

# onBOARD

## Immigration wave Being Overlooked

It's no secret that immigration will have a monumental impact on Canada's workforce in the next few years — and never more so than in the Toronto region. From Statistics Canada to virtually every media outlet, we're deluged with information on boomer demographics, skills shortages, and the plight of internationally educated professionals (IEPs) finding meaningful, well-compensated work.

While all this attention has brought issues such as credentialing of globally acquired education to the front and centre, a vital aspect of this immigration wave is being overlooked. Considerable global research confirms values, beliefs and perspectives vary significantly by country of origin, realizing a disconnect between Canadian expectations of successful workforce performance and those of IEPs.

According to Rhonda Singer, president of Progress Career Planning Institute (PCPI), "Business leaders who develop cultural intelligence in their organizations will have a significant competitive advantage in the global economy. "Companies who ignore cultural difference assume business is business is the same, the world over". However research shows a diverse workforce outperforms a homogenous organization

on many bottom line levels, including higher productivity, engagement, and retention.

Simply stated, cultural intelligence is about gaining increased knowledge and mindfulness of the values associated with different cultures, and how these values impact workplace behaviour. Cultural norms impact today's IEPs on a number of levels, notes Singer. "Our institute assists thousands of immigrants annually to find jobs. Data from major organizations indicates that performance improves significantly when employers and candidates alike become better aligned with each others' cultures and values. This can be facilitated through a myriad of approaches from providing appropriate cultural training, followed by organizational incentives to adapt behaviour, cultural competency assessments, and recruitment/retention strategy reviews."

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Rhonda Singer  
PCPI

Rhonda Singer, President PCPI with Mayor David Miller at the 2006 IEP Think Tank.



Since 2003, under Singer's leadership, PCPI has facilitated many IEP — focused initiatives with leading corporate and public sector partners, including three highly successful Breaking Barriers Building Bridges conferences, and, most recently, the IEP Think Tank which garnered Mayor David Miller's enthusiastic endorsement.

**PCPI**

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