



TIP SHEET 5

HOW TO CREATE A CULTURALLY INCLUSIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT

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Regardless of skill level, occupation or previous experience, new immigrants to Canada will have some differences that require an adjustment for themselves, you – their new employer, and your employees – their new colleagues. These differences can stem from cultural backgrounds, understanding of workplace behaviours and practices, or communication styles. This tip sheet will offer strategies to help seamlessly integrate new immigrants into your organization, foster a stronger corporate culture, reduce turnover, and tap into a new world of ideas.

1 Provide a thorough orientation:

- Ensure your orientation includes the organization's vision, mission, values, structure, teams, and staff members; and identify those with diversity roles in the workplace.
- Introduce policies affecting the workplace such as diversity policies, human rights, anti-discrimination, anti-harassment, and other employee safeguards.
- Clarify workplace values including how teams and management work together and operate.
- Provide written instructions on how to access phone, voicemail, internet and internal file directories, etc.
- Develop a training plan outlining daily and/or weekly objectives, responsibilities and scheduled check-ins.

2 Help new immigrant employees adjust to the Canadian workplace:

- Before the new hire arrives, familiarize yourself with potential cultural differences, to help ease their orientation and better prepare your organization for success.
- Provide a peer-buddy from the same culture, a mentor of any background or a supervisor who is available for questions and support.
- Provide sector-specific English language training or subsidize the cost of language training outside the workplace.

3 Develop a workplace that embraces culture:

- Host monthly company luncheons and holiday events, enabling employees to practice their English and build relationships with their peers.
- Regularly update equity policies, recruiting processes and training procedures to ensure that diversity initiatives remain current.
- Train all employees in culture competency and how to communicate in a culturally diverse workplace.

In 2011, BC had the highest proportion of visible minorities compared to other provinces in Canada, with nearly 1.2 million in the classification. That's 27.3% of people in the province who identify themselves as part of the visible minority, ahead of Ontario at 25.9% and Alberta at 18.4%.

Statistics Canada, Projected trends to 2031 for the Canadian labour force

4 Provide opportunities for ongoing development:

- Include opportunities for individual development as well as team-building and workshops to help foster skills for working with diverse teams.
- Offer mini-workshops or sponsor courses to improve communication skills such as report writing, giving presentations, accent reduction or business English.
- Examine your workplace signage and internal/employee communications to ensure they are culturally inclusive.
- Train all supervisors on effective performance review practices, and work with employees to develop action plans for their goals and ensure employees are acknowledged for their work achievements.

“Skilled immigrants foster a workplace culture grounded in diverse thinking at a time when the true potential of businesses rests more than ever on innovation.”

BC HRMA Cultural Competence Toolkit

Resources:

Cross-Cultural Teamwork: [Delegating Roles and Managing Communication Barriers](#)

For more help, visit MindTheGapBC.com to access additional resources and download essential guides (free!)

Previous Tip Sheets:

Tip Sheet 1: How to Create Barrier-Free Job Descriptions

Tip Sheet 2: Where to Post a Job Vacancy

Tip Sheet 3: Conducting Culturally Sensitive Interviews

Tip Sheet 4: How to Assess Skills and Negotiate Competencies

There's more... IEC-BC provides an extensive online library of employer tools and resources. The IEC-BC Employer Tools and Resources Library is a collection of materials developed, in part or entirely, by partners or key organizations throughout Canada. If you're ready to dig deeper into attracting immigrant talent click the button below.

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