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The business case for diversity

The face of our workforce is changing

Census data from 2001 shows that immigrants represented almost 70% of the total growth of the labour force over the previous decade. Statistics Canada predicts that by 2011, immigration could account for virtually all of our country's labour force growth.

To succeed in the future, Canadian businesses will need to hire immigrants to meet workforce needs. Companies that can increase the diversity of their workforce today will be prepared as our country begins to rely on immigrants to fuel both population and workforce growth.

An Aging Population

- ↑ The Canadian government estimates that, by 2015, approximately 48% of the working population will be between the ages of 45 and 64, compared to 35% in 2004.
- ↑ 46% of baby boomers – those born between 1946 and 1966, are close to their retirement or pre-retirement years.

Here are some of the reasons Canada's population and its workforce are undergoing a seismic shift that will affect every employer:

- Aging baby boomers are moving toward retirement.
- Lower birth rates are leading to fewer young people entering the workforce.
- Demand is increasing for more highly educated and skilled workers.

For London region employers these demographic and workforce changes have already had impact:

- Attracting and retaining skilled workers is more difficult than in the past.
- Job vacancies take longer to fill.
- The traditional methods for attracting skilled employees are no longer working.

As these demographic and workforce shifts have accelerated, there has been another change. Increasing numbers of skilled immigrants are coming to Canada and entering the workforce. Many employers have already discovered and are tapping into this valuable pool of talented workers. In the coming years, these individuals – who we refer to as Global Talent – will play a major role in our regional workforce.

Businesses that depend on their ability to attract and retain a productive and resilient workforce, must prepare themselves to hire more newcomers and become an employer of choice for an increasingly diverse workforce.

The good news is that many of the changes you make to attract and retain newcomers to Canada, will also strengthen your ability to attract all workers.

*Annaliza Arriola,
an Administrator at
Trudell Medical International*



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Fulfilling Canada's promise

We make an unspoken promise to newcomers that Canada is a land of opportunity. Immigrants are allowed entry based on a point system that favours those with high levels of education and skills. Consequently, newcomers assume that the same qualities and experiences that allowed them to come here will be respected and in demand by employers. They believe that if they are educated, skilled and willing to work hard, they will quickly find meaningful employment.

The reality is that many newcomers do find career success here, but the path is often longer and more complicated than it needs to be. Many immigrants who are well educated, skilled, experienced, eager and prepared to work, remain unemployed or underemployed for far too long.

That's what Global Talent is all about – meeting the workforce demands of employers, while fulfilling Canada's promise to newcomers.

2005 Immigration to Canada

- ▲ In 2005, a total of 262,236 new immigrants landed in Canada, an 11% increase over 2004. Over 140,000 came to Ontario. 60% of immigrants landed in the economic class, 24% in the family class, and 14% were refugees.

— Citizenship and Immigration Canada,
The Monitor, 2006 Issue 2

"At WIL Employment Connections, we work with many individuals who we know will be truly outstanding employees for the right company.

We also believe it is important to be authentic, to tell employers the truth. We don't say – these people are ready for anything. Instead we say – take the time to get to know this person, allow them to understand your work culture and gain confidence: then get ready, because you're going to have a great employee!"

— Susan Koning
WIL Employment Connections

"For many employers, the focus will have to be on educating managers on the business case for hiring newcomers. 3M provides diversity training for all managers. We also offer managers tips on how to conduct interviews that level the playing field for all applicants, such as recognizing international work experience and credentials, and looking at transferable skills."

— Phyllis Retty
Country Leader for Human Resources
3M Canada