



HIRING AND RETAINING SKILLED IMMIGRANTS

A Cultural Competence Toolkit



Canada 



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“Embracing a diverse workforce is a rich part of Canada’s economic history and now is the ideal time to leverage this national competitive advantage.”*

— Zabeen Hirji,

Chief Human Resources Officer, RBC

“Organizations are made better by people who think differently. There’s an operational heart to any company and if you want diversity to take hold, it’s got to take hold there.”**

— Bob Elton,

President & CEO, BC Hydro

“The best advice is not setting quotas, but making diversity a very important strategy for the organization, and supporting managers to be successful in their hiring practices.”**

— Ellen Pেকেles,

Senior VP, Strategy, VanCity Savings

* Source: The Canadian Immigrant Magazine.

**Source: Corporate Knights Diversity Issue 2008.

INTRODUCTION Why This Guide?

Whether in good economic times or bad there is a business imperative to increase the diversity of your workforce. Factors such as the retirement of the baby boomers, more culturally diverse populations and global challenges are creating this imperative. Skilled immigrants, many of whom are unemployed or underemployed, play a critical role in the solution. However, there exist a number of ‘demand-side barriers’ (employer challenges around the issue of hiring and retaining skilled immigrants).

Communication styles and other related differences have prevented many skilled immigrant candidates from receiving adequate consideration in the hiring process. As revealed by a survey¹ of BC Human Resource Management Association (BC HRMA) members, there is a real need for a resource fostering a better understanding of skilled immigrants, one that encourages a higher level of cultural competence on the part of those involved in the hiring process.

The purpose of this guide is to provide a culturally-competent tool for HR practitioners and hiring managers to enable them to reach, assess and integrate skilled immigrants into their workplace, thereby increasing organizational diversity and helping to resolve the shortage of skilled workers.

WHO IS THE GUIDE FOR?

This guide is primarily intended for:

- Human Resource Practitioners
- Recruiters
- Hiring Managers
- Line Managers

It will also be useful for senior executives to better understand the advantages of a culturally diverse workforce; employment counsellors and job coaches when advising skilled immigrants; new Canadians looking to understand the hiring process and the employer perspective; and employees working in culturally diverse workplaces.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

The toolkit is filled with suggestions and resources to assist in the process of hiring and retaining skilled immigrants. Along with tips and tools, it provides references at each step to assist the recruiter. Ultimately, this guide encourages recruiters to reflect upon cultural biases, and lays the groundwork for ensuring skilled immigrants and employers realize their shared professional potential despite their differing backgrounds.

HOW THE GUIDE WAS PREPARED

This guide was produced from a range of resources including a survey of employer guides, and a survey of common cultural traits employers face when hiring and working with skilled immigrants. The guide structure and content was reviewed by an advisory group of HR practitioners. The core content came from skilled immigrants of various cultural backgrounds and HR professionals participating in a series of focus groups.

Feedback on this guide is welcome and may be submitted to research@bchrma.org

¹ BC HRMA Immigrant Talent Integration Survey 2007

A Culturally-Competent Approach to Hiring and Retaining Skilled Immigrants: Main Concepts

Primary Goal: To improve organizational innovation and performance by increasing the cultural diversity of workplaces in British Columbia and Canada. This toolkit provides recruiters and hiring managers with the information required to go beyond cultural differences, and access the real skills and abilities of their skilled immigrant candidates and employees.

A Culturally-Competent Process for the HR Practitioner or Hiring Manager

A culturally-competent recruitment process starts with an HR practitioner or hiring manager's realization that he/she may hold personal biases which unfairly affect their hiring judgement. The culturally aware hiring manager or HR person informs himself/herself about the cultural backgrounds of skilled immigrants, clarifies different communication responses/behaviours, and uses an objective process versus 'gut feel' to prevent bias from affecting the selection process.

FOCUS ON ESSENTIAL JOB REQUIREMENTS

A culturally-competent hiring process focuses on the essential skills criteria, allowing skilled immigrants more opportunity to demonstrate their ability to meet the core job requirements. This process may require collaboration with direct managers and employees with relevant work experience.

PERFORMANCE/SKILLS BASED ASSESSMENT VS. CREDENTIALS-BASED ASSESSMENT

Foreign credentials not known to HR practitioners and hiring managers may be undervalued or ignored during the selection process. Many jobs do not require certification or credential equivalencies – in such cases, a culturally-competent HR practitioner or hiring manager will use performance-based methods to rate a skilled immigrant's abilities. Rather than judging by 'impressions', he/she will ask the candidate to perform a skill, explain the steps in a project, or take a test rather than judging by 'impressions'.

In certain cases, certification and/or appropriate credentials are required. In such cases, employers can substitute skill-based testing, and look to link the employee with a credentialed supervisor. Possessing the skills, but not the credentials, this scenario allows skilled immigrants to build Canadian credentials while working under certified supervisors, and for organizations to begin closing their skill gaps.

INCLUSIVE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Existing diversity in the workplace will assist in the hiring of skilled immigrants, especially if there are existing employees with knowledge of a skilled immigrant's country of origin. Involving such individuals in the hiring process allows for better interpretation of relevant education and experience.

FOLLOW UP FOR SUCCESSFUL RETENTION

The practices, procedures and values of the Canadian workplace may differ from the workplace culture of the skilled immigrant. The culturally-competent workplace acknowledges these differences and provides suitable orientation, periodic check-ups and performance reviews, as well as supportive mentors to develop the necessary cultural connections.

The Business Case for a Culturally-Competent Approach to Hiring and Integrating Skilled Immigrants

- Skilled immigrants fill a gap in Canada's shrinking labour force. "Immigrants accounted for 21.2% of Canada's total labour force in 2006. By the end of the next decade, immigrants will account for 100% of net labour force growth." (<http://www12.statcan.ca/English/census/06/analysis/immcit/index.cfm>)
- Skilled immigrants are highly educated. Of "recent immigrants (between 2001-2006) 51% have a degree, twice that of the Canadian born labour force." (<http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/as-sa/index-eng.cfm>)
- Skilled immigrants provide competitive advantage to companies. The buying power of ethnic minorities has increased and skilled immigrant employees inform companies about the needs of immigrant customers. Moreover, skilled immigrants are typically bilingual, sometimes multilingual, act as 'cultural bridges' for global communication and have a higher retention rate.
- Skilled immigrants foster a workplace culture grounded in diverse thinking at a time when the true potential of businesses rests more than ever on innovation.

Food for Thought:

Are you aware of your own biases? Are there members of any groups you would not invite into your home. If so, why? Are there any racial, religious or cultural groups you prefer to associate with? You feel threatened by? What groups do you perceive as most different from yourself? Why? How?

Adapted from the Public Service Commission of Canada, and quoted in Business Critical: Maximizing Talents of Visible Minorities, Conference Board of Canada. P.30

A culturally diverse workforce improves the bottom line, work teams, and the quality of the workplace. Employing people from different parts of the world improves the team's diversity of thought and experience, and adds to the overall creativity and ultimate strength of the organization.



Diversity Impacts the Bottom Line

A survey by SHRM/FORTUNE into the business impact of diversity found overwhelming agreement that a diverse workforce:

- Improves corporate culture
- Improves recruitment of new employees
- Improves client relations

All three of these factors have been correlated with reduced costs and improved profitability.

OVERVIEW

The following is a summary of the various steps in the process of hiring and retaining skilled immigrants. This quick reference sheet will remind you of the steps, actions, tools and tips to follow to ensure the success of your culturally-competent hiring and retention efforts.

STEP 1: ADVERTISING THE JOB

To access the pool of skilled immigrants in BC and Canada you need to know where they are, what they read and who they connect with. Consider advertising in ethnic newspapers, connecting with employment agencies that serve the various immigrant groups or asking for referrals within your own organization. Placing ethnic language in your ad or on your website communicates that your organization values diversity and encourages applications.

STEP 2: SCREENING THE APPLICATIONS

Don't let unusual responses cloud your judgement. Cultures have different approaches to cover letters and résumés. Raise your awareness of these different traits to better understand the candidate. They may well be the most skilled candidate – why let them go because their résumé is atypical.

Assessing credentials is a complex and important step. Use the resources in this guide to learn more about how to check up on international qualifications or equivalencies.

(Use Tool #1 to distinguish between essential and non-essential duties so that you focus on what is actually important.)

STEP 3: INTERVIEWING AND TESTING

Use plain language and be open to different cultural responses. Interviewers often make decisions quickly and are more influenced by body language and tone than specific words. You could be ruling out the best candidate because you are misinterpreting their communication style.

(Use Tool #2 and #3 to ensure effective communication during an interview. Use Tool #4 to assess the level of communication and interpersonal skills needed for the role.)

STEP 4: REFERENCE CHECKING

Reference letters may need translation. If there is no local work reference, consider using a character reference instead. The Internet has made it easier to check out university or higher education qualifications and there are a number of agencies within Canada that can provide guidance on how to check.

STEP 5A: OFFERING THE JOB

Use plain language in your offer. Newcomers to Canada will appreciate an offer letter with clear details about expectations. Having found your ideal candidate you don't want to lose them through unclear communication.

STEP 5B: GIVING FEEDBACK

If the candidate is unsuccessful and your organization policy supports it then providing a couple of pieces of useful feedback will go along way to ensuring a positive experience. Consider indicating to the candidate which courses, qualifications or areas of improvement would support them to be successful next time.

STEP 6: ENSURING SUCCESS IN THE WORKPLACE

Attracting and selecting a skilled immigrant to work for your organization is a valuable investment. The diversity of thought and potential for innovation that is created has been shown to have a positive impact on organizational success. It is important to look after your investment by effectively integrating your candidates into your workforce. This requires conscious work both to support the new candidate and to educate and support your existing work group.

(Use Tool #5 to support your new and existing employees to effectively integrate.)

STEP 1 Advertising the Job

The traditional advertising route is not the only, or best, way of targeting talented immigrants. What follows is a list of recommendations for beginning the process of attracting skilled immigrant candidates.

Tips for Culturally-Competent Job Advertising

1. ADVERTISE WITH ETHNIC MEDIA.

Many immigrants read media reflective of their ethnic origins. Reaching them through newspapers and magazines that 'speak their language' is an effective means of reaching your target audience. For ethnic media resources, visit:

http://www.bcethnicmedia.ca/md_directory.html
<http://www.lookingahead.bc.ca/employer/index.cfm?chp=3>

2. POST THE JOB WITH YOUR LOCAL AGENCIES THAT PROVIDE EMPLOYMENT COUNSELLING TO IMMIGRANTS.

Many newcomers to Canada seek out immigrant service agencies, specifically those providing job search assistance, employment counselling, and workplace orientation. These agencies connect employers with job-ready immigrants. It is worth developing a partnership with your local agency. For resources, visit:

<http://www.amssa.org/members/index.htm>
http://welcomebc.ca/en/service_providers/agencies.html

3. PLACE ETHNIC LANGUAGE IN THE JOB AD.

Including an ethnic phrase can catch the attention of immigrants, and indicates a diversity oriented workplace. You do not need to translate the whole job ad if English comprehension is required for the role. For translation resources, visit:

<http://www.cttic.org/member.asp>
<http://www.stibc.org/page/directory.aspx>
<http://babelfish.yahoo.com/>

4. UTILIZE THE CULTURAL DIVERSITY OF YOUR EXISTING WORKFORCE AND ASK FOR REFERRALS.

Many immigrants commonly network amongst their ethnic communities, especially upon arriving in Canada. The contacts of a culturally diverse team can provide a good source of prospective candidates.

5. MAKE YOUR WEBSITE IMMIGRANT FRIENDLY.

Ensure your website communicates the cultural-competence of your workplace through the inclusion of relevant language, images and resources. Consider adding links to diversity resources and/or career sections which provide interviewing tips to immigrants.

6. SEPARATE THE ESSENTIAL FROM THE NON-ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND QUALIFICATIONS WHEN WRITING THE JOB DESCRIPTION.

(See Tool #1: Culturally-Competent Screening.)

Posting a single set of standard requirements may limit the number of skilled immigrants both in the application and screening processes. Work directly with existing employees and managers to identify the difference between essential and non-essential requirements.

STEP 2 Screening The Applications

Tips for Screening Applications

1. WHEN REVIEWING RESUMES AND COVER LETTERS, REMEMBER THAT VARIOUS CULTURES COMMUNICATE DIFFERENTLY.

Embrace this diversity of expression and seek to understand the experience and skills behind the presentation. Skilled immigrants may include religious greetings, mention of their families or offer up other personal information deemed atypical to the hiring process. In many countries religion permeates business communications, and mention of family is both typical and honourable.

Culturally-competent hiring focuses on the immigrant's skills, knowledge, and experience and does not prejudge on the basis of differing styles of communication.

2. UTILIZE THE CULTURAL DIVERSITY OF YOUR EXISTING WORKFORCE IN THE SELECTION PROCESS TO BETTER UNDERSTAND SKILLED IMMIGRANTS EDUCATIONAL PEDIGREES AND PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS.

Some immigrants include information in their resumes about their ranking in certain universities because this achievement is highly prized and opens the door to jobs in their country. This information may be key, and relate directly to the skills required. Seek insight from within your team regarding qualifications of unknown relevance.

Some immigrants will put the position and company on the résumé without much elaboration, assuming the recruiter understands the related experience. Having someone from the same culture as the applicant on the assessment process may explain the significance of their qualifications, and may help the recruiter understand how those qualifications apply to the job in Canada.

3. TO BETTER UNDERSTAND HOW TO ASSESS THE FOREIGN CREDENTIALS OF A CANDIDATE, VISIT:

<http://www.cicic.ca/415/credential-assessment-services.canada>

<http://www.bcit.ca/ices>

Candidates requiring certification and licensing by regulatory bodies should be referred to the appropriate Canadian regulator.

4. SEPARATE THE ESSENTIAL/ MUST HAVE FROM THE NON-ESSENTIAL / NICE TO HAVE DUTIES AND QUALIFICATIONS WHEN SCREENING JOB APPLICATIONS.

(See Tool #1: *Culturally-Competent Screening.*)

Are Canada's workplaces ready to access the skilled immigrant advantage?

"Skilled immigrants with (a lot of) international experience expect recruiters to have a global perspective, yet the question always seems to be: "Do you have Canadian experience?"

-Chinese and Filipino focus group participants,
ITI project, Phase 2, December 2008.



STEP 3 Interviewing and Testing

Tips for Culturally-Competent Interviewing and Testing

1. USE LANGUAGE THAT IS IMMIGRANT-FRIENDLY AND ALLOW FOR DIFFERENCES IN COMMUNICATION STYLES.

(See Tool # 2: *Culturally-Competent Language for Interviews.*)

For many immigrants, English is not their primary, or even secondary, language and the culture of the Canadian workplace is a new experience for all immigrants. Miscommunications are therefore common and should be anticipated. Avoid slang, jargon and unnecessarily technical language and be alert to the pace of conversation, body language and expression.

This can be particularly important in the early phase of an interview process when engaging in small talk. While many talented immigrants speak English fluently, this is not to be assumed, nor is the subject matter of the small talk. The weather might seem a clichéd topic, but it is something we all share. If small talk is atypical don't let this cloud your judgement – it is to be expected this is a learning experience for both parties.

For this reason telephone screening may not be an effective practice when it comes to hiring immigrants. However, you can train telephone interviewers to work past the different communication styles to get an accurate picture of the candidates ability.

2. BE AWARE THAT DEFINITIONS OF PERSONAL SPACE DIFFER BETWEEN CULTURES.

(See Tool #3: *Culturally-Competent Awareness of Body Language at Interviews.*)

Different cultures have varying comfort levels regarding personal space. For immigrants, the typical personal space may be smaller or larger than generally accepted by Canadians. What seems rude or forward to you, or reticent and retiring, may have a different meaning entirely.

3. IF THE EQUIVALENCE OF A SKILLED IMMIGRANT'S CREDENTIALS ARE UNKNOWN, FOCUS ON ASKING SCENARIO-BASED QUESTIONS TO MORE IMMEDIATELY AND ACCURATELY ASSESS HOW THE CANDIDATE WOULD PERFORM ON THE JOB.

(See Tools #1 and #4 *Testing Performance and Skills on Key Job Criteria.*)

4. FOCUS ON ASKING FOR EXAMPLES AND SPECIFICS OR ENABLE THE CANDIDATE TO DEMONSTRATE THEIR SKILLS.

If language is a barrier to accurate assessment, you will need to spend more time or consider more practice-based ways of determining a candidate's ability. This can be a very valuable approach for all candidates.

5. DO NOT ASK WHAT CANADIAN EXPERIENCE A SKILLED IMMIGRANT HAS HAD.

Ask what experience they have that is relevant and valuable in Canada.

6. MAKE YOUR WEBSITE IMMIGRANT-FRIENDLY.

Making diversity a visible component of your brand is easily done with the interactive nature of the Internet. Go one step further than looks, and provide immigrant candidates with links to existing support services that describe how to write a resume, cover letter, prepare for an interview etc.

For a good example, visit:

<http://vancouver.ca/humanresources/jobs/howtoapply.htm>

STEP 4 Reference Checking

Tips for Culturally-Competent Checking of References and Equivalencies



Did you know that...

Surveys show that the total impact of a message on a receiver is based on:

- 7% words,
- 38% style – ie, tone of voice, loudness, inflection
- 55% non-verbals– ie, body language, facial expressions, hand gestures, body position.

Source: Harris and Moran. Managing Cultural Differences. P. 33

1. GET IT TRANSLATED.

If the reference supplied is in another language, suggest to the applicant that it be translated, and refer to translation resources.

(See Tip #3 in Step # 1 for translation services...)

2. IF NO LOCAL REFERENCES ARE OFFERED OR AVAILABLE, PROBE FOR CHARACTER REFERENCES.

If the immigrant is a member of a professional association, ask for a reference from the association. If an immigrant volunteers somewhere, seek a reference from a relevant supervisor.

3. WHEN UNSURE OF AN IMMIGRANT'S EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS.

You can request a credential evaluation from one of the provincially mandated services in Canada. In British Columbia, you may want to contact the International Credential Evaluation Service (ICES). Another option would be to look up the relevant educational body in the country of origin and determine whether the university or college is recognized by this group. In addition, you may want to contact a reference from a past employer to determine the relevance of the qualification.

4. IF THE INTERNATIONAL REFERENCES CAN SPEAK ENGLISH, AND CAN BE REACHED BY PHONE, MAKE THE CALL.

Consider sending the questions ahead of time by email so that the reference can review the questions and be better prepared to answer. Clarify the pronunciation of names with the candidate and use phonetic spelling to support the hiring manager's communications.

STEP 5 Offering the Job & Providing Feedback

PART A Making a Job Offer

USE PLAIN LANGUAGE IN YOUR OFFER LETTER.

Skilled immigrants may not be familiar with employment terms and conditions that are commonly used. Consider adding a plain English description to the more technical phrases. For advice and information about writing clear materials visit the Plain Language Association International.

<http://www.plainlanguagenetwork.org>

A skilled immigrant was offered a job and told he was on the “graveyard” shift. Thinking this meant working in a graveyard he did not accept the offer!

- BC HRMA Focus Group Participant

PART B Providing Clear Feedback

1. COMMUNICATE CLEARLY WITH UNSUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES.

If your organization's policy is to provide feedback to unsuccessful candidates, you will need to take additional time to provide constructive suggestions to your immigrant candidates.

2. IF THE CANDIDATE IS STRONG IN OTHER WAYS IT CAN BE WORTHWHILE SUGGESTING A COURSE OF STUDY OR OTHER CERTIFICATION WHICH WOULD INCREASE THEIR CHANCES OF SUCCESS NEXT TIME.

This is a quick and risk free way for your organization to develop a pipeline of potential candidates.



STEP 6 Ensuring Success in the Workplace

Myth:

Immigrants are not successful in holding executive and management positions.

Reality:

Many immigrants become successful entrepreneurs, company executives and important political figures in Canada. Gurbax Singh Malhi was educated at Punjab University and upon his arrival in 1975 worked as a factory worker. He is currently a member of the Canadian House of Commons. Moyez Gulamhussein Vassanji, born in Kenya and raised in Tanzania, founded The Toronto South Asian Review (TSAR) and later TSAR Publications. Other skilled immigrants own/control major businesses like Husky Oil of Alberta, Vintage Inns of Niagara-on-the-Lake in Ontario, and Grand Adex Developments in Vancouver. The candidate you interview tomorrow could be the next success story.

<http://www.canadaimmigrantblog.com/successful-famous-immigrants-66/>

Tips for ensuring success of skilled immigrants on the job

1. PROVIDE A THOROUGH ORIENTATION, INCLUDING BOTH PROFESSIONAL AND CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS SUCH AS:

- Orientation to the organization mission, values, structure, teams, and staff members; identify those with diversity roles in the workplace.
- Policies affecting the workplace such as diversity policies, human rights, anti-discrimination, anti-harassment, and other worker safeguards.
- Workplace values including how teams work together, and management operates. (See Tool #5: Culturally-Competent Approaches For Integrating Skilled Immigrants.)

2. PROVIDE A BUDDY TO THE NEW EMPLOYEE.

This could be a peer buddy from the same culture, a mentor of any background or a supervisor who would be available for any questions and support.

3. INCLUDE CULTURAL INTEGRATION QUESTIONS AS PART OF REGULAR PERFORMANCE REVIEWS.

Consider asking, "What has surprised you about the way things work here?" "What have you liked?" "What has frustrated you?"

4. PROVIDE REGULAR WORKPLACE DEVELOPMENT SESSIONS INCLUDING:

- team-building opportunities.
- diversity workshops to foster better understanding and appreciation of different cultures.
- other workshops to support personnel in working effectively together.

5. CONSIDER PROVIDING ESL SUPPORT FOR SKILLED IMMIGRANTS TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATIONS.

For further information regarding sector-specific language training visit:

<http://www.elsanet.org/esldirectory/>
http://elsanet.org/links_students.html

6. WHEN CONSIDERING PROMOTIONS, CLARIFY THE PROCESS AND EXPECTATIONS WITH SKILLED IMMIGRANTS.

In many cultures it is not appropriate to self-promote or apply for a more senior position without the express permission or support of a supervisor.

7. PROVIDE SUPPORT TO EXISTING EMPLOYEES TO HELP WITH INTEGRATION.

Although much of your focus is on helping the skilled immigrant to integrate, it is also advisable to invest time and resources in educating your existing staff on how to engage effectively with people from different cultures. This type of activity can go a long way to increasing the successful integration of skilled immigrants.

Tools Culturally-Competent Tools

There are a number of tools offered in this guide. What follows is a listing of these tools with references to the accompanying recruitment steps:

Tool	Step	Goal
Tool 1: Culturally-Competent Screening Tool	STEP 1 & STEP 2: Advertising the Job and Screening the Applications	To distinguish between essential and non essential duties.
Tool 2: Culturally-Competent Communication for Interviews	STEP 3: Interviewing & Testing	To ensure effective communication and avoid miscommunication.
Tool 3: Culturally-Competent Awareness of Body Language at Interviews		To identify appropriate level of communication and interpersonal skills required for the role.
Tool 4: Testing Performance and Skills on Key Job Criteria – Interview Stage		
Tool 5: Culturally-Competent Approaches for Integrating Skilled Immigrants	STEP 6: Ensuring Success in the Workplace	To review typical workplace scenarios through lenses of 'Canadian vs. Other Cultures' expectations.

To download templates of all tools please visit.
www.bchrma.org/researchvoice/immigrant_talent_integration.htm

Tool 1

Culturally-Competent Screening Tool

This chart helps the HR practitioner and hiring manager separate the essential from the non-essential aspects of a job to create a clear picture of the core competencies required. We thank the City of Vancouver for contributing to the creative development of this valuable tool.



The following actions should be used to make the best use of this tool.

ACTION 1:	Sit with the hiring manager and work with them to list out all the possible duties that are required to perform the role. Do not rank or rate the duties yet.
ACTION 2:	For each duty identify the skills and experience required to fulfil that duty.
ACTION 3:	Working duty by duty determine which are essential and which are non-essential. Essential duties are those that are core or fundamental to the success of the role and the team. Non-essential duties are those that are nice to have, but do not directly impact the outcome of the role’s effectiveness. For example, it is essential for a nurse to be able to relate all aspects of a patient’s condition to doctor or team member. It is not essential that they are able to develop a training module in Power Point.
ACTION 4:	Once you have agreed on the essential and non-essential duties, record them and their associated skills and experience on the chart.
ACTION 5:	Under the column Performance Measure for Skills, write down how you will determine whether or not the candidate being screened has the skills and experience relating to the duty.
ACTION 6:	Score the candidates in the columns called ‘Ranking’ and ‘Weight’. The ranking should reflect the skills and experience were described or demonstrated and the weighting accords the duty’s importance as relevant to the role. The more important the duty the higher the weighting. An overall score for the duty is calculated by multiplying the ranking by the weighting.
ACTION 7:	All candidates should be scored and those with the highest scores should be short-listed for interview. This approach gives a more objective way to determine if the skills required to do the job are present. It also removes the potential for cultural bias to influence this decision making process.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES	EXPERIENCE	SKILLS	PERFORMANCE MEASURE FOR SKILLS	RANKING: 0 - 5 0 = LOW EVIDENCE 5 = FULL EVIDENCE	WEIGHT: 1-3 1= LOW IMPORTANCE 3 = HI IMPORTANCE	TOTAL SCORE: RANK X WEIGHT
Example 1. A nurse’s ability to relate all critical aspects of a patient’s condition to a doctor or team member	Experience: 10 years working as a direct care nurse	Strong English and documentation abilities	Scenario based test	3	3	9
2.						
3.						
				Essential Duties Subtotal		
NON- ESSENTIAL DUTIES	EXPERIENCE	SKILLS	PERFORMANCE MEASURE FOR SKILLS	RANKING: 0 - 5 0 =LOW EVIDENCE 5 = FULL EVIDENCE	WEIGHT: 1-3 1= LOW IMPORTANCE 3 = HI IMPORTANCE	TOTAL SCORE: RANK X WEIGHT
Example 1. A nurse’s ability to develop a training module in Power Point	Basic computer skills, served as head nurse	Strong communicator, mentor	Ability to explain how they have trained others in the past	3	1	3
2.						
3.						
				Non-Essential Duties Subtotal		
				Total Score		

Tool 2

Culturally-Competent Communication for Interviews

SCENARIO (RECRUITER)	DON'T SAY OR DO THIS	DO SAY THIS	RATIONALE
WHEN ASKING QUESTIONS	"Tell me about yourself."	"Tell me about your education/experience."	Immigrants may have trouble answering open-ended questions. Specific questions help focus responses.
	"Tell me about a time..."	Add, "I want to know your particular role in this work activity."	Many immigrants are modest about personal "achievement"; their cultural values may emphasize collective over individual achievement. It is culturally inconsistent for them to speak of individual achievement. Emphasizing that you want to know their particular role will draw out this information.
WHEN RECEIVING A BRIEF REPLY TO A QUESTION	Assume the person doesn't know.	Be patient, polite and probe.	Respect for authority sometimes causes immigrants to "answer only what is asked"; elaborating without being asked may seem impertinent.
WHEN RECEIVING A SLOW REPLY	Become impatient. Think the candidate is incompetent.	Be patient. Encourage with a smile and nod.	Pauses in some cultures are natural, recognizing the significance of the question. Thinking before speaking is common for many cultures.
WHEN RECEIVING NO REPLY AFTER ASKING "DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS?"	Think the candidate lacks interest or is slow.	Assure the candidate they can ask any question at all about either the job or the process of selection.	Immigrants are not used to being asked this question, which in their culture may be associated with "challenging authority".
WHEN DISCUSSING TECHNICAL MATTERS	Use jargon, slang, acronyms, complex phrases.	Communicate clearly using simple words.	Competency is key; core knowledge conveyance is what is critical. More complex communications will become possible with familiarization.
WHEN THE CANDIDATE HAS A STRONG ACCENT	Lose focus or become frustrated.	Seek clarification. Encourage the person to speak slowly.	Again competency is key. Accents both lessen and become easier to understand with experience in the workplace.
WHEN NOT CERTAIN OF LANGUAGE LEVEL	Assume the person can't do the job.	Request an English test at specific Canadian Benchmark Levels.	Immigrants may have different proficiencies for oral and written English and jobs may have differing requirements.



Plain Speak Please!

A skilled immigrant applying for a health care position was asked by the recruiter: "What do you bring to the table?" The person answered that she would usually bring food. She didn't get the job!!

-Note from South Asian focus group.

Tool 3

Culturally-Competent Awareness of Body Language at Interviews

The most impactful element of communication is the non-verbal component – closely followed by tone of voice. Body language and modulation varies greatly from person to person and often results in miscommunication. Between cultures and countries, continents apart, such non-verbal communicators span the gamut of 'normal' custom. This tool targets just a few of the more common 'face-to-face' miscommunications to help you focus on a more accurate assessment of the candidate.

BODY LANGUAGE	ASSUMPTION / REACTION	ALTERNATIVE INTERPRETATION
No eye contact	Not trustworthy, shifty	Respect for authority; candidate does not want to appear challenging
Shaking head from side to side	No	Actually, YES! (i.e. India and Japan)
Soft or gentle handshake	Not assertive/confident, weak	Conveys respect rather than power or strength
Unusual gestures/closeness	Rude	Acceptable cultural convention



Did you know that...

"Most recruiters make the decision to hire/not hire in the first seven minutes."

La Roche and Rutherford. Recruiting, Retaining and Promoting Culturally Different Employees. Elsevier Inc. 2007, p 30.

Test your cultural awareness / openness.

The candidate arrives 20 minutes early wearing a strong perfume, stands three feet away from you, looks you up and down, gives a prolonged hand-shake, maintains continuous eye contact, and chit-chats about family and politics. Have you made up your mind against this candidate already? Why? Can you maintain an open mind knowing cultural differences may be causing the behavior? Can you maintain an open mind knowing these cultural differences may not necessarily relate to job performance?

Tool 4

Testing Performance and Skills on Key Job Criteria - Interview Stage

Communication and interpersonal skills are often cited as a concern when hiring skilled immigrants. This tool allows a clear determination of the communication skills required to be assigned to any role. Use of this tool makes decisions about the communication skills required to be more conscious and consistent, thereby reducing the challenge of such hiring assessments.

ABILITY DESIRED	CHECK WHICH SPECIFIC LEVEL OF SKILL IS NEEDED (0 LOWEST, 5 HIGHEST)	SCENARIO OR METHOD TO TEST SKILL OR PERFORMANCE
1. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS	<div><div>5. Public presentations required</div><div>4. Mostly staff presentations only</div><div>3. Mostly meeting discussions only</div><div>2. Mostly 1-1 communications, some meetings</div><div>1. Mostly 1-1 communications, no meetings</div></div>	Review verbal communication in phone screening or interview process to determine ability to communicate directly with colleagues or in team meetings.
2. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS	<div><div>5. Full technical reports with no oversight.</div><div>4. Full technical reports, with oversight</div><div>3. General narrative reports</div><div>2 External communications</div><div>1. Internal memos</div><div>0. None at all</div></div>	
2. READING COMPREHENSION	<div><div>5. Full technical reports for implementation with no oversight</div><div>4. Full technical reports for implementation with oversight</div><div>3. General narrative reports</div><div>2. External communications</div><div>1. Internal memos</div><div>0. No reading requirements at all</div></div>	
3. 1. INTERPERSONAL SKILLS: TEAM RELATIONS	<div><div>4. Leading a team of more than 3 people</div><div>3. Supervising 1-3 people</div><div>2. Member of team, no supervision</div><div>1. Not member of a team</div></div>	
3.2. INTERPERSONAL SKILLS: PUBLIC RELATIONS	<div><div>3. Mostly interacting w/ public</div><div>2. Some interaction w/ public</div><div>1. No public interaction</div></div>	
4. TECHNICAL PROFICIENCY FOR THE JOB	<div><div>4. Job requires certification, completely accountable with no oversight</div><div>3. Job requires certification and reports to 'certified personnel'</div><div>2. Certification not required, completely accountable wit. no oversight</div><div>1. Certification not required and reports to 'certified personnel'</div></div>	
5. COMPUTER PROFICIENCY (OR SPECIFY APPLICATION)	<div><div>3. High</div><div>2. Moderate</div><div>1. Low</div></div>	

Tool 5

Culturally-Competent Approaches For Integrating Skilled Immigrants

TYPICAL WORKPLACE SCENARIOS	POSSIBLE CANADIAN EXPECTATION	CONSIDERATIONS
Meeting discussion	A prompt start and agenda-directed discussion.	Many skilled immigrants surveyed emphasized relationships over tasks. Greetings come first in many cultures.
Group decision-making	Everybody has a say and group decisions are made by majority or consensus.	Many skilled immigrants surveyed are familiar with with hierarchical leadership styles where authority is not questioned. Their input may have to be directly requested.
Managing team conflicts	Team member deals with other team members (egalitarian).	Skilled immigrants may be accustomed to asking supervisors to deal with other team members. (hierarchical)
Supervising and being supervised	Supervisor both delegates and expects staff to take initiative on the project.	Many skilled immigrants expect firm direction from the boss. Skilled immigrant managers may be uncomfortable delegating to staff.
Performance evaluations	Managers "sandwich" negative feedback between pieces of positive feedback, and expect frank feedback from staff.	Skilled immigrants may appreciate frank direction to focus on key areas of improvement. Speak frankly, give praise as due, and solicit discussion. Skilled immigrants may find it inappropriate to challenge authority. Encourage critical feedback.
Promotions	Employees wanting promotion let managers know and work to demonstrate abilities.	Skilled immigrants may think it inappropriate to self-promote and expect their good work is sufficient to communicate their intent.



HERE ARE SEVERAL EXAMPLES OF HOW DIVERSITY LEADERS SUPPORT AN INCREASE IN DIVERSITY AND CULTURAL-COMPETENCE THROUGHOUT THEIR ORGANIZATION.

- Talk with managers about how to set appropriate expectations with their teams about what constitutes culturally-competent behaviour.
- Post multi-cultural calendars in all departments so everyone can see the full range of cultural holidays and celebrations every week.
- Hold a diversity week and celebrate with different food and cultural events.
- Celebrate the "country" day of every member of your workforce – hoist their flag and put on a local dish at lunch time or break time.

CONCLUSION

For the dividends it yields, cultural-competence in the workplace should be common sense.

It is an imperative for any organization seeking to solve their skilled labour challenges and navigate the current economic straits. The impact of demographic shifts alone are making Canada's workforce a more diverse entity. Coupled with the impending wave of retiring baby boomers, the acceleration of technological potentials and the increasingly interwoven global workplace, challenges and opportunities abound. Skilled immigrants play a critical role in crafting a solution.

For organizations to thrive and grow in this changing world they will need to alter their current practices and become skilled and proficient at hiring, retaining and growing a more culturally diverse workforce. Capability in this area is moving from being commendable to being a necessary component of organizational success.

The evidence suggests that those organizations which embrace diversity and take the steps required to re-shape their hiring, retention and promotion practices gain additional advantage from their diverse work group. The main advantages cited to-date are increased innovation, increased loyalty and an improved ability to compete at a global level. Many organizations recognize both the imperative and the benefits, and yet the "demand side" barriers to integrating skilled immigrants still exist.

The tools and information in this guide will go some way to reducing the unemployment and underemployment of the skilled immigrant population. We hope that we have opened minds to the opportunity and provided some practical tools. This is the first step on a vital journey. The next step is up to you and your organization to put these tools into practice and build your diverse and successful workforce of the future.



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