

Native niche A fast-growing and young source of talent that employers ignore at their peril **Page 2** ➔



Report on Diversity

STRATEGIES



JAMES TURNER

HIRE LOCAL, THINK GLOBAL

Assembling a workforce that looks like the greater community has become a business imperative. Equally important is doing it the right way

BY TERRENCE BELFORD

As Jason Colley explains it, in 2004 senior management at American Express Canada looked out the windows of the company's new headquarters in Markham and realized the world had changed. Geography helped spark social change. Markham, one of Toronto's northern suburbs, had become a city with an extraordinarily diverse population. No longer a farming town dominated by white Anglo Saxons, Markham was now home to expanding Chinese and South Asian communities. In most families, women worked as well as the men.

If the company was going to recruit staff locally, its hiring and retention policies would have to change. Diversity would have to become a fundamental pillar of corporate culture, says Mr. Colley, manager of talent acquisition, the man responsible since 2007 for finding ways to dip into existing pools of qualified women, ethnic minorities and those with physical disabilities.

"At the same time our customer base was changing," says Mr. Colley. "There was a realization that there were sound business reasons to have our staff reflect the various communities we served."

American Express is just a case in point. Major corporations are fostering diversity in the workplace as good business sense, not only to reflect changing customer bases today, but as a strategy for the long term.

Organizations such as the Canadian Federation of Independent Business say that one

of the greatest challenges for any enterprise - large or small - is recruiting and retaining workers. They predict that as baby boomers move into retirement, that challenge is certain to escalate.

At the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management, associate dean Beatrix Dart says she can think of at least four sound business reasons for all enterprises to pursue diversity in the workforce. Her first echoes those who point to the shrinking pool of available people following the boomer bulge.

She also says that business is increasingly international in nature and having people on staff fluent in foreign languages and cultural savvy can prove a tremendous asset. Then there is the need to have an organization reflect the communities it serves: That just makes sound branding sense, she says.

The fourth point reflects a change of perception as to who is the decision maker in households.

"Surveys show that women have the greatest influence in 70 per cent of household purchases," she says. "With new cars they are the primary influencers in 60 per cent of buy decisions. It just makes sense to strengthen the female component and use their insights."

"All organizations have to start looking for ways to reach deeper into the pools of available talent within their communities," says Jane Allen, chief diversity officer at Deloitte Touche LLP, the international accounting and consulting company with

7,900 staff across Canada. "It simply makes good business sense."

The challenge for many, however, is how to get started and then how to create internal systems and processes to ensure programs created to achieve diversity do not wither on the corporate vine.

At both Amex Canada and Deloitte the process started with benchmarking, a complete demographic survey of just how diverse staff was, say both Mr. Colley and Ms. Allen. Deloitte even brought in an outside consultant to help structure change and advise on the process.

"The idea is to create a baseline, which can be used to measure progress," says Ms. Allen.

The next step for both was creation of a company-wide diversity council. In Amex's case it has 12 members from across Canada and at Deloitte 18. The council acts as a central organizing group, monitoring change and reporting to both management and staff.

Step three was to create a series of task forces with each given responsibility to organize, launch and monitor specific diversity initiatives.

"At Amex one of the top priorities was not just broadening recruitment but broadening retention programs as well," says Mr. Colley. "Our goal was to have units such as our call centre and credit risk groups - those that deal directly with customers - more closely reflect our client base."

A top priority at Deloitte became increasing the number of women management.

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DIVERSITY PLAN

BENCHMARK WHERE YOU ARE TODAY. Crunch the numbers on your current demographics so you have something to compare your progress to.

EXECUTIVE BUY-IN. Senior management must support programs designed to recruit, train and advance the careers of minorities, women and those with physical disabilities.

ACCOUNTABILITY. Programs must come with clear individual and group accountability for their success and tangible rewards and penalties.

TRAINING AND COACHING. Create mentoring and training programs to support individual development, as well as employee networks.

PUT IT IN WRITING. Base performance management and promotion on bias-free criteria.

CREATE STRUCTURES. Create an internal diversity council and dedicated task forces for specific programs.

Source: Deloitte & Touche

SAME-SEX AT WORK

'This is really a huge social change'

Workplace rights for gay workers and their partners have come a long way

BY MARLENE HABIB

Long before same-sex marriage was legalized in Canada in 2005, men and women commonly saw little benefit to being open about non-heterosexual relationships in the workplace.

In the 1980s and even into the '90s, it was more the place of high-profile gay activists like the late George Hislop, advocacy groups like Egale and big unions to fight for the equality-rights battles of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (often referred to as GLBT) individuals in work boardrooms and the courts.

For instance, when it came to trying to access family dental, medical, parental leave and other coverage long associated with workers only in opposite-sex relationships, or being open about one's sexual orientation, "coming out" was commonly seen as being out of the workplace comfort zone.

Although times - and work-environment attitudes and policies - have changed dramatically, many advocates, union leaders, employers and employees say the road to workplace diversity is smoother, but still has its bumps.

For their part, employers are increasingly incorporating GLBT employees in their diversity efforts.

Among the big banks, at the forefront of including GLBT workers in diversity plans, Toronto-Dominion Bank "has been working hard to create an environment where every employee and customer feels comfortable, regardless of sexual orientation," says Beth Grudzinski, vice-president, corporate diversity.

Amin Sunderji, who started in customer service 19 years ago at TD in Vancouver and held various positions before moving to Toronto for a promotion, says he started taking advantage of same-sex benefits as soon as he and his partner were eligible - a year after the two began living together.

He recalls rising through the bank's ranks right after university - including holding man-

ager and human resources roles.

"My first branch [in Vancouver] that I managed was an Indo-Canadian-focused branch with a lot of Indo-Canadian customers that are very conservative in their way of thinking, and I was managing close to 40 staff, but they made it so comfortable for me, as did my bosses, when I was coming out about 14 years ago," recalls Mr. Sunderji, 43, now senior manager of corporate diversity at TD in Toronto's downtown financial district.

"Today, when I come to work, my co-workers don't think of me as a gay employee. They think of me as a fellow employee," he says.

TD, with more than 45,000 Canadian-based employees, made same-sex benefits available to employees beginning in 2002 - around the time many provinces were amending various laws to come in line with court rulings in favour of same-sex benefits, and other rights - when it integrated with Canada Trust, which started its same-sex benefits plans in 1995.

An Employee Pride Network, founded in 2005, has about 600 TD members who are in the GLBT community or support it. It helps gather feedback to shape strategies at the bank, and lets employees share ideas and experiences - efforts that have helped boost the number of employees accessing same-sex benefits by 36 per cent between March 2006 and March 2008.

TD is also a chief sponsor of Out on Bay Street, an annual conference and career fair for GLBT students that gets the support of leading financial services companies.

Gerald Hunt, a professor at Toronto's Ryerson University, says such efforts would never have been commonplace two decades ago.

"This is really a huge social change that's gone on," says Dr. Hunt, chair of Ryerson's human resources management and organizational behaviour department.

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INSIDE



The new face of recruiting
How immigrants get jobs
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Weaving diversity

Deloitte.

into the fabric of Canadian business

Learn more about our diversity initiatives at deloitte.com/ca/diversity

ABORIGINAL EMPLOYMENT

'I found myself. That's what motivated me'

Actively hiring aboriginal workers not only has social benefits – it also opens up a pool of untapped talent

BY MICHAEL RYVAL

Only a few years ago, Chantell Quill was a single mother on social assistance, struggling to raise two daughters while finishing her Grade 12 high-school diploma.

Today, the 30-year-old member of the Cree Nation is a second-year business administration student at Red River College in Winnipeg. She is also well on her way to becoming a banker.

Thanks to being a recipient of the Ron Jamieson Aboriginal Scholarship and a summer internship at Bank of Montreal, Ms. Quill discovered her chosen path in the financial services field.

"I started meeting good people who motivated me to follow my dreams," recalls Ms. Quill. "I found myself. That's what motivated me."

Ms. Quill took another program aimed at aboriginal women that taught computer skills, and then tried her luck at the scholarship which provides financial support and summer employment at BMO, where Mr. Jamieson, a Mohawk from Six Nations, was a former senior executive.

Although she had to overcome the discouragement of a case worker who questioned her decision to attend college, Ms. Quill persevered and gained confidence at the college and the bank, where she trained last summer as a financial services manager.

"This experience established that I'm ready for the workplace and have a lot to offer," says Ms. Quill, who is returning to the bank for a second summer.

Like Ms. Quill, scores of aboriginals are entering the workplace through scholarships, internships and recruitment programs. It's largely driven by a mixture of corporate social responsibility and a desire to tap the talent of the 1.2 million-strong aboriginal community. The fastest-growing segment of the Canadian

population, it is also the youngest, since 48 per cent is under the age of 24.

"When you look at this body of talent of young people, what they need is to develop skill sets to fulfill their responsibilities as future employees," says Clint Davis, president and CEO of Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business, a Toronto-based non-profit organization that offers resources and programs to mainstream and aboriginal companies that foster economic opportunities for aboriginals across Canada.

An Inuit who holds a Dalhousie University law degree, Mr. Davis notes the native community's grim history of high poverty and unemployment and low levels of education. "We are definitely playing catch-up. It takes generational change to build that level of skill foundation, and a level of confidence that we are creating among young aboriginal leaders.

There is a significant educational gap between aboriginals and non-aboriginals, he acknowledges. Yet it is narrowing, as 51 per cent of aboriginals achieved a level of post-secondary education in 2006, compared to 23 per cent in 1986, according to Mr. Davis. In contrast, 62 per cent of non-aboriginals completed a level of post-secondary education.

"As industries evolve, and more technical skills are required in the future, aboriginals must attain these skills to get the jobs and earn a living," says Mr. Davis.

Being seen as an employer of choice is a goal for BMO Financial Group, says April Taggart, senior vice-president, talent management and diversity. "The aboriginal community is a terrific source of talent and the only growing source, except for immigration."

BMO has long believed in supporting the communities in which it does business, adds Ms. Taggart, who is based in Toronto. "There are a number of aboriginal communities that



Chantell Quill, a business admin student at Red River College in Winnipeg. JOHN WOODS FOR THE GLOBE AND MAIL

When you look at this body of talent of young people, what they need is to develop skill sets to fulfill their responsibilities as future employees.

Clint Davis, CEO of Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business

are customers. It makes sense from a talent and a business perspective," she says, adding that the bank employs almost 350 native staff.

In 2008, BMO awarded 14 scholarships worth \$3,000 each. Six of the student recipients accepted summer internships with the bank in areas such as commercial banking and wealth management. One has become a permanent employee.

"Our core reason for doing this is about building relationships with an important pool

of talent," says Ms. Taggart.

Adding talent is also a concern for the accounting profession. Shelly Brown, an audit partner at Deloitte & Touche, in Saskatoon, Sask., has been involved since the fall of 2004 with the InRoads programs, which are run through the Edwards School of Business at the University of Saskatchewan.

"We wanted to build relationships with aboriginal students at an earlier stage of their career," says Ms. Brown. "One of our challenges was that not many were going into the accounting program. They didn't see a career as a chartered accountant."

That changed, however, when summer students got a taste of the profession. Six aboriginal students have joined the firm, although not all came through the InRoads program.

Jason Schell, 32, worked for the firm in 2005 and 2006. A Métis who came on board permanently in 2007, Mr. Schell was completing a Bachelor of Commerce degree when he heard about the InRoads pro-

gram.

"I wasn't sure what I wanted to do with my degree," says Mr. Schell, who credits his parents with pushing him to go to university. "But when I worked with Deloitte in Saskatoon I decided I wanted to get the chartered accountant designation."

"And there's a lot of camaraderie," says Mr. Schell, adding that there are about 40 Métis chartered accountants but only two aboriginals in the province.

KPMG is also getting into the act. Last November, it became one of two accounting firms involved in a mentoring program sponsored by the Martin Aboriginal Initiative, a charitable organization funded by former prime minister Paul Martin.

Starting later this month, the program will provide mentors for five aboriginal high school students in Brantford, Ont. who have expressed an interest in chartered accounting. BDO Dunwoody is providing mentors to three aboriginal students in Fort Francis, Ont. » Special to The Globe and Mail

ABOVE PAR

Companies looking to improve their relationship with the aboriginal community can turn to the Progressive Aboriginal Relations (PAR) program, launched in 2001 by the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB).

The program requires that companies set goals and assess themselves in four areas: employment, business development, individual skill development, and community relations.

PAR recognizes companies at three levels of achievement, gold, silver and bronze. Each firm must complete a self-assessment, which is verified by the National Quality Institute (NQI), a Toronto-based independent organization that measures organizational excellence. NQI makes recommendations to an independent jury of business leaders that in turn awards the PAR hallmarks.

"To get to the gold level requires a significant period of time. It is a major process to begin working with aboriginal people and then reaching a point where you are seen as a company of choice," says Mr. Davis.

Twenty leading companies participate in the program, including The Bank of Montreal, Diavik Diamond Mines Ltd., and SaskTel.

Syncrude Canada Ltd. is at the gold level.

Syncrude has 5,000 employees, 8.5 per cent of whom are identified as aboriginals.

Among other initiatives, it has provided \$2-million in assistance for trades training in Fort McMurray, Alta., and awarded scholarships to 138 aboriginal students since 1989. Since 1992, Syncrude has also spent more than \$1-billion on goods and services from aboriginal-owned businesses.

For more information, go to www.ccab.com/par.

Not cut from the same cloth.

Still think diversity is just a warm and fuzzy subject? More about box-ticking, going through the motions, and show rather than substance?

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REPORT ON BUSINESS

RECRUITING

New faces, new customers

Reaching out to immigrants and visible minorities brings companies new perspectives and access to more clients

BY DEIRDRE KELLY

It wasn't what you'd expect a staff member to be doing at the corporate offices of Bayer Canada.

Wearing a traditional Chinese costume from her native Hong Kong, Suzanne Wan was performing a fan dance. The audience consisted of colleagues, mostly newcomers to Canada like herself, watching as Ms. Wan unfurled the brightly coloured fans, making them look like birds in flight.

This was more than a show. As a participant in Diversity Day, a company initiative meant to showcase the various cultures at play within Bayer, Ms. Wan used the occasion to underscore her value as an employee within the global organization – her ethnicity.

"Different cultures bring different perspectives," says Ms. Wan, who has worked at Bayer in Human Resources for the past 27 years, first in Hong Kong and, after immigrating in 1988, continuing at the company's HealthCare and Materials division in Mississauga, Ont.

"In business today, there are no absolute right or wrong ways of doing things. It's about being open to different opinions and ideas that might come from different backgrounds and cultures, and celebrating them."

Having left the compliance gate long ago, Bayer has strategically positioned itself as an industry leader in actively creating an equal opportunity environment for all its staff.

To Helen Sraka, Bayer's head of Talent Management, focusing on diversity just makes good business sense.

"Canada has a lot of immigrants, and in that pool of newcomers is a lot of talent," says Ms. Sraka, a Croatian by heritage who joined Bayer in 1984.

"You need to be able to look at that diversity across the board because a company is only as good as its strength in diversity. A diverse environ-

ment drives a business forward because there is naturally an abundance of different opinions and ideas that spark creativity and help set an organization apart from its competitors."

By diversity, Ms. Sraka goes beyond a narrow definition of racial and ethnic differences to embrace also gender and generational divisions in describing the full spectrum of Bayer's 900 employees. New mothers, for instance, are allowed flex time to accommodate the demands of their offspring, while new Canadians are given English-language training and mentoring with an already established member of staff.

New employees are hired largely from within Canadian universities and schools where students are representative of the diverse Canadian population.

So-called visible minorities often approach Bayer on their own, attracted by the company's growing reputation as an equal-opportunity employer. Bayer also seeks out new immigrants for its work force, in particular physicians and pharmacists from other countries unlicensed to practice in Canada.

"We pro-actively reach out to that pool of candidates," says Ms. Wan. "We go to local colleges to recruit them for our medical department."

Among these is Humber College, which offers programs to foreign medical personnel looking for careers in clinical operations and drug safety – fields of interest to Bayer.

At Sun Life Financial Inc., new Canadians are sometimes hired before stepping foot in the country.

Founded in Montreal in 1865 by Irish immigrant Matthew Hamilton Gault, the financial services company seeks new recruits through embassies in foreign countries where potential immigrants first apply to enter Canada. The company believes that hiring sales agents and advisers from with-



India native Vinod Karna is director of Diversity Recruitment at Sun Life. PETER POWER/THE GLOBE AND MAIL

in a particular ethnic community allows them to better communicate their products to people of similar backgrounds in Canada.

At least that is how Sonia Del Rosario got her start with the company 22 years ago. "I got recruited through the

embassy in my native Philippines," says Ms. Del Rosario, Sun Life's financial adviser in Ottawa. "They knew who was a good candidate for immigration from within the community, and my name was put forward."

Managing a pharmaceuticals

company at the time, she was at first reluctant to move into financial services.

"I am a nurse by profession and I hadn't worked in the field before," Ms. Del Rosario says.

But Sun Life offered on-the-job training, and the opportu-

nity to work in her mother tongue offering services to people from her own culture.

"I believe that working with my ethnic community has provided me with a natural niche. Not only can I serve them in their first language, but I also understand what keeps them awake at night and that understanding is key to success."

While Sun Life has long opened its doors to new Canadians, over the last two years hiring has focused on recruiting ethno-Canadians within the country, again through community referrals, says Jacqueline McMullen, assistant vice-president of Sun Life's Career Sales Force Growth division.

"As Canada grows and becomes a more culturally diverse country we need to ensure that we have advisers who represent all our key markets across Canada," Ms. McMullen says.

Last year, of the 700 new advisers hired, 34 per cent were new or ethno-Canadians, while 12 per cent were new graduates and 38 per cent were women.

India native Vinod Karna is director of Diversity Recruitment at Sun Life's headquarters in Waterloo, Ont., says that there are emerging opportunities among ethnic groups in Alberta, Saskatchewan and in Halifax.

He says managers can go a long way toward understanding ethnic communities by looking at their publications, attending cultural events and making connections with community leaders.

Mr. Karna adds that newcomers make for excellent salespeople "because we are driven to succeed in our new environment."

But, as Ms. Wan demonstrates at Bayer, immigrants bring to the workplace more than just a willingness to work hard.

"We bring something fresh to the table," Ms. Wan says. "We open people's eyes to an idea of diversity as a state of mind."

FROM PAGE 1 » SAME-SEX



Ryerson professor Gerald Hunt, right, and his partner David Rayside. FRED LUM/THE GLOBE AND MAIL

'We have a long way to go'

"It's one of the major social-legal change stories of our time," says Dr. Hunt, who is also with the school's Diversity Institute in Management and Technology.

Dr. Hunt also just celebrated his 20th anniversary with his live-in partner, David Rayside, a political science professor at the University of Toronto. The two men are enrolled in same-sex benefits at both Ryerson and U of T.

"We're both lucky and have really good employers with excellent benefit packages," says Dr. Hunt. "There has never been any question about our [benefits], but we both have been together long enough and are old enough to see how unbelievable the changes have been when you look back."

Marie Kelly is now assistant director for Ontario and the Atlantic provinces for the United Steelworkers, which represents about 750,000 workers in Canada and the U.S. in industries as varied as steel and mining, hotels and restaurants, manufacturing and health care, as well as universities.

In the early 1990s, Ms. Kelly, a lawyer, worked in the USW's legal office, and still recalls that the main fear back in the days when same-sex benefits weren't considered a legal right was being outed – if a worker claimed discrimination, he or she would need to file a grievance that would mean making the issue a matter of public record.

"It wasn't about collective bargaining ... it was about the culture and the society," says Ms. Kelly. "It's changing, but 15 years ago, there wasn't as open

and accommodating a view out there when it comes to same-sex relationships.

"I can tell you that really, it's no longer an issue in the sense that it's become such a part of our culture that ... we rarely find ourselves butting heads as we did 15 years ago," adds Ms. Kelly. "Tons of arbitration decisions make it clear employers have to provide same-sex benefits, and for those companies without unions, there are human rights tribunals that say that."

Helen Kennedy, Toronto-based executive director of Egale, recognizes the advancements major employers in particular have made on the road to equality for GLBT workers, but adds: "We have a long way to go."

"Yes it's fine with large companies and corporations which have equity and diversity offices that oversee these areas, but it's still very difficult for a lot of people out there. I get calls all the time from people saying they're being discriminated against."

When it comes to being on the ground and implementing some of these policies, especially at smaller companies, we have a long way to go."

Some say the push for same-sex coverage gained prominence in the mid-1980s, after Mr. Hislop started his fight for Canada Pension Plan survivor benefits following the death of his partner of 28 years.

The Supreme Court of Canada ruled in 2007 that a federal law denying benefits to spouses with same-sex mates who died before Jan. 1, 1998 was unconstitutional. But the courts also limited the retroactive

payments to one year – despite attempts by surviving spouses to claim benefits dating back to 1985, when the Charter of Rights and Freedoms' equality provisions for same-sex couples took effect.

Dr. Hunt says unions – including the Canadian Union of Public Employees and the Canadian Auto Workers – were also at the forefront of the same-sex benefits battle.

"A lot of it started at the bargaining table – beginning in the mid-1980s and very, very active starting in the early 1990s," says Dr. Hunt. "Union members were telling unions 'We're not getting access to the goodies and you have to fight for us.' Unions by [the early '90s] were starting to take some of their cases to the court after employers were saying, 'We can't do it.'"

But unions filed grievances and turned to the courts to argue discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation – rights later confirmed to be protected under human rights legislation – and that led to provinces changing their laws affirming same-sex benefits and other workplace rights, noted Dr. Hunt.

"Increasingly organizations started seeing the light and [granting benefits to GLBT workers in live-in relationships] on their own without union pressure. ... Today, there is no employer in Canada who could deny benefits [to employees in same-sex relationships]. You have to provide the same benefits structure for all workers regardless of race, gender and sexual orientation."

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Big Blue's global reach

IBM's chief diversity officer helps unify people across time zones and cultures

BY RANDY RAY

Diversity has particular global importance to IBM. About two-thirds of its revenues come from outside the United States. To remain competitive, IBM needs employee populations that mirror and understand the markets it serves uniting different cultures, languages, geographic origins, professions and perspectives into one globally integrated enterprise.

As a result of its diversity programs, IBM has experienced a 500-per-cent increase in female executives since 1997. Sixty-five per cent of its global female executives are working mothers; and there are 16 female country managers in locations such as Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand and Spain. IBM's U.S. African-American executive population has grown by 130 per cent over the past 10 years.

RAY: *What is the role of a diversity officer?*

RON GLOVER: The job involves helping a company connect externally to various communities to improve the pipeline of talent and working to create a positive environment inside the company. A diversity officer has to improve the leadership ability of a team to manage people across time zones, cultures and language differences. IBM is a globally integrated company; so if you work here, you are likely to be on teams where people speak a different language, work in a different company, with a different perspective on technology and who come from a profession entirely different than yours. We are always calling on resources from across the globe to work together, so my ability to understand how someone in Asia deals with conflict, hierarchy and communicating becomes a critical ingredient in melding people as a team.

IBM as a company can succeed only if it gets the best and brightest people in the marketplace. We understand that those really smart, bright and capable people can be found in every part of the human family and that no race, gender or socio-economic class has the corner on the market for talented people. If we want them to choose IBM, we have to provide an environment where those differences are understood. It is my job to help the company make a connection

to those parts of the community by reaching out with thoughtful practices to make sure that happens. We also offer programs and policies to ensure we understand and learn about those similarities and differences, and that we engage in ways to teach people how to benefit from those differences.

What does the job involve?

For me and my team, the task is to figure out externally where we are most likely to make contact with people who are not always visible, who we can use as a pool of talent. We work with universities, professional associations and non-profit organizations that are trying to develop talent within various communities, such as women's groups or associations of Hispanic engineers, so we can get our message out. These organizations have the same aim as us, so we partner with them. As a consequence, when people in that community look for opportunities, they think positively about IBM.

My team also has specific activities, such as holding summer camps that get kids interested in math and science. We work with diversity associations when they run recruiting fairs to ensure jobs at IBM are visible to all recruits. The end goal is to connect to communities that have the talent we need.

When people of various backgrounds come to our company, we work to help them form diversity network groups in the company, and then we engage with other employees to understand needs of people in those groups. Aboriginal employees, for example, can form a diversity network and they will support each other, mentor each other to improve their professional and technical skills, to share insights with their community and with their colleagues. This improves engagement and dialogue and they help us deliver further mentoring at summer camps and with students at universities.

Do you get buy-in from your executives?

Our executives are better than just supportive. The way we manage is that everyone who reports directly to the CEO has direct responsibility for one of the communities — women, Asians, Hispanics, etc. There are Hispanic executives,



The end goal is to connect to communities that have the talent we need.

aboriginal executives that represent a community, who, in fact, sponsor that community, and we work with them to understand the needs of that community to design responsive programs.

For example, the senior vice-presidents who are the sponsor of a particular community design programs to help managers understand how the attitudes of women impact women. Three to five years after we started doing this, the number of women executives has increased at IBM by over 500 per cent.

Do you feel your role as diversity officer is a public relations kind of job, something for a company's optics, or is it something that actually makes a difference?

IBM runs on the competence of its people; the success of the company is in direct relationship to how good our people are. We are in a war for good people around the globe and the talent we need is in short supply. We believe diversity means we are more effective in terms of the productivity of our global teams, which are the core of our success.

Are there differences between how the diversity issue operates in the workplace in Canada as opposed to America or other parts of the world?

Yes. Canada has its own issues. In Canada you are looking at shifts in demographics. Aboriginal people coming to the workplace and gaining real opportunities, differences in the language and culture between Quebec and the rest of the country.

Canada is a country with multiple languages and cultures and all of these things have an impact on what goes on in the workplace. And there

are a whole different set of issues in Central America around class, educational opportunities and women that are not found in Canada.

Does having a diverse workplace actually help the company's bottom line?

The simple fact of the matter is that there is great talent everywhere but if everyone comes from the same place, speaks the same language and goes to the same school, what are the chances of getting a lot of innovation? They are not good. There is a difference in the way we experience and look at the world and that is one of the engines of innovation.

Diversity is also helpful in the markets we deal with. By having people from many communities, we are more likely to understand the needs and expectations of the marketplace; having someone from South Africa means local knowledge, local experience and local connections and a better chance of success than flying someone in [to South Africa] from New York or France or Germany.

To do business in many countries you need to understand the country, its companies, its people and its culture. The perception of people in those countries is that we are a local company, although we operate globally. We sell to women-owned businesses globally, and to the small and medium business sector and we sell to visible minorities in Canada and to U.S. businesses owned by minorities. We believe we do \$1-billion worth of revenue per year selling products and services into those communities.

How does diversity contribute to employee satisfaction?

Employee satisfaction at IBM is measured by simple issues, such as attrition rates or people's commitment to stay with the company. Another interesting measurement is when we ask people to help us recruit talent from various communities. How many people are willing to do that for IBM? The answer is that I have yet to have an occasion where I have called on my employees where they have not shown up on work time, after hours and on weekends. They help because they care about the issue of diversity.

» Special to The Globe and Mail

FROM PAGE 1 » STRATEGIES

Diversity is still a work in progress

» When Mr. Colley took over his new position in 2007 he began to reach out to non traditional sources for recruiting such as job sites directed towards aboriginals and specific ethnic communities.

"We also started working with student groups such as the aboriginal students' organization at Ryerson University," he says. "It is not so much an effort to hire X number from any group, but to ensure they are not overlooked in the process," he says.

Key to any diversity initiative is creating an internal structure that makes managers ac-

countable for expanding diversity in their business unit and supporting their efforts, explains Ms. Allen.

"That means identifying who makes the decisions or influences recruitment and retention, right from the board level down to everyday staff," she says. "Then we created individual programs for each unit with set targets and a monitoring system to check on progress."

Those programs can indeed be broad ranging. Amex, for example, now has two dozen managers working as mentors to new Canadians trying to make the most of their train-

ing in the homeland in the Canadian workplace. Deloitte will introduce its own mentoring program this year, but unlike the one at Amex it will be aimed at exposing existing staff to the challenges faced by their managers and bosses.

At Deloitte there are company sponsored affinity groups among employees where gays, lesbians, the physically disabled, women and Canadians from a broad range of ethnic backgrounds can network, often becoming incubators for new programs and a continuing resource to tap into their own community for new corporate talent, says Ms. Allen.

At Amex, the company developed partnerships with groups such as the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council to participate in TRIEC programs designed to speed the entry of new Canadians into the work force.

At both companies diversity is still a work in progress. Evidence of its success is still chiefly anecdotal.

"Measurement is probably still a year away," says Deloitte's Ms. Allen. "But I can see we are seeing very encouraging results in things like performance reports and in internal discussions."

» Special to The Globe and Mail



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HIRING IMMIGRANTS

Wading into the talent pool

Stories of skilled immigrants who can't find suitable work in Canada have been legion. But as awareness spreads of what employers have been missing, opportunities are growing, **Tavia Grant** finds

In 1906, a young man named Samuel Cohen arrived in Montreal with nothing more than a few dollars in his pocket and the name of a shop owner who happened to come from his village in the Ukraine. This newcomer spoke neither English nor French and knew not a soul.

He got lucky. The shop owner gave the man space in the corner of his store to start a shoe-repair service. Years of hard work, and the operation expanded into socks. Eventually, it became a successful Montreal-based clothing store.

More than a century later, and Sam's grandson, David, is hoping to replicate his grandfather's success by establishing an online social network between immigrants in the process of coming to Canada, and established Canadians who can offer advice on how to find jobs and settle in the country.

"Were it not for the generosity of that shop owner, who really wasn't a friend of his but who was willing to help out someone from the same hometown, it would have been much harder," says Mr. Cohen, an immigration lawyer for the past 25 years.

His grandfather's experience, and years of observation in his own work that immigrants who find meaningful work in Canada tend to have connections here, is the inspiration for a social networking website he launched this month. He calls it "Facebook with a purpose," and the site, Loon Lounge, has already chalked up 15,000 members from 191 countries.

"The idea is to find a way for people to connect even before they're here. And it's based on the premise that people, when they are here, are willing to help."

So now someone from, say Nigeria, can post a profile and find people in Canada from his hometown. A professional engineer from India could ask questions about job availability in different cities. Or a Canadian hospital recruiter can find and hire a nurse from the Philippines before she even arrives in the country.

It's one of several new ideas popping up across Canada to better integrate immigrants into the work force. And as employers realize that hiring newcomers is good for business — boosting trade ties, generating new ideas and helping serve ethnic communities more effectively — they too, are rethinking old practices.

"We've adapted our interviewing techniques for newcomers," says Daniela Perciasepe, director of human resources at Enbridge Gas Distribution Inc. in Toronto.

That's after noticing many new Canadians, nervous about a job interview and anxious about their English, sometimes had trouble understanding or answering questions. It's not that they weren't qualified. It was that the formal interview environment was clouding their responses.

So, when interviewing newcomers for Enbridge's internship program, the company now lets them arrive an hour early. It distributes the questions in advance and gives people a chance to clarify wording and think over their answers.

"We recognized we would get a better sense of their strengths if we reduced their anxiety levels," Ms. Perciasepe says.



Nadeem Anwar, from Karachi, Pakistan; now at Scotiabank. Below, the Loon Lounge social networking site. KEVIN VAN PAASSEN/THE GLOBE AND MAIL



By the numbers

11.5%
The national unemployment rate for very recent immigrants (in Canada five years or less).

4.9%
The national unemployment rate for the Canadian-born population at that time.

36%
The proportion of immigrants aged 25 to 54 who had at least a bachelor's degree.

22%
The percentage of those born in Canada in the same age group with similar education levels.

60%
The proportion of immigrants who work in their skill area within six months of arrival.
» *StatScan (latest figures, based on the 2006 census), Canadian Council on Learning*

Enbridge's motivation to try and attract more immigrants is twofold: It wants to ensure its workers reflect the local community, and it recognizes that new Canadians will soon become the main source of growth in the country's labour force. "We just wanted to be ahead of that curve," she says. "We know there's lots that bring experience and education and we wanted to be sure we tapped into it."

Employers' attitudes toward hiring immigrants have shifted dramatically in the past year or two, said Marva Wisdom, a Guelph, Ont.-based consultant on diversity (who prefers the term "inclusivity.") "It will ramp up quickly within the next couple of years," she said. "So much research now shows that we are no longer isolated — that the global village is a much closer place than we think."

That said, "in terms of organizations that specifically go out and seek new immigrants, it's still not where it should be." Canada brings in about 250,000 immigrants a year and now has the second-highest proportion of immigrants among Western nations.

Many newcomers, however, struggle to become integrated into the work force. Scores of highly trained immigrants wind up working at jobs far below their capabilities. Canada's last census showed the earnings gap between immigrants and Canadian-born residents has widened in the past few decades.

Nadeem Anwar bucked that trend. The 42-year-old from Karachi, Pakistan, arrived in Toronto last March with his wife and three children.

So much research now shows that we are no longer isolated — that the global village is a much closer place than we think.

Diversity consultant Marva Wisdom

For months, he searched for jobs that would match his decade-long experience in financial services. No nibbles. Instead of settling for more casual work, he spent time volunteering and seeking out other professionals.

Last fall, he enrolled in a financial services connection program that helped him prepare for the Canadian Securities Course, revamp his résumé and do mock job interviews ("I learned that in interviews here, you must stay focused and not stray from the core thing.")

His revised résumé — and bolstered confidence — helped land him a full-time, permanent job in December at the Bank of Nova Scotia, where he's currently in training to become an account manager for small businesses.

"I wanted to be somewhere where there's a long-term opportunity to grow," he says. "I feel lucky to be here."

For Scotiabank, which operates in more than 50 countries, hiring people like Mr. Anwar remains a top priority — even as

the economy slows.

Involvement in programs that support hiring immigrants "is the one place where we're really not looking at cuts," said Deanna Matzanke, director of global employment strategies. "It's a great investment and we don't want to abandon it."

What's spurring Scotia? The wish to reflect growing immigrant populations among its staff and a constant need for more multilingual workers. As well, that global experience can help smooth transitions when the bank makes a merger or acquisition, Ms. Matzanke says.

Many cities across Canada are now offering newcomers programs that promote mentoring, internships, or a chance to network. In Halifax, for example, next month the city will launch a new approach to helping immigrants get connected. It has signed up 40 employers and professionals, who will have coffee with a newcomer to offer advice and answer questions. Each expert will then give the person three names they can call for further guidance.

"It's a pay-it-forward idea," said Fred Morley, executive vice-president and chief economist of the Greater Halifax Partnership economic development organization. "It gives people a one-on-one, personal experience and provides an opportunity to find a connection."

Back in Montreal, Mr. Cohen hopes his free-of-charge (and ad-free) website is another way to make those connections. "I just hope this will facilitate the path for new Canadians," he says.

RESOURCES

Selected organizations that link skilled immigrants with potential employers:

CASIP Umbrella organization with eight member agencies that helps internationally-trained people find jobs. www.casip.ca.

ASSOCIATION FOR NEW CANADIANS (NEWFOUNDLAND) Community-based organization that provides settlement and integration services for immigrants and refugees. www.anc-nf.ca.

METROPOLITAN IMMIGRANT SETTLEMENT ASSOCIATION Halifax-based association offers settlement services, English classes and help integrating newcomers into the work force. www.misa-nf.ca.

TRIEC Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council works with employers to raise awareness of the immigrant talent pool; offers mentoring and runs the website hireimmigrants.ca. www.triec.ca, www.hireimmigrants.ca

REGINA OPEN DOOR SOCIETY Employment assistance services introduction to Canadian work culture, job search techniques, resume preparation and referral to potential hiring opportunities. www.rods.sk.ca.

EDMONTON MENNONITE CENTRE FOR NEWCOMERS Career development programs include employment workshops, counselling, computer classes and specialized training. www.emcn.ab.ca

BC IMMIGRANT EMPLOYMENT COUNCIL Created in October to carry out a co-ordinated action strategy that addresses the challenges of immigrants finding and retaining appropriate employment. www.vancouverfoundation.bc.ca
» Tavia Grant

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