

CORPORATE CONNECTIONS PILOT MENTORSHIP PROGRAM IS A SPEEDY HIT!

The minute you settle for less than you deserve, you get even less than you settled for.

- Maureen Dowd



Corporate Connections was designed as an innovative mentoring program, piloted by the Information and Communications Technology Council (ICTC) in partnership with JVS Toronto to assist Internationally Educated Professionals (IEPs) in the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector with their integration into the Canadian labour market.

Corporate Connections mentoring events were held from April to June 2009. Throughout the pilot, 20 ICT staff from seven companies and organizations volunteered their time to mentor 39 IEPs from the ICT sector. IEP participants ranged from ICT Security Experts, Programmers, Developers and Certified Project Managers to Web Developers, Quality Assurance Analysts and a Certified Ethical Hacker. Notably, many IEPs attended more than one event, bringing

the total number of IEP participation to 55 over the course of the pilot. Similarly, one ICT mentor also attended another event, bringing the total number of ICT staff participation to 21 overall. ICT mentors included Business Owners, Vice-Presidents, Directors, Senior Managers, Managers, Team Leaders, Analysts, IT Specialists and HR Staffing Consultants.

Prior to participating in the mentoring events, all IEPs attended two to three hour preparatory mini-workshops, developed and facilitated by JVS Toronto. Topics covered included: communications and interview skills, self-marketing techniques, relevant labour market information, professional dress code, Canadian workplace culture, networking tips and a formal introduction to the concept of mentoring.

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SPEED MENTORING CONCEPT

- Job seekers met with every mentor from the participating corporation for 10 minutes each.
- A bell rang to signal the 10 minute mark.
- Job seekers moved to the next mentee.
- Once the cycle was completed, 5 new job seekers joined the mentors for a new cycle.
- While waiting to be mentored, job seekers received a cold calling workshop, resume coaching, interview preparation and job search guidance specific to the ICT sector.

INTEGRATED WORK EXPERIENCE STRATEGY PROGRAM - SECOND INTAKE

LOOKING TO HIRE GREAT ICT TALENT IN BC?

Are you seeking highly educated and skilled ICT talent that has the "right package" of relevant soft skills and Canadian work experience? Look no further. ICTC's Integrated Work Experience Strategy (IWES) pilot program, in partnership with S.U.C.C.E.S.S BC, is addressing current employment barriers facing highly skilled ICT IEPs by creating opportunities for IEPs to find meaningful employment in the ICT industry and support-

"Thanks again for introducing us to such talented personnel."

-- Bob Allen, President, ABC Communications, IWES Practicum Employer

ing the industry as it responds to workforce skills shortages. Specifically, the program is increasing the availability of highly qualified IEPs in order to meet the demand for highly skilled

talent in the ICT sector by providing competitively screened IEPs with relevant Canadian work experience and critical training in soft skills.

Contact IWES Regional Program Manager Gerald Chiang today, either by phone (604-524-2100 ext. 127) or email (iwes@ictc-ctic.ca), to inquire further about how you can leverage diverse talent for a competitive edge!

IWES SEEKING APPLICANTS

Are you looking for a job in Canada's information and communications technology (ICT) sector and residing in the Greater Vancouver area of British Columbia? If so, check out the Integrated Work Experience Strategy (IWES) pilot program! IWES is part of ICTC's Immigration Initiatives and aims to strengthen Canada's competitive advantage in the global ICT market by providing training in workplace cultural intelligence, workplace communication, business networking and community connections

The IWES program is available to unemployed or underemployed ICT internationally educated professionals (IEPs) who are legally entitled to work in Canada and are recent Canadian immigrants.

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IWES PILOT PROGRAM IS NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR INTAKE TWO

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Eligible IEPs must have a background in ICT/IT, be committed to completing an intensive program, and keen to work in Canada's ICT sector.

The IWES program consists of a five-week training session, including full-time classroom training and interactive workshops, followed by guided work experience. It allows IEPs to identify and improve their soft skills which are necessary for successfully integrating into the Canadian ICT workplace.

Notably, the program prepares candidates for specific occupations and arranges work placements with ICT employers. So far, 14 IEPs are well on their way to completing the program.

"I learned about the IWES program from one of my friends who has attended the first session and highly recommended it to me. I'd like to attend the next session of this program and cherish this opportunity."

– Interested Applicant for Intake Two of IWES

Applications are now being accepted until July 9, 2009 for the second intake of this pilot program. The next training session is scheduled to begin August 10, 2009.

For more information, and to apply for this first-of-its-kind initiative offered by ICTC in partnership with S.U.C.C.E.S.S BC, visit www.ictc-ctic.ca.

MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTERS

ICTC launched our monthly Immigration Initiatives e-newsletter in April 2008 and each month we send it to more than 1300 individuals in the ICT industry.

To sign up or to include your information in a monthly newsletter – email us at: immigration@ictc-ctic.ca



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Modelled after "speed dating", Corporate Connections was adapted to a strategic mentoring format that allows for both formal and informal networking and facilitated discussions, thereby maximizing employer engagement. Essentially, the program replaces potential love connections with "speedy professional interactions" between mentors and IEPs within a time-sensitive environment.

Events began with a presentation providing an introduction to the ICT partner, ICTC and JVS Toronto and context for the program including up-to-date immigration facts, a discussion regarding the barriers new Canadians may face, strategies for integrating newcomers successfully into the workforce, and practical tips for effective mentoring.

IEP mentees prepared copies of their current resume and came ready to discuss their work experience and employment goals with mentors. All IEPs researched the corporate culture, mission, values, and vision of the participating ICT partner and prepared questions to guide the discussion with their mentor.

The reach of the pilot program was further extended by recording and broadcasting a video of a facilitated discussion period to CIIP IEP members overseas via YouTube, in addition to conducting an online mentoring session via Skype involving two mentors in Toronto and three IEPs residing in the Philippines.

The session addressed a series of important questions formulated by mentees based in the Philippines who plan to immigrate to Canada within the next few months. The event was very

successful in producing a clear picture of the status of the Canadian economy through the perspective of ICT Canadian employers. Outcome-wise, the pilot program was a resounding success from the perspective of participating IEPs, with more than 80% "very satisfied" with the overall results and more than 70% rating the interactions between mentors and mentees as "excellent". Participating mentors also rated involvement in the program very highly and several offered to answer follow up questions.

According to Beth Clarke, Manager of Newcomer Employment and Mentoring Services, JVS Toronto, one of the unexpected surprises of the program was the real morale boost that it gave to participating IEPs. "It's been such a boost for IEPs to be able to meet with so many mentors and learn that things aren't so bleak," observed Clarke. "The opportunity to speak to professionals as a professional is so esteem-building

and makes a big difference in the job search."

Notably, IEPs such as Thusyaden Muruganathan gained more confidence in their communication skills as the mentoring process moved along within any given session. "I came to know about Canadian (ICT) work culture, key accountabilities of my position, and came up with more confidence in myself," said Muruganathan after attending two of the seven sessions.

The pilot formed and reinforced many more connections beyond IEPs with senior ICT staff. "Corporate Connections gave us the opportunity to connect with employers, strengthen and renew our relationships and keep them engaged," noted Clarke. "As a partner, we would absolutely welcome the opportunity to work together with ICTC again and help integrate even more newcomers into the Canadian workforce."

OUR PARTNERS

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ICTC PROGRAM – A PERFECT FIT

More than five years ago, my friend encouraged me to migrate to Canada. During that time, I had not really thought about how serious it would be to move to a different place and leave everything behind. Before I left for Canada, I was doing well in the Philippines, I had a good career!

For more than 11 years I worked as an application developer and business systems analyst, in one of the leading Telecommunications Company in the Philippines. It didn't really bother me that my immigration application was not moving or progressing. Just when I didn't expect it anymore, I started receiving letters from the embassy. My application was approved in just a few months from then. I started attending seminars, one of which was conducted by CIIP.

Despite my current status in the Philippines, I still decided to take my chances here in Canada. Processing my application took five years before it was approved, and I did not want to let the chance pass by without seeing what could be in store for me. I believed, it was worth a try, so my journey to the unknown began on March 7, 2009.

In the Philippines, I met Sandra Saric & Norman McDevitt of ICTC, and heard about a bridge to work program that was to be launched in Vancouver, British Columbia. British Columbia was not my original place of destination, and applicants to the Integrated Work Experience Strategy

(IWES) program had to live in the Greater Vancouver area, but as chance would have it, I ended up landing there anyways, and a place in the IWES program!

Moving to Canada is definitely a life changing experience. It is like starting all over again, my work experience is not as recognized here as it was in the Philippines. I have to say that coming here in this time when recession is at its peak, makes the situation even more challenging. Even though I have a lot of experience as an IT professional, there are very few openings and most companies may not be that open to hiring immigrants. It is hard to get my foot in the door and convince them that immigrants like me, have also a lot of experience and skills to offer just like the locals here.

It was a good thing that I was able to get in the IWES program delivered by SUCCESS BC and ICTC. The program served as guidance in setting more realistic goals and strategic approaches to gaining employment in the Canadian ICT labour market. Most importantly, it gave me hope to continue looking forward and to be reminded that the 'BEST' is yet to come. I just have to be patient.

Now, after several weeks of working closely with the IWES team, especially with the efforts and patience of Gerald Chiang, I got an internship at Atimi Software Inc. as a QA Analyst—just the right position for me to get started and get back into

my profession. This would have not been possible; had I not been a part of the IWES program and if Atimi Software had not believed that my IT experience and skills could be an added value to their company.

Nothing is final yet, this is just the beginning, but I am hopeful that this could be the start of something worthwhile for me. No matter what happens, I am thankful that I have been given a chance to be a part of this great company, Atimi Software Inc. I am having a great time here; the people are nice, the working environment is very comfortable and best of all, I have the opportunity to learn new things and new technology.

It was not a bed of roses here in Canada. I miss a lot of things and people from the Philippines, but it is possible to succeed as long as you have and maintain determination and faith in yourself. For those who are preparing to come here, just make sure that this is really what you want since it is much easier to fight a battle if you know why you are fighting for it.

For new landed immigrants, do not necessarily focus in applying to large companies, the small- medium enterprises are also a great place to start your career in Canada. Start small, dream big, and hopefully with your hard work, things will get back to normal, then you can say that you've made the right decision!

“I got just the right position for me to get started and get back into my profession. This would have not been possible; had I not been a part of the IWES program.”

– Marilou Cajayon

ICTC's Immigration Initiatives are aimed at improving the integration of IEPs into Canada's ICT workforce. The initiative is funded by the Government of Canada's Foreign Credential Recognition (FCR) program, one of the key components of the government's "Internationally Trained Workers Initiative" and Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

Canada



LINKS AND RESOURCES

Immigrant Serving Organizations across Canada

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/welcome/wel-20e.asp>

British Columbia Technology Industries Association (BCTIA)

<http://www.bctia.org>



OUR PARTNERS



ICTC OVERSEAS

BY FAIRLANE INSO,
ICT CLIENT COORDINATOR, PHILIPPINES

The Information and Communications Technology Council's pilot testing program for the Canada Readiness Tool (CRT) is excitedly and continuously being tested in the Philippines. The Project Manager, headed to the country for the second round of the pilot testing session, Workplace Communications and Workplace Culture modules, last May 19 and 20, 2009.

"It was a very refreshing experience and very intense especially with the exercises," said Victor, an Interactive Media Developer who was able to attend two pilot testing sessions in the Philippines.

The CRT is a self assessment tool that is very effective for Internationally Educated Professionals (IEP) to be able to identify and understand their current standing in the Canadian ICT Labour Market. The tool also identifies the skills that are to be improved, to become highly competitive by the time they get to Canada.

"The tool has an in-depth analysis of skills needed for an ICT Professional," stated Arthur, a Security Information Officer, and will be leaving for Canada in July.

The IEP from the Philippines would want to continue testing the tool until they will finally complete it. "I would like to continue testing the tool since it provided me some inputs in areas of improvement," agreed Wilfredo, an IT professional in the Geomatics Sector and would continue to test the tool in Canada.

The CRT, funded by the Foreign Credential Recognition Program will be tested until the end of October in the Philippines and it will be launched in January 2010.

With the help of the Canadian Integration Immigration Project (CIIP), there were a good number of participants for the targeted work stream to test the tool. The participants were excited to understand and learn more about the tool.

BY VIKAS SHARMA,
ICT CLIENT COORDINATOR, INDIA

ICTC successfully completed its second round of pilot testing of the Canadian Readiness Tool's Workplace Communication module in May 2009 in New Delhi, India.

ICT sector has a very broad domain in India and all clients had very diverse backgrounds in terms of both education and work experience, which ranged from 8-15 years.

Some of the positions at which clients are working include Systems Programmer, Software/Hardware engineer, Dean of Technology Management, Network Administrator etc. Each one of them holds a university degree and had various internationally accepted certifications such as MCSD, CISCO etc.

Participant feedback was very positive, as they were keen to participate and found it to be a beneficial exercise. Participants were appreciative of the fact that ICTC is investing resources to try and help new immigrants. Raman Jha, one of the clients remarked, "The question content was very good and well designed. The language used in module was identical to what is used in the Indian IT sector."

ONLINE LEARNING WORKSHOP PILOTED IN KOREA AND TAIWAN

In May, ICTC Immigration Initiatives Program Director and Project Coordinator travelled overseas to Korea and Taiwan for phase two of international piloting of the Online Learning Workshops, funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

The tool is designed to assist both Immigrant Stakeholders, as well as ICT IEPs thinking of coming to Canada, in the process or already here in Canada.

The pilot testing was hosted in partnership with SUCCESS BC through their satellite offices overseas; SUCCESS

Korea and SUCCESS Taiwan. Participants came from a wide range of ICT backgrounds, industry, and academia. ICTC was provided with valuable feedback to ensure the tool will accurately fulfill the needs of IEPs and Immigrant Stakeholders.

Thank you to all those who participated in the pilot testing! A special thanks to Diana Nam, Seoul Field Office Manager, and Jennifer Lee, Taipei Field Office Manager and

their teams, for all their help in planning, executing, and participating in the pilot testing.

