

# 4.

## Creating an inclusive culture

# How is cultural competency measured?

Perhaps you have already taken some steps to ensure your workforce is more reflective of your customer base or your community. That's great! Now is a good time to step back and take a look at your organizational culture and processes to see how you're doing.

Creating a diverse work culture – one where everyone feels comfortable with the diversity, doesn't happen overnight. It is a process that requires education, leadership, open communications, and participation at all levels.

Here are some questions to help you evaluate and track what is now referred to as "cultural competency". While some steps are easier for larger employers, you will find ideas here to help you think and act in new ways.

1. Do you know the best places to go to recruit global talent?
2. Are you an employer of choice for people of diverse backgrounds? Do they recommend your company to their friends/family members?
3. What percentage of job applicants are recent immigrants or people from visible minorities? What percentage of those who gain interviews are from those same diverse backgrounds?
4. Can diversity be found at all levels of your organization, including management?
5. Do promotional materials for your company reflect a diverse workforce?
6. Do you have relationships with organizations in the region that can help provide you with access to skilled newcomers?
7. Have you set diversity goals? Does your team understand those goals and the reasons for them? Have they received diversity training?
8. Have you put any procedures in place to help newcomers find their way around, understand their role and develop the skills necessary to be successful as part of your organization?
9. Do you track the turnover rate for employees? Is it higher or lower for people who are newcomers or from visible minorities?

10. Have you examined your recruiting and hiring practices to ensure there are no hidden barriers that might keep immigrants from qualifying? Have your recruiters and interviewers had diversity training? If you have a hiring team, do they represent diverse backgrounds?
11. Is there a way for employees to communicate their concerns about diversity issues in a non-threatening manner?
12. What practices do you have in place that recognize and celebrate diversity?

*Joseph Arriola,  
a Quality Technologist at  
Trudell Medical International*



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# How do employers connect with newcomers?

There are a number of places in the London region you can go to find global talent.

- A good first stop is WIL Employment Connections, an organization that provides employment services for newcomers to the region. WIL can help arrange short-term trial placements for pre-screened professionals and other global talent and will introduce you to tools that can connect you with many highly trained international workers.
- Check out Skills International – [www.skillsinternational.ca](http://www.skillsinternational.ca) – a website designed to match employers with pre-screened, internationally educated professionals who are ready to go to work.
- Job Connect agencies can also assist with finding workers. Job Connect Agencies include: the London Unemployment Help Center (LUHC), Youth Opportunities Unlimited (YOU), Association canadienne-française de l’Ontario (ACFO), Employment Services Elgin, Community Employment Services in Woodstock, and the GAIN Centre in Strathroy.
- Pathways Skills Development and Placement Centre in London offers consulting and training services to assist employers.
- The London Urban Services Organization (LUSO) centre offers an employment support program for immigrants and foreign trained professionals.
- Recruiting firms are working with a growing number of newcomers.
- Advertise at cultural events that attract immigrants.
- Place an advertisement in local ethnic publications such as:
  - Al bilad (Arabic) – Contact Ziyad Ali at 519-649-0700
  - London Korean Community Newspaper - Contact Chong Park at 519-686-8434
  - Skaner (Polish) newsletter – Contact Jolanta Pawluk at 519-858-8897
  - Kalejdoskop (Polish) – Contact Peter Cwynar at 519-453-1874
  - London Chinese Press – Contact Lisa Li at 519-777-4098
  - Magazine Latino (Latin American) – Contact Jose Rey at 519-933-3226
  - Revista Culturas – Contact Andres Rodriguez at 519-936-4495
  - The Western radio station CHRW presents programming in a number of languages and accepts advertising – 519-661-3601 ext. 84905.

The website [www.hireimmigrants.ca](http://www.hireimmigrants.ca) offers some excellent strategies for employers who want to hire and integrate newcomers into their workforce. Click on “Strategies”.

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### What is Skills International?

Skills International is an innovative new website that connects employers across Ontario with internationally educated and trained professionals. This tool allows registered employers to browse the resumes and credentials of hundreds of pre-screened and qualified applicants. Employers can conduct detailed searches based on criteria such as skills, experience and education, and will be able to perform on-line interviews with individuals who are of interest to their companies.

Candidates who are listed on this site have already worked with a qualified employment advisor on employment preparation and are ready to work in Canada. All postings are performed by employment advisors and only employers may initiate communications.

Skills International is an excellent way for London region employers to quickly, from their own office, meet some of the best global talent available to them today and to get detailed information on a candidate's background and browse through credentials.

You may register by visiting the Skills International website at [www.skillsinternational.ca](http://www.skillsinternational.ca).

*Maria Guiomar Cabra,  
a Law Clerk at Lerner's*

*"I wish I could get a job for every one of the people who pass through our doors. I see some amazing skills. I wish the London region could make better use of those skills."*

*— Corrie Kinahan, Employment Advisor  
London Cross Cultural Learner Centre*



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# How does an organization keep its good workers?

Some employers worry that they may invest in hiring and training newcomers, only to have them leave for another job. In truth, that loss of talent is possible for all employees, and many of the same strategies that work for other employees, help with retention of global talent.

### Training and Development

Does your company provide training and development opportunities to people at all levels? Are newcomers encouraged to take advantage of training opportunities? Are in-house training programs designed in a way to appeal to newcomers and allow them to be successful?

### Company Leadership

Does company management respect the skills and efforts of all its employees?

### Company Culture

Is there a 'feel' to your company that makes it welcoming, not only to customers, but to those who work there? Is there a sense of teamwork that crosses departments and cultures?

### Work-Life Balance

Is there an understanding that people with balanced lives often do the best work? Is there flexibility that allows people to meet family and other obligations without putting their job at risk?

### Compensation and Benefits

Is there a good understanding of what motivates your company's employees? Are employees consulted about their personal compensation/benefit goals?

### Workplace Diversity

Has your company examined recruiting efforts and procedures to ensure they target a broad range of applicants? Do your recruiters represent a broad cross section of the community? Is age, race and gender diversity apparent to those who visit or tour your company?

Remember, when "underemployed" newcomers prove their capabilities, they deserve to be given the opportunity for promotion when jobs are open. If they are compensated equally and fairly, they will likely stay.

Investing in employee satisfaction brings rewards, not just in retention of global talent, but of all employees. This will become increasingly important as the workforce shortage in the London region escalates and competition increases to attract and retain talent.

### Good Advice

The Ontario Chapter of the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters (CME) offers good advice in their document, *Take a Look at What's Working: Internationally Trained Workers in Canada* at [www.cme-mec.ca/shared/upload/on/reference\\_piece.pdf](http://www.cme-mec.ca/shared/upload/on/reference_piece.pdf).



*Maria Guiomar Cabra and Edgar Marquez, Law Clerks, and Mark Lerner, Partner at Lerner's*

## Recruiting in Interesting Places

### Lerner's

A restaurant may seem an unusual place for a lawyer to be recruiting for his firm, but Mark Lerner knows a good thing when he sees it.

Mark met Edgar Marquez, a lawyer from Colombia who was waiting tables to help pay his bills. Edgar's wife, Maria Guiomar Cabra was also a lawyer, and Mark was so impressed with their story, he worked with partner Matt Duffy to help secure training positions for the couple with Lerner's.

Edgar, Guiomar and their young son came to Canada via the United States as refugees. In Colombia, the family, riding in a car one day, were stopped and threatened with death by guerillas who opposed their involvement in an organization working with the poor of their community. Leaving their country meant leaving their home, their money, their family and friends.

After coming to London, both found jobs to pay the bills – Guiomar as a retail clerk, and the restaurant job for Edgar.

"There have been days in our journey when we thought, 'We are safe, we are alive – that is all that is important', but we also want to work in law and build a new life for our family," says Guiomar.

Edgar agrees, "Every day we are thinking how lucky we are to be given the chance to work in this company. We have been given the opportunity to show what we can do."

Kim Bean, Executive Director of Human Resources at Lerner's says "Edgar and Guiomar are wonderful people who have developed the respect and friendship of their coworkers. They are good at their work as law clerks, and they are eager to learn and take on greater responsibility. They've also both been working hard to strengthen their language and communications skills. It's been a learning experience for us too."

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# What about internationally trained professionals?

One of the major barriers for internationally trained professionals such as engineers, physicians, lawyers, and others, has been navigating the path to accreditation – a path that can be painfully long, complex and expensive.

Two new Ontario government initiatives are designed to make that path easier to follow.

1. In December of 2006, the Ontario government passed legislation called the **Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, 2006**. It requires regulated professions in Ontario to “ensure their licensing process is fair, clear and open” and to ensure that credentials are assessed faster.
2. **Global Experience Ontario**: This is a new one-stop access and resource centre for internationally trained professionals. Here, newcomers can seek guidance on requirements for professional qualifications, licensing and registration processes and training. For newcomers who choose not to pursue certification, they can also learn about alternative professions that will utilize their existing skills.  
[www.ontarioimmigration.ca/english/geo.asp](http://www.ontarioimmigration.ca/english/geo.asp)

There are a number of things that employers can do to assist internationally trained professionals:

- **Provide interim jobs in a related field:** As professionals take the steps necessary to gain accreditation and certification, most still need interim jobs to pay their bills. Most would prefer to work in their field in a position not requiring certification. You may wish to put the skills of a professional to work and offer the opportunity for job shadowing with a certified professional.
- **Welcome internships and co-op placements:** Internationally trained professionals returning to school may require an internship or co-op placement. This is a good way for a company to determine an individual’s skills and see how they fit with the organization.
- **Provide a “survival job”:** Newcomers often accept what they refer to as survival jobs to carry them through until they are able to gain employment in their chosen field or profession. We’ve all heard stories about engineers who deliver pizzas to make ends meet. You may be able to offer a job that puts some of the education and experience achieved by a foreign professional to work for your organization, in exchange for assisting the individual as they improve language skills and grow accustomed to Canadian culture.



## World Leaders

### Trojan Technologies

Trojan Technologies is a world leader in the development of ultraviolet water treatment solutions. To remain leading edge Trojan needs the brightest and best in very specialized fields – people like Domenico Santoro.

Domenico, who hails from Italy, is a world-class expert in computational fluid dynamics. He was recruited by Trojan and the company supported his application to come to Canada as a skilled worker.

Trojan recruits locally, across Canada and from around the world.

“What we care about is finding people with great skills”, says Kathy Davis, Vice President of Corporate Services.

Trojan has welcomed over a dozen internationally trained individuals through a WIL Employment Connections voluntary work experience placement program, and many have become full-time associates.

Increasingly, Trojan is recruiting from London’s immigrant population, and even, as in the case of Domenico, bringing in skilled international talent from around the world.

Language issues can sometimes be an issue. Many highly skilled newcomers understand English very well, but may have difficulty articulating their thoughts.

*Domenico Santoro, Specialist in Computational Fluid Dynamics and Marvin DeVries, President of Trojan Technologies*

“These are issues we work through,” says Davis, “and the company encourages and supports language training.”

Trojan uses a legal firm to assist with the paperwork involved in recruiting a foreign worker, and makes use of a “welcome plan” of benefits offered by their insurance carrier specifically for international recruits. But even with lots of supports in getting settled, it is still a big period of adjustment for an employee such as Domenico.

“One of the hardest things for me was trying to balance all the work it takes to get settled – getting a driver’s license, a car, utilities, health insurance, preparing to pay Canadian taxes, while also being in the first days of a job where I am trying very hard to prove myself to my new employer.”

For Trojan, with business ventures around the world, international workers have proven tremendously helpful.

“Doing business in China, for instance, is very different than in Canada,” says Davis. “Our associates of Chinese background have been very helpful at making us aware of what we need to know about the culture to succeed in that business environment.”



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# Can international students accept jobs?

Yes! Every year thousands of international students come to the London region to study at The University of Western Ontario, Fanshawe College and other institutions.

Here are some things you should know about international students:

- Many students who come here from other countries hope to gain permanent residency and stay in Canada.
- Even though a student may not have permanent resident status, most are entitled to work off campus through the Off-Campus Work Permit Program, introduced in 2006.

International students make excellent employees because they:

- Have a strong work ethic;
- Add cultural and ethnic diversity;
- Bring a global perspective;
- Are usually multilingual;
- Are eager for Canadian work experience

Students may work off campus for 20 hours a week during the academic year, and up to 40 hours a week during school breaks.

As an employer, you must ensure that an international student has:

- An Off-Campus Work Permit – many students who apply for jobs already have this permit, otherwise it may take a few weeks to process a student's application.
- A Social Insurance Number – this can usually be obtained in a few days by a student with a work permit.

### Co-op and Internship Programs

Many programs of study at university and college now include a work component. Students applying for co-op placements and internships require a work permit.

### What Happens after Graduation?

International students may apply for a work permit that will allow them to continue to work in Canada for up to two years after graduation. Many students will also submit an application for permanent residency.

If the employer wants to retain the international graduate after the expiration of the post-graduation work permit, they can do so by filing an Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC) Foreign Worker Application. There may, in some cases, be an exception from the requirement to demonstrate in-Canada recruitment efforts.

For more information on hiring students contact Citizenship and Immigration Canada, or contact the international office at the educational institution of your choice.

Citizenship and Immigration Canada –  
[www.cic.gc.ca](http://www.cic.gc.ca)

UWO –  
[www.international.uwo.ca](http://www.international.uwo.ca)

Fanshawe –  
[www.fanshawec.on.ca/international](http://www.fanshawec.on.ca/international)

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### New Rules Allow Off-Campus Work for International Students

In 2006, the federal government announced new regulations that allow international students studying in Canada to work off campus. Canada's Minister of Citizenship said that "Foreign students make a significant contribution to Canada. They enrich campus and community life with new ideas and new cultures and they are an important pool of potential future skilled workers that Canadian businesses need to remain competitive."



## Where can companies get more information about hiring immigrants?

WIL Employment Connections – [www.wil.ca](http://www.wil.ca) 519-663-0774

[www.Hireimmigrants.ca](http://www.Hireimmigrants.ca) – this website, established by the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC) offers good information and resources for employers. TRIEC was established in 2003 to promote the integration of immigrants into the Canadian labour market.

[www.hrsdc.gc.ca](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca) – Human Resources and Social Development Canada

[www.citizenship.gov.on.ca](http://www.citizenship.gov.on.ca) – Ontario Ministry of Citizen and Immigration – look for the employers' section of Opening Doors for Internationally Trained Individuals.

*Yahya Almoufadh, a Broker at Checker Limousine*

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# Can businesses bring international workers to Canada?

Employing foreign workers who are not yet in Canada can be complicated, but an increasing number of London region companies are having success by searching abroad for the skilled workers they require to remain competitive.

Of course, foreign workers need a valid work permit to be employed in Canada and depending on country of origin, may need a visa. As an employer, you can assist in accelerating this process.

Some employers may choose to bring temporary workers in while others hire skilled workers on a permanent basis and support their immigration.

In general terms the federal government looks to see that:

- An employer has made a reasonable effort to hire or train Canadians for the job;
- The working conditions and wages are comparable to what a Canadian would receive in the same position;
- The hiring of a foreign worker will not affect a labour dispute.

To obtain more information on hiring a foreign worker, please contact Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC) and Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC).

Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC) – [www.hrsdc.gc.ca](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca)

Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) – [www.cic.gc.ca](http://www.cic.gc.ca)

### Temporary Foreign Worker Program - Rules Eased

In late 2006, as a result of pressure from employers who have been experiencing increasing difficulty in filling vacant positions, the federal government eased requirements for advertising positions prior to hiring some types of foreign workers. The goal is to allow employers to hire foreign workers more quickly. The government has published regional occupation lists that outline some of the jobs where there is pressure to fill positions. The Ontario list includes over 20 occupations including senior managers, HR specialists, mechanics, engineers and a number of health care specialists.



*Griselda Congo Quintanilla, CAD Operator and Paul Cocker, Chairman and CEO of McKay-Cocker Construction*

## Building Bridges for Newcomers

### McKay-Cocker

Paul Cocker, Chairman and CEO of McKay-Cocker Construction says immigrants have played a huge role in the construction industry for many years, particularly in the trades. Increasingly though, the skills of newcomers are being sought at all levels of the industry.

Paul has been working with WIL Employment Connections for a number of years, leveraging his connections to obtain placements for some of WIL's highly-skilled, international clients.

“Sometimes, when I make the call asking a colleague to offer a placement position, I’m asked, ‘What’s the business case?’ I tell them they’ll get a highly-skilled, motivated worker for a salary that’s very competitive. I also mention that because of our good fortune to live in Canada, we owe it to new Canadians to assist in providing an opportunity to become productive members of our society.”

Paul talks about experiences going back as far as two decades ago, working on Toronto based projects with architectural and planning teams that reflected a wide spectrum of visible minorities.

“It just felt natural and comfortable that all members of the project team were able to work well together. I know it’s a sensitive issue, but I believe London still has some progress to make to get to where we should be with respect to comfort levels on the issue of diversity.”

Paul suggests that employers might begin by offering a mentoring or job-shadowing opportunity to a newcomer who may still be developing language skills and be trying to gain some Canadian work experience.

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# Is diversity important for companies seeking federal contracts?

Employment equity is essential if your company is pursuing a federal government contract. The Federal Contractors Program (FCP) is designed to ensure that “organizations that do business with the Government of Canada achieve and maintain a workforce that is representative of the Canadian workforce population.” The FCP requires that employers who receive federal contracts for goods or services of \$200,000 or more, certify in writing a commitment to achieve employment equity according to FCP criteria that include:

- Communications to employees regarding employment equity;
- Assignment of a senior person responsible for equity;
- Collection of workforce information and analysis;
- Establishment of equity goals and an equity plan.

### A Labour Perspective

*“We have a lot to gain when newcomers share what they have learned in their country of origin. They also bring a perspective that can help us to realize we live in a great place.*

*Unions understand how much newcomers can contribute to the workforce, and in cooperation with employers are willing to work to find ways to make the workplace more inclusive and welcoming.*

*From a labour perspective, it’s important that newcomers know their rights – particularly the right to refuse an unsafe job.”*

— Tim Carrie  
President of the London and District Labour Council  
President of Canadian Auto Workers Local 27

*“After owning my own company, it’s very hard to take the back seat to decisions that I know I am capable of making. Although this is frustrating, you have to understand this is part of moving to a new country. Working towards your goals keeps you moving forward.”*

— Marilia Cola  
Maintenance Planner,  
St. Marys Cement

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### What are the next steps to take?

Here are ten great first or next steps you can take to strengthen your company by hiring global talent.

1. Give a newcomer the opportunity to develop Canadian work experience.
2. Contact a local organization that can link you with skilled immigrants. (See page 32.)
3. Register on the Skills International website to have access to a fabulous pool of trained professionals.
4. Offer cultural diversity training for managers – talk to London’s Cross Cultural Learner Centre.
5. Buy a book on cultural diversity for each of your managers.
6. Ask your employees to help you find positive ways to recognize and celebrate cultural differences.
7. Establish a mentoring program for new employees, including those who are newcomers to Canada.
8. Take a closer look at your recruiting methods and at your recruiters to ensure they are culturally competent.
9. Find new ways to put the international experience of your employees to work to strengthen your company. Utilize their language skills or knowledge of markets in their country of origin.
10. Learn how to say “good morning” in as many languages as possible.

*Paula Kaye, Chief Financial Officer and Lingling Qiu, a Quality Assurance Tester at EK3*

