



Good Employer Practices:

ATTRACTING AND RETAINING INTERNATIONALLY TRAINED WORKERS
IN CANADA'S TOURISM SECTOR



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1. Why are Internationally Trained Workers Important for the Tourism Sector?

Against the backdrop of a fluctuating global economy, the tourism sector—like most others—is being increasingly challenged by labour shortages, a growing need for skilled workers, rapid demographic change, transformations in the sector, and globalization of labour markets and clients. The Canadian Human Resource Tourism Council (CHTRC) projects that by 2025, the labour shortage in the tourism sector will increase to 219,000 jobs.¹ Yet amidst these challenges, the federal government's 2009 Economic Action Plan is investing in the tourism sector to "better sell Canada as a tourist destination".²

Internationally trained workers (ITWs)—employees from countries other than Canada who have a particular skill set³—are becoming key in the solution to Canada's labour market changes and the push for economic revitalization and expansion. Statistics Canada has predicted that Canada's net growth in the labour force will depend 100% on immigrants by 2011.⁴ The federal government has developed strategies for attracting, retaining, and integrating ITWs; provinces also have tools and resources in place for companies to attract and retain ITWs, as well as strategies to facilitate integration of ITWs. One example is Quebec's recently launched Campagne de promotion de l'apport de

l'immigration à l'essor du Québec, a province-wide campaign intended to encourage Quebec society to welcome immigrants and to view immigration as the future of a strong Quebec.

The Alliance of Sector Councils (TASC), a network of Canada's sector councils dedicated to implementing industry-driven labour market solutions, recognizes that some sectors and employers are working to attract, retain, and integrate ITWs into the Canadian labour market and communities. However, the unemployment and underemployment rate for ITWs remains higher than for those who are Canadian-born. Of those ITWs who do find work, only 42% find it in their intended occupations.⁵

¹ CTHRC/ CTRI, The Future of Canada's Tourism Sector: Economic Recession Only a Temporary Reprieve from Labour Shortages, 2010.

² Canada's Economic Action Plan, "PM Consults with Tourism Industry Leaders", 4 June 2009, <http://www.actionplan.gc.ca/eng/media.asp?id=1489>.

³ ITWs include those who enter Canada under several categories to become permanent residents (e.g., Skilled Worker Program, Immigrant Nominee Programs, Canadian Experience Class, and Quebec Skilled Worker), their family members and refugees. ITWs also include those who enter Canada to work on a temporary basis (e.g., temporary foreign workers, international students, mobile youth on working holiday or SWAP visas, and workers covered by international trade agreements such as NAFTA).

⁴ Statistics Canada, 2008.

⁵ The Alliance of Sector Councils, "Internationally Trained Workers", <http://www.councils.org/our-priorities/internationally-trained-workers/> (accessed 5 December 2009).

According to the Alliance, integration patterns continue to be weak. Successful integration of ITWs is affected by:

- › Lack of information and poor preparation prior to immigrating;
- › Weak proficiency in the language of work;
- › Necessary requirements for Canadian work experience;
- › Non-recognition of prior experience and qualifications; and
- › Lack of appropriate social supports and networks to gain access to employment.

Statistics from the Conference Board of Canada indicate that 42% of Canadian employers do not have a diversity strategy⁶ and 88% rated their ability to manage their workplace for diversity as average or below average.⁷ Primary reasons why Canadian employers invest in diversity are to access a broader talent pool, to be an employer of choice, to mirror their customer base, to improve or create customer relationships, and to meet legal requirements (e.g., Canadian Human Rights Act). Although some employers may have strategies intended to diversify the workplace, the real challenge lies in the true integration of ITWs through strategies that also foster a culture of inclusion in the workplace and the community.⁸

In the tourism sector, more than 20% of current employees were born outside of Canada—and this number is rising.⁹ While some employers are beginning to realize the importance of targeting ITWs and are only now developing strategies to address this emerging labour market, others, generally due to the economic climate of their region, already have sophisticated programs and processes in place to attract, retain, and integrate ITWs into their workforce and communities.

CTHRC has created this compendium of case studies of employers in the tourism sector¹⁰ to collect and showcase practices proven to be effective in recruiting, integrating and retaining ITWs. It is CTHRC's hope that these good practices can serve as models for others in the tourism sector.

Part of the challenge in developing this compendium is determining which criteria or elements of success enable tourism employers to effectively recruit, retain and integrate ITWs. In the absence of comprehensive national standards or specific tourism sector standards on workplace diversity and inclusion, and given the importance of tourism employers in building capacity in this area, CTHRC has proactively identified the criteria for cultural competency and collected a set of proven diversity practices. CTHRC strongly encourages the use of these practices throughout the tourism sector.

⁶ Diversity strategy in business is commonly understood to be an intentional process to value the differences in employees—differences in culture, gender, religion, demographics and other personal preferences. Businesses with an effective diversity strategy will have a leading edge in employee productivity and retention.

⁷ Conference Board of Canada, *Immigrant-Friendly Businesses: Effective Practices for Attracting Integrating and Retaining Immigrants in Canadian Workplaces*, November 2009.

⁸ In 2008, Alberta Employment and Immigration released *Employing a Diverse Workforce: Making it Work*. The strategy focuses on “Diversity to Inclusion” or going beyond diversity in the workplace to fostering inclusion and full integration of ITWs in the workplace and the community. “Diversity Practices”, for this project, includes integration strategies in the company and community. (Available at <http://alis.alberta.ca/pdf/cshop/employdiverse.pdf>)

⁹ Statistics Canada, *Human Resource Module of the Canadian Tourism Satellite Account*, 2007, <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/13-604-m/13-604-m2009061-eng.pdf>.

¹⁰ The tourism sector is comprised of five industries: accommodations, food and beverage services, recreation and entertainment, transportation, and travel services.



2. Why Produce a Good Employer Practices Compendium?

As a leading sector council in Canada, CTHRC facilitates human resource development activities for the 174,000 businesses and 1.75 million workers that comprise the Canadian tourism sector.

CTHRC develops and supports the delivery of a vast range of tools and programs designed to address labour market issues and promote professionalism (please see Appendix A for further information). CTHRC supports a collaborative approach and makes a coordinated effort to disseminate labour market information, pool resources and share good practices to ensure Canadian employers make the best possible use of the talents of ITWs.

The CTHRC Good Employer Practices compendium is an ideal tool to share good practices. Designed as a virtual peer-mentoring tool, the compendium presents 12 case studies, describing and analyzing the impact of employer practices that result in the successful recruitment, integration and retention of ITWs in Canada's tourism sector. Each case study is formatted to ensure readability and interest and includes images and quotes from ITWs, as well as callout boxes that profile ITWs and provide employer tips and reasons to hire ITWs.

Although many of the good practices included in the compendium are local in scope, they present elements that can easily be adapted and tailored to other circumstances. The compendium authors strove to highlight replicable elements of good practices. Although these

elements may not be an exhaustive list, they clearly exemplify the components of diversity strategies that have proven successful. Adaptations of these practices should take into account the specific characteristics of local tourism labour markets, communities and organizations as well as the diverse needs of newcomers across Canada.

CTHRC plans to feature the Good Employer Practices compendium on the Discover Tourism website and disseminate it through CTHRC's network as well as provincial tourism Human Resource Organizations (HROs) across Canada. Effective marketing and distribution will help ensure that employers and HR professionals in the tourism sector, as well as immigration policy practitioners, take full advantage of this tool.

3. What are Good Employer Practices?

The CTHRC Good Employer Practices compendium features a range of tourism employers representing a cross-section of industry groups, provinces and territories, urban and rural settings and utilizing a variety of immigration programs.

For the purpose of this compendium project, "good employer practices" were defined as follows:

Good employer practices are organizational structures, cultures and systems that set the benchmark standards of excellence for others in the sector to follow. Good practice employers also apply cultural diversity practices in a strategic manner as part of a larger effort to create welcoming workplaces within welcoming communities.¹¹

¹¹ CTHRC and Critical Link developed this working definition based on a literature review and examination of selected diversity management frameworks.

4. What Criteria were used to Screen and Select Good Employer Practices?

Tourism employers are all at different stages of developing cultural competency. Those selected for inclusion in the compendium either met or were well on their way to meeting the following selection criteria:

RECOGNIZED

- › Recognized by a third party for excellence in recruitment and retention of ITWs (preferably an awards program, website, publication or conference).
- › Employer agrees that it is a leading employer for ITWs and publicly acknowledges the importance of diversity.

STRATEGIC

- › Employer has developed and embraced a diversity program that is supported by senior management.
- › Employer strategically targets ITWs for recruitment and retention for more than just entry-level positions.
- › Employer's practices address more than one stage of HR management life cycle.

ENGAGED WITH THE COMMUNITY

- › Employer works within a broader community context, collaborating with other organizations to leverage resources in order to support integration of newcomers into the community and workplace.
- › Employer acts as a champion, creating a welcoming organization within a larger context of a welcoming community.
- › Employer is involved in initiatives outside of the company related to helping immigrants integrate into the community and workplace.

FAIR AND EQUITABLE

- › Good practices address the needs of both employer and workers.
- › Good practices showcase the benefits experienced by the workers' families, communities in the country of origin.
- › Employer demonstrates fair and ethical treatment of workers including pay, training, advancement equity and equality in the workplace.

DEMONSTRATES ROI

- › Employer has developed a system to measure the results of diversity practices.
- › Employer can clearly articulate the positive impact of employing ITWs.

Elements of good practices listed under a specific criterion may also exemplify good practices under other categories. For example, while an employer may be demonstrating fair and equitable treatment of workers in relation to pay and advancement of equality in the workplace, this can also be considered to be part of the larger strategic effort to develop and embrace a diversity program that is supported by senior management.

5. How were the Good Employer Practices Compiled?

While CTHRC acknowledges that many other good practice employers exist across Canada, gathering information from reliable sources ensures a certain level of confidence that the majority have been identified. Primary sources included recommendations from representatives at provincial HROs, immigrant employment councils, and provincial and federal government offices. Secondary sources included publications and websites as well as diversity award programs.

Twenty-seven different employers were contacted. Nineteen were screened and 13 were interviewed. Employers were selected according to the criteria listed above (recognized, strategic, engaged with the community, fair and equitable, demonstrates ROI).¹²

The tourism sector is comprised of five industry groups: accommodations, food and beverage services, recreation and entertainment, transportation, and travel services. As indicated in **Table 1**, the employers featured in this compendium represent a broad cross-section of the tourism sector in Canada.

¹² Further information on this project's literature review, interview guidelines and templates can be obtained by contacting CTHRC directly.

Table 1: Good Practices by Tourism Industry Group

Good Practices	Accommodations	Food & Beverage Services	Recreation & Entertainment	Transportation	Travel Services
A&W		X			
Boston Pizza		X			
Coast Edmonton Plaza Hotel	X				
D.P. Murphy Inc.	X	X			
Edmonton Marriott at River Cree Resort	X	X			
Panorama Mountain Village	X		X		
Poet's Cove Resort and Spa	X	X	X		
Portes Ouvertes sur le Lac	N/A; Non-profit organization				
Prince George Hotel	X				
Société de Transport de Montréal				X	
Steam Whistle Brewing			X		
Voyageur Transportation Services				X	

6. What Type of Tourism Employer is More Likely to have Good Practices?

One of the advantages of conducting research on good practices in recruiting, integrating and retaining ITWs is that it provides an opportunity to better understand the current capacity and trends within the tourism sector.

Research efforts for this compendium ensured comprehensive coverage of the tourism sector by including cross-sections of: tourism industry groups, aspects of the HR cycle, types of ITWs, as well as sizes and locations of employers. Researchers noted the following trends:

- › The accommodations industry group had the most examples of employers utilizing good practices. This could be due to the fact that this industry has large employers with greater HR capacity.
- › It was challenging to find good practice employers in the travel industry group. These firms are often smaller in size and while they may employ ITWs, they have few, if any, formal diversity practices in place.
- › Participating employers collectively formed an overall sector case study incorporating all aspects of the HR cycle including recruiting, integrating and retaining ITWs. Some, like A&W and Boston Pizza, focused more on the recruiting process, which was still relatively new to them—they needed to hire large numbers of ITWs to sustain their businesses. Formalized diversity practices dropped off sharply after

initial on-boarding and orientation of ITWs. See **Table 2** (pg 10) for a snapshot of good practices broken out by HR cycle stage.

- › Participating employers targeted a cross-section of ITWs admitted to Canada under various immigration and labour mobility programs. Several hired ITWs from more than one program type. The Temporary Foreign Worker Program offered by the federal government and the Immigrant Nominee Programs offered by the provincial governments were the most commonly used; these helped to expedite the immigration process. Seasonal operations such as Panorama and Poet's Cove relied more on students participating in Working Holidays and the SWAP Program (Students Working Aboard Program). Once employers experienced the benefits of hiring ITWs, most were open to expanding their recruitment methods and began hiring economic immigrants, refugees as well as referred family and friends.
- › The size of the employer had a direct relationship with the level of sophistication of that employer's diversity practices. Many smaller employers considered for the project were successfully employing ITWs but did not have enough formalized processes in place to meet the selection criteria. It appears that employers with 75 or more staff begin to implement more formal strategies.
- › Good practice employers were equally distributed throughout all regions of Canada, with the exception of the Northwest Territories, Nunavut and the Yukon, where most of the four recommended employers were not available to participate or did not meet the selection criteria. Those in other geographic areas including the West coast, mountain parks, Niagara and the Maritimes had many good practice employers to choose from.

Table 2: Snapshot of Good Practices by Stage of HR Cycle

Good Practices Employer	Industry Group	Staffing ¹³	Integration & Development ¹⁴	Retention ¹⁵
A&W	Food & Beverage Services	Selection process through community organization	Pre-employment training through community organization	Employer and community activities
Boston Pizza	Food & Beverage Services	Direct international recruitment, recognition of foreign qualifications	Support with community integration	
Coast Edmonton Plaza Hotel	Accommodations	International recruitment, competency assessment and on-boarding practices	In-house training and professional certification	Support permanent immigration of employees
D.P. Murphy Inc.	Food & Beverage Services	Selection process through community organization	Pre-employment training through community organization	Diversity training through community organization
Edmonton Marriott at River Cree Resort	Food & Beverage Services; Accommodations	Orientation and on-boarding practices	In-house training and professional certification	Support permanent immigration of employees
Panorama Mountain Village	Accommodations; Recreation & Entertainment	International recruitment; salary & benefits	Training and advancement, performance measurement	Promotion of culturally sensitive workplace
Poet's Cove Resort and Spa	Accommodation; Food & Beverage Services; Recreation and Entertainment	Culturally sensitive screening practices; local recruitment through academic institutions	Tap into ITW foreign contacts and business expertise	Promotion of culturally sensitive workplace
Portes Ouvertes sur le Lac	N/A—non-profit organization	Facilitates selection processes for tourism employers in the community		Promotion of cultural awareness in the community
Prince George Hotel	Accommodations	Direct international recruitment, on-boarding practices; links with community organizations		Support permanent immigration of employees
Société de Transport de Montréal	Transportation	Selection process through community organizations		Executive support for diversity, diversity training
Steam Whistle Brewing	Recreation & Entertainment	Expansion of recruitment methods, recognition of foreign qualifications	Training and advancement, performance measurement	Promotion of culturally sensitive workplace, diversity training
Voyageur Transportation Services	Transportation	Selection process through community organization, competency recognition	Pre-employment training and in-house training	Diversity training

¹³ Recruitment, selection, qualification assessment, salary & benefits, orientation, termination.

¹⁴ Pre-employment training, performance measurement, training, advancement.

¹⁵ Organizational diversity, employee involvement, team work, knowledge transfer, workforce planning, working conditions, incentives.



7. What Were the Elements of Good Practice and Tips for Success?

All employers featured in the compendium met the five selection criteria for good practices: recognized, strategic, engaged with the community, fair and equitable, and demonstrates ROI. An analysis of each case study reveals a number of elements common to good practice employers.

- › **Companies that are ahead of others in their use of cultural diversity practices within their organizations appear to have an advantage over their competition.** Although many employers interviewed did not see themselves as leaders in the area of cultural diversity practices (most stated they work with ITWs to stay competitive), several employers interviewed by the research team were encouraged to realize they are indeed examples of good practice employers. Other employers interviewed felt very confident about their abilities and leadership in cultural diversity practices, including A&W, Panorama Mountain Village, Poet's Cove Spa and Resort, Prince George Hotel, Société de Transport de Montréal (STM), and Steam Whistle Brewery. Portes Ouvertes sur le Lac was also very confident in its work with ITWs to date.
- › **Preparing a welcoming and supportive workplace was seen as a key element to good diversity practice.** Participating employers noted that when on-boarding and ITW development processes are

carefully thought through, integration and retention naturally occur. Marriot River Cree and Steam Whistle are examples of employers that pride themselves in preparing welcoming and supportive workplaces. Marriot River Cree makes concerted efforts to help ITWs get established, and has special programs and support in place for ITWs. Steam Whistle, on the other hand, does not do anything specific to prepare the workplace for ITWs; rather, social activities and open communication are used to ensure that ITWs feel welcome and well-integrated.

- › **Clear communication with both ITWs and Canadian employees was often noted as key to success.** Of those employers interviewed, once the decision was made to target ITWs, most held meetings with existing employees to inform them of this decision, why it was made, and what changes employees could expect. This provided a great opportunity to get other employees involved in preparing the workplace for the arrival of ITWs. In the case of A&W, the current staff donated furniture, clothing and kitchen utensils to help furnish the newcomers' apartment(s). At Steam Whistle, hiring is done first internally and by referral; all staff take part in building the team and many ITWs have been hired through referral. Prince George Hotel is another example of a work environment where clear communication is practiced.
- › **Many of the participating employers recognize the value of a formal diversity program or strategy that incorporates many aspects of the HR cycle, and either already have a program in place or are in the process of developing one.** Most employers, like D.P. Murphy Inc., begin with a first step—often targeted recruitment and on-boarding practices—and add more capacity as time allows and need increases. Although numerous employers interviewed use other tools and resources to help guide development of their diversity practices, the consensus was that each city and each business has unique needs and, as such, a customized diversity strategy is required.

- › **Several employers acknowledged that collaborating with community organizations or other employers often helped them get started.** They were able to learn from others' practices, share tools and resources and obtain referrals for ITWs. Saskatchewan Boston Pizza learned from the experience of its restaurants in Alberta, and the Prince George Hotel from the Hotel Association of Canada's annual conference. Poet's Cove currently partners with international programs at local colleges and universities to identify prospective employees. A&W uses the hospitality training program launched by a local immigrant-serving agency. D.P. Murphy Inc. works closely with the PEI Association for Newcomers to Canada for recruitment and integration. STM goes directly to cultural associations in Montreal to hold job fairs. Tourism employers in the Lac Saint Jean region of Quebec turn to Portes Ouvertes sur le Lac for pre-screening ITWs.
- › **Many employers felt their success in retaining ITWs was partly due to treating ITWs fairly and equally while at the same time recognizing their particular needs as newcomers to our country.** ITWs were given equal opportunity for advancement, preferential shifts and professional development. Several employers noted the importance of transparent communication with all employees, acknowledging different needs and equal practices. Portes Ouvertes sur le Lac recommends that employers have honest discussions with all employees about why ITWs are being hired. Good practice employers also acknowledged that ITWs have different needs from each other and from other employees. Depending on an ITWs country of origin, each individual brings unique challenges and preferences. Several employers, such as Poet's Cove, offered additional time off for ITWs during non-peak periods to allow for longer trips back home to visit families.
- › **Providing cultural awareness training for both ITWs as well as management and other employees is another key to success.** STM has a Diversity Division that works closely with management to provide cultural sensitivity training. D.P. Murphy Inc. used an interview checklist from a local organization to train managers on how to interview applicants from different cultures. Steam Whistle holds social activities so that employees can get to know each other on a personal level. These types of activities foster a greater awareness of and appreciation for cultural differences.
- › **Good practice employers also strive to establish close, positive working relationships with immigration offices in both Canada and the ITWs' country of origin to ensure a smooth process.** It helps when employers stay up to date on changes to immigration policies and procedures. Boston Pizza, for instance, looked to best practices in Alberta and went further to establish close personal connections in the Philippines.



8. What are the Impacts of Good Diversity Practices?

An analysis of the case studies included in this compendium identifies a number of benefits in hiring ITWs. Each case study presented includes a collection of points under *Why Hire ITWs*, noting the return on investment from the employer's perspective.

- › Employing ITWs gives employers a competitive advantage. ITWs come with unique ideas for improving business practices and can often directly connect employers to international markets (for both customers and additional employees).
- › Participating employers unanimously agreed that the retention rate of ITWs far surpasses that of other Canadian employees. Implementing supportive practices to help ITWs integrate into both the workplace and the community results in highly loyal employees.
- › The vast majority of ITWs bring with them an appreciation for the opportunity to work and live in Canada. Participating employers found that many ITWs are hard workers and are eager to learn more about Canadian social and business customs.
- › Participating employers often referred to building an extended work family. This was partly driven by ITWs' need for greater support to settle into the workplace and community, and also by the warmth and generosity of the ITWs themselves. The donation of clothing and furniture, invitations to family dinners, community outings and close personal friendships were among the outcomes of these close working relationships.
- › Employers targeting ITWs acknowledged that once they establish a good reputation within immigrant communities, employee referrals are abundant and help expand recruitment methods. ITWs make great ambassadors for their respective employers.
- › Some ITWs, according to participating employers, are a very mobile workforce and are often more willing to move to other parts of Canada with a national firm.
- › Participating employers often remarked that having ITWs as part of their workforce provided a richer, more meaningful experience for visitors, and brought an international flavour to their business. Several employers commented on the superior service provided by professionally trained international hospitality workers.
- › Participating employers often noted that patience and curiosity on both sides (ITW and employer) were two qualities needed for ITWs to establish trust and feel comfortable providing business ideas as well as constructive criticism.
- › Many ITWs are highly skilled business people with a lot to offer an employer. Many are underemployed, and employers who take advantage of their training and work experience often benefit from their knowledge.

The CTHRC Good Employer Practices compendium presents a collection of 12 case studies describing and analyzing the impacts of good employer practices that result in the successful recruitment, integration and retention of ITWs in Canada's tourism sector. Each case study includes:

- › A Great Employers section, which focuses on how many ITWs a company employs, their countries of origin, and any recognition the employer may have received from third parties for its diversity practices;
- › A Great Practices section, which highlights any formal diversity practices the employer has in place, types of activities used to hire, retain and integrate ITWs, and which community organizations the employer is working with to attract and retain ITWs;
- › A Great Results section, where each employer identifies why having ITWs in its workforce is important, challenges that arose, and positive results that ensued;
- › An Employer Tips box, highlighting the salient points employers and HR professionals felt were key to their success and;
- › Callout boxes that present an ITW employee profile as well as reasons each employer decided to hire ITWs.

The following firms were found to have good employer practices in place (presented in alphabetical order):

A&W

Boston Pizza

Coast Edmonton Plaza Hotel

D.P. Murphy Inc.

Edmonton Marriott at River Cree Resort

Panorama Mountain Village

Poet's Cove Resort and Spa

Portes Ouvertes sur le Lac

Prince George Hotel

Société de Transport de Montréal

Steam Whistle Brewing

Voyageur Transportation Services



Immigrant Teens Proud to Contribute to Family Income

— A&W Restaurants

When A&W management started working with a local immigrant and refugee agency to address labour shortages, they had no idea they were hiring such trustworthy, loyal employees. These teen immigrants take great pride in starting their Canadian careers with A&W and helping their families make ends meet.

GREAT EMPLOYER

A&W restaurants in Winnipeg have been working hard to adopt progressive hiring policies that see immigrants and refugees as great additions to their team.

Their efforts have paid off. The Manitoba Tourism Education Council (MTEC) recognized A&W's achievements in its July 2009 e-newsletter with an article that began, "Hats off to A&W!".

Hats off indeed. A&W's journey has been a long road filled with learning.

In the fall of 2007, during the height of the national labour shortage, the Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association (CRFA) called a meeting of interested parties and government to explore workforce solutions. Instead of targeting temporary foreign workers (TFWs) from overseas, restaurants were encouraged to consider the large pool of immigrants already in Canada. The opportunity emerged to work with immigrant teens already in Canada with their families.

A&W representatives left the meeting excited about the possibility of not only addressing their labour shortage but also providing employment to these teens in order to help them integrate into the community, gain Canadian work experience, and help support their families.

The idea really took off when Newcomers Employment Education and Development Services (N.E.E.D.S.) Inc.—a local non-profit agency that provides services and support to immigrant and refugee youth—created a hospitality training program that would offer newcomers to Canada an opportunity to acquire essential workplace skills. N.E.E.D.S.' overall goal is to enhance integration into Canadian society by providing youth with employment, education and social recreational programs; the agency manages an employment program that helps newcomers develop the employability skills required to enter and successfully participate in the Canadian labour market. Its objective is to connect talented youth with forward-thinking employers who want to increase the pool of qualified candidates.

THE FACTS

Profile: Teens of economic immigrants, provincial nominees and refugees

Demographics: 500+ employees. Of those, 70+ are immigrant youth aged 15–19, recruited and pre-trained through a local immigrant-serving agency.

Countries of Origin: Africa, India, and Philippines.



A&W's Teen Burger, symbolic of international youth

It seemed like a natural partnership that would benefit both sides: A&W commits resources and employment opportunities, while N.E.E.D.S. Inc. manages the pre-employment training and placement process. "As each new set of youth complete this program, we make improvements and continually get better," says Regional Manager Stephen Sidloski. "A number of our Operators have had strong successes, and as a

result an even larger number of Operators have gotten on board. All these restaurants are benefiting with getting dedicated new employees that have received pre-employment training that includes specific A&W material and responsibilities."

GREAT PRACTICES

Almost 50% of the 27 A&W franchises in Winnipeg are now committed to working with N.E.E.D.S. Inc. To date, 70 immigrant youth have received in-class training and hands-on work experience in Winnipeg locations. The N.E.E.D.S. program is funded by the Government of Manitoba, Labour and Immigration, at no cost to A&W. N.E.E.D.S. Inc. collects a group of applicants to the program and matches them with prospective A&W locations in Winnipeg three times a year. N.E.E.D.S. Inc. provides pre-employment training over six Saturdays, including lessons on Canadian culture, financial literacy, and work ethics. It also includes A&W's corporate online training to familiarize prospective employees with the work environment and corporate culture. Franchise

owners have an opportunity to interview and pre-screen applications. N.E.E.D.S. Inc. follows up with teen immigrant employees and the employer, and provides assistance when needed.

Once hired, on-the-job training includes tours of restaurants after hours so that the teens are exposed to the workplace during low-risk times. Immigrant youth have also had the opportunity to become mystery shoppers in the restaurant they will eventually work in. "Mystery shopping helps these young people observe Canadian customer service expectations and at the same time realize what will be expected of them," explains Stephen Sidloski. "The feedback on this has been exceptional, and as a result, some Operators now have existing employees do additional mystery shops on their restaurants. This is helping improve our overall customer experience," Stephen adds. A&W has developed an online training tool that introduces new employees to the culture and values of the company. Immigrant youth who require support are provided an English-speaking colleague to help them complete the modules on work time.

WHY HIRE ITWs?

- › Once you have a good reputation within the local immigrant communities, employee referrals are abundant.
- › The turnover rate of ITWs is 10% compared to up to 250% common in the quick-service restaurant industry.
- › ITWs offer fresh perspectives on how to do business.

GREAT RESULTS

In the quick-service restaurant industry that typically sees double-digit turnover rates, A&W retains almost 90% of its immigrant youth on an annual basis. “The turnover rate for this group of employees is almost nil,” boasts Dean Fuller, Restaurant Franchisee responsible for four restaurants in Winnipeg. “These kids are so loyal and trustworthy that we can put them in charge of a shift and know that the work will be done.”

Another success of this program has been the corporate support it has received, along with in-store staff who have welcomed and mentored the students.

The confidence A&W has in its immigrant youth employees makes them easy to target for promotion. Several have become shift managers and others have been selected for management training. “We realize that for most of our employees, working at A&W is not a career,” admits Dean Fuller, “But our young immigrant employees take full advantage of how much they learn about Canadian customer service and work culture while in our employment.” Working at A&W is designed as a stepping-stone for students, building skills beyond those required in the food service industry.

“This employment program has had a dramatic positive effect on the families and communities that have participated,” states Robyn Andrews, N.E.E.D.S. Inc. Employment Program Coordinator. Participating A&W restaurants have earned a great reputation in Winnipeg’s cultural communities for offering a positive employment experience. As a result, many friends and family members of immigrant employees want to work there too. The number of internationally trained workers (ITWs) from referrals now exceeds those coming through the N.E.E.D.S. Inc. program.

“Immigrant-serving agencies are always looking to identify employers where there is an awareness that ITWs make a significant contribution to the labour market,” says Robyn Andrews. “Getting involved in a work training program allows your company to be more competitive in hiring and retaining ITWs.”

EMPLOYER TIPS

- › Continually work hard at creating a work climate of respect and listening for all employees.
- › Partner with local immigrant-serving agencies.
- › Teach ITWs about the things we take for granted—like paycheque deductions.
- › Offer cultural awareness training for both employees and supervisors.
- › Be more flexible when interviewing.
- › Consider how ITWs’ skills and experience will be applicable in the Canadian workplace.
- › Assign culturally sensitive mentors to support new ITWs.
- › Share cultural practices and find ways to celebrate cultural diversity.



Going the Extra Mile Ensures Good Permanent Fit

—Boston Pizza

Saskatchewan Boston Pizza franchises proactively target immigrants from the Philippines to come to Canada through the Temporary Foreign Worker and Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Programs. With lots of personal contact before departure from the Philippines and little extras that make the 84 Filipino employees feel more at home in their new communities, Boston Pizza has experienced the ultimate success—most have chosen to stay.

GREAT EMPLOYER

When Jim Werschler, Store Franchisee, decided to purchase nine more Boston Pizza franchises in addition to the one he already owned in Regina, he was understandably nervous. Saskatchewan is booming. While a boom is great for business, it also means one can expect labour shortages. How would Jim maintain staff at all 10 of his locations throughout Saskatchewan?

Jim paid close attention to what he heard at Boston Pizza committee meetings about how other provinces across Canada, especially Alberta, were dealing with labour shortages. “It seems that Saskatchewan is always about 12 to 18 months behind Alberta,” he observed. “Boston Pizza franchises in Alberta were targeting internationally trained workers, and I figured it was only a matter of time before we would need to do the same.”

Jim decided to be proactive. He contacted former colleague Jerry Morgan of the Mercan Group of Companies, who was involved with a recruiting office in the Philippines. Jerry, a licensed member of the Canadian Society of Immigrant Consultants, had knowledge of the food service industry, knew the required skills, and had access to prospective employees. Jim and his other operating partners agreed on a fee for service and put the wheels in motion. Prospective employees for the positions of cook and manager were pre-screened to ensure that they had the prerequisite skills and a strong command of the English language.

From November 2007 until May 2008, Boston Pizza in Saskatchewan welcomed 53 employees from the Philippines through the Temporary Foreign Worker program. In May 2008, when the Government of Saskatchewan began to place greater emphasis on immigration as a solution to labour shortages, Jim—who was considered a pioneer by now—joined a provincial government recruitment mission to the Philippines. He had several opportunities to address business leaders,

THE FACTS

Profile: Temporary foreign workers and provincial nominees.

Demographics: 14 restaurants with 850 staff; 84 of them (10%) are provincial nominees; 81 of those 84 ITWs are men aged 23–45.

Country of Origin: Philippines.



recruitment firms and interested individuals about Boston Pizza's success to date and the solid processes they had in place. Jim also personally interviewed and selected several individuals for employment. "Once I made my short list, we set up interviews via Skype™ so that the restaurant managers and prospective employees could meet each other virtually before being offered a job," Jim recalls.

The channels between Saskatchewan Boston Pizzas and the Philippines are open and flowing. In February 2009, another 36 employees began to arrive through the Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program (SINP). Another six arrived in December 2009 and 24 more are expected in the first few months of 2010. Boston Pizza has recruited more than 84 internationally trained workers (ITWs) from the Philippines—that's almost 10% of their 850 employees. And in just over two years.

"We were lucky," reflects Jim. "We learned a lot from the Boston Pizza franchises in Alberta who had pioneered the trail of bringing in employees from the Philippines just a few years before us." International employees are here on two-year work permits. With mutual consent from both the employer and the employee, individuals can apply for permanent residency status. Based on the Alberta experience, Boston Pizza in Saskatchewan anticipated that it would lose up to 50% of its international employees at the end of the two years if the company did not help them apply for permanent status. Boston Pizza acted quickly by supporting applications for permanent residence and ensuring smooth turnover. "Alberta told us that most international workers decide to return home or move on to work with other employers," Jim said, "but we have only lost eight out of 92 people to date. Almost all of them want to stay—and most of them want to stay with Boston Pizza!"



Boston Pizza golf tournament—a favourite with its international workers

In the beginning, Jim had kept his recruitment strategy under wraps, thinking that welcoming foreign workers would give him a competitive edge. Now, many industry sectors are relying on ITWs to help them during the labour shortage, and Boston Pizza is happy to share its experience with other organizations eager to learn of the opportunities and pitfalls. In October 2009, Jim Werschler was

asked to speak at the Conference Board of Canada workforce conference held in Saskatoon. Several of his international employees have been showcased in local papers telling stories about their new lives in Canada. Many have become more involved in the community.

GREAT PRACTICES

Now that Boston Pizza in Saskatchewan has a few years' experience with international recruitment, it has implemented many standard policies and procedures for restaurants throughout the province. Boston Pizza makes a concentrated effort to make its international workers from the Philippines feel welcome. Newly landed employees are greeted at the airport by a member of the management team and taken to a welcome gathering at a restaurant where they meet their colleagues and other important community members. They are given three to four days just to settle in before they start their first shift. Boston Pizza provides subsidized, affordable housing in each community and fellow employees donate furniture and small appliances to help newcomers



get established. “We make sure every home has access to the Internet so that they can connect with their families and friends back home as soon as they arrive,” notes Jim.

“You may think that you only provided me a job, but the reality is you have changed my life and my family’s future for the better. It would not have been as smooth as it turned out to be, if you and your family had not made sure that we were at ease with the job and community.”

—Eldon Flores, Boston Pizza employee

Boston Pizza knew that some of its Canadian employees might take issue with what they perceive to be inequitable treatment. Immigration regulations

require a 40-hour workweek, which is higher than the norm. Boston Pizza took the time to explain the situation to their existing employees and offer them the same salary if they agreed to a 40-hour workweek. Most preferred to keep their weekends free and were happy to stay at their current level of compensation as a result.

Boston Pizza also knew that international workers would need more support integrating into the community—support with housing, loans, banking and accessing other community services.

GREAT RESULTS

Boston Pizza’s internationally trained workers (ITWs) have been working very hard and contributing equally, and have won the respect of their Canadian colleagues. Most of the international workers were hired as cooks, and one is now a kitchen manager. When positions for

advancement open up, the Filipino cooks compete like all other employees, ensuring that the most qualified person gets the job.



Whole team at the golf tournament

Recognizing the value of foreign credentials, Boston Pizza hired five Filipinos directly into management positions on a trial basis. These five managers have now been in Canada for over half a year and are well accepted in the restaurants they manage. While capable and competent, their biggest challenge is learning the traits of Canadian managers. “Part of the issue,” notes Jim, “is that they tend to be non-confrontational. It’s hard for them to be the boss because it means having to tell others what to do and to sometimes express dissatisfaction



with staff performance.” Jim encourages the restaurants to provide lots of support to these new managers and is confident that they will develop the necessary Canadian management skills over time.

Boston Pizza has taken a greater interest in the Filipino communities within their respective cities. The company has built relationships with

EMPLOYER TIPS

- › It’s important to recognize that ITWs are not Canadians and will need a bit more of your time and effort. You can’t simply treat them like everybody else.
- › Make sure your employment and HR practices remain fair and equitable to both ITWs and Canadian employees.
- › Balance personal favours with setting realistic precedents.
- › It is important to let all your staff know why ITWs need a little extra assistance.

the local Filipino associations, supporting and attending their social functions and ensuring that their employees are aware of association activities. A representative from the local Filipino Association joins Boston Pizza staff to greet newcomers at the airport, encouraging them to be part of

the Filipino community. As a result, many Filipinos are now beginning to actively contribute to their respective communities.

“Our Filipino employees are important to us both professionally and personally,” says Jim with a smile. “It is so gratifying to be able to help a fellow person, not just my business.” Having international workers is mutually beneficial. ITWs have a chance to come to Canada and to start a new life with a standard of living that far exceeds any they could have had in the Philippines, and in return they ensure that the Boston Pizza business continues to grow.

There have been many friendships and a few surprises. One franchise owner recently went to the Philippines as the best man at the wedding of one of his employees. At a recent staff recognition event, the Employee of the Year was from the Philippines. And Boston Pizza held a golf tournament after one Filipino employee commented, “If my mom saw a picture of me playing golf, she would think that I’ve become a millionaire.” The grand prize for the tournament—a round trip to, or from, the Philippines. The little extras really do make a difference.



Finding and Recognizing Value in Each Employee

—Coast Edmonton Plaza Hotel

Act with Fairness, Expect Commitment, Live with Honour, Challenge the Limits and Win Together form the Core Values at this hotel. On-boarding and development practices welcome and recognize internationally trained workers for their accomplishments in and outside the workplace. As a result, they choose to stay.

GREAT EMPLOYER

The Coast Edmonton Plaza Hotel is part of the Coast Hotels & Resorts, a North American chain with over 40 hotels throughout western Canada and the western United States.

In 2008, the Coast Edmonton Plaza Hotel—or simply ‘the Coast’—was a finalist in the Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission’s Diversity Leadership Award of Distinction. This notable award recognizes organizations that embrace diversity in their workforce, encourage respect and inclusion, and are working toward eliminating discrimination and barriers to fair employment practices.

Coast Hotels & Resorts have two corporate-wide programs that clearly illustrate how they invest in their employees, regardless of culture. Employees are called Ambassadors because of the role they play promoting the hotel. The Living the Values program links every structure and practice to the hotel chain’s core values:

- › Act with fairness
- › Expect commitment
- › Live with honour
- › Challenge the limits
- › Win together

The entire People & Culture (HR) process from recruitment to orientation to succession planning is linked to these core values. All Ambassadors, including internationally trained workers (ITWs), have a chance to be recognized for their gifts and abilities through this program.

The Coast’s ‘real people’ logo tagline celebrates the different interests of employee Ambassadors outside of the workplace and recognizes the importance of work-life balance. Stories about Ambassador accomplishments outside of the workplace are featured in the hotel’s internal newsletter. Front Office Manager from the Coast Edmonton Plaza Jordan Majeau was recently showcased as he travelled to Rwanda for a month on missionary work to help construct mercy homes for HIV/AIDS patients and purchase property

THE FACTS

Profile: Temporary foreign workers as well as international students, refugees and economic immigrants.

Demographics: 150 employees; 10% are ITWs, aged 20–60 years.

Country of Origin: This case study focuses on TFWs from the Philippines.



in Kigali to be developed for a skills development centre, farming and homes for families that desperately need them. Jordan recalls, “I was inspired to try to bring that African attitude of hospitality back to my position here at the hotel, so when people approach our front desk they feel that warmth and welcoming spirit.”

GREAT PRACTICES



First experience in the snow for
Glenia Gerardo

Coast Ambassadors come from many countries around the world and have found a new home—and a new family—at the Coast.

The hotel directed its attention to ITWs a few years ago when it experienced a shortage of workers during the economic boom. Taking advantage of a resource produced by the Alberta Hotel and Lodging Association, *The Guide To Foreign Worker Recruitment*, the Coast

Edmonton Plaza educated itself on the benefits of ITWs.

Working with a third-party international recruitment agency out of Jasper, Alberta, the Coast connected with individuals in the Philippines. These individuals, with previous hospitality sector work experience in their country of origin, were pre-screened and had to pass the *emerit* Occupation Knowledge exam before being offered a position and brought over as temporary foreign workers (TFWs). The Coast Edmonton Plaza Hotel then arranges for the evaluation process with AHLA once these newcomers have completed the required 500 hours of experience

“I am living my dream working in Canada and more importantly working for an amazing employer, The Coast Edmonton Plaza Hotel. I have been provided so much support and patience while transitioning into this culture and am so very grateful.”

—Glenia Gerardo, TFW

in Canada. After the evaluation, they are then eligible to qualify for the Provincial Nominee Program. Passing these assessments indicates to the hotel that an individual is serious about the industry—it shows the individual has mastered the competencies needed for the specific occupation based on the *emerit* National Occupational Standards.

TFWs are made to feel welcome from the moment they arrive. Arrangements are made to have them meet hotel managers and other employee Ambassadors. They are offered interpretive services and a mentor from their country of origin. Accommodation is provided at a sister property as well as roommates, if they so desire. TFWs take part in a comprehensive orientation that provides information about immigrant-serving agencies, other community organizations and churches, Canadian customs, customer service expectations and business acumen. The hotel offers tours of the city including its neighbourhoods and amenities.

The hotel makes it clear to their ITWs that its goal is to support and retain them—indeinitely. ITWs without *emerit* professional certification are eligible and encouraged to enroll after three months of employment. If language is an issue, they are assigned a mentor to assist.

The Coast Edmonton Plaza Hotel now has 13 TFWs from the Philippines at the hotel. All have remained employed by the hotel and most are working towards becoming permanent citizens with the help of the hotel's People & Culture department.

GREAT RESULTS

The Coast Edmonton Plaza Hotel employs temporary foreign workers, international students, economic immigrants and refugees. Five ITWs are currently in leadership positions as Chief Engineer, Assistant Maintenance

Manager, Guest Services Manager, Night Manager and Banquet Manager.

The Coast collaborates with the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, Edmonton's largest immigrant-serving agency, to help target and support the integration of ITWs. The Coast has earned such

a good reputation for caring for ITWs through its on-boarding and recognition practices that it has successfully attracted and transitioned additional TFWs who were laid off by other hotels.

The Coast works closely with Alberta Employment and Immigration's Temporary Foreign Worker Advisory Office to understand both its opportunities and obligations. The hotel has participated in employer education audits to ensure TFWs are receiving fair and equitable treatment, and has been asked to help evaluate the TFW program and process.

WHY HIRE ITWs?

- › Having come from overseas, ITWs are very mobile and more willing to move to other properties and cities across Canada.

"International workers in the hotel industry come with exceptional training and high standards," says Olga Millns, People and Culture Manager. "We realize how lucky we are to have them but also know that we have to become much more intentional in our diversity practices. "

Senior management at Coast Hotels & Resorts fully supports diversity in the workplace, and a formal diversity program is in development stages.

Coast Hotels & Resorts is in the process of launching a customer service program that includes cross-culture service training to address the needs of both international guests and Ambassadors.

EMPLOYER TIPS

- › Embrace diversity.
- › Strive to become more aware and inclusive of cultural diversity.
- › All employees add value to your team. Seek to find the value in each.
- › One size does not fit all. What works for one culture and/or ITW does not always work for another.



D.P. Murphy Inc.

Premier Hospitality and Service Provider Welcomes More Diversity

—D.P. Murphy Inc.

As the population of PEI becomes more diverse, so does the workforce at D.P. Murphy Inc. In the last couple of years, D.P. Murphy has worked with community groups to hire internationally trained workers who demonstrate the ability to offer quick and courteous service. The results have been so good that D.P. Murphy now sees embracing diversity as an “absolute necessity”.

GREAT EMPLOYER

At D.P. Murphy Inc., a good attitude is good business. Guest Courtesy Always, “for every guest, every visit, every day,” is an unwavering commitment. This makes sense, considering the company owns all of the Tim Horton’s and Wendy’s restaurants, as well as a Holiday Inn & Suites, a Super 8, Stanhope Beach Resort & Conference Centre and Oak Acres

Children’s Camp on the island; five Wendy’s in Québec; a Holiday Inn & Suites in Saint John and a Hampton Inn & Suites by Hilton in Moncton, New Brunswick.

Dianne Griffin, Human Resources Manager at D.P. Murphy’s head office in Charlottetown, estimates that of the company’s 1,200 employees, approximately 6% are internationally trained workers (ITWs). In the friendly island way, she refers to a couple of ITWs by their first names and speaks proudly about how far they’ve come with the company. “Peng started working here a couple of years ago as a crew member at a Tim Horton’s in PEI and is now a shift manager. When he told us about his fiancée, Emma, we didn’t hesitate to hire her too,” explains Dianne. “Both Peng and Emma are very good workers. They’re both in our GM training program because they want to advance and have the skill set to do so.”

D.P. Murphy’s training program selects individuals who demonstrate dedication, leadership and a passion for the business. They receive management training to assist them in becoming qualified for promotions within the entire company. D.P. Murphy prides itself on promoting from within the organization.

Family is important at D.P. Murphy. At the Wendy’s restaurants, one store has six family members on staff. Referrals are proving effective for filling gaps at all of the D.P. Murphy properties.

THE FACTS

Profile: Economic immigrants, family/dependants, and provincial nominees.

Demographics: 1,200 employees, 6% ITWs.

Country of Origin: Mostly China.



Training, staff recognition, and benefits are at the core of D.P. Murphy's success with ITWs. The company doesn't have formal diversity practices in place at this time. Instead, ITWs are trained just like every new employee and evaluated like their colleagues are, too. They aren't treated differently and, like everyone else, they are hired based on their skill level, receive the same benefits, and are eligible for the same internal

staff awards.

Everyone is given free uniforms, paid training, discount cards for various stores, and is eligible for the tuition assistance program after three years of employment.

This equal treatment, which



Dianne accepting the Chamber of Commerce award.

includes extras like gym and golf memberships for all employees, is getting nods from third parties. In November 2009, D.P. Murphy was a finalist for two prestigious awards: the Charlottetown Chamber of Commerce President's Excellence Award in the category of Workplace Excellence, and the Tourism Industry Association of Canada's (TIAC) National Award in Human Resources Development. D.P. Murphy won the Chamber of Commerce Award for Workplace Excellence.

GREAT PRACTICES

Just because D.P. Murphy treats all employees as equals doesn't mean that managers don't recognize the unique needs of ITWs and the need to reach out, point staff in the right direction, and get creative.

"Our need for employees here is high," admits Dianne, "but the pool to draw from in PEI is low due to our aging population and our youth leaving the island to go west. We have to look towards immigrants to fill our needs." Like all organizations hiring ITWs, D.P. Murphy is preparing for more diversity. "It's not a question of newcomers taking jobs, which is what some people think. The jobs are there! And to continue to provide the best customer service possible, we need to hire [ITWs]. They are very good at what we hire them to do," she adds.

Partnering with the PEI Association for Newcomers to Canada and the Tourism Industry Association of PEI (TIAPEI)—an association created to represent all geographical regions and industries in the PEI tourism sector—has proved beneficial for D.P. Murphy and its ITWs. With TIAPEI, D.P. Murphy has participated in recruitment seminars during which prospective employees bring their résumés and learn more about jobs at TIAPEI. This works well for the hotel industry in particular, as ITWs do not necessarily have substantial English-speaking skills; working in hotel properties allows them to become more proficient and then apply to other internal job postings at other properties within the D.P. Murphy organization.

The Association for Newcomers is a great partner for both hiring and integration. ITWs can access D.P. Murphy job descriptions at the Association. The Association also helps newcomers set up their lives in Canada—to open bank accounts and find accommodation, for instance. The Association also offers English language training.



D.P. Murphy has accessed resources from both the Association for Newcomers and the Charlottetown Chamber of Commerce to address diversity in the hiring process. When managers were not hiring ITWs because candidates weren't looking them in the eye or shaking their hand during interviews, the HR department at D.P. Murphy looked to the Association and the Chamber for checklists and tips to help managers better understand the cultural differences of such interviewees. D.P.

WHY HIRE ITWs?

- › They are willing to apply for jobs that are hard to fill.
- › Many ITWs at D.P. Murphy are very hard-working, loyal, and excel at customer service.

Murphy understood that cultural differences do not mean that ITW candidates are not qualified for the job.

In addition to using outside resources when needed, D.P. Murphy is brainstorming ways to better integrate its ITWs using

internal means. One idea is to have a class at its training centre where new employees can be trained in both English and Mandarin. Another is to have an ethnic food night for all employees as a social gathering that can break down barriers and let everyone celebrate each other's culture. The HR department strives to create a sense of community at D.P. Murphy for all employees, and believes that the small things—like a smile or sharing a new dish—are important.

GREAT RESULTS

D.P. Murphy feels confident that its hiring and integration practices are producing good results. Retention of ITWs, at any workplace on the island, however, is difficult. "A lot of ITWs work in PEI for only a short period of time because ultimately they want to settle in larger centres where they might become part of a stronger cultural community,"

EMPLOYER TIPS

- › Embrace diversity.
- › Work with community groups that have the expertise that you don't have.
- › Understand that small gestures matter.
- › Be sure to recognize ITWs, just like anyone else, for the hard work that they do.

says Dianne. D.P. Murphy entices its ITWs to stay by giving them fair and equal treatment, offering advancement opportunities, and by offering a way of life that is less stressful than more populous provinces.

It is too soon to tell if these retention practices are working, but D.P. Murphy will continue to monitor retention over the next year to be able to share these results in the future.

Meanwhile, the company will make

sure that ITWs know there are opportunities to advance, change hotels and restaurants, and bring their family and friends into the broader D.P. Murphy family.

D.P. Murphy is definitely on the right track. In 2009, 15% of its President's Guest Courtesy Award recipients were ethnic minorities. "The ones who get on and stay on," Dianne points out, "want to do well. Why wouldn't we welcome more employees who exemplify Guest Courtesy Always, no matter where they are from? That's what is most important to us here at D.P. Murphy."



Rolling out the Red Carpet

—Edmonton Marriott at River Cree Resort

Rolling out the red carpet to welcome internationally trained workers has proven to be well worth the time and effort. On-boarding practices set the tone for a highly inclusive family atmosphere at the Edmonton Marriott at River Cree Resort.

GREAT EMPLOYER

When the Edmonton Marriott at River Cree Resort opened its doors three years ago, the economic boom in Alberta was at its height. The resort needed to find almost 300 employees in only a few months, during a period of less than 3% unemployment. “We had no choice but to consider internationally trained workers,” says Genelle Payant, Director of Human Resources. Now, nearly one-third of its employees are temporary foreign workers or international students.

Internationally trained workers (ITWs) are sourced from other Marriott Hotels around the world, through a licensed international immigration firm in Toronto and through referrals from family and friends.



A very diverse culinary team. Suhail Sayed, Sous Chef, top left.

Over the past year, the Edmonton Marriott at River Cree Resort established a close working relationship with English Bay College in Vancouver, which provides English language training to international students. Students come with an open permit to work in Canada and are required to do a three-to nine-month work placement as part of their course of studies.

The Edmonton Marriott at River Cree Resort also works closely with Service Canada and has received Labour Market Opinion approval on culinary staff, housekeeping, front office, door positions, as well as supervisors for food and beverage and guest services. These employees are brought in as temporary foreign workers (TFWs).

THE FACTS

Profile: 70 + Temporary Foreign Workers & international students.

Demographics: 25–35 years of age, both men and women.

Country of Origin: Bahamas, Dubai, Egypt, India, Korea, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and St. Kitts.



Although the majority of its ITWs are in housekeeping and food and beverage, the Edmonton Marriott at River Cree Resort considers ITWs to be highly skilled individuals who have raised the standards of excellence for all other employees. Almost 100% of the hotel's culinary team is from Dubai, Sri Lanka, St. Kitts or the Bahamas, and bring with them extraordinary international service standards of 5- to 7-star properties.

GREAT PRACTICES

The Edmonton Marriott at River Cree Resort believes in creating a welcoming workplace even before ITWs arrive at the hotel. Once an employment offer is made, the HR department is in regular email contact with the new international employees to provide information and updates on their approval status. Accessing information provided by Edmonton Economic Development Corporation, the Edmonton Marriott at River Cree Resort sends ITWs a welcome package including

WHY HIRE ITWs?

- › Guests enjoy superior service of international excellence.
- › Newcomer needs bring employees together to become an extended family.

the *Images of Edmonton* magazine targeting international workers, a CD-ROM on the city, as well as a copy of *A Newcomer's Introduction to Canada*, a publication available through Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

Once the Labour Market

Opinion is approved by Service Canada, a staff member meets international employees at the airport. ITWs are taken to a hotel or an apartment sponsored by Marriott until they can find a place of their own. ITWs are then escorted by a member of the HR team to obtain their social insurance number, open a Canadian bank account and acquire an Alberta Health Care card. The hotel has provided a half-day

"Welcome to Canada" orientation session that provides information on how to navigate the city, how to dress for the seasons, tourist information, how to buy and take care of a car, and how to take advantage of what Canada has to offer including RRSPs, entertainment, recreational opportunities, and child and elder care. ITWs who are well established at the hotel and familiar with the issues newcomers face often help facilitate the training. The hotel also surveys its ITWs to evaluate and make improvements to its on-boarding and training practices.

The Edmonton Marriott at River Cree Resort recognizes and values cultural diversity in its workplace. Each year it hosts an Associate Appreciation Week, in part to celebrate the many different cultures found within the workplace. The hotel will celebrate a different culture each month beginning in 2010. Working under the direction of employee representatives from featured countries, employees decorate the common areas for staff in traditional style and complimentary cultural food and beverages are offered during breaks.

GREAT RESULTS

The extra effort to make ITWs feel welcome pays off. "ITWs rely on each other for support as they come to learn about Canada and our customs," says Frances Baggeley, Housekeeping Coordinator. "This closeness spreads to other employees and throughout our hotel. We're all part of an extended family."

"It only makes good business sense to retain their knowledge and expertise," says Genelle Payant. "Guests win too, because they receive an elevated experience when they stay with us."



The HR department has developed a tracking program that notifies HR personnel in advance when a work permit is about to expire. Many employees come with family, integrate into the local community and want to stay. If the employee is interested in permanent residency status, the Edmonton Marriott at River Cree Resort takes the lead in the application process.

“Duty makes us do things well, but encouragement makes us do them beautifully. Thanks to Marriott’s leadership, I have achieved what I had dreamed when I stepped in this land of opportunities.”

—Suhail Sayed, Sous Chef

In Alberta, TFWs must pass both a written and an on-the-job performance evaluation of the *emerit* program in order to be nominated under the Alberta Immigrant Nominee Program (AINP) and secure permanent residence status. If an application is denied by

the AINP for a particular occupation, the hotel tries to transfer them to a high-demand occupation. To date, the Edmonton Marriott at River Cree Resort has had eight ITWs approved through the AINP program and another 15 are in progress.

The Edmonton Marriott at River Cree Resort hopes that changes will be made to the Temporary Foreign Worker program to allow for exemplary employees advancing to more senior positions. “It’s frustrating, for example, that a room attendant interested in cross-training is not allowed to do so,” states Genelle Payant. Genelle has joined the board of the Edmonton Region Immigrant Employment Council to work towards solutions for full integration of ITWs into the regional labour market.

EMPLOYER TIPS

- › Stay up to date on immigration policy changes.
- › Build relationships with other organizations that can help you.
- › Addressing the specific needs of the ITWs in your on-boarding process really pays off.



Working Holiday Program a Good Fit for BC Ski Resort —Panorama Mountain Village

Winter sports have always attracted young adults, so when Panorama Mountain Village exhausted the national labour supply, it began to target, welcome and develop international youth on working holidays.

GREAT EMPLOYER

Panorama Mountain Village, situated in the snow belt of south-central British Columbia, has positioned itself as a leader in the ski resort industry with its diversity practices. The year-round mountain resort is featured on the go2HR, Internex and International Exchange Program (IEP) websites, published in the *Kootenay Tourism News*, and was asked to speak to industry at the Canada West Ski Area Association. A few years ago, Panorama was awarded the Business Excellence Award for, among a list of things, its HR diversity practices.

Why all this notoriety? Panorama has always recruited nationally through tourism sector HR programs across Canada. Five years ago, it needed to look beyond traditional markets due to declines in graduates from these

programs. Panorama took a step back to identify which employee markets to target; young people wanting to experience the Canadian Rockies seemed the perfect fit. Combining work with an extended vacation is what the Working Holiday Program is all about.

Internationally trained workers (ITWs) are now hired regularly for most positions, including room and lift attendants, snow makers, retail clerks, reservation agents, front desk staff, food and beverage staff, and snow removal and maintenance staff.

GREAT PRACTICES

Panorama connected with the International Exchange Programs (IEP) in both Australia and New Zealand to target students wanting working holidays. Panorama was invited to interview candidates face-to-face in both countries. The investment paid off, and now over 60% of its seasonal employees are ITWs.

The IEP pilot program between Australia and Canada is available to 18- to 30-year-olds. Initially limited to a one-year visa, the program currently allows Australians to apply for multiple visas, as long as they meet the age requirements. This new regulation allows more opportunity for advancement to senior positions. Many of these individuals are now collecting Provincial Nominee Program points in order to apply for permanent residency.

THE FACTS

Profile: 221 Students Working Abroad (SWAP) and Working Holidays.

Demographics:
Aged 18–30 years

Country of Origin:
Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Chile, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Sweden, Switzerland, England, Germany, Ireland, Scotland and the Czech Republic.



At Panorama, diversity is much more than simply taking advantage of programs that target international youth. During biannual strategic planning sessions, senior management reviews its current and desired staffing models to ensure a comprehensive cross-section of international workers. New targets are set for numbers and countries of origin. "Next year we plan to target youth from Argentina, Brazil, Ecuador and South Africa," says Nicole Morgan, Manager of Employee Experience. "The international students we employ have become an integral part of the Panorama experience. They add a dynamic and vibrant atmosphere, which is very appealing to our visitors."



Staff orientation

Each member of the Panorama HR team acts as a consultant to other divisions, monitoring the impact and success of ITWs and supporting division managers and staff. The HR team provides ITWs with subsidized housing either in the nearby town of Invermere or right on the hill, as well as leads to private rental opportunities. A free shuttle transports

employees to and from the workplace. All employees receive seasonal insurance coverage, food and beverage discounts, complimentary ski passes and reciprocals to 30 other resorts in the Canadian and American Rockies. Most recently, seasonal ITWs are able to access the same comprehensive benefits package available to other staff, provided they hold a provincial health card. Obtaining this benefit took quite a bit of effort by the Panorama HR team, but the value to ITWs staffed at Panorama is well worth the extra work.

WHY HIRE ITWs?

- › ITWs offer an international experience for visitors.
- › Over 100% improvement in retention rate.

With international recruitment well in hand, Panorama has turned its attention to providing a comprehensive training program to all staff. A number of employees have received professional accreditation thanks to Panorama's tuition subsidy. Employees who have graduated from Selkirk's ski resort management program receive a full tuition reimbursement after completing their co-op placement and two years of employment with Panorama. Regardless of seniority, all ITWs receive invitations during the off-season to leadership training on performance management, conflict resolution, interview skills, budgeting and scheduling, business planning and other areas. "I came to Panorama in November of 2004, started off in guest services and spent the winter as a ticket seller," shares Danica Adler of Germany. "That summer I was promoted to a lead and was placed in a training supervisor role the following year. I now hold the position of front desk supervisor. I welcome the opportunity to take part in our leadership courses and essential skills training." Panorama is investing in ITWs and their future, and the ITWs are giving great feedback.



GREAT RESULTS

After ITWs have been employed for one month, Panorama takes a “temperature check” survey to make sure things are going well, that ITWs feel their skills are a good match for their position, that they have received training and to see if they need more. The goal of this “temperature

“What I love about Panorama is that the hierarchy between senior management and front-line staff is completely invisible. You get to know all levels of the organization and simple recognition is felt throughout the company. It’s like one big family, completely different from the work culture I was brought up with.”

—**Danica Adler, Front Desk Supervisor from Germany**

risen from 20% to 44%. “The extension of working visas from one to two years made a tremendous difference,” comments Nicole Morgan. “That factor alone increased our retention rate because international workers could advance to more senior positions and build their careers.” With five years of international recruitment under its belt, Panorama is now starting to attract new ITWs through referrals from former and current employees. Good news travels fast.

check” is to identify the top three issues in the employee team and to address corresponding needs. Panorama also conducts an employee-wide opinion survey each year to determine employee satisfaction, engagement and requirements. Survey results for ITWs are culled from the data collected.

Since embarking on its international recruitment strategy, Panorama’s retention rate—the number of seasonal staff who choose to stay for another season—has



The news of Panorama’s success has also created a senior team highly sought after for expertise. The retail manager shares best practices through his position with the local Chamber of

Commerce. The risk manager is part of the Health and Safety Committee for go2HR. The local college has contracted the Panorama HR team to deliver a course and develop an HR toolkit—including cultural diversity practices—for other small businesses.

EMPLOYER TIPS

- › Take time away from operations to review your recruitment strategy.
- › A diverse workforce helps to create a healthier workplace.



International Employees Help Grow the Business

—Poet's Cove Resort and Spa

Poet's Cove Resort and Spa realizes the tremendous business benefits that come with having more than 38% of its workforce comprised of international employees. Innovative recruitment practices have led to a mix of international and Canadian energy and creates an exciting dynamic for guests, employees and management—not to mention increased business from around the world.

GREAT EMPLOYER

Located on Pender Island, one of British Columbia's spectacular Gulf Islands, Poet's Cove Resort and Spa is surrounded by rolling farmland, pristine lakes and wilderness and marine parks. While visitors flock to the island to "get away from it all", not everyone is willing to live and work there year round.

Some internationally trained workers (ITWs) are on Working Holidays or the Student Work Abroad Program (SWAP) and find out about Poet's

Cove from the website or word-of-mouth. Others are international students looking for seasonal work and see Poet's Cove advertisements at colleges and universities that offer international programs on Vancouver Island and in the Vancouver area. ITWs work in all areas of the resort, including the spa, marina, restaurants, kitchen, housekeeping and front desk. Their skill sets are identified and fully utilized.

Over the past several years, Poet's Cove has quietly been building its capacity to become an inviting location for new Canadians seeking seasonal and full-time positions. "We want to get it right before we look for any recognition," confesses Melody Pender, Manager of Human Resources. "We've had a lot of success employing internationally trained workers, but we're still evolving and we don't have everything right quite yet."

Melody and general manager Walter Kohli make a great HR team at the resort and spa. Melody brought a wealth of experience from her previous positions as well as resources from go2HR. Walter himself is an immigrant from Switzerland with 10 years of work experience in Asia, making him an empathetic manager for the resort's international staff.

THE FACTS

Profile: International students, Temporary Foreign Workers, economic immigrants, and those on Working Holidays or the Student Work Abroad Program.

Demographics: 28 of the 88 employees are ITWs. 13 of these are TFWs. Ages range from 20 to 30, with most between ages 23 and 27. There are 16 males and 12 females.

Countries of Origin: Australia, Brazil, Hungary, Korea, Morocco, Moldova, Mexico, Poland, Slovakia and Russia.



With no formal diversity program in place, Poet's Cove credits much of its success to its core corporate values of mutual respect and open, honest communication. Staff strive to create an extended family in which they care for one another. The small community on Pender Island helps to welcome ITWs and opens its doors, and hearts, to these newcomers.

GREAT PRACTICES

The Poet's Cove website and advertising boldly states, "We are an international employer and welcome applicants from around the world." And welcome they do. The resort provides subsidized accommodation within 15 km of the resort. It also provides shuttle service to and from work as well as to the ferry and other services on the island. "We want to make their personal lives, not just their work lives, easier," Walter states. When they first arrive, ITWs prefer to be housed with other employees from their home country. Within a few weeks, the resort balances the houses between Canadian and international occupants to allow more opportunity to learn each other's language and customs. "We have mostly young people here," notes Walter, "Mixing them together helps to create a better understanding and appreciation of each other."



Poet's Cove Resort and Spa conducts monthly meetings with all staff members without management present. These meetings provide an opportunity to offer

constructive criticism and make recommendations for improvement to resort operations. In many cultures, it is not appropriate to complain to your superiors. These meetings allow for a safe place for ideas to be shared.

"We started the meetings to provide an opportunity for our staff to better understand our business," explains Melody. "It's not just management who comes up with good ideas. We all do!"

It is not always easy to get ITWs to talk. "You need to encourage them to talk, and then really listen in order to build trust so that they will feel comfortable telling you when they have a problem or something goes wrong," shares Melody. In response, the resort commits to listen to, follow through on, and implement staff suggestions.

A group of Korean employees offered to contact Korean travel companies, schools and businesses to generate more international business. Front desk employees from Morocco, Russia, Hungary and Mexico wrote letters to their respective countries as well as contacts in the Vancouver region to promote the resort. ITWs are recognized as vital to the marketing process and integral to the resort's success. Employees are reminded of this daily. "We have thrown them a challenge to come up with their own ideas," laughs Walter, "and they have!"

"Working with both Canadian and international staff has improved my English skills and made me a more empathetic, flexible manager."

**—Zahra Hajjaj,
Housekeeping, of Morocco**



Poet's Cove is very considerate of the needs of ITWs. Over the winter months when things quiet down, a small group of overseas employees are allowed to go home for one to three months to visit their families.

Friends and family are also invited to come and stay at the resort, taking advantage of very affordable special rates. "Families often feel more comfortable once they know where their children are working and living," notes Melody. Walter takes personal interest in ITWs to ensure their stay is both pleasant and rewarding. Those who want to pursue professional development are encouraged and supported to do so. "We take their career development seriously. If they tell us what their plans are, we do whatever we can to help," pledges Walter.

GREAT RESULTS

Poet's Cove helps to stimulate and facilitate understanding between its employees, management and local islanders. Walter talks openly about language issues and cultural nuances, encouraging others to be patient and empathetic. He holds daily briefings with unit managers and reminds them of their responsibility to make things work for everyone.

The resort helps its international employees integrate into the local community. They participate in local fundraisers, sporting events and annual celebrations. "We took part in a fundraiser for cancer this fall,"

EMPLOYER TIPS

- › Be patient and build trust with your staff so that they feel more comfortable sharing their concerns and thoughts with you.
- › Give ITWs the time they need to travel back home during slow periods and visit their families.
- › Ask them to share their ideas for building your business.

Melody says, "And two of our Australian employees entered the annual Polar Bear Swim and raised \$400 for community projects." The local islanders know how much some Brazilian employees at Poet's Cove like to play soccer and regularly invite resort staff to their games at the school field. In the spring, locals also invite resort staff to the baseball diamond for regular weekly games. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the resort's international staff to be fully immersed in Canadian culture and language. Management at the resort open up their homes and their hearts on Canadian holidays, inviting international employees home to celebrate with their families. "We had 15 Koreans join us for Christmas this year," says Walter. "They are a natural extension of our families."

The mix of international and Canadian energy at the Poet's Cove Spa and Resort creates a fantastic dynamic. "You can feel the buzz as soon as you enter the hotel," says Melody with pride. "Our staff and guests are eager to get to know one another." Operating a resort using a multitude of languages puts Poet's Cove in a better position to deal with international guests. Even Canadian guests notice the difference. With a hospitality industry trend towards guests wanting to have a more meaningful experience, communicating and interacting with the international employees at Poet's Cove gives the resort a competitive edge. Simply put, it's great for their business.

WHY HIRE ITWs?

- › ITWs bring great ideas to your organization as well as links to the international marketplace.
- › ITWs provide a richer, more meaningful experience for your guests.



Non-profit Helps Link ITWs with Rural Tourism Sector

Portes Ouvertes Sur Le Lac

Portes Ouvertes sur le Lac (Doors Open on the Lake) is a non-profit organization that helps the tourism sector and other sectors in the Lac-Saint-Jean region of Québec recruit and integrate ITWs. Its work in the tourism sector and its tips for employers have proven invaluable.

GREAT ORGANIZATION

The Lac-Saint-Jean region is a tourist hot spot in Quebec. Located 500 km north of Montréal, Lac-Saint-Jean is described as an “inland sea” worth exploring. People come from all over the world to swim in the annual Traversée internationale du Lac Saint-Jean, to bike the trails, and to camp and participate in water activities. The region is also home to the Zoo Sauvage de Saint-Félicien, a zoo that mimics the animals’ natural habitats and is one of the largest zoos in Canada.

Over 200,000 visitors from around the world visit the zoo every year. More than 1,000,000 people escape to Lac-Saint-Jean to experience its pristine

waters and beaches. Until 2006, few foreigners had come to the region to settle. Portes Ouvertes sur le Lac was created to welcome newcomers, increase diversity in the region, and fill employment gaps in several sectors, including tourism.

Portes Ouvertes sur le Lac welcomes internationally trained workers (ITWs) and helps them settle into the Lac-Saint-Jean region. The organization began in 2006 with one employee and served Saint-Félicien, a city with a population of about 10,000. Today, Portes Ouvertes sur le Lac has seven employees—a couple of them ITWs themselves—and serves 38 municipalities for a total population of 107,000. Portes Ouvertes sur le Lac is a grassroots organization with over 50 volunteers throughout the region

supporting its mission and activities. According to Director Patrick Lalande, “The volunteers really help the ITWs integrate into the community both professionally and socially. Without their help, we could not welcome so many immigrants and make sure that they remain in the region.”



Employees at Portes Ouvertes

In 2007, Portes Ouvertes sur le Lac welcomed 34 ITWs; the following year, it welcomed 64. Portes Ouvertes sur le Lac’s mission to help ITWs settle into Lac-Saint-Jean, a rural area, is not an easy one to fulfill.

THE FACTS

Profile: Economic immigrants, family dependants, refugees.

Demographics: 175 ITWs in the region; 10% in the tourism sector.

Country of Origin: 20 different countries, mainly France, Colombia, Morocco, Mexico, and Burundi.

Approximately 88% of all ITWs in Quebec remain in Montréal. Portes Ouvertes sur Le Lac helps to relocate ITWs throughout the province.

The ITWs who do settle in Lac-Saint-Jean are either from rural communities in their native countries or they seek a way of life different from the hustle and bustle of larger centres. In 2007, Arnaud, a young man from France, decided that he wanted to immigrate to the region after a short vacation along the lake. Arnaud, who has a background in business and administration, moved to Saint-Félicien to become a teacher for the Cégep de Saint-Félicien (College of General and Vocational Education) professional tourism program. He teaches all kinds of courses on business and administration specific to the tourism sector. Those ITWs who are serious about working and living in the Lac-Saint-Jean region are screened to take part in the program. The program—and Arnaud’s knowledge and expertise—have attracted ITWs to the tourism sector in Lac-Saint-Jean.

With the objective of facilitating students’ transition from college into the tourism workplace, the Cégep de Saint-Félicien is the first academic institution in Canada to sign an official agreement with the Canadian Tourism Human Resources Council (CTHRC) that allows for the mutual recognition and promotion of professional qualifications. Individuals who are *emerit*-certified obtain credit at the Cégep, and students who graduate from certain tourism courses and programs from the Cégep automatically receive *emerit* certification from the CTHRC. The program and Portes Ouvertes sur le Lac are important for strengthening the region’s tourism sector.

“The tourism sector,” says Patrick, “depends on Portes Ouvertes sur le Lac to take care of the ITWs coming to the region. We help to attract AND maintain people. Without Portes it would be very difficult to include ITWs in businesses in a sustainable manner.” Portes Ouvertes sur le Lac works with many organizations and companies in the tourism sector. Examples include Note Café, Hôtel Chutes des Pères, La Traversée Internationale du Lac Saint-Jean, Hôtel Château Roberval, Zoo sauvage de St-Félicien and the Hôtel du Jardin.

For its work, Portes Ouvertes sur le Lac was nominated for the Québec Ministry of Immigration and Cultural Community’s prestigious Prix québécois de la citoyenneté for non-profit organizations promoting cultural diversity in 2008. In the same year, Portes Ouvertes sur le Lac won the Saint-Félicien Chamber of Commerce award for top non-profit organization.

Portes Ouvertes sur le Lac has been granted funding from the Quebec Ministry of Municipal Affairs to be a pilot project in rural Quebec. The six-year pilot project was granted to Portes Ouvertes sur le Lac to: increase the number of ITWs in the region, create a favourable environment, make rural life attractive for newcomers, and create social acceptance of cultural diversity. Municipalities across Québec and Canada are watching Portes Ouvertes sur le Lac closely.



GREAT PRACTICES

Portes Ouvertes sur le Lac is grassroots. People in the communities of the Lac-Saint-Jean region are more receptive to newcomers because they feel involved. Portes Ouvertes sur le Lac keeps the community and local leaders informed of its activities so that they will be supportive and involved.

WHY HIRE ITWs?

- › People who master several languages and bring in new knowledge and perspectives to the sector.
- › They want to work and excel.
- › Everybody wins by learning more about each others' cultures and strengthening the local economy together.

Portes Ouvertes sur le Lac is part of a broader province-wide immigration network of government-funded organizations such as Promis, Collectif, and Alpa, all located in Montréal and tasked by the province with

welcoming newcomers to Québec. They all specialize in integration and helping ITWs find jobs outside of Montréal. When an employer is looking for employees, it can contact Portes Ouvertes sur le Lac who will, in turn, reach out to the provincial immigration network to notify newcomers upon their arrival (which is most often in Montréal) that a job is open for them to apply. Candidates are referred to Portes Ouvertes sur le Lac, and these referrals are then forwarded on to the employers.

Portes Ouvertes sur le Lac also helps with the selection process. Once a suitable ITW candidate is chosen, Portes Ouvertes sur le Lac starts helping successful candidates with their living arrangements, bank accounts, networks, and finding free French language classes if needed.

Portes Ouvertes sur le Lac also helps other community groups and companies in the tourism sector and in other sectors with multicultural events. Throughout the Semaine québécoise des rencontres interculturelles that takes place every fall, Portes Ouvertes sur le Lac organizes multicultural events along with its partners to promote cultural diversity and stimulate volunteering. These are geared towards immigrants and the community. Another example is the Traversée internationale du Lac Saint-Jean, which welcomes people from around the world. "When the region hosts events like the Traversée internationale du Lac Saint-Jean, it helps to have locals who master multiple languages and bring cultural and other knowledge to the region," notes Patrick.

GREAT RESULTS

"To our great surprise, people in the region were really helpful," states Patrick. "Our network of 50 volunteers continues to grow. When we started, we weren't expecting that kind of support. We expected difficulties; this is a rural area that doesn't have a lot of diversity. But, we had the support of key people within the community and the rest just fell into place. Volunteers came forward from every corner of the region."

Portes Ouvertes sur le Lac has political and private sector leaders on its side, including municipal representatives such as the Domaine-du-Roy Regional County Municipality and the Lac-Saint-Jean Est Regional County Municipality as well as tourism employers like Zoo sauvage de St-Félicien. This public support is especially important in rural areas where diversity is relatively new.

Portes Ouvertes sur le Lac credits its integration success with having 175 ITWs from 20 different countries. “Newcomers,” says Patrick, “are more likely to integrate into the community if they are not always sticking to their cultural community. We encourage them to share their culture and engage with everyone in the community.”

EMPLOYER TIPS

- › Get prominent community members on board.
- › Involve the community in your efforts. People are proud of their communities and want to welcome newcomers.
- › Be patient. The learning curve is slow at the beginning, but does speed up over time.
- › Mention in your job advertisements that positions are open to newcomers.
- › Inform your staff why you are hiring newcomers and what it will bring to the company. Open communication is essential.
- › Be part of a network of organizations that exists to help you and ITWs connect. You will get valuable information and help—everyone wins.

Before Portes Ouvertes sur le Lac existed, many ITWs who came to the region because of job opportunities would end up returning to larger cities like Montréal. There was no support system for them in Lac-Saint-Jean. Sustainability is vital to the region and to Portes Ouvertes sur le Lac. The goal is to attract and retain ITWs in the region, and make them a part of the community.

According to Patrick, “ITWs work in all levels in the tourism sector. Some

Most ITWs who come to the region now stay and make it their home. Eighty-two percent of newcomers still live in these communities. About 20 immigrants have left for Montréal or gone back to their countries of origin. “We’re working hard to keep people in the region and to be a model for other rural areas that have tourist attractions or just really need ITWs to fulfill jobs,” says Patrick. “At Portes Ouvertes sur le Lac we know that we are making a difference, increasing diversity, and strengthening the economic and social fabric of the region. We welcome tourists from around the world every year. Now we welcome ITWs from around the world too.”

of them come here for the Cégep tourism training and get jobs in the region following their education. The program is gaining in popularity. Some come with managerial backgrounds in their home countries, for instance, and prefer to work their way up to managerial positions. Every case is different.”



Dealing Directly with El Salvador Key to Success

—The Prince George Hotel

When local labour shortages forced The Prince George Hotel in Halifax to consider hiring international employees, it decided to establish a close working relationship with the Temporary Foreign Worker office right in El Salvador to learn firsthand about the immigration process.

GREAT EMPLOYER

The Prince George Hotel was one of the first hotels in Halifax to target temporary foreign workers (TFWs). But it was not alone in its need for new sources of workers. The past six years have proven to be very challenging for many hotels in the Maritimes that have been unable to recruit housekeepers and room attendants from the local market. “There were so many other opportunities, our cleaning positions were not attractive positions—the position is also very physical,” comments Carol Logan, Director of Human Resources at the hotel.

The hotel’s journey began four years ago when the General Manager attended a presentation at the Hotel Association of Canada’s annual conference. He listened intently to a panel member speak about TFWs from El Salvador. Intrigued by this relatively untapped resource, the hotel HR department initiated contact with the El Salvadorian embassy. The embassy put the hotel in direct contact with the TFW office El Salvador. “We decided early in the process to deal directly with contacts in both Ottawa and El Salvador,” Carol Logan explained. “We prefer to invest our resources in supporting our new Canadian employees once they arrive, rather than in the process of getting them here.” The Prince George Hotel met with Service Canada and Immigration in Halifax to ensure it understood and followed correct procedures. It was a steep learning curve, with a lot of bumps along the way.

Now, with several years of experience and having employed five TFWs, The Prince George Hotel is often called upon to share its learning and best practices with others in the tourism sector. The hotel’s success has been showcased in the *Halifax Chronicle* and the 2008 summer edition of the CTHRC’s *HR Times* newsletter. In 2008, the hotel shared its story with over 900 delegates at the Metropolis Forum. It has also been recognized by the Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association (MISA) and the Halifax Immigrant Learning Centre (HILC)—now collectively known as Immigrant Settlement & Integration Services (ISIS)—as a Champion of English in the Workplace, for the training the hotel provides its employees, including temporary foreign workers.

THE FACTS

Profile: Temporary foreign workers & economic immigrants.

Demographics: 25–35 years of age, both men and women.

Country of Origin:

Bahamas, Dubai, Egypt, India, Korea, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and St. Kitts.



GREAT PRACTICES

Carol Logan credits much of the hotel's success to the careful steps it took in preparing to hire immigrants and the support of the team at the Prince George.

Once The Prince George Hotel committed to recruiting TFWs from El Salvador, management gathered the hotel's employees together to tell them about the decision and why it was made. They took advantage of the opportunity of having everyone together to discuss what the needs of these newcomers might be. Advice from several current employees—themselves immigrants from China, Egypt and the Dominican Republic—helped the hotel to accurately anticipate and prepare to meet the needs of the newcomers. The hotel staff rallied together and provided tremendous team support.

The partnership with the Temporary Foreign Worker office in El Salvador was also instrumental to the hotel's success. The Prince George Hotel needed to find housekeepers and room attendants; the TFW office screened prospective candidates and administered an English language test. Short-listed candidates were invited to an interview at the TFW office in El Salvador. Interviews were conducted via SKYPE with Carol Logan. The hotel provided one of their current staff to interpret in Spanish, if required. "I was a little bit nervous that day, because my English is still improving," recalls Gaby Benitez, one of the TFWs now working at the hotel. Following the interview, the TFW office in El Salvador conducted security checks, secured work permits and prepared all other necessary documentation. "It took me almost nine months to get through the process," admits Griselda Campos, another TFW who has now been with the hotel for more than two years.

"When I arrived at the airport I was so nervous. Carol was waiting for me. I recognized her from the interview and I was so grateful. She stayed with me the whole time while I opened a bank account and got all my paperwork done."

**—Gaby Benitez,
TFW from El Salvador**

"Maybe it's because I have a family and want to bring them to Canada to live with me here."

Conducting an interview using Skype set the tone for a very positive experience. New employees were met by Carol at the airport and taken back to a suite at the hotel until more permanent living arrangements could be made. Carol, along with a current employee who could speak

Spanish, personally accompanied the newcomers to obtain their social insurance numbers, health care cards and bank accounts. She helped them to find accommodation and the hotel paid for their first month's rent.

The Prince George Hotel does not have a formal diversity program but does have many well-entrenched diversity practices. The hotel takes great pride in treating all of its employees fairly, but not the same. "Not everyone has the same needs," reminds Carol Logan. "Working with employees from El Salvador has helped us to recognize and prepare for these differences."



GREAT RESULTS

News of the new arrivals from El Salvador spread quickly through the hotel community in Halifax. Everyone watched closely to see if recruiting TFWs would result in long-term, loyal employees and provide a good return on investment. Time and time again, The Prince George Hotel is

WHY HIRE ITWs?

- › People who master several languages and bring in new knowledge and perspectives to the sector.
- › They want to work and excel.
- › Everybody wins by learning more about each others' cultures and strengthening the local economy together.

called upon to share its process and lessons learned with the Halifax Hotel Association and other hotel properties.

"All of our temporary foreign workers have adjusted very well," Carol Logan says with pride. "We have been

fair to each other, and we have communicated well throughout the process." The Prince George Hotel conducts performance measurement with all of its employees. "Our TFWs have always met or exceeded our performance standards." That doesn't mean that all have stayed. Those who have left, though, have left on their own accord.

The benefits of these working arrangements are felt far beyond the walls of the hotel. Gaby Benitez decided to come here because she wanted a new experience. "I am now able to help my family by sending money home every two weeks." Griselda Campos was one of the first to arrive more than two years ago, and now wants to bring her husband and three daughters ages 9, 11 and 15 to Canada. "Canada is a better future for my daughters," she admits. "Even though my husband works, he earns very little in El Salvador." She sends home money to pay for her

daughters' schooling and for many other things that they need.

"If both my husband and I were working here, we would have a much better life," smiles Griselda. Carol Logan admits that if Griselda's husband has the skills and positive attitude, she will consider offering him a position as well.

During trips back home, both Griselda and Gaby tell as many friends as possible about the opportunities here in Canada. But there are also challenges to the immigration process that frustrate both employers and employees. Housekeepers are labeled as "unskilled workers" and have difficulty getting recognition for their wealth of work experience. Some employees are now waiting for approval for another year's extension on their work permits. In the meantime, medical care and other privileges are suspended. The process can be a long one. "I would like to know for sure that I could stay in Canada to live, because then I

would know that the money and time I put into learning English would be worth it," notes Gaby Benitez. "Come here and work, I want to say to everyone. The experience I am having makes me feel very happy!"

EMPLOYER TIPS

- › Establish close, positive working relationships with immigration offices in both Canada and the country of origin.
- › Prepare yourself and your workplace for the arrival of your TFWs.
- › Assign one point-person in HR to take care of the TFWs and address their needs throughout their time with you.
- › Treat your TFWs fairly and with respect.



Diversity to Survive... and Thrive

Société De Transport De Montréal (STM)

The STM's newly established Diversity Division goes beyond hiring to create a new culture for integrating internationally trained workers. For this dynamic team, being open and proactive by partnering with community organizations and reaching out to middle management is essential for survival and long-term success.

GREAT EMPLOYER

The STM, Montreal's bus and metro transportation provider, has always had a good track record for hiring internationally trained workers (ITWs). In fact, the company started diversity programs in the 1980s, long before Quebec made diversity a legal obligation. Why? As a service provider, it made good business sense for the STM to reflect its clientele and anticipate their needs. It also made good sense when faced with labour shortages. First, the STM sought to employ women and attract minorities. More than 20 years later, "diversity", to the STM, has a much broader definition.

According to Serge Fortin, Corporate Manager of the Diversity Division who worked at the Quebec Human Rights Commission before joining the STM 25 years ago, "The STM's Diversity Division was established in 2008 to ensure that the STM adheres to the principles of diversity and human respect in the everyday practices of the company, not just in hiring." The Diversity Division, which was created by STM Director General Yves Devin, is a sign of upper management's commitment to a fully integrated workforce and indicates the high value placed on diversity in the company. The Division is working on stimulating the development of an inclusive culture at the STM, where diversity (which includes gender, generational, cultural and disability) is seen by all staff as integral to the day-to-day operations of the company. Apart from the resources devoted exclusively to the various forms of diversity, the Division also includes an ombudsman and an Employee Assistance Program coordinator. The Division has two objectives: to facilitate workplace adaptation to diversity and recognition of differences, and to implement professional and personal well-being programs.

The STM must be doing something right. Not only is its retention of ITWs very high, but third parties are taking notice. The STM has won several awards for its diversity practices and equal access programs, including awards from La Table ronde du Mois de l'histoire des Noirs (The Black History Month Round Table) in 2007; from the Canadian Urban Transit Association in 2006; the Prix Maurice Pollack from Quebec's

THE FACTS

Profile: Economic/
permanent immigrants.

Demographics: Average
age is 44 years; 17% of the
STM's 8,400 employees
are minorities.

Country of Origin:
Mostly North Africa,
Eastern Europe, Latin
America, Africa.



UNE CARRIÈRE STIMULANTE DANS LE SECTEUR DU TRANSPORT COLLECTIF, ÇA T'INTÉRESSE?

Fabienne, Betty, Francis, Magalie et Djawad
ont trouvé leur place à la STM.



Ministry of Immigration and Cultural Communities in 2004; and from CEDEC Ahuntsic-Cartierville in 2004. In 2009, STM was a finalist for Tourism Québec's grand prize for sustainable tourism, an award that acknowledges companies with a triple bottom line—environmental, social, and cultural—in all aspects of business.

The STM Diversity Division also regularly shares its best practices and challenges with members of Allies Montreal, an initiative that is part of a pan-Canadian network called ALLIES (Assisting Local Leaders with Immigrant Employment Strategies). When it comes to diversity, the STM considers itself to be on par with Hydro Québec, Service de Police de la Ville de Montréal, and several other large Quebec organizations. The STM constantly looks to different organizations to learn and seek out resources to develop new strategies that fit the STM's business, goals, and a changing labour market—in which shortages loom. While the

company has used consultants and *emerit* training resources in the past, it prefers to develop its own tools and experts to ensure sustainability and an inclusiveness that is truly suited to its business and culture.

GREAT PRACTICES

In 2009, STM was involved in 30 various events such as community job fairs to recruit ITWs. In the STM's experience, awareness is of the utmost importance, because a lot of newcomers don't know how or where to apply for employment. The STM partners with community groups and employment centres to reach ITWs and give them the information they need to join the STM team. Examples of these groups and centres are Salon de l'emploi de l'Est (Haitian), Salon de l'emploi Libanais (Lebanese), Alpa, Carrefour emploi CDAI, Foire leadership africain, and Salon emploi et éducation pour les nouveaux canadiens et les autochtones et minorités visibles (Employment and Education Centre for New Canadians, Aboriginals, and Visible Minorities).

The STM hires immigrants for permanent employment at all levels. ITWs have positions as managers, engineers, information technology

"As a person from a different ethnic background, I have to say that over my eight years with the STM, I've seen the recruitment department become as representative of diversity as the UN headquarters. I've also noticed the kindness, the patience and the efforts of employees to facilitate our integration. Congratulations!"
—Ilwana Dicu, STM employee

specialists, drivers, cleaners, etc. Hiring of all staff at the STM is centralized, which makes applying diversity strategies somewhat easier than it would be if each manager had to do his/her own hiring. The Recruiting Department handles all staffing, and all selection committees consist of 50% minorities to ensure fairness. The Diversity Division complements the work of the Recruiting Department by providing knowledge and coaching to managers and employees regarding diversity issues and ITWs. A dedicated staff member acts as an internal advisor to all managers regarding diversity issues.

With top-notch salaries and benefits, the STM has no problem retaining ITWs. The STM's employees' saving bank (caisse d'économie des employés de la STM) provides \$2,000 loans to help new ITWs get their drivers' licenses, offers part-time school and training programs for ITW cleaning staff, and now ensures that experts in the Diversity Division are available to assist employees and management at all times.

The STM is working to create a truly welcoming environment. The Diversity Division is reaching out to managers—especially middle managers—to offer knowledge and expertise. The Division is also developing a training program for managers to increase their knowledge about different cultures and learn how to handle diversity.

"Diversity can be a mess or it can be amazing. It's up to managers to choose," says Julie Sylvestre, Intervention and Prevention Advisor in the STM Diversity Division. "If a manager doesn't know about a specific religious holiday and isn't tolerant, this lack of awareness could cause conflicts and unjust treatment when an employee asks for time off. Many managers come to us because they want to learn." But the Division doesn't wait for managers to come to it—it goes to them. Being proactive on all fronts, from recruitment to integration, is a strategy that works well for the STM.

GREAT RESULTS

STM prefers to ask what it would cost if it did not invest in ITWs. Predicted issues include staff shortages and potentially widespread problems amongst staff and with the Human Rights Commission or unions if management didn't see managing diversity as an important investment in sustainable community and business development.

The Diversity Division is currently developing systems to measure diversity competencies of STM's managers. Evaluation of the quality of integration and the effectiveness of integration programs are also important. The STM plans to ask ITWs for feedback after six months. The evaluation will consist, in general, of asking what worked, what didn't work, and what suggestions ITWs might have for improvements.

In his experience in the area of diversity, Serge Fortin has learned that things change and one has to adapt. "We are always working to develop further. Diversity management is a process. We didn't have the same issues five years ago and we didn't have the same tools. Things won't be the same in five years' time. You have to constantly evaluate and move forward to thrive."

EMPLOYER TIPS

- › Be proactive on all fronts.
- › Change is inevitable. Evaluate regularly.
- › Keep up with what others are doing.
- › Work with your community.
- › Include ITWs in implementing diversity practices.



#2 Tourist Attraction in Toronto the “United Nations” of Breweries

Steam Whistle Brewing

Internationally trained workers from all corners of the globe are shaping Steam Whistle and helping it reach new heights. With policies of open-mindedness and open communication; equality across the board; hiring from within and by referral; ownership, internship, and training programs; and a really cool work environment, Steam Whistle has been able to recognize the value of qualifications and bridge many cultures in innovative ways.

GREAT EMPLOYER

Steam Whistle wants to be known at home and around the world as Canada’s premier pilsner. Currently, the company’s one and only all-natural beer can be found in Ontario, BC, and Alberta, and has annual sales of \$20 million. The brew, however, is increasingly popular and will soon be available coast to coast.

In addition to offering a fine beer, Steam Whistle’s brewery gives tours and has art and event spaces for charities, weddings, and concerts.

Doors are open to the public because community and diversity matter at Steam Whistle. Interaction with the public has paid off; in 2009, Steam Whistle was voted by www.tripadvisor.com as #2 out of 315 tourist attractions in Toronto.

Indeed, the awards section on Steam Whistle’s website is impressive. Not only has the brewery won awards for its beer, it has also won environmental, community, and top employer awards. In 2007, Steam Whistle accepted the Immigrant Success Award, in the Small Employer category, from the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC). The company won because over half of its management personnel are from countries other than Canada.

Steam Whistle’s Brewmaster is from the Czech Republic, its Chief Financial Officer (CFO) is from Sri Lanka, and its top engineer and plant manager hails from Russia. Other internationally trained workers (ITWs) in managerial positions are found at the quality assurance level. The coordinator for this department is from Cuba and worked on soft drinks and rum in her native country.

Czech Brewmaster Marek Mikunda was hired on a referral from a former Serbian employee at Steam Whistle. Despite having completed Master Brewer’s studies and having worked at the renowned Pilsner Urquell Brewery in Prague, Marek was employed as only an assistant at another

THE FACTS

Profile: 70 + Temporary Foreign Workers & international students.

Demographics: 25–35 years of age, both men and women.

Country of Origin: Bahamas, Dubai, Egypt, India, Korea, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and St. Kitts.



brewery in Canada before moving to Steam Whistle. Steam Whistle recognized the qualifications and experience Marek had earned both overseas and in Canada, and immediately elevated him to one of the highest and most important positions in the company.



Steam Whistle CFO Adrian Joseph, who is originally from Sri Lanka.

Similarly, Steam Whistle CFO Adrian Joseph, who is originally from Sri Lanka, was a referral. Joseph's education and awards in accountancy weren't recognized when he first arrived in Canada. Steam Whistle was able to recognize the value of Joseph's foreign credentials and covered his costs to complete his

Certified General Accountant designation while he successfully navigated the company through difficult fiscal restraint in its start-up years.

Steam Whistle recognizes the expertise and experience of ITWs even if the foreign credential recognition process in Canada is cumbersome and challenging. The company is willing to invest in training and certifying its employees despite the costs and tough economic times. At Steam Whistle, investment in people is key.

GREAT PRACTICES

Steam Whistle initially sought ITWs because of the lack of formal brewing-industry post-secondary educational institutions in Canada.

Hiring its first Brewmaster from outside of Canada was such a positive experience that Steam Whistle co-founders Greg Taylor and Cam Heaps decided to seek more employees with global experience.

"I was interviewed by the co-founders within one week of immigrating to Canada and commenced employment with Steam Whistle immediately. Over the years, it has given me immense satisfaction that I have been able to contribute to the growing success of our company. My personal life, too, has mirrored the fortunes of the company, as I thought that if I were to contribute to making this company successful my life in Canada would get better established.

Most of the long-serving employees are like my extended family as they are among the first Canadians that I socialized with when I arrived, and helped me settle into my office role at the time."

**—Adrian Joseph, Chief Financial Officer
and Sri Lankan immigrant**

"Hiring ITWs is simply an intrinsic part of our culture," says Sybil Taylor of Steam Whistle's Marketing Communications Department. "They're a good fit for small and medium-sized companies because they don't have an aversion to risk. They find a place where they feel like part of a family, where they excel; a strong relationship of loyalty develops."



Hiring at Steam Whistle is done from within and by referral first. This motivates staff to stay on because they see a future for themselves and see that their input is valuable. Many of the ITWs at Steam Whistle were hired by referral. Others started as international students and were hired to stay on.

Steam Whistle works with the Royal Canadian Institute of International Studies (RCIIS) located in Toronto to hire interns as graphic designers, lab technicians, arts management, administration assistants, tour guides, and communications personnel. Some have stayed on. Yosuke Nishiyama, for instance, started as a lab technician intern through RCIIS after emigrating from Japan. He is now working full-time in the Quality Assurance Department at Steam Whistle.

“At Steam Whistle,” points out Sybil, “we believe in the internship process as it provides valuable work experience for students and immigrants in a real Canadian business while giving them the opportunity to demonstrate validity of their foreign-earned education and expertise.”

When advertising a position, Steam Whistle will often approach the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC), which will then take a posting and vet candidates. TRIEC also has programs that Steam Whistle has used in the past, such as its trial and co-op programs that allow Steam Whistle to “test-drive” employees who have less-than-ideal résumés. Steam Whistle was recently asked to join the TRIEC board to help shape policies and fulfill TRIEC’s mandate to promote immigrant employment in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Steam Whistle is very proud of this invitation.

Steam Whistle does not have formal diversity practices for hiring; diversity is business as usual for this team of 110 employees.

When it comes to retaining ITWs, Steam Whistle offers plenty of incentives to stay, including trips, an employee profit sharing plan, full benefits, funded education, lots of staff meetings to get everyone’s input and share information, fun teambuilding events (white water rafting, parachuting, and more), staff birthday parties and time off, and lots of socializing so that employees can get to know each other outside of the office. The result is a family atmosphere where people have fun and feel part of a team.

GREAT RESULTS

Steam Whistle has high loyalty, low turnover, high attendance records, and employee involvement and innovation at all stages. Visitors

WHY HIRE ITWs?

- › They have a skill set not found in Canada.
- › They can bring new ideas to the company.
- › Good for small and medium-sized companies just getting started.
- › Innovative and willing to take more risks.
- › Loyal and engaged.

instantly recognize and comment on how happy, passionate, and loyal Steam Whistle staff members are.

Steam Whistle is pleased with its results and recommends companies not only hire ITWs, but also make

them part of the business. Through quarterly breakfasts and monthly creative meetings, employees at all levels and from all backgrounds share their ideas. Everyone brings to the table his or her experience to improve the business.

It’s not always easy. “You can imagine that there can be misunderstandings between employees. An Eastern European has a very different way



of communicating and different cultural biases than someone from a Spanish-speaking country,” says Sybil. “It can sometimes be a challenge to have everyone communicate and respect each other. We work hard to ensure that communication is smooth.”

Open communication is critical. Steam Whistle spends a considerable amount of money (\$160,000) annually on staff appreciation and the social side of work life to bring employees together. The company also conducts cultural sensitivity training with managers to train them to ask questions differently during performance reviews (in some cultures it’s considered impolite to talk about oneself). Steam Whistle measures the satisfaction of ITWs, and everyone else, through performance reviews.

Steam Whistle co-founders purposefully have their desks in the “bull pen” of the office with everyone else. They also know everyone by name and welcome any employee into their office space for a chat. Openness is at the heart of everything that Steam Whistle does. “We’re the United Nations of breweries,” repeats Sybil. “We’re very open-minded to different cultures and work experiences, and we give everyone an equal voice.”

EMPLOYER TIPS

- › ITWs are a good fit for small and medium-sized companies.
- › Be open to ITWs’ ideas.
- › Provide a great working environment and you’re bound to increase retention rates.
- › Open communication is important. Make sure you have ample social activities for employees to get to know each other and each other’s cultures.
- › Invest in accreditation and training for your ITWs. Don’t let this get in the way of hiring the right people for the job.
- › Always appreciate ITWs and the rest of your staff. Be creative!



Voyageur Transportation Services

En Route to a Formal Diversity Strategy —Voyageur Transportation Services

Checker Limousine, a division of Voyageur Transportation Services, welcomes skilled immigrants as drivers. Working in partnership with local agencies, the company understands that these skilled individuals will make a significant contribution to future growth of the organization.

GREAT EMPLOYER

Voyageur Transportation Services aspires to be the largest transportation company in Ontario. Its Checker Limousine division sets the standard for transportation in London, Ontario, where it is known for providing “sedan service, with a uniformed driver, for the comparable price of a taxi.”

London is similar to many other Canadian cities where very few of the locals aspire to become taxi drivers. Voyageur, which has a number of divisions including non-emergency patient transfer, school buses,

charters, trucking and taxis, is having a hard time finding skilled employees. To grow the firm, Voyageur realizes that it needs to strengthen its foundation and develop existing employees for more supervisory through to senior management positions. “We don’t have enough people coming through the door with the skill set that we’ll need five years from now,” says Corey Jarvis, Director, Human Resources.

Rather than setting its sights on unskilled workers who can simply fill positions, Voyageur is targeting highly skilled immigrants who can grow with the company, share their business acumen and take on more senior positions or roles in other divisions when the time is right.

One division, Checker Limousine, is extremely diverse, but the rest of the company is not. “For some reason, immigrants aren’t attracted to or don’t know about all of the other jobs we offer, besides driving cabs,” notes Corey. “We believe that cultural diversity is absolutely key to our success. We have a great opportunity to diversify all of our divisions in order to be prepared for future growth.”

Voyageur’s Hire Internal First policy ensures that front-line employees are provided with management training and the opportunity to be mentored by a member of senior management if they show both interest in and aptitude for advancement.

THE FACTS

Profile: Economic immigrants, family members and friends.

Demographics: 200 drivers: 3% women, 95% ITWs.

Country of Origin: India, Ethiopia, Turkey, the Middle East and a variety of Slavic Countries.



A group of international Checker drivers attend an AGM

GREAT PRACTICES

There are many great practices within the Checker Limousine division of Voyageur. When an individual applies for a license to drive a taxicab/limousine, that person undergoes a rigorous training process involving an English language test, a week of intensive training and another comprehensive competency test from the prospective employer.

Individuals wanting to drive a taxi/limousine must first pass an English language test. But this test doesn't assess competency in workplace language. That omission leads to issues for internationally trained workers (ITWs) trying to communicate with customers and the dispatch office. As such, Voyageur is currently exploring a partnership with the local Thames Valley School Board to train drivers in the English language and terms required for the transportation industry.

Once prospective cab drivers pass the English test, they are then required to attend a week-long course on driving skills, geography, routing, customer service and safety. Checker Limousine provides taxi/limousine training for the entire city of London. "We must have taught more than 2,000 people about the geography of London," comments Corey Jarvis.

Voyageur also sees its role in providing taxi/limousine training as part of its corporate social responsibility. People who take this class gain valuable knowledge about the city as well as Canadian customer service skills, and are therefore more attractive to other employers seeking drivers.

Voyageur works closely with two local organizations, Diversity at Work and Pathways Skill Development and Placement Centre, to identify prospective employees. Voyageur is considering offering a two-day complimentary class on routing to immigrant clients of both organizations with the hope that additional immigrants will consider a career with Voyageur. "It gives us a chance to get to know these people and for them to learn more about us," states Corey. "We consider it a pre-screening interview."

WHY HIRE ITWs?

- › Many ITWs are highly skilled business people with much to offer your company.
- › The tourism sector offers a stable first job for many ITWs. Capitalize on the few years they may give you before moving up or moving on.

GREAT RESULTS

Voyageur has started on the road to implement a formal diversity strategy. Diversity at Work has been engaged in a consultative capacity to assess the opportunities and challenges within the organization and to provide diversity training for the management team. In January 2010,

it will offer the session “Toward Diversity and Inclusion at Voyageur & Checker” to all Voyageur employees. This session offers perspectives on how to interpret and deal with cultural differences.

Voyageur acknowledges that it is on the right path but admits it has only just skimmed the surface of possibilities with ITWs. Not all immigrant communities know about the opportunity for a stable occupation with Voyageur. “We know that there is a large Colombian population in London, but they’re not yet seeing Voyageur as an employer of choice,” observes Corey Jarvis. In response, Corey has pulled together a list of multicultural publications and websites where Voyageur can profile opportunities for work.

Voyageur admits that it also needs to do better internal marketing between divisions. Checker Limousine drivers, for example, could work in other divisions of the company during periods of low demand. In that way, they can maintain a more consistent income and learn about other aspects of the company.

Voyageur is committed to becoming more intentional and strategic in its efforts to recruit and integrate ITWs. Partnerships with other community organizations have helped Voyageur to better address gaps in training and inclusionary practices. The result is an increasing number of highly skilled immigrant employees in a variety of positions who can grow with the firm.

EMPLOYER TIPS

- › If you haven’t considered diversifying your workforce, its time to take a good look at all of the advantages.
- › Diversity is a sophisticated business strategy and requires a formal plan.
- › Make sure your diversity practices are customized to your city and your industry. One size does not fit all.

10 Things You Need to Know About the Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council

1. We conduct, compile and disseminate research and labour market information.

The Council assists the tourism sector in understanding the nature of its labour market—the size, characteristics of employment, growth projections, compensation and benefits, and future skills requirements. It also provides information about industry-specific human resource issues and trends through studies, research reports and articles.

www.cthrc.ca/research

2. We provide employers with a wealth of resources to assist in attracting and retaining qualified employees from different target groups, and job/career seekers with a web resource tailored specifically for different demographics.

One such example is CTHRC's Discover Tourism website that offers a multitude of resources and tools for employers to attract, retain and develop a strong, capable, customer-focused workforce.

www.discovertourism.ca

3. We offer Canada's best workplace training and professional certification for more than 50 tourism occupations.

The service experience customers have at a tourism establishment can mean the difference between repeat business and never seeing them again. It's that simple. The *emerit* line of products—which includes training and professional certification—stresses the importance of "bringing them back". It's the first step towards improving people, repeat business, and the bottom line.

www.emerit.ca

4. We have created a FREE online assessment tool that enables employers and their staff to rate their HR practices.

An Employer of Choice is one whose employees feel appreciated and valued, know their contributions are recognized and rewarded, and align their actions with the employer's business goals. Employers who are rated an Employer of Choice tend to have employees who are willing to stay, perform, and adapt to change.

www.employersofchoice.ca

5. We are engaged in a number of projects with the education community.

Through education partnership and consultation, the CTHRC is able to promote tourism as a viable career or job choice. We continue to partner with the Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC) on several initiatives.

www.cthrc.ca/education

6. We oversee the Canadian Academy of Travel and Tourism, which has been introducing high-school students to opportunities in the sector since 1995.

The Academy introduces and promotes careers in the tourism sector while students pursue their high-school studies. The knowledge of global travel and tourism conditions and trends is complemented by relevant skills and attitudes provided by high-school education.

www.cattcanada.ca

7. We are engaged in groundbreaking work regarding Foreign Credential Recognition.

The goal of this initiative is to improve labour mobility by helping new immigrants from non-regulated professions come to Canada more easily. It also assists new immigrants in integrating into the Canadian labour force more quickly.

<http://www.cthrc.ca/fcr>

8. We recognize the impact of skill and labour shortages in the tourism sector.

Through its work on foreign worker integration, the CTHRC supports efforts by local tourism Human Resource Organizations (HROs) to foster stakeholder engagement on ways to facilitate the entry and integration of internationally trained workers.

www.cthrc.tfw

9. We work with a dedicated network of tourism Human Resource Organizations to ensure national programs and products are available from coast to coast to coast.

CTHRC is part of a network of tourism HROs across Canada. In each province and territory, our local partner delivers CTHRC's entire range of *emerit* tourism training programs and products, including National Occupational Standards, occupation-specific training, business planning and "how-to" tools, and National Professional Certification and other recognition programs. Our partners also deliver the Ready-to-Work program and promote our career planning and awareness initiatives.

<http://www.cthrc.ca/localcontact>

10. Every year, we host the HR Forum—the tourism HR conference in Canada.

With keynote presenters, expert panels, and engaging breakouts, the HR Forum is the premier event to learn and network with others looking for strategies and solutions to topics ranging from temporary foreign workers and labour shortages to HR best practices and emerging labour trends.

<http://www.cthrc.ca/hrforum>

Resource People

The following individuals provided recommendations of resource material and good practice employers in support of this project.

CTHRC GOOD EMPLOYER PRACTICES STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Darcy Acton, Saskatchewan Tourism Education Council, Division of Tourism Saskatchewan (STEC)

Laura Burke, ALLIES (Assisting Local Leaders with Immigrant Employment Strategies), Maytree Foundation

Ruth Caceres, Canadian Tourism Human Resources Council (CTHRC)

Darlene Doerksen, Yukon Tourism Education Council (YTEC)

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Luanne Christensen, Manitoba Tourism Education Council (MTEC)

Darlene Doerksen, Yukon Tourism Education Council (YTEC)

Juanita Ford, Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador (HNL)

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Yvan Laviolette, Tourism Industry Association of New Brunswick (TIANB)

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Wendy Paradis, OTEC—Training and HR Solutions in Ontario

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MAYTREE FOUNDATION/ALLIES PROGRAM (ASSISTING LOCAL LEADERS WITH IMMIGRANT EMPLOYMENT SOLUTIONS)/IMMIGRANT EMPLOYMENT COUNCILS:

Peter McFadden, Waterloo Region Immigrant Employment Network (WRIEN)

Doug Piquette, Edmonton Region Immigrant Employment Council (ERIEC)

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www.yourdiversityatwork.com

Edmonton Immigrant Employment Council (ERIEC).

www.eriec.ca

Edmonton Economic Development Corporation (EEDC), *Employers of Choice Edmonton: Best Practices website.*

<http://www.edmonton.com/moving-to-edmonton/705.aspx>

Government of British Columbia. *Welcome BC, Welcoming and Inclusive Communities Workplaces Program (WICWP).*

http://www.welcomebc.ca/en/service_providers/programs/welcome_program/



London Economic Development Corporation (LEDC). *Global Talent: Guide for Employers.*

<http://www.globaltalent.ca>

-----, *Global Talent: Guide for Workers.*

<http://www.globaltalent.ca>

Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees. *Toolkit.*

www.gcir.org/publications/toolkit

Hire Immigrants Ottawa.

www.hireimmigrantsottawa.ca

Immigrant Employment Council of BC. *Resource Section.*

www.iecbc.ca/resources

Halifax Immigrant Employment Council. *Immigration Works in Halifax.*

www.immigrationworksinalifax.ca

Maytree Foundation. *Hire Immigrants, Case Studies.*

www.hireimmigrants.ca/who

Niagara Immigrant Employment Council. *Employer Resources.*

www.niec.ca/employer-resources

Settlement and Integration Services Organization (SISO).

The Workplace Development Toolkit - provides information, tools and resources that assist employers to plan for their future diverse workforce.

<http://thetoolkit.ca>

Trevor Wilson Incorporated. *The Equity Continuum™*

— an industry-recognized diversity measurement methodology.

www.twiinc.com

Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council. Canada's premier Immigrant Employment Council mentoring other cities across the country.

www.triec.ca

Waterloo Immigrant Employment Council. *Best Practices and Employer Resources.*

www.wrien.com

Award Programs

Canada's Top 100 Employers. *Best Employers For New Canadians Awards*, competition managed by the editors of Canada's Top 100 Employers in partnership with ALLIES, a joint initiative of Maytree and JW McConnell Family Foundation to recognize the nation's best employers for recent immigrants.

www.canadastop100.com/immigrants

-----, *Canada's Best Diversity Employers*, competition managed by editors of Canada's Top 100 Employers, in partnership with BMO Financial Group and diversity consulting firm TWI. Recognizes employers across Canada that have exceptional workplace diversity and inclusion programs.

www.canadastop100.com/diversity

Enriching My Canada and Yours (emcy). *Canada's Diversity Awards*, emcy awards are national awards bestowed on individuals, organizations and communities that have created excellence through celebration of diversity.

www.emcy.ca

Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council. *TRIEC Immigrant Success Awards*, recognize leadership and innovation in recruiting and retaining skilled immigrants in the Greater Toronto Region. Four distinct categories with private sector sponsors.

www.triec.ca/programs/is