



*Yahya Almoufadhhal, Dafalla Yousif, Syed Haider – Brokers at Checker Limousine*

## Turning a job into a business

### Voyageur Transportation – Checker Limousine

It is a classic taxi experience – learning that the person driving you to your doctor's appointment is actually a physician – or an engineer, or holds a PhD in philosophy! It is not a myth. Many newcomers who were respected professionals in their country of origin are accepting these jobs in Canada – and some have even turned them into a successful venture!

Such is the case at Voyageur Transportation's Checker Limousine division, where management estimates that about 65% of their brokers and drivers (both are independent contractors) are immigrants. Brokers can own and manage more than one car and can establish a successful business doing so.

At Checker, an up-scale taxi alternative, drivers wear uniforms, drive luxury sedans and are expected to provide a higher level of service – not difficult if you are a former lawyer, engineer or business owner.

Brad Rice of Voyageur Transportation is Division Manager for Checker Limousine.

“Many of our drivers have that international customer service experience. They appreciate the opportunity to be entrepreneurial, to have flexibility and they understand that the income they make is often dependent on the level of service they provide.”

Syed Haider has a commerce degree and owned a building material store in his native Pakistan. He began driving for Checker five years ago and is now a broker with five cars and eleven drivers working for him.

Dafalla Yousif came to Canada with an engineering degree from his homeland of Sudan, a diploma from Italy, a Master's from Holland and PhD from England. He did some research contract work when he came to London, but found that he was able to turn the opportunities offered as a Checker broker and driver into an excellent way to support his family.

Yahya Almoufadhhal had just started to practice law in his native Iraq when the Gulf War drove him to Saudi Arabia as a refugee. He landed in Vancouver but was lured to London by a friend. Yahya enjoys his work for Checker, where he is now a broker but as many of his Iraqi classmates and friends are now judges, he is considering a return to Iraq where he can practice law.

Each story is different, but all three men at one time or another applied for various jobs and were turned away because they lacked Canadian job experience. They were left wondering why employers were not more interested in putting their skills and education to work in Canada. Instead, they have built a success story of their own.