented in small businesses.

While innovation is key to Canada's competitiveness, the Conference Board of Canada reports that Canada's performance is lacking, and Cukier describes Canada as an 'innovation laggard.' Some results that point to this are a drastic drop in the number of immigrant entrepreneurs and the number of immigrants that are leaving within the first 10 years. This situation as well as well-documented labour shortages could be improved with better integration of immigrants both in the Canadian workforce and in self-employment. As she sees it, Canada's challenges are first of all, finding and attracting talent and secondly, matching them with jobs suited to their qualifications. Cukier also distinguishes the motives of skilled immigrants: achievement and power. For example, a 2006 study commissioned by the National Venture Capital Association reported that 25 percent of the venture-backed, public companies that were established in the last fifteen years were started by one or more immigrant founders; these companies were also in the more innovative sectors such



as high tech manufacturing, IT and life sciences, i.e., Google, Intel, Yahoo! and eBay. As well, immigrants represented no less than 35% of Research Chairs in Canada.

Based on the Forbes 2011 survey, *Global Diversity and Inclusion: Fostering Innovation Through a Diverse Workforce*, employers largely agree that diversity is key to driving innovation and associate diversity with innovation. The benefits highlighted were:

- It can break the cycle of limited unilateral thinking
 - o Cultural diversity breeds diversity in attitudes, perspectives, and decision-making. The underlying idea is that like-mind people make like-minded decisions.
- Diversity is associated with innovation
- Diversity provides access to new markets
 - o As the 2010 Conference Board of Canada survey indicates. Employers' top reason for investing in diversity and inclusion is "access to a broader talent pool."
- A diverse workforce enhances collaborative thinking and creates a better work environment.

Her presentation also revealed some of the barriers that internationally-trained professionals are still facing:

- A lack of recognition of their credentials acquired outside of Canada
- A deficiency in the area of self-promotion according to Canadian standards
- A lack of Canadian work experience
- A lack of know-how in terms of how leadership, negotiation, etc. is performed in Canada



- Inconsistency in the programming initiatives funded by various levels of government to assist IEPs
- Limited access to mentors and role models
- Poor diversity management in the workplace, i.e., addressing issues of discrimination
- Exclusion from informal networks and therefore, difficulties in accessing the hidden job market
- Services accessed through community agencies are not responsive to the needs of highly educated immigrants; the more educated the immigrant, the less satisfied they are with the services - 23% of those with Bachelor Degrees felt their needs were being met.

The way forward, according to Wendy, includes the following recommendations:

- Remove policies that make Canada unattractive to the immigrant investor class
- Remove barriers to entrepreneurial activities, i.e., net worth requirement, long waiting periods, suspension of federal government's entrepreneur class immigrant program, etc.
- Provide more concrete support systems for immigrants through immigrant services (both pre and post-arrival), employers, etc.

Avril Phillip, Lead Researcher and Denise Ghanam, responsible for Employer Data Collection and Analysis, presented the key findings and recommendations from the 2012 PCPI research study, *Progress: IEPs' Experience Matters*. This qualitative research was based on surveys from 560 IEPs (238 employed and 322 unemployed), 24 employers, 18 job developers as well as interviews with employers, associations, recruiters and 4 additional stakeholders. A significant number of the IEPs had Canadian qualifications. The study looked at the experiences of IEPs with 6 to 15 years of work experience as well as successful workplace integration strategies.

The research identified several types of career interruption including:

- Workplace acculturation or getting used to a different work environment
 - o This barrier raised the importance of new hire orientation in successful workplace integration, a factor supported by the study
- Disparity in wages
 - o It took IEPs a longer time to earn wages comparable to their Canadian-born counterparts
- Underemployment
 - o It takes longer for IEPs to acquire work commensurate with their education and experience
 - o Less than 10% found jobs at the same level as pre-immigration



- Lower levels of job satisfaction and security
 - o Even those employed were looking for work
 - o It takes IEPs longer to make careers that use skills optimally
- A lack of networks (from postsecondary education)
 - o 46% of those that found jobs found them through networking
- Undervaluation of qualifications (credentials, education and experience levels not recognized)
 - o IEPs reported that employers were looking for Canadian experience and qualifications

A majority of both IEPs and employers found workplace orientations helpful. According to employers, language and cultural competency were the major barriers to hiring IEPs. They reported communication skills as the most important skill for IEPs to possess and technical skills, computer skills and business etiquette tied for second most important. In terms of the hiring priorities of large firms, they valued not only Canadian experience but experience within their own organization. This finding would suggest the importance of getting one's foot in the door.

Recommendations to optimally integrate IEPs into the Toronto workforce included: readily accessible workforce integration programs that are responsive to the needs of IEPs and that engage employers and supporting agencies, building partnerships between bridge training programs and IEP-serving organizations, a government-resourced workplace orientation and diversity model plan should be developed and made available to both IEPs and employers to better inform them on Canadian workplace cultures and practices, encourage more employers to adopt more policies that support IEP workforce integration and diversity and to learn from other companies' best practices, employer-sponsored communications training for IEPs, strategies tailored specifically to the Toronto region.

Betty Carr, Vice President and Regional Publisher at Metroland Media group Ltd. also greeted luncheon guests. Responsible for 9 community newspapers, specialty publications and websites under the Toronto Community News umbrella, she is active in the community. Metroland Media Group is a leader in coverage of local information about the people and events in local Toronto communities.

Representing the provincial government at the conference, Steven Chaves is the Service Delivery Manager of the Scarborough Office at the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU)/Employment Ontario (EO). Programs funded by MTCU of particular interest to IEPs include Employment Service (providing a variety of job search support and resources as well as job placement for unemployed individuals), Second Career Strategy, Ontario Self-Employment Benefit, Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP), apprenticeships, as well as access to academic upgrading and language training.

Keynote Speaker – Donna Messer



The Power of Leverage - Building and Utilizing Your Network

Managing Editor for Entrenomics and President of ConnectUs Communications Canada, Donna Messer is 'The Queen of Networking'. She kick started the afternoon session energizing delegates and helping to demystify the art of networking. She describes networking as "the new barter"; she drove home the point of networking as a practice of give and take. Delegates were reminded to give something to those they were networking with that would have them remembered; this tip is important to getting one's foot in the door. She promoted the conference as an opportunity "to be linked to a bunch of people who have what you don't have."

In a lighthearted manner, she explains her fate as an entrepreneur as the result of not being able to find a job and consequently creating a job of her own. Attendees were encouraged to identify their strengths, particularly those they often take for granted. With fierce competition for jobs, knowing their strengths will help demonstrate to employers what sets them apart from other candidates.

Messer offered the following tips on networking effectively:

- Learn the true value of networking; it's not about you, it's about we.
- Build rapport that makes a difference in career options
- Note: Networking is a systematic process that provides leverage and skills needed to find that perfect job.
- The difference between networking and not working is the 'e' for effort!
- Find the common ground in networking (Hint: The common ground is not being unemployed).
- Remember the 3 C's of Networking: Collaboration, Communication and Commitment





Messer advised delegates to use the power of leverage using the W3:

- 1) Who are you?
- 2) What do you need?
- 3) What are you willing to share?

She posed the following question to the audience: “How can you leverage knowing me?” The magic words can be summed up in one small question (which launched her company in 1993): How can I help you? As she describes it, networking is about building your social capital: who you know and what you know about who you know. She recommends finding the common ground through the use of questions such as:

What do I like to do?	What are my hobbies/interests?
What is my favourite vacation spot?	What associations do I belong to?
What kind of car do I drive?	Am I a volunteer? Where?
What is my favourite pet?	What is my best accomplishment?

Finding common ground is based on the premise that people like to hire people like them.

Her imperative is: Make your communication style work for you!

Orange – Auditory

Big picture thinker, think in “pods”, comfortable with conceptual ideas

Red – Kinesthetic

Think in terms of chapters; always need a beginning, middle and end

Green – Visual

Organized, sequential in their thinking - specific and brief

Donna Messer also recommended maximizing social media tools such as LinkedIn, blogs, Twitter, Facebook and YouTube. Now ahead of personal email as an online activity, she declared, they increase your visibility.



Effective networking strategies that Messer promotes are:

- 1) Develop a plan, that responds to the following questions:
 - a. What do you want to accomplish?
 - b. What organizations or associations do you need to connect with?
 - c. Which specific people do you want to contact within those organizations?
- 2) Research the people you wish to contact.
- 3) Be prepared to listen. Find out what they need too.
- 4) Force yourself to circulate. With people you meet, find out what they do, where they're been and who they know.
- 5) Ask for one thing at a time.
- 6) Generate a winning introduction or infomercial that will generate opportunities.
- 7) Give before you get. You must be willing to give if you want others to help you.
- 8) Exchange cards and make a note on the back to help remind yourself how you met and why you want to keep in contact
- 9) Develop profitable contacts by finding out what you have in common.
- 10) Follow up on leads. People like to know when their efforts produced positive results. They are also more likely to help you again.

She concluded her presentation inviting delegates to get in contact with her.





Taking It to the Next Step: LMI for Career Advancement

This presentation, facilitated by Karen Charnow Lior, Executive Director at Toronto Workforce Innovation Group, provided current labour market statistics on the city of Toronto, where one fifth of the province's population resides. It outlined characteristics of the labour force such as age and educational attainment as well as the city's important employment clusters.

Sectors that are growing include: construction, retail trade, finance and insurance, professional and scientific services and healthcare. The 2015 Pan Am Games are expected to create opportunities in non-residential construction. A focus on green building is also generating jobs in the construction sector. The retail trade is a strong indicator of the health of the economy. It is particularly important to Toronto due to the number of head offices located in the city. The growing sectors include Clothing and Clothing Accessories as well as Furniture and Home Furnishing stores. It also has an unemployment rate considerably lower than the national rate. Toronto's financial sector is the third most important in North America. Lastly, information and communications technology is targeted for growth particularly as it relates to new media and mobile applications. Job openings also show up where ICT intersects with other sectors such as healthcare and education. Like the retail trade, it also features a low unemployment rate.

New Media is also a newly emerging sector and as such, is a sector worth paying attention to. Arts and culture, despite its small size and its concentration of small businesses and self-employment, is also an important sector because it differentiates Toronto from other markets. This sector makes up almost 10% of all employment in Toronto.

Jobs can also be found in educational services, hospitality and manufacturing.

Karen also highlighted Toronto Workforce Innovation Group's new site, Route TO. Employment, which speaks to the needs and interests of internationally educated professionals. It provides key information about Toronto's employment sectors, essential to finding meaningful employment.





TIPS AND TOOLS FOR ACHIEVING SUCCESS IN THE CANADIAN WORKPLACE

Rose DeVeyra, Research and Curriculum Developer at TRIEC, facilitated a practical session on the job search process.

As part of an effective search, job seekers should:

- Conduct a self-assessment
- Explore careers
- Engage in new experiences
- Research employers and target organizations
- Develop your networking skills
- Look for job opportunities
- Write a résumé and cover letter
- Prepare for interviews
- Know salary and labour market information

To update your résumé, she recommends, write down every job responsibility you've ever had and outline the outcomes you contributed in each role. It is also important to link the outcomes with the company's values. Key qualifications for the role should be repeated at least three times between the résumé and cover letter.

An experiential component of her presentation incorporated one of TRIEC's training videos, Finding Talent: Techniques for Recruiting and Selecting Skilled Immigrants. It provides a 'behind the scenes' example of how a company recruits new staff, some of the typical challenges faced by employers and ways to address those barriers.





Using Social Media Effectively as a Job Search Tool

Socially Active's Cher Jones delivered a highly practical and accessible presentation on the use of social media to enhance one's job search. Some of the ways she cited that it can help are: setting one apart from the competition, helping to maintain relationships with old connections (for example, former co-workers), providing jobseekers with real time information on companies and industries, providing access to a hidden job market and showcasing one's knowledge and talent.

She informed attendees how social media accounts can be scrutinized during the hiring process. Based on the Jobvite Social Recruiting Survey (2011), 64% of employers surveyed used at least 2 social media tools to screen candidates with LinkedIn at the top of the list. Reasons candidates were not hired, due to information revealed on their social media sites, included inappropriate photos/information, badmouthing of former employers, lying about qualifications and evidence of poor communication skills. Candidates were hired because their accounts supported their qualifications, what was showcased revealed a good 'fit', and they conveyed a professional image. Account audits and efforts to delete any negative photos, comments, posts, videos, application and groups were recommended. Participants were also encouraged to Google search their name and to identify and log anything positive while aiming to remove the negative.

Benefits and best practices associated with LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter were reviewed. Two of the key benefits for LinkedIn were its professional network and the ability to participate in industry discussions. It was also recognized as an excellent tool to research and connect with companies and employees. Twitter's advantage was the ease with which one could connect with or start a conversation with virtually anyone. Ways to use Facebook for job search were highlighted including 'like'-ing recruiting pages on Facebook and joining industry group pages. Participants were also reminded to review their privacy settings.

In her 'Final Thoughts', she warned participants about not keeping up-to-date with their social media accounts ('if you use them, use them well') and about making it all about them; she recommended that IEPs focus also on what they have to offer and to be aware of their personal brand online.





What Every Professional Needs to Know

Philip Cabral, an IT Business Leader with over 20 years of experience, provided advice on what every job-seeking professional needs to know. He suggested that workshop participants make a list of their assets and then use that list when submitting applications to show employers what they bring to the table and how they match their requirements. As an IEP, it is essential to know and understand the business culture, the nuances in communication and the unspoken expectations in the Canadian workplace. While he acknowledged that IEPs are multi-skilled, he recommended that they identify the ones that will be of most interest to potential employers and then promote them effectively.

Strategic Steps in Starting a Successful Business

Vice President of Incubation at the innovative not-for-profit Toronto Business Development Centre, Michael Donahue, shared his expertise with incubation centres. Business incubator programs support new businesses through advice, mentorship and collaboration (with other entrepreneurs). The support provided leads to the establishment of successful businesses because small business owners are helped to avoid some of the pitfalls and challenges that cause new startups to fail. Donahue confirms, 'Incubators across Canada and the U.S. have a success rate of 85 to 90% and are still in business 5 years after they have left the program.' Program participants meet individually with a business advisor and have access to other entrepreneurs with whom they can share information and get feedback. In addition, they can be linked with other sources of financing and industry partners. The Centre also promotes the idea that 'entrepreneurs need to be good business managers'; workshops and one-on-one coaching to better understand marketing, operations and financial management is part of the programming. Business owners learn to be very responsive to market demands. Marketing is one of the biggest challenges faced by entrepreneurs.



Closing Remarks



Events to conclude the day's proceedings consisted of presentations on cultural intelligence and the research study findings as well as a final draw with prizes for delegates. Former President of PCPI, Rhonda Singer is one of the key founders of the IEP Conference. She is currently the President of Culture Chemistry, a consulting company that helps businesses drive bottom line results by identifying, leveraging and engaging global talent, spoke to delegates about the benefits of cultural intelligence. Successful businesses make use of the Law of 3s: The 3Cs (Credentials, Culture and Communication) + The 3As (Accountability, Alignment and Analytics) = The 3Ps (Performance, Productivity and Profit. Cultural intelligence, defined as the capacity to function effectively across various cultural contexts (national, ethnic, organizational, generational, etc.), is the difference between individuals that succeed in today's globalized world and those that fail. According to Singer, innovation comes not from individuals but from groups of talented people sparring each other. She promoted the following practices: ask questions, use the law of 3s, be inspired: listen for success stories, and to get connected: build relationships in your new home.

Avril Phillip, Lead Researcher for the 2012 PCPI research study on mid-career IEPs, *Progress: IEPs' Experience Matters* and Workforce, Economic and Community Development Professional presented to IEP delegates results from this year's research. She provided a profile of the IEP respondents as well as the findings from both employed and unemployed IEPs and employers. The study acknowledged the efforts of businesses to develop diversity policies and guidelines; however, work to ensure effective practice of these policies is needed. While the advantages of hiring IEPs have been researched and are becoming more widely known, there is more that Toronto employers could be doing to reap the benefits.

Conference Chair, Silma Roddau and successful IEP panelist, Samuel Vuillaume, closed the conference with a draw for various prizes. With last minute evaluations arriving from all corners of the John Bassett Theatre, the draw was one incentive for delegates to complete and submit evaluations. Books, gift cards and a printer were among the prizes distributed.





- *Choose the sectors that the conference will address based on the sectors that are currently hiring*
- *Programs to promote and support self-employment among newcomers should be strengthened given the results and successes of immigrant entrepreneurs*
- *Allot more time to the sector hub discussions and the Marketplace; skill-building sessions could be shorter in duration or even eliminated from the program*
- *Recruit more panelists who are successful IEPs themselves and have been through the process*
- *A small fee should be charged to service providers wishing to attend the conference as participants*
- *While bridge training programs, enhanced language training programs, OSLT programs and other programs geared toward the specific needs of IEPs are of great benefit to IEPs, these programs cannot accommodate all IEPs; more needs to be done to improve the level of service available to IEPs through other employment programs and services.*

Acknowledgements



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Sector Hub Scribes

No scribe – Engineering & Related Professions

Kuziva Ziramba – Information and Communications Technology

Karen Gray – Financial Services/Accounting

Debra Bentzen – Healthcare & Related Professions

Nancy Nightingale – Business Services

Marketplace Exhibitors



Academy of Applied Pharmaceutical Science
Alternative Youth Centre for Employment (AYCE)
BioTalent Canada
Care Centre for Internationally Educated Nurses (Care4Nurses)
Canadian Immigrant/Starmedia
CASIP ESN (Consortium of Agencies Serving Internationally-Trained Persons)
Catholic Immigration Centre
CBC
Centennial College
Centre for Education and Training
Certified General Accountants of Ontario (CGAO)
Citizenship & Immigration Canada (CIC)
City of Toronto (TO Employment & Social Services/Enterprise Toronto)
Certified Management Accountants (CMA)
COSTI Immigrant Services/Job Search Workshops (JSW) program
Credit Institute of Canada

EPIC College of Engineering Technology
Findhelp Information Services/Poss.ca
George Brown College Immigrant Education
Global Experience Ontario (Ministry of Citizenship & Immigration)
Human Resources Professionals Association (HRPA)
Humber College
Information and Communications Technology Council (ICTC)
Innovations in Business Solutions (IBS)
Institute of Chartered Accountants of Ontario (ICAO)
Internationally Trained Lawyers Program (University of Toronto)
International Credential Assessment Service of Canada (ICAS)
Investors Group
Job Skills
MCIS (Multilingual Community Interpreter Services)
Non-Profit Language Services
Morgan International



Marketplace Exhibitors



Newcomer Women's Service

Occupation Specific Language Training (OSLT)

Occupational Therapy Examination and Practice Preparation (OTepp)

Ontario Association of Certified Engineering Technicians and Technologists (OACETT)

Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI)

Ontario Institute of Agrologists

Ontario Society of Professional Engineers (OSPE)

Progress Career Planning Institute (PCPI)

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TDSB – Next Steps Employment Centre

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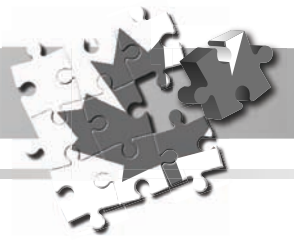
York University's Bridging Program for IEPs



Notes



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