



Employer Recruitment Strategies & Newcomer Employment Outcomes



THE RBC IMMIGRANT,
DIVERSITY AND
INCLUSION PROJECT AT
RYERSON UNIVERSITY

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Background

- **Skills Shortages & Changing Demographics**
 - Canadian organizations continue to report challenges recruiting skilled workers as an obstacle for their business
 - In Canada, the 65+ age cohort is growing 6 times as fast as children aged 0-14 years
 - 5 million Canadians will retire by 2030
- **Newcomers**
 - 2-3 times more likely to hold bachelors, masters or doctoral degree
 - University educated newcomers are more likely to hold STEM degrees vs. their Canadian born peers
 - Yet newcomers face higher rates of underemployment/unemployment

Exploratory Study

- Examined **end to end recruitment process** including technology use
- Interviews conducted **September - November 2020**
- In-depth interviews with **Talent Acquisition leaders**
- **Private sector organizations** across Canada, varied industries
- **177 Talent Acquisition leaders contacted**
- 26 responded & **11 agreed to participate**

Objectives

- Understand employer recruitment strategies in relation to the hiring of mid-career immigrant professionals & managers
- Understand how employer practices do or do not promote skill commensurate employment
- Identify & share employer best practices
- Support policy and program development

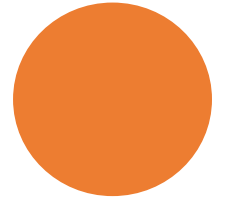


Findings

- Significant variability in employer practices
- Potential for positive or negative impact
- Talent acquisition processes are not neutral
- Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) strategies are often narrowly defined
- Technology use ubiquitous

Technology & Recruitment

- **Technology dominates sourcing**
 - Career websites & digital platforms
 - Applicant tracking system use
 - On-demand video interviewing
 - AI recruitment algorithms for screening
- Technology provides **access to pre-arrival services, job fairs**
- **Potential for disparate impact**
 - Social media presence & job taxonomies
 - Structured data fields & non-standard work histories (Ajunwa & Greene, 2018)
 - Historic training data & AI screening



Practices that create barriers

- Job postings privileging local product/institutional knowledge
- Reliance on social capital (e.g., referrals)
- “Canadian experience” & “overqualified”
- EDI strategies omit intersectionality & newcomer specific barriers
- Skills demonstration techniques not used or cover a small % of roles
- Absence of training: interviewing, cross-cultural, combined with focus on “soft skills”
- Decentralized nature of hiring decisions
- Lack of measurement to understand impact of process on newcomers



Employer Best Practices

- Focus on transferrable skills
- Outreach programs for candidate sourcing
- Structured interview process
- Diverse hiring committee
- Mandatory interviewer training
- Excluding vague selection criteria such as “fit”
- Incorporating skills assessments, testing
- Measuring & refining processes to promote inclusion
- Active engagement with ISAs & newcomer communities

Implications

- Treating newcomers fairly/equitably necessitates treating newcomers differently
- Intersectional lens on EDI strategies
- Organization wide initiatives/senior leadership involvement
- Role of Talent Acquisition
- Ontario's 2013 Human Rights Act amendments – removing the “Canadian Experience” barrier
- Government action on regulated professions



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Thank you