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Profits

HR Diversity



Victoria Immigrant and  
Refugee Centre Society

Human Resources  
Solutions Project

*Promoting multicultural  
perspectives & practices to  
local employers*

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We welcome contributions of articles  
that related to the best practices of  
Human Resources. Submissions may  
be edited for length purposes.  
Please email submissions to  
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Newsletter designed by: Melanie Matining

# Inspirations

A newsletter for employers in the Capital Regional District

## Celebrating Diversity while Forming New Workplace Relationships

Individuals from around the world are arriving in the Capital Regional District (CRD) looking for work. Their experiences, languages, and perspectives add exciting and necessary diversity to the workplace.

VIRCS recently celebrated this diversity at its Workplace Diversity Celebration and Employer Resource Guide Launch event. This event took place on May 29th and brought together over 300 employers and immigrant employees from around the CRD. The Workplace Diversity Celebration included over 20 employer hiring/information booths, an immigrant fashion show, fabulous food, and many engaging conversations.

This type of event is an important and unique way to bring together employers and employees in a difficult labour market. It also helps to broaden awareness of what challenges and relationships are involved in a multicultural workforce and what skills and knowledge can be useful when working with immigrants. Feedback from both employers and employees was very positive, with most participants looking for more of the same to occur quickly!

The Workplace Diversity Event was an exciting initiative, which showed how locally-based, one-of-a-kind events can have a strong impact on improving workplace relationships and facilitating communication in difficult economic times. VIRCS looks forward to continuing to promote such events in the future. In the meantime, its Employer Resource Guide to a Multicultural Workforce is currently available in either paper or electronic forms.

## Did you know that...?

The "Seven Dimensions of Culture" have a significant impact on workplace relationships. These dimensions include how employers and their employees understand time, communication, space, power, competitiveness, structure, and thinking.

People view these aspects differently depending on their cultural backgrounds. For example, cultural differences may influence how individuals express themselves and how much focus is put on facial expressions and tone versus words and their literal meanings. Also, some cultures value close physical proximity, while others consider the clear demarcation of boundaries important. Finally, some cultures value social stratification and accept differing degrees of power, while other cultures appreciate equality.

It is important to recognize these differences and appreciate how they can affect interactions in the workplace.

## July Multicultural Calendar

July 1: Canada Day (Canada)

July 4: Independence Day (USA)

July 9: Martyrdom of the Bab (Baha'i)

July 14: Bastille Day (France)

July 19: Shab-e-Miraj (Islamic) - Commemorates the ascension of Muhammad.

July 20: Umi no hi (Japan) – Honours importance of the sea and its role in Japanese history.

July 27: Hurricane Supplication Day (Virgin Islands)

July 30: Dharma Day (Buddhist) - Commemorates Buddha's first discourse following his enlightenment in Sarnath.

July 31: Feast of St. Ignatius of Loyola (Spain)

Adapted from <http://www.dom.com/about/education/culture/july.jsp> and <http://www.afk.com/resources/ethniccalendar.tpl>

## Employer's Corner

What information would you like to see in the HR Solutions Newsletter?

We would appreciate your thoughts!

Questions? Comments?

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## Words From a Recent Immigrant in the Workforce

By Scott Xiong, VIRCS client

As a skilled immigrant, I worked as a university instructor and as an engineer and technician before immigrating to Canada. Cherishing a hope for a brighter future, I moved to Victoria from China with my family about two and half years ago. I got some funding from the government for my tuition and my living expenses. I was so surprised that Canada has set up so many programs for immigrants and I am so thankful to the Canadian government and many Canadian people.

However, I have experienced a lot of frustrations and struggles during the process of looking for professional jobs. In order for skilled immigrants to make better contributions to Canada as soon as possible, I would like to make some suggestions for Canadian employers and the government.

As far as I know, skilled immigrants possess lots of abilities which are difficult to have recognized in Canada. They can make positive contributions as soon as they land in this beautiful country. Unfortunately, they have often been locked out of professional positions for a long time because of English barriers and cultural differences. As immigrants, we should, of course, try our best to improve our English and adapt to the Canadian environment as soon as possible. However, if employers change their hiring ways a little bit, it will help skilled immigrants shorten their transition a lot, which will benefit immigrants, employers and Canada.

In my opinion, most Canadian employers set very high thresholds for hiring new professional employees. As a result, they probably keep very good prospective employees away from their companies. I also think that some employers do not trust foreign credentials and what immigrants say in their resumes, cover letters and interviews. Employers should focus more on how much money employees can make for them instead of language barriers, no Canadian credentials, no local work experience, and so on.

I think that Canada, employers and skilled immigrants would benefit from my suggestions if they were accepted.

