

GET IN THE KNOW

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Orientation, Retention and Promotion A Guide for Building Welcoming and Inclusive Workplaces for New Immigrant Workers



Developed by DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society
and PEERs Employment and Education Resources

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Developed by DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society and
PEERs Employment and Education Resources
With funding from the governments of BC and Canada.

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Content and materials within this guide may be used and replicated for educational purposes with proper acknowledgment of **Get In The Know** and its authors. Please acknowledge as follows:

“This material was adapted from *Get in the Know! Orientation, Retention and Promotion: A Guide for Building Welcoming and Inclusive Workplaces for New Immigrant Workers*, developed by DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society and PEERs Employment and Education Resources.



More Information, Resources and Tools

The information, resources and tools held within this guidebook are a starting point for employers wishing to successfully embrace cultural diversity within their workplaces. For more information and additional resources, please visit the website www.getintheknow.ca developed within this project by DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society. This employer and community resource contains a comprehensive inventory of tools, current

articles, websites and community resources and supports related to all aspects of immigrant workforce integration.

Further information, resources and news related to new immigrant workers can be found on the Get In The Know's social media channels: follow us on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.



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Are You On Track?

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Orientation, Retention and Promotion – A Guide for Building Welcoming and Inclusive Workplaces for New Immigrant Workers is a part of the Get In The Know initiative. Get In The Know is a one of a kind initiative developed to support employers in the orientation, retention and promotion of new immigrant workers. The initiative includes this guidebook, a robust website, social media and training.

The Get In The Know resources and tools are the result of extensive consultation and research originally conducted in 2009 within the Welcoming and Inclusive Communities and Workplaces Program funded by from the BC and Federal Governments. DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society undertook this initiative and throughout its development, met with numerous employers, human resources professionals, business and community organizations.

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- Scotia Bank
- Canada Safeway Ltd.
- Douglas College
- Chartered Professionals in Human Resources, BC (formally HRMA)
- DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society
- Applied Science Technologists and Technicians of British Columbia
- The Public Services Commission
- WorkSafeBC
- Diversity Group Coaching & Consulting
- BC Hydro

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Neelam Sahota
Chief Executive Officer
DIVERSEcity Community
Resources Society

Introduction

Why is it important for employers to improve their ability to orient, retain and promote new immigrant workers?

Much has been said and written about BC's and Canada's labour and skills shortages. According to a Conference Board of Canada report (2016), the shortage of workers could cost BC close to \$7.9 billion in GDP annually (*Conference Board of Canada* www.tupc.bc.ca/pdfs/2016_PSE_Skills_for_a_Prospereous_BC.pdf).

Our aging population and a surging retirement rate will result in unprecedented job vacancies. Currently, about 8% of BC's labour force is at retirement age. Over the coming ten years, 70% of all job openings will result from people leaving the workforce. BC is forecast to have 917,000 job openings between 2017 and 2027; 78% of most of these jobs will require some form of post-secondary education or training. (*WelcomeBC*, www.welcomebc.ca/Choose-B-C/Why-Choose-British-Columbia-Canada/B-C-2025-Labour-Market-Outlook).

A low birth rate, (Canada ranks 188 on a list of 224 countries) combined with our aging population means BC employers must look to the province's immigrant population to fulfill vacancies at all levels. Indeed, government officials predict that all Canada's labour force growth will soon come from immigration.

Currently, Canada welcomes nearly 300,000 new immigrants each year and BC almost 40,000. The country plans to take in 980,000 new permanent residents to the country between 2018 and 2020 (Canada Immigration Plan). The majority of these will arrive as skilled or economic immigrants.

Reports indicate that these numbers may be inadequate to meet growing workforce demand. Work to improve immigration policies is ongoing in order to speed up the process and better meet the specific labour needs of business.

In a global economy in which individuals are increasingly mobile, workers have choice; they will select their new country based on where they see the strongest prospects for employment, career development and success. If employment and career growth are too difficult, individuals will not immigrate to BC or will not stay.

To attract and retain workers, it is essential that BC employers provide new immigrants with work environments that are inclusive and supportive. Throughout the province's history, its multicultural workforce has been a major economic force. To continue to attract and improve retention of new immigrant workers, policies related to

recruitment, training, career development and staff management must be continuously reviewed and adapted. Different cultures, communication and work styles need to be better understood.

The information, tools, tips and resources contained within this guide focus on the orientation, retention and promotion of new immigrant workers. This guide was originally designed to build from a toolkit developed by the Chartered Professionals in Human Resources entitled: "Hiring and Retaining Skilled Immigrants". You can access this toolkit at: www.cphrbc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/itiguide.pdf. For more information on recruiting, hiring and retaining new immigrant workers, visit www.getintheknow.ca.

**In the words of
Canadian Chamber
of Commerce
President and
CEO, Perrin Beatty:**
**"We need to expand
Canada's labour
force if we want the
Canadian economy
to continue to grow."**

"As a government we went from 260,000 to 300,000 because of the need to meet the demands of Canadian families who wanted to reunite with their loved ones. But also employers are asking us to allow them to continue to use immigration more and more as a way to meet their growth needs."

— **Ahmed Hussen**, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, News Conference, Ottawa, January 2017

Recruitment and Hiring of New Immigrant Workers

The tools, tips and strategies found in this guide will assist you in orienting, retaining and promoting new immigrant employees into the workforce.

Naturally, the successful integration of new immigrant workers begins with understanding the benefits of a culturally diverse workforce and with employing successful hiring practices. The following are a few tips and strategies for accessing and recruiting new immigrant talent. These have been adapted from the toolkit Hiring and Retaining Skilled Immigrants, developed by the Chartered Professionals in Human Resources (CPHR). To download, go to: www.cphrbc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/itiguide.pdf. For more, check out www.getintheknow.ca or the resources and tools developed by the Immigrant Employment Council of BC (IEC-BC) at www.iecbc.ca.

Advertising the Job

To access the pool of skilled immigrants in BC and Canada you need to know where they are, what they read and who they connect with. Consider advertising in ethnic newspapers, connecting with immigrant serving agencies such as [DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society](#) that provide immigrant focused employment services or asking for referrals within your own organization. Placing additional languages and culturally diverse imagery in your ad or on your website communicates that your organization values diversity and encourages applications from newcomers.

Screening Applications

Don't let unfamiliar responses cloud your judgement. Different cultures have different approaches to cover letters and résumés. Raise your awareness of these differences to better understand job applicants. A candidate with an atypical résumé may actually be the most skilled. Why let him or her go because of it?

Interviewing and Testing

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

Reference Checking

Reference letters may have been or need to be translated. If there is no local work reference, consider using a character reference instead. The Internet has made it easier to check out university or higher education qualifications. Applicants can have their credentials evaluated by the International Credential Evaluation Service (www.bcit.ca/ices/).

Offering the Job

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

Giving Feedback

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

Benefits of a Culturally Diverse Workforce



Much of BC's economic success can be attributed to the hard work, innovation, skills, knowledge and experience of immigrants. Organizations with culturally diverse work-forces site the following benefits.

Reduction in Skill Shortages

Internationally educated and experienced candidates increase the talent pool, offering employers more hiring choices and fill BC's need for workers

Access New Markets and Customers

A culturally diverse staff will assist you to identify new customers and their product and service needs

Access International Markets

Companies with culturally diverse staff may use the languages, expertise and cultural knowledge of their staff to expand business

Stronger Referral Network

Organizations with diverse workplaces have access to larger numbers of new employees through increased individual referrals

Improved Customer Service

Staff teams that include members that speak multiple languages and understand cultural differences improve customer service and cross-cultural business success

Expertise and Experience

Fresh thinking enhances overall staff skills and brings new solutions, advanced use of technology, and new perspectives resulting in new opportunities, products and profitable business strategies

Dynamic / Successful Workplace

Culturally diverse staff teams increase learning and sharing making the workplace more inviting and fulfilling for all staff

Reduced Cost / Increased Success for International Projects

Familiarity with different social and business cultures reduces training costs and can avoid lost business by adapting quickly, reducing risks and circumventing errors

Preparing the Workplace

Most employers simply want to hire the best candidate for the job and will state that they don't care whether that person is a new immigrant or not. So why then should employers spend time preparing the workplace for new immigrant workers?

As discussed in the previous section, there are many real and compelling reasons to hire immigrants, but employers must recognize that new immigrants to Canada, regardless of their skill level, occupation or experience will have some cultural, workplace behaviour and practices, or communication differences that will require an adjustment mainly for the individual, but also for the employer and existing employees. Spending some time in advance to understand some of these cultural differences will not only ease the integration of these new employees, but perhaps more importantly, better prepare the whole organization for success.

Develop an Understanding of Related Definitions and Terms

In working with or managing staff from various cultural backgrounds, there can often be uncertainty or even apprehension about things such as cultural discrimination, workplace racism, stereotyping or even basic cultural differences. Managers and colleagues may struggle to determine whether a miscommunication or misunderstanding is related to a cultural difference. And if it is, they might wonder how to address these issues without appearing discriminatory or racist. A better understanding of related terms and definitions will enhance understanding of multiculturalism in the workplace and create a better ability to discuss and share differences and concerns.

New / Recent Immigrants are individuals who have arrived to Canada as permanent residents within the last five years. Between 2011 and 2016, 175,555 recent immigrants made BC their home. (*Census 2016, Stats Canada*)



Immigrants are persons who are, or who have ever been, landed immigrants or permanent residents. These people have been given the right to live in Canada permanently. Some have resided in Canada for many years, while others have just arrived. Some are citizens and some are not. British Columbia has the second highest immigrant population compared to all other provinces and territories in Canada. Only Ontario has a greater immigrant population. Census 2016 reported that a total of 1,292,675 immigrants call BC their home, representing 28.3% of BC's total population.

Refugees are immigrants who were granted permanent resident status on the basis of a well-founded fear of returning to their home country. This category includes people who feared persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in particular social group or for political opinion (Geneva Convention refugees) as well as people who had been seriously and personally affected by civil war or armed conflict, or have suffered a massive violation of human rights. (*Source: Stats Canada www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/98-501/98-501-x2016008-eng.pdf*). As of 2016, a total of 82,360 refugees call BC home, representing 2.4% of BC's total population.

(Definitions and Terms continued from p. 7)

Temporary Foreign Workers are foreign nationals who arrive in Canada with a valid work permit which is facilitated by the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFW) or the International Mobility Program (IMP). TFWs come to Canada to fill temporary labour and skill shortages when qualified Canadian citizens or permanent residents are not available. Most temporary foreign workers are limited to working in Canada for four years before having to return to their home country (*Source: Government of Canada www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/fact-sheet-temporary-foreign-worker-program.html*).

Visible Minority is a person who is visibly not one of the majority cultural groups. In 2016, more than 7.6 million Canadians identified themselves this way. The latest census data shows that British Columbia has the highest proportion of visible minorities in the country. It is important to recognize that much of BC's "visible minority" population was born and raised in BC and that they have varying, or, in some cases, no connection to their ancestral culture; they are simply "British Columbian or Canadian." For this reason, this guidebook refers to the orientation, retention, and promotion of "new or recent immigrants".

Culture is the beliefs, values, behaviours and material objects that shape an individual's identity and his or her

way of life. An understanding of culture provides a base for learning, understanding and acceptance as you work with more individuals from an increasing number of cultures. Multiculturalism stresses mutual respect and acceptance of cultural differences.

Racial Stereotypes are preconceived concepts or ideas about a racial or cultural group. Whereas a cultural trait is a belief, value, or behaviour shared by many people, racial stereotypes imply that all individuals from a racial or cultural group are the same. Stereotypes are often used in a negative or prejudicial manner whether intentionally or unintentionally and can be harmful to workplace relations.

Example: "All people from China are good at math."

This is incorrect, and even though seemingly positive, it is harmful to other cultures by implication and to those from Chinese extraction that are not strong in math. If this stereotype is applied, it is likely a "Chinese person" will be asked to solve the accounting problem at work. If they could not, or if this task was difficult, there would be surprise; people might say – "You're Chinese, this shouldn't be difficult for you." In truth, this statement has left no room for individual differences and has led to judgment or "prejudgment" – which is prejudice. Stereotyping may affect hiring, delegating, morale, promotion and wage reviews negatively.



What makes one culture different from another?

Language	Hobbies
Values	Politics
History	Dress / Fashion
Geography	Philosophy
Gender Roles	Architecture
Natural Resources	Dance
Manners	Traditions
Accent	Sports
Literature	Art / Esthetic
Religion	Education
Industry	Music
Parenting Styles	Appearance
Customs	Food
Work Ethic	Behaviours
Technology	Superstitions

Racism is thoughts, words, attitudes or actions that criticize people due to race, colour or culture. Racism can be used by any group against any other race, colour, culture or cast. Often racism includes "racial slurs", jokes, graffiti, threats or violence.

Example: *Choosing who to hire for a job or who to rent an apartment to, based on race or culture are forms of racism; often difficult to prove.*

Discrimination is treating people differently because of characteristics that are not related to their merit or the requirements of the job including race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction and social origin. Discrimination at work is a violation of a human right that results in a waste of human talents, with detrimental effects on productivity and economic growth, and generates socio-economic inequalities that undermine social cohesion and solidarity. (*Source: International Labour Organization, Global Report: The New Face of Discrimination and Inequality in the World of Work, www.ilo.org*).

In addition to the nearly 300,000 individuals coming to Canada as permanent residents, there are also nearly 300,000 people in Canada every year as temporary workers. In 2016, 287,117 temporary work permits were issued.

Source: *Government of Canada www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/annual-report-parliament-immigration-2017.html#section2*

Develop Cultural Diversity Related Policies

The development of company policies, vision statements, mandates, missions and goals are all elements of strategic and organizational planning – processes that are complex and time consuming. Providing tips towards the development of a strategic plan is beyond the scope of this guidebook. However, as the cultural diversity of our workplaces and communities continues to grow, it is imperative that policies related to multiculturalism, anti-racism, stereotyping, communication, hiring, interviewing, performance reviews, and promotion and succession be reviewed and included. Not only will the inclusion facilitate and support your management team and the individuals you choose to hire and retain, but you

will have clearly demonstrated the value and importance your organization places on cultural diversity within the workplace and community.

A good starting point is to review the policies, vision statements, mandates, missions and goals of large organizations and businesses. It may be not be possible for your business to adopt all that a large organization like Scotiabank and Shaw Communications has taken on. However, these and others can stand as examples and provide you guidance as your organization moves forward.

Once developed, your new policies should be widely shared within the company and measures should be taken to hold managers and employees accountable.

Shaw Communications Inc.



Recognized as one of the Canada's Best Diversity Employers (2018)

“One of the most powerful differentiators of our culture here at Shaw is that we can all bring ourselves to work and that our diversity of thought and perspective makes our culture richer.”

— Jim L., EVP & Chief Marketing & Culture Officer (www.canadastop100.com/diversity/)

Diversity

“Shaw is an equal-opportunity employer. We are committed to a policy of nondiscrimination in our employment and personnel practices. We encourage applications

from all qualified individuals, regardless of race, gender, age or any other identifying characteristic.”

“Our philosophy is to respect the individual and the dignity of others by appreciating their differences and similarities.” (www.shaw.ca/Corporate/Careers/Our-Culture/).

Award Winning Practices

Shaw Communications was recognized in 2018 as one of the Canada's Best Diversity Employers (2018). These are some of the highlights of why they were selected:

- We recognize, celebrate and benefit from the uniqueness of each employee and customer
- Shaw Communications' diversity strategy features three areas of focus: hiring and retaining talent, developing talent, and aware-

ness and communication — the company also created a Diversity Index to measure tangible progress towards achieving goals outlined in its strategy

- To support the employment efforts of new Canadians, Shaw Communications partners with the Canadian Immigrant Women's Association and YWCA to provide work placements for their members and participates in mentoring relationships facilitated by the Calgary Region Immigrant Employment Council — additionally, Shaw participates in monthly Employer Cafés for new Canadian job-seekers, facilitated by Manitoba Start
- Maintains a formal commitment to diversity through its executive diversity committee and national diversity task force

Inclusion at Scotiabank



A culture of inclusion is the heart of our global community of Scotiabankers.

An inclusive workplace allows us to reap the benefits that diversity brings: new perspectives, fresh ideas and the ability to compete at our best in a global market. Inclusion is deeply rooted in our organization and entrenched in everything we do.

Through our people: we welcome a variety of perspectives, backgrounds and experiences. This allows us to better understand our customers, our co-workers and helps us achieve our key priorities.

Through our practices: we create an environment that appreciates and leverages diversity to innovate, motivate and build our performance-oriented culture.

Belief

Inclusion is the action that delivers the benefits of diversity.

Approach

Through our people and our practices, we build our understanding of our customers and each other, creating an environment where we amplify and leverage our differences to innovate and perform.

People

Every Scotiabanker has a role in creating an environment where people feel involved, respected, valued, connected, and are able to bring their authentic selves to work.

Impact

Embracing a culture of inclusion wherever we operate makes Scotiabank, a great place for our customers to do business – as well as a great place to do work.

www.scotiabank.com/ca/en/about/inside-scotiabank/inclusion.html

Research to Understand the Demographics of the Communities Your Company Serves

Canada and BC welcome new immigrants from every country in the world and immigrant communities in BC are growing rapidly. This presents big opportunities for employers and business. New immigrants constitute a pool of potential employees as well as new markets, clients and customers. Having an understanding of the cultural diversity represented within your communities and the neighbourhoods you serve is good for business.

Between 2011 and 2016, 175,555 new immigrants arrived in BC from 180 different countries. 81.2% of BC's recent immigrants lived in the Metro Vancouver region. Of these:

- 80% resided in Vancouver (26.2%), Surrey (25.5%), Burnaby (11.3%), Richmond (10.7%) and Coquitlam (6.7%)
- 67.2% are of working age (25 – 64)
- 63% arrived within the Economic Class
- 53.2% hold a university degree or higher
- 14.6% hold a college or trade certificate
(Source: 2016 Census)

To find more detailed immigrant demographic data, visit NewToBC online. This initiative is funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada to analyze, compile and distribute settlement information and Census data on immigrant populations in communities across Southwest BC: www.newtobc.ca/newcomer-resources/

For more information about and to connect with the immigrant populations living in your community, contact immigrant serving organizations, such as DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society and others in your area. Immigrant serving organizations exist in many BC communities. These organizations provide language and career services to new immigrants and many provide staffing assistance to employers. Some



Percentage of Population Born Outside of Canada

BC	28%
Richmond	60%
Burnaby	50%
West Vancouver	44.7%
Coquitlam	44.2%
Surrey	43%
Vancouver	42.5%
City of North Vancouver	38.2%
New Westminster	34.9%
Port Moody	32.2%
Port Coquitlam	31.8%
District of North Vancouver	31.2%
Delta	31%
Abbotsford	26%
Langley	19%
Maple Ridge	19%

Source: 2016 Census



Top 10 Sources Countries of Immigrants to BC (2011 - 2016)

(Number of arrivals and percentage of total of all arrivals)

1. China	38,105	21.7%
2. India	27,455	15.6%
3. Philippines	26,685	15.2%
4. Iran	8,645	4.9%
5. South Korea	8,030	4.6%
6. UK	6,535	3.7%
7. USA	6,490	3.7%
8. Mexico	2,885	1.6%
9. Taiwan	2,500	1.4%
10. Japan	2,290	1.3%
Other Countries	45,935	26.3%

Source: 2016 Census

even have services to support immigrant workforce integration. Perform a web search for Immigrant Serving Organizations (include your community) to see what is available.

Understand Common Cultural Differences

We know that different cultures have different beliefs, customs, foods and ways of thinking. Beyond language, these differences can sometimes make understanding each other difficult. In some workplaces, many different cultures work side by side. Staff, managers or team leaders may ask, "How can I possibly learn everything there is to know about all cultures?" The answer is we can't know everything, but the more you know, the better able you will be to relate. If you don't understand and value all members of the group, how can you hope to successfully work with, motivate or supervise your culturally diverse staff teams?

Different people will value their roles in the organization differently. They may have varying ideas about how they can make a contribution and how they may want to be recognized for it. What motivates one worker might completely bother another. For example, rewarding someone with a pat on the back when he / she is unfamiliar with being touched; an individual treated in this manner may become uncomfortable, upset and less productive.

Understanding what beliefs, values or behaviours are shared by a cultural group may help us communicate. However, it is important to remember that cultural traits are not true for every member of a cultural group. Also, note that one country does not mean one culture. China, for example, has 56 named cultures as well as innumerable subcultures.

Common Cultural Differences that Cause Misunderstandings in the Workplace

Cultural Trait	Potential Challenge <i>In some cultures...</i>	Possible Solution
Leadership / Authority	...hierarchic leaders make decisions without explanation and expect all to follow, lean towards micromanagement, often will not admit problems	Explain how leadership in Canada looks less hierarchical and the input of individuals from an organization or team has greater value and is considered beneficial – here success is achieved by a whole and capable team
Teamwork	...staff is expected to be assigned tasks and are not expecting to take responsibility / ownership for the completion and success of the project	Tell employees their knowledge, experience and participation is valuable and you will ask them for it and need them to share their ideas and work as a team
Time	...five to ten minutes does not matter; to others one hour either way does not matter; to others being exactly on time is extremely important	Clarify expectations related to timeliness / punctuality; be clear about the consequences of a meeting delay or of the deadlines in your schedule / work plan; note that lateness is not necessarily a sign of laziness
Personal Space	...individuals have less need for or awareness of personal space	Explain the importance of personal space; “arm’s length” is comfortable for most North Americans
Collectivism and Individualism	...success and failure of an individual are measured ... the individual and their accomplishments are deemed more important than those of the team or group	Recognize/ discuss the importance of the accomplishments of the team but emphasize that individual effort is important and will be recognized
Gender Equality	...males hold most or all of the dominant / leadership roles	Explain to your staff that Canada’s human rights laws demand genders be treated equally and that poor or inappropriate treatment of women will not be tolerated
Demonstrating Emotions	...body language, facial expressions, voice volume / pitch, silence, or very demonstrative physical behaviour mean different things	Be cautious in interpreting emotion / expression; smiles and laughter may indicate embarrassment or discomfort, not agreement and delight
Saving Face / Reputation	...“face” or ego and dignity can be negatively impacted by a lack of attention or by criticism	Balance your criticism with public and private praise; attend to all of your staff equally
Fact vs. Opinion Giving	...opinion is seen as important as fact and opinion may be communicated as fact to persuade people to accept an idea; employees may interpret opinion as fact	Communicate the facts as facts and opinion as opinion; clarify to ensure the distinction
Superstitions	...superstition guides behaviour	Note superstitions and try to work with people that are resistant due to superstitions; ask for more information
Asking For Help / Giving Help	...asking for help indicates failing or looking bad, and offering to help can be seen as being critical of someone’s abilities	Encourage people to ask for help and watch to see if new workers are overwhelmed with work; be sure to validate a person’s work before offering help while affirming your confidence in them
Problem Solving	...individuals are unfamiliar with making decisions and getting involved with problem solving; dealing with a problem may be interpreted as blame	Communicate with your employees that you plan to make them think so they can resolve problems themselves
Dress / Grooming	...workplace attire is different	Share and discuss the norms within your organization regarding dress and grooming; be accepting of difference and accommodate if possible (i.e. health and safety are not at risk)
Food	...food and eating habits are very different; different cultural groups find some foods offensive for religious or other reasons	Communicate the dietary needs of all members of your staff to avoid offense. Be aware of dietary needs if providing a meal
Familial Relationships	...family responsibility and loyalty may be extremely important	Be respectful of the need for your staff to consult family before making big decisions or when negotiating time off
Adherence to Religion	...religion and adherence to holy days and times is critical	Obtain an understanding of “special days” and work to accommodate; explain clearly when accommodation is not possible

Adapted from: *Recruiting, Retaining, and Promoting Culturally Different Employees*, Lionel Laroche

Improve Communication

In 2016, 717,375 (15.6%) of BC's residents spoke non-official languages most often at home, up 7% since 2011. It is estimated that more than 170 different languages are spoken in BC homes. As immigration continues to grow, so will linguistic diversity and communication challenges. The following tips will improve workplace communication.

1. Use Plain English

To ensure workplace communication is working for all:

- Speak and write in short sentences;
- Use simple and commonly used words; avoid "big" words and jargon when possible;
- Use clear headings;
- Use tables and lists to simplify complex material;
- Review and apply "plain language" to all workplace print and web materials, such as:
 - > Job postings / descriptions
 - > Orientation materials / employee handbooks

- > Advertising and promotional brochures and posters
- > Health and safety manuals
- > Training and policy manuals
- > Workplace signage
- > Emails, company forms, memos
- > Instructions for operating equipment

2. Be Conscious of the Difference Between Communication Skills and Language Skills

Language skills are defined by an individual's vocabulary, an accurate accent and the ability to follow the rules of grammar. Good communication is defined by the ability to give and receive a message. Some of the best communicators have less than perfect language skills.

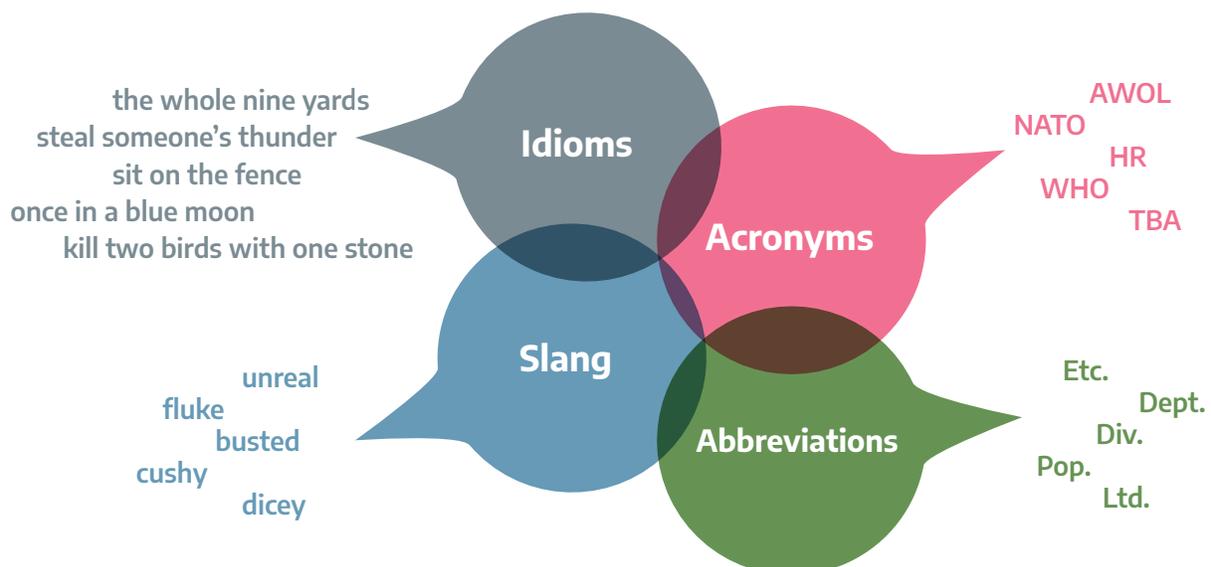
3. Enunciate

Enunciation means pronouncing a word clearly. For example, "What do you want to do?" can become "Whadywannado?" For a new English speaker, this simple question may not be understood.

4. Avoid Using Idioms, Slang and Abbreviations and Acronyms

Typically these are very difficult to understand for speakers of English as an additional language.

- An idiom is a colourful expression often with historical, untraceable or very interesting origins.
- Slang is not only unprofessional, but it is usually generational and developed and used to exclude others.
- Acronyms, words formed from the initial letters of words, are often sector or topic specific and difficult to follow even for native speakers new to an environment.
- Abbreviations, shortened forms of words, can also be difficult for newcomers to understand.



5. Use the Written Word as Often as Possible

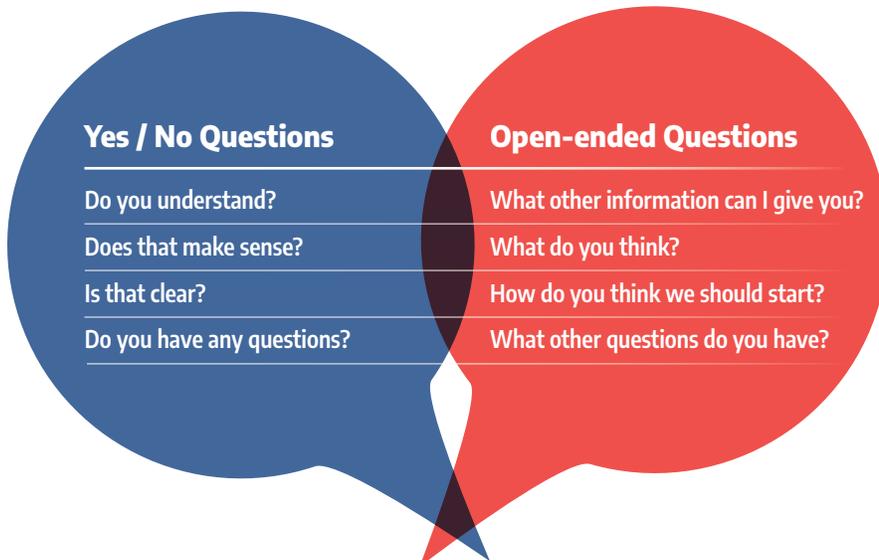
Many people who speak English as an additional language have a larger reading and writing vocabulary than a speaking and listening vocabulary. Many newcomers have studied English, some for many years, and have had very few chances to practice speaking and listening. To enhance understanding, provide supporting documents prior to meetings, handouts to support oral presentations and written instructions.

6. Replace “yes / no” Questions with “Open-ended Questions”

Ask a “yes / no” question and you will often only get a “yes” or a “no”. To obtain more meaningful answers and information and improve communication overall, try to use more open-ended questions.

It is estimated that more than 170 different languages are spoken in BC homes. As immigration continues to grow, so will linguistic diversity and communication challenges.

Source: 2016 Census



7. Increase Understanding Through Good Questions

Encourage asking questions. Explain that asking questions demonstrates interest and enthusiasm; clearly express that asking for a word to be defined or a concept clarified is a good thing to do. In some cultures, asking questions shows that you are not capable.

8. Avoid “tag questions”

A tag question is not really a question; they are usually used to get confirmation or to check information the speaker thinks is true. Tag questions are also tricky grammatically; if the main part of the sentence is positive, the “tag” is negative. For example, “It isn’t cold today, is it?”. If the main part is positive, then the “tag” is negative. For example, “It’s a nice day, isn’t it?” This type of question can be quite confusing.

9. Choose Your Humour Carefully

Humour can improve rapport and improve communication. However, it does not always translate well across language and culture. If you are not sure that your humour will be appreciated, resist the temptation. If you do share a joke or humorous anecdote, be sure to check that it has been understood as intended. If it hasn’t been understood, be ready to explain.

10. Allow for Silence

Pauses are often needed in order to allow listeners operating in a second language to digest what has been said and to prepare to respond. Many people, especially many North Americans, are uncomfortable with silence of any length. Learn to become a little more comfortable with a second or two of processing time.

11. Learn to Correctly Pronounce Names

The most important word in any language is an individual’s name. Taking the time to learn to say an unfamiliar name correctly will make people feel valued and respected.

Build Employee Awareness and Interest in Cultural Diversity

As your workforce becomes more and more culturally diverse, supporting your staff to build awareness and interest in cultural diversity will become more and more important. Increased understanding and appreciation will build stronger work teams and better morale. The following are a few easy-to-adopt activities.

1. Post or email daily or weekly quotes related to cultural diversity.

Quotes can easily be found by doing a quick internet search.

A few examples:

- Diversity is not about how we differ. Diversity is about embracing one another's uniqueness. *Ola Joseph*
- I cannot, and will not judge, by what my eyes may see. For the skin on a man shall not reveal his true identity. *Robert M. Hensel*
- A lot of different flowers make a bouquet. *Unknown*
- Strength lies in differences not in similarities. *Steven Covey*
- Diversity: The art of thinking independently together. *Malcolm Forbes*

2. Post or email articles or links to videos, news and events that inspire discussion of and engagement in cultural diversity. The Get In The Know website is updated each week. Visit www.getintheknow.ca to find items to share.

3. Review your training, orientation, promotional and other print and electronic materials and publications to be sure that the residents of the communities you serve are represented in the photos you are using.

4. Consider celebrating the cultural diversity within your workplace.

Some suggestions:

- Hang flags representing the countries of origin of your employees and / or customers
- Mark the countries of origin of your employees or customers on a map of the world
- Celebrate or mark the cultural holidays of your employees and /or customers.

Consider Becoming a Cultural Diversity Award Winner

Some of the country's most successful companies know that their success has depended on workplace cultural diversity and supporting the integration, training and development of new immigrant workers. Get In The Know regularly reviews the best practices of local and national cultural diversity award winners – the following are a few examples of orientation, retention and professional development practices your organization might adopt. To view a more comprehensive list, visit: www.getintheknow.ca

Retain, Develop and Promote New Immigrant Hires

- Provide onsite English language training.
- Promote career advancement by paying for courses that added to an employee's skill set, e.g. technical writing and computer classes.
- Support career development by sponsoring memberships to professional associations.
- Provide financial support for new immigrants' career development.
- Provide training to senior employees on how to assist new immigrants develop career plans.

Develop a Culturally Friendly Workplace

- Host monthly company luncheons and holiday events, enabling employees to practice their English and build relationships with their peers.
- Regularly update equity policies, recruiting processes and training procedures to ensure that diversity initiatives remain current.
- Provide diversity awareness training to all employees.
- Provide staff training on communication in a culturally diverse workplace.

Find more examples at: www.getintheknow.ca

In addition to **Get In The Know**, the **Immigrant Employment Council of BC** offers many tools and resources for employers. Check out their resources at: www.iecbc.ca/employer-tools-and-resources/

Provide Work Experience Opportunities for Internationally Trained Professionals

- Provide practicums or other work experience to internationally trained professionals.
- Engage in employment mentoring programs with a focus on supporting internationally trained professionals.

Help New Immigrant Employees Adjust to the Canadian Workplace

- Provide peer mentoring, skills development and feedback opportunities.
- Provide sector specific English language training.
- Subsidize the cost of English language training outside the workplace for new Canadian employees.

- Hold lectures and workshops to help new immigrant employees (and their spouses) adjust to Canadian work culture.
- Establish diversity network / affinity groups for employees from various cultural backgrounds.

Ensure Senior Management Support

- Hire to ensure cultural diversity at the management level.
- Create a campaign / advisory / committee on issues related to cultural diversity in the workplace.
- Participate on national or local Diversity Advisory Boards / Committees



Local and National Cultural Diversity Awards You May Want To Apply For

Fraser Valley Cultural Diversity Awards

www.abbotsfordcommunityservices.com/news/events/2018-cultural-diversity-awards
The Fraser Valley Cultural Diversity Awards Ceremony recognize the best practices of Fraser Valley organizations, initiatives and businesses in recognizing the diversity of our community.

British Columbia Multicultural Awards

www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/celebrating-british-columbia/honours-and-awards/bc-multicultural-awards
The awards recognize individuals, organizations and businesses whose exceptional work helps bring our diverse cultures together.

Leadership Recognition Awards

www.iecbc.ca/our-work/events/employer-recognition-awards/
The Leadership Recognition Awards recognizes the innovation, leadership and commitment of partners, employers, immigrant serving organizations and professional member organizations in supporting and promoting the employment of skilled immigrants in BC.

Canada's Best Diversity Employers

www.canadastop100.com/diversity/
Canada's Best Diversity Employers recognizes employers across Canada that have exceptional workplace diversity and inclusiveness programs. This competition examines a range of diversity initiatives, including programs for five major employee groups: (a) Women; (b) Members of visible minorities; (c) Persons with disabilities; (d) Aboriginal peoples; and (e) Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered/ Transsexual (LGBT) peoples.

Canada's Top 25 Immigrant Awards

www.canadianimmigrant.ca/canadas-top-25-immigrants
This national annual award is a peoples' choice award that recognizes inspirational immigrants who have come to Canada, achieved success and made a positive difference living here. Whether it's a community advocate or volunteer, a successful entrepreneur or a cultural icon, this Canadian national award recognizes immigrants' achievements from all walks of life.

Orientation, Retention and Promotion – Tips and Strategies for Employers

The contributions new immigrant employees can make to a workplace are tremendous. Although a solid “on-boarding” or orientation plan is important to have in place for all new employees, it is absolutely critical for new immigrant workers.



Orientation or “on-boarding” can be understood best if one imagines boarding a ship from a dock, where a hand is extended from a member of the crew (employer) and one hand is extended from the passenger (new immigrant hire). A firm grasp is shared by both as the “on-boarding” takes place with a pull (employer) and a step up (new immigrant hire) while onlookers from the ship (staff) and the dock (family / friends of new immigrant hire) look on with great interest. In essence, everyone is involved.

You have selected this new employee because he or she is qualified for the position. But it is important to remember that although capable to do the work, many elements of the workplace and its culture may be unfamiliar. The following pages provide “checklists” to guide you in supporting your new employees to get started on the right track,

adjust to their new surroundings and to prepare current staff to be good hosts. These may seem like simple things. However, both new immigrants and native-born Canadians have common stories about not being given a thorough orientation to their new company, its staff and the expected responsibilities. Even though both groups may feel somewhat anxious, newcomers tend to experience a much higher level of stress. *Adapted from **Recruiting, Retaining, and Promoting Culturally Different Employees**, Lionel Laroche Ph.D*

Beyond orientation, the following “checklists” will support successful retention and provide guidance related to career planning and the promotion of new immigrant employees. It is true that the greatest responsibility to learn and adjust to the new workplace rests mostly on the employee. It is also true, however, that a few efforts from the employer can make

the investment to hire and transition an even greater success for both parties.

The checklists found on the following pages were developed with input and direct contributions from employers, business associations, community service providers, and human resources experts. In addition, the developers of this guide conducted extensive research and drew upon decades of experience working with employers, workforce integration initiatives and new immigrants to BC.

Beyond [Get In The Know](#), if you are seeking additional resources to support the orientation, retention and promotion of new immigrant workers visit the [Immigrant Employment Council of BC's](#) website, where they showcase many tools and resources developed specifically for employers to find, hire and retain immigrant talent.

Prior to the First Day: Preparing to Welcome the New Immigrant Employee

Many employers identify the selecting and hiring of new staff as the most important decision they make. To ensure the success of your decision, particularly with new immigrant employees, a little work in advance can go a long way towards ensuring successful workplace integration and a smoother entry into the workplace for your new employee. Even small steps and pieces of information can help set appropriate expectations and build confidence for your new employee.

Consider these suggestions in welcoming your new immigrant employee.

It's been estimated that **80% of workplace success depends on the new hire and 20% on the employer.**



1. Prepare a “Welcome Packet” for your new immigrant hire

- Create an acceptance or congratulation letter that includes information on what to expect on their first day including hours, breaks, where and who to report to and dress code information.
- Provide print and web links to pertinent company information.
- Provide directions to work and /or a map, parking information and, if appropriate, supply a parking pass.
- Include an invitation to call prior to their first day with any questions.

2. Assign and prepare a sponsor / mentor / buddy for the new immigrant hire

- Assign someone and prepare them to be the new immigrant hire’s “sponsor / mentor / buddy”. Although not necessary, consider selecting someone who shares the same culture and may have experienced some of the same challenges.

3. Make arrangements for the appropriate office / desk / workspace set up

- Prepare the new immigrant hire’s work area, personal item storage, and ensure that all required passwords and security codes are enabled (office / parking entry, computer, email, phone, voice mail, etc.); have someone prepared to explain all of these in detail – these processes / procedures may be new.

4. Contact pertinent staff and departments about the arrival of a new staff member

- Advise current staff of the arrival of the new immigrant hire and their roles and responsibilities.
- Share that the new immigrant hire may have questions and a requirement for additional support in the early days.
- Set up payroll and personal information gathering processes; schedule time so that the payroll person can answer any questions the new immigrant hire might have.

Any efforts you make to prepare for a successful “First Day” will be time well spent and result in a quicker transition to productivity and success for the newcomer and their impact on the organization.

The First Day: An Orientation Checklist

Like any new employee, it is important to provide a thorough orientation to their new job and workplace. It is a good idea to set aside at least a few hours for orientation on the first day. Many of the recommendations below will be a part of the orientation you provide all employees. It is important to remember as the orientation is provided that new immigrant employees may have more questions, a greater need for detail, and require more time than their Canadian-born peers.

Consider including some of these in your orientation.



Researchers have estimated in a relationship it takes **five compliments** to balance out **one criticism**.

Source: Unknown

1. Company Introduction

- Provide company information, description of different departments, a staff and / or organizational chart.
- Provide access to or copies of organizational policies, safety and security procedures.
- Share information about the existence of a cultural diversity committee or any cultural diversity policies, in-house resources or toolkits; consider printing and sharing "Orientation, Retention and Promotion – Tips and Strategies for New Employees" of this Guidebook.
- Share information about any appropriate networking or affinity groups.

2. Working Environment

- Review hours of work, breaks and expectations around punctuality and absences from work.
- Explain how IT and administrative supports function within your workplace environment.
- Tour the facilities: kitchen, washrooms and other common spaces and explain expectations for their use.
- Explain access and use of supplies and clerical support, if appropriate.

3. Job Expectations

- Ensure that new immigrant hires are introduced to their direct manager(s), mentor / sponsor / buddy and others they may get direction from as well as their team members.
- Explain the interactions expected with staff, management, suppliers and clients.
- Review the job description and any unwritten duties and / or expectations.
- Clarify how their performance will be evaluated and the details of the probation period.
- Explain the wage structure, commissions, incentive pay, expenses, benefits, payroll deductions, etc.

4. Training and Development

- Provide an overview of any training plans / practices available to them within the organization.
- Explain how and when any technical orientation / training may take place.
- Be prepared to answer questions about your workplace and discuss differences in work culture and practices.
- Explain the support their mentor / sponsor / buddy may provide, but also explain your expectations for both sides in this relationship.

5. Checking In

- Ask about religious or cultural requirements related to work or time off.
- Provide an opportunity to ask questions about the company, roles and responsibilities.
- Provide an opportunity to share concerns or ask questions about life outside of work.

The First Week: Settling In

For any new immigrant hire, there is a lot of information to take in during the first days and weeks. For someone who is new to the Canadian workplace, it is very likely some areas will require further interpretation, explanation, and clarification. New immigrant employees may not require much additional time, just remember that much of the workplace culture may be very different for them.

Consider these suggestions for checking in with your new immigrant employee.

People new to Canada may have very little idea what to expect in the business culture and office norms. They have been brought up and trained in a completely different system. As scary as it sounds, their expectations about your workplace could have been developed by what they have seen on North American television. Needless to say, you will want to help them know what to expect.

Adapted from Recruiting, Retaining, and Promoting Culturally Different Employees, Lionel Laroche Ph.D

1. The Day After Orientation

- Let it be known that you anticipate questions related to their duties and workplace norms.
- Check in to reinforce support and ask how things are going on a regular basis.
- Observe their behaviour during breaks and renew introductions to staff, if necessary.

2. Throughout the week

- Choose a coffee break (or two) to sit down and discuss work and non-work related topics.
- Look for opportunities to provide casual support or discuss differences you've observed.
- Check in from time to time to ensure the new immigrant hire is connecting with their mentor / sponsor / buddy.
- Check in with workplace supervisors to support their effort to ensure new immigrant hires are transitioning into the workplace.

3. Make Inquiries and Document Areas for Improvement and Praise Related to

- Work Quality
- Relationships / Teamwork
- Communication
- Overall Integration in the Staff Team

4. Arrange a Meeting For the End of The First Week

- Give feedback but consider that some cultures will receive the feedback more negatively than meant or, alternatively, interpret feedback more neutrally than intended.
- Discuss each area of work performance and make plans in writing for improvement where necessary; present them with a copy for their use and offer your support to help them achieve established goals.
- Praise new immigrant hires for their abilities to adapt, achievements, and successes.

These suggestions are not exhaustive and may already be included within your existing orientation practices and processes or they may be more than you choose to apply. Use your discretion regarding what you will do within the setting of your company.

The First Month: Working Towards Retention

Over the first month it is important to check-in regularly and informally with your new immigrant employee. Remember that although they are able to do the work, many elements of the work and the workplace culture may still be very different than what they are used to.

This checklist may be used to guide your interactions over the first month and may be used to guide a formal meeting if scheduled.



Some employers provide time off for culturally significant events and holy days and provide quiet space for prayer.

Diversity at Work, HR Council for the Non-Profit Sector www.hrcouncil.ca/hr-toolkit/diversity-at-work.cfm

A multi-faith calendar can be ordered from the Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Services Agencies of BC at:

www.amssa.org/calendar

1. Throughout the month

- Provide performance feedback relatively often.
- Discuss their “first month” experiences and arrange formal or informal discussions about any noted workplace cultural differences.
- Check in with them on the relationship with their sponsor / mentor / buddy and other staff.
- Note areas for improvement and expectations for changed behaviour, work habits or communication.
- Consider providing an opportunity for new employees to introduce the culture of their native country at a staff potluck or as a story within your company newsletter.
- Utilize their knowledge / experience; ask for their ideas and input.

2. Evaluate the Relationship Between the Sponsor / Mentor / Buddy and New Immigrant Hire

- Discuss the relationship between the sponsor / mentor / buddy and the new immigrant hire - Has contact been regular enough? Are questions being answered? Is encouragement being provided? Are opportunities for professional development being discussed?
- Evaluate the outcomes of the relationship and discuss how this relationship could be enhanced or changed.

3. Training Plans

- Earmark areas (skill, technical, software, language, etc.) for development, training and upgrading.
- Consider providing presentations / workshops / “brown bag” discussions to help new Canadian employees (and perhaps their spouses) adjust to Canadian work culture.

4. Employment Evaluation

- If a new immigrant hire has not worked out, consider taking the time to conduct an “exit interview” to give them feedback on how to improve for future success.

The First Three Months: Establishing Success

For many organizations, it is expected that an employee be “up to speed” by the end of three months; this period often marks the end of the “probationary” period. The support, training and guidance that is provided to new employees, and especially those new to the country, during these months is critical.

This checklist includes considerations to ensure your new immigrant hires are successfully retained and are working on a career plan and next steps for professional development and advancement.



Retention and professional development are two closely linked concepts. Employees tend to leave an organization if they see limited professional growth opportunities, or if they feel that their accomplishments are not sufficiently appreciated or recognized.

*Conference Board of Canada –
Immigrant Friendly Businesses*

1. Leading Up To the Three Month Mark

- Discuss successes and areas for improvement with sponsor / mentor / buddy.
- Review punctuality, absences, work quality and overall behaviour.
- Check in with the new immigrant employee regularly during these three months.
- Ask them about their relationship with their sponsor / mentor / buddy and other staff.
- Check in with them on their cultural integration within the workplace (personal reflections and discussions / needed observation on Canadian workplace practices and expectations).
- Write down and share noted areas for improvement and expectations regarding work habits or communication.
- Continue to seek input from your new immigrant hires to benefit from their knowledge / experience and ask them if they see any opportunities or any areas the business / organization could improve on.

2. Training Plans

- Discuss training plans and encourage your new immigrant hire to research and determine their best training options.
- Determine what professional development goals they have.
- Discuss what training and development can be provided internally or externally.
- Encourage research regarding the best training options; initiate a plan when it best suits you or once the three-month probation period expires.
- Provide employees with information and advice on any credentialing processes, if necessary.

3. Follow Up on Cultural / Religious Needs

- Follow up on cultural / religious needs during these three months and give a further opportunity for them to state their needs or make requests. Uncertainty in a new work environment or personal privacy may cause new immigrant staff not to disclose their religious or cultural beliefs and requirements right away.
- Consider producing or providing a multi-faith calendar and ask them what days they observe; if they need time off for family/religious activities, determine if you can support these observances

4. Welcome New Immigrant Hire Formally and Publicly

- Send out an email to all staff announcing the completion of probation or a formal welcome highlighting their inclusion in the company / organization.

Orientation, Retention and Promotion – Tips and Strategies for New Employees

Approximately 80% of the success of a new employee depends on the employee! Many new immigrants have done an incredible amount of research and planning to adapt to Canadian workplace expectations. To help your employees be successful in their new position, get them to read over and follow the simple tips below. For some, the following pages will serve as a review; for others, these recommendations and considerations will be instrumental in securing their success.

Prior to the First Day: Preparing for Your First Day at Work

Within Canadian culture, every person must take full responsibility for his or her career and professional development. Even though there are avenues to find support and gain assistance, career success is not the responsibility of the government, service providers, career coaches, network contacts, friends, family or most of all, the employer. Career success is the responsibility of each working individual.

Here are a few things a new employee should consider doing before day one.

First Impressions



You have just a few seconds to make a good first impression and it's almost impossible to change it once it's happened.

So it's worth giving each new encounter your best. You can do this by doing the following:

1. Be on time
2. Present yourself appropriately
3. Be yourself
4. Smile
5. Be open and confident
6. Make small talk
7. Be positive
8. Be courteous and attentive

www.mindtools.com/CommSkill/FirstImpressions.htm

1. The day / night before

- Review the job requirements that were listed on the job posting or advertisement.
- Check your new employer's website to refresh your company knowledge.
- Prepare to make a great first impression; consider what you will wear and what is appropriate for your new workplace.
- Ensure that you will be early for work, not just on time; familiarize yourself with your commute, transit schedules, parking locations etc.
- Get organized for your first day. Prepare your work materials, be prepared to make notes, and if you have any questions, write them down in advance.
- Try and relax. You were selected as the best candidate for the job and your employer believes you are capable.

2. Plan Ahead to Avoid Some Things

To ensure success, here is a list of things to avoid in the workplace:

- Workplace gossip / politics
- Absenteeism / lateness
- Dishonesty / lying
- Blaming others
- Bragging, arrogance, egotism
- Not giving input when necessary
- Doing personal business
- Personal email, social networking, cell phone calls, texting
- Inappropriate internet sites, software, games
- Keeping to yourself
- Fooling / playing around
- Unsafe work

3. What are BC Employers Looking For?

Canadian employers are looking for these "soft" skills. Be prepared to demonstrate your:

1. Communication Skills
2. Analytical Abilities
3. Computer Proficiency
4. Managing Multiple Priorities
5. Interpersonal Skills
6. Leadership Skills
7. Cultural Awareness
8. Organization Skills
9. Problem Solving Skills
10. Teamwork Skills

Adapted from Skills Canadian Employers Want: 10 Ways Newcomers Can Be Job-Ready www.welcomepackcanada.com/blog/skills-canadian-employers-want-10-ways-newcomers-can-be-job-ready/

The Employee's First Day: A List of Considerations

Your first day on the job will have many “firsts”. A little bit of planning and forethought will help you get through the early days successfully.



First Day Preparation



As you prepare for your first day on the job, ask yourself the following questions:

- What are the values that my new employer will be looking for?
- How will I demonstrate those values?
- How will my performance on the job reflect those values?

In the words of Canadian Chamber of Commerce President and CEO, Perrin Beatty: “We need to expand Canada’s labour force if we want the Canadian economy to continue to grow.”

1. The Morning of Your First Day

- Give yourself some extra time to prepare for work; your first day is an important one.
- Unless arrangements have previously been made, don't forget to pack a lunch; depending on your worksite, there may not be a cafeteria or anywhere close to buy lunch.
- Be sure to call ahead if anything unexpected happens on your way; if you have a cell phone, be sure to turn your ringer off as you arrive to the worksite.
- Bring personal identification like Driver's Licence, Social Insurance Number (SIN) and your Care Card.
- Do not bring personal items like pictures and desk top decorations on your first day.
- Plan to arrive at least 15 minutes before start time.

2. Arrival

- Greet all staff with a smile and exercise good conversation skills by introducing yourself and asking “How are you today?” or “How was your weekend?”
- Choose to have a good attitude and always be positive.

3. Work Site Tour / Introductions

- Smile and shake hands with all staff you meet and remember or write down names.
- Remember various departments and managers.
- Take notes and ask questions as you are toured around the workplace.

4. Ask Questions During Orientation – Some areas that will likely be covered:

- Job description and performance measurements
- Leadership hierarchy / organizational chart and who your direct supervisor is
- Work area and materials needed
- Company policies
- Human Resources / Administration processes
- Pay and source deductions (Income Tax, Canada Pension, Employment Insurance)
- Benefits (even though they may be discussed they do not normally come into effect until the probation period of 90 days has expired)
- Special needs based on your religion, i.e. time off for significant events or religious ceremonies / celebrations and quiet space for prayer
- Support and guidance that a workplace mentor / sponsor / buddy may provide.

The Employee's First Week: Settling In

There's a lot to take in on the first day on any job, but the first week is just as important as those first few hours. Be sure to look over and review all your notes and any paper-work from the first day and prepare for the upcoming week.

Many things need to be kept in mind during the first week and as you adjust and get to know the new organization, business, staff, customers, suppliers, products and services.



Affinity Group: a group of people having a common interest or a goal or acting together for a specific purpose: e.g. The Society of Punjabi Engineers and Technologists of BC.

www.merriam-webster.com

1. Create Strong First Impressions

- Continue to arrive early to prepare well for your day.
- Remain professional: adhere to the dress code of the workplace and try your best to engage in workplace-appropriate communication and interactions with your new colleagues.

2. Relationship Building

- Work to build a relationship with your mentor / sponsor / buddy, manager and team.
- Observe and be aware of the culture of your new workplace, dress code, attitude, relationships.
- Note that your colleagues may have differing cultures, beliefs and religions; work to develop an understanding and appreciation of these differences.
- Keep a positive outlook on things - employers tend to respond better to employees who bring solutions and ideas rather than complaints and problems.

3. Adding Value to the Company / Organization

- Review your job description to ensure you are on the right track.
- Produce early successes by achieving your work tasks thoroughly and efficiently; do more than the minimum required.
- Come up with a solution before seeking your supervisor's advice for dealing with any situation.
- Keep current in your field or occupation; make an effort to observe trends and link your knowledge to your new work.

4. Network Internally / Externally

- Work to develop a relationship with your supervisor and team.
- Join a networking or affinity group if one exists; some organizations have internal networking groups; there are also numerous occupational and professional organizations that you might register with.
- Participate in lunchroom and coffee break activities and conversations; a lot of information about the company, your industry and the work in general is shared at these times. Not only that, but the people you meet through work are often the people who become your friends.
- Network with people across departments.

5. Communication

- Identify your communication strengths and weaknesses in context of your new job, i.e. industry or technical language barriers and cultural differences.
- Research internal and external resources to improve your communication skills.
- Consider taking notes or writing down instructions; don't hesitate to clarify your work tasks.
- If you do not understand something, ask. Questions demonstrate your interest and enthusiasm.

The Employee's First Month: Working Towards Retention

The first week was without doubt a week of adjustment, discovery and learning. Over the next few weeks you will be able to build on that knowledge and make your future work experience more meaningful to you, your team, manager and the organization.

To learn about BC, Canada and Canadian culture visit:

Discover Canada, The Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship

www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/discover-canada.html

WelcomeBC

www.welcomebc.ca

1. Throughout the Month

- Be prepared to receive feedback. In order to fully adjust to your new work environment, suggestions for improvement should be willingly accepted.
- Note areas of accomplishment and ask for feedback.
- Talk with your supervisor or mentor / sponsor / buddy about the work and / or improvements you believe can be made to the organization / company; your experience could benefit your new employer.

2. Communication

- Keep a positive relationship with your mentor / sponsor / buddy and your supervisor and initiate feedback.
- Continue to observe and adapt to Canadian communication and culture.
- If you are experiencing difficulties with English or workplace terminology, find help to improve through local courses or support provided by local immigrant serving organizations.

3. Upgrading and Training

- Research courses to increase your skills in technical areas. Check with your mentor / sponsor / buddy or your supervisor to get their opinion.
- Research and identify the Canadian or provincial credentials, certificates or licences needed for further development.

4. Review Your Own Performance

According to a survey of Canadian employers, these are the most important soft skills. Review your performance and look for ways to demonstrate the following.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Dependability / Reliability – 70% | 6. Commitment – 35% |
| 2. Communication (verbal) – 55% | 7. Listening – 35% |
| 3. Motivation – 45% | 8. Interpersonal abilities – 30% |
| 4. Enthusiasm – 40% | 9. Initiative – 25% |
| 5. Flexibility / Adaptability – 35% | 10. Team work – 25% |

Express Employment Professionals: Survey of Canadian Employers (2014)

www.marketwired.com/press-release/prove-youre-dependable-and-youll-get-hired-1950377.htm

5. Prepare for Future Performance Reviews / Discussions

- You will likely have a formal meeting or performance review just before the end of your three-month probationary period. This first month is a good time to set goals to increase your success.
- Keep a record of your activities and achievements that have helped the organization.
- Identify relationships that should be strengthened and initiate efforts to build them.
- Itemize your personal goals and include them in your goal setting.
- Propose strategies for business challenges and offer to act on an issue that has been neglected.
- Capitalize on your strengths and bring value added approaches, profit-making suggestions, time saving or innovative solutions for your organization.

The Employee's First Three Months: Establishing Success

In the early months of your new job, it is important you continue to show your desire and efforts to succeed in your work while at the same time advancing your knowledge, communication and skills.

Consider the following to support your career development and potential advancement.



**Toastmasters
International –
Become the Speaker
and Leader You
Want To Be**

www.toastmasters.org

To learn more about Foreign
Credential Recognition:

WelcomeBC Foreign Qualifications Recognition

[www.welcomebc.ca/Work-or-Study-in-B-C/Work-in-B-C/Foreign-Qualifications-Recognition-\(FQR\)](http://www.welcomebc.ca/Work-or-Study-in-B-C/Work-in-B-C/Foreign-Qualifications-Recognition-(FQR))

International Credential Evaluation Service (ICES)

www.bcit.ca/ices

1. **Enhancing Workplace Communication – Some areas to consider are:**

- Discuss your new work culture and offer a comparison to the work culture of your native country.
- Improve language skills if needed; try including more technical language in conversations and ask for feedback.
- Look for opportunities to improve your communication and ability to network effectively; consider taking an English course or an evening class related to your work or just for pleasure; consider joining Toastmasters.
- Get familiar with topics relating to the workplace; take a course or join an external networking or industry group.

2. **Utilize Management Skills / Develop Leadership Abilities**

- Look for opportunities to be involved in working out a complex problem and offer details and knowledge with ideas for managing change, improvement or providing a business solution.
- Work to keep time lines and demonstrate time management.
- Volunteer / seek cross-departmental projects if it does not interfere with your responsibilities.
- Look to find other ways to become involved in your workplace, i.e. participate in extra-curricular activities, offer to become a part of a committee, be part of a charity fundraising event or assist to organize an event, etc.
- Connect externally with industry groups which will keep you connected to what's happening in the industry.

3. **Exercise Conflict Resolutions / Negotiation**

- Deal with conflict by remaining unemotional and communicating with clear and direct language.
- During discussions relating to areas of your expertise, use good sound reason to negotiate your position and always work towards a solution or plan of action.

4. **Training Planning**

- Get advice from mentors and supervisors regarding your short-term and mid-term development plans.
- Obtain an understanding of the jobs / occupations held within your company and where you might advance to.
- Develop a career plan that maps out next steps for credential recognition, training, obtaining any required certification, professional networking, joining industry associations, etc.
- Research internal and external courses and resources to support your plan.
- Talk with your supervisor about support for your plan. Financing, flexible scheduling or time off might be part of the discussion.

In addition, review all previous meeting notes, action items and areas of improvement brought to your attention by your sponsor / mentor / buddy and management. Be sure to take action and to demonstrate how you have worked on these areas and the improvements as a result of your efforts.

Be prepared for some type of "First Three Month" meeting with management or your supervisor. Be ready to discuss all aspects of your work, communication, attitude, accomplishments and challenges.

Are You On Track?

Each organization has to determine which cultural diversity practices, steps and initiatives are best for its work environment. Do staff and management need training? Does the diversity of your organization reflect the diversity of your community? Are you tapping into local, national, and international markets? These questions and many others must be answered in context of your organization's plans and circumstances. However, as you embrace cultural diversity within your workplace, it can be useful to consider the steps others have taken and reflect on how practices could be implemented or adapted within your organization.

Only you can determine if you are on track. This checklist is provided as a summary of some of the key steps, suggestions and activities presented within this guide. Use it to assess your cultural diversity progress, and perhaps identify some of the next steps you would like to take.

	Key Steps Checklist	Planned?	In Progress?	In Place?
	Have you developed a policy or included cultural diversity in the development of your mission and vision statements?			
	Do your staff and management have an understanding of the benefits of a culturally diverse workforce?			
	Does your organization have an understanding of the cultural make-up of the communities your company serves?			
	Do your staff and management have a sense of some common cultural differences that may be impacting understanding and communication?			
	Has your staff and management accessed cross-cultural communication training?			
	Do you have a plan for effectively orienting new immigrant employees?			
	Do you provide a mentor / sponsor / buddy to ease workplace adjustment for each new immigrant hire?			
	Do you have a plan for assisting your new immigrant employees to access language and other training?			
	Have you assisted your new immigrant employees to develop a career plan and next steps for training and development?			
	Have you reviewed your print and electronic company materials for "plain language" and to ensure that your staff and customers are graphically represented?			
	Have you reviewed the cultural diversity related best practices of other companies? Have you considered becoming an "award" winner?			
	Have you set up ways to "celebrate" diversity?			

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www.getintheknow.ca

