



Information and Communications Technology Council / Conseil des technologies de l'information et des communications

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Integration and Retention Programs

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The presence of measures to actively integrate and retain new hires will positively influence their job satisfaction and engagement. The following provides an overview of five good practice programs, with a focus on how you can adapt standard elements to be more inclusive of IEPs. All programs proposed will benefit all employees in your company, not just IEPs.

Integrate	Retain / Engage	Advance
Onboarding		
	Mentoring	
		Managing Performance
		Networking
		Career Development

If some of these programs are new to your organization, review the additional resources provided for each to gain a deeper insight into how they work. When identifying which programs might best benefit your organization, first look at the evidence you have inside your company – e.g. exit interview data, input from employees and managers (both formal and informal) – to help determine some of the gaps or barriers that most need to be addressed.

For many ICT employers, their most serious HR challenge is recruiting ICT professionals who have not only technical skills, but also the equally important complementary skills – ‘soft skills’ relating to communications and team work, ‘context skills’ or understanding the business context in which ICT is being applied, and ‘domain-specific technical skills’ that are associated with a particular industry or product.

ICTC. Labour Market Outlook, 2015–2019.

Onboarding

Specific measures to onboard a new hire have been shown to pay off in terms of promoting faster employee productivity and deeper engagement. Being “green” to the Canadian workplace as well as to your unique organizational culture, your new IEP hire will, in particular, benefit from explicit guidance on your expectations of them as an employee in your company, and in their individual role....

LESSONS LEARNED...

“Give new IEP hires time to be exposed to new systems, processes, etc. Appoint a coach to lead them on important training – it is best if it is a peer. Prepare the coach by letting them know the new hire’s goals. Have them focus on getting the new hire ready to work.

Don’t take for granted that an IEP knows exactly how to behave or go about a process.”

ICT Employer

Description	A comprehensive process spanning several months (or more) that serves to help a new hire build a solid understanding of your business, company culture and policies, and their role in meeting your business goals.
Objectives	To engage the employee in his or her new position, help them build relationships with coworkers, build a sense of commitment to your company, and make the employee productive as soon as possible.
Key components	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Conduct orientation with HR to review corporate information such as mission, business profile and corporate culture, and administrative details such as payroll.2) Provide Employee Manual as a written reference to supplement information provided during orientation.3) Schedule meeting with manager to confirm employee responsibilities, performance expectations and developmental goals.4) Schedule meeting to introduce coworkers and their roles.5) Introduce new hire to CEO/senior management to help employee feel included and welcomed.6) Assign peer buddy for job shadowing or training on specific tasks and technologies for new job.7) Provide tools, materials and access to resources required for job.
Success Factors for Employers	<p><i>Explain organizational culture</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ During orientation, be explicit about the “unwritten rules” of your company culture such as:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• dress code, core office hours, how to address colleagues and managers, how to participate in meetings, response time for emails, etc.• company values such as respect in the workplace, valuing diversity, open communication, etc.• common company jargon and abbreviations <p><i>Provide resources</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Establish and communicate a clear plan for where the new IEP hire can go to address any questions or issues he or she may have during their adjustment period. This clarity can help build an open and welcoming environment for people from diverse backgrounds.✓ An Employee Manual can be a timesaver for ICT managers as employees will be able to take the initiative and look up information they need. Make the information available on the company intranet or social media for easy reference.

**Success Factors
for Employers
(cont.)**

- ✓ Assign a “buddy” who can not only provide training on job-specific tasks, but also act as a cultural informant – e.g. explaining expected behaviours as a member of the team, and helping with settlement challenges (e.g. opening a bank account, obtaining a driver’s licence), as needed. This buddy should be a peer – IEPs from some cultures may find it easier to open up to and ask questions of a co-worker, as in their culture admitting to a manager that you do not know something might be perceived as a weakness. The buddy should be provided with a checklist on the new hire’s responsibilities and goals to use as a reference.

Cultivate relationships

- ✓ During the first week, organize a lunch with the new hire and his or her co-workers to make them feel welcome and help them get to know other team members.

Explain processes

- ✓ Share information on how processes such as performance management work – this may differ from what the IEP is used to:
 - Explain to a new employee in the first days of his or her employment how often feedback will be shared.
 - Clearly define expectations and set performance objectives linked to performance measures.
- ✓ Let the employee know about other programs available to help them integrate and develop their career at your company – e.g. mentoring, career development, networking, etc.

Check in regularly

- ✓ Check in often to see how the new hire is doing and answer any questions. Such actions can demonstrate that you are approachable and open to providing support.

**Additional
resources**

See ICTC HRM Guide for more on [Orientation](#) and the [Employee Manual](#).

See Hire Immigrants for videos, articles and a webinar targeted to [onboarding](#) IEPs, and the [Roadmap](#) for sample orientation policy and checklists.

For access to information and support from your province, please refer to Hire Immigrants’ [local resources](#).

Mentoring

Teaming a new hire up with a mentor will accelerate his or her adjustment to their new workplace, and help them build the confidence, skills and relationships to help them become both productive and effective, quickly. For IEPs - who come equipped with excellent technical knowledge and skills, but sometimes need a “longer runway” to adjust their working style to the Canadian workplace – mentoring is an excellent way to help them learn the norms of your specific workplace practices.

LESSONS LEARNED...

“An IEP I worked with managed a large build-out of a communications network before coming to Canada – he was hired as an individual contributor but was looking to move into management. I advised him to sit down with his supervisor, share information on his leadership roles, explain that he wanted to move to that level at some point, and ask for supports to do so.”

Coach from ICTC’s *Coaching to Career Program*

<p>Description</p>	<p>Mentoring is a relationship between an employee (the mentee) and a more experienced or senior employee (the mentor), whereby the mentor provides guidance on a range of professional issues.</p>
<p>Objectives</p>	<p>To guide the mentee towards improving performance, building networks, enhancing skills and knowledge, and building awareness of how to navigate (and advance in) the corporate culture.</p>
<p>Key components</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify and recruit potential mentors and identify mentees 2. Match mentoring pairs 3. Provide guidance and tools to mentoring pair 4. Support and evaluate relationship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Mentoring can be a formal program, with a training plan and a detailed schedule of activities, or it may be an informal coaching relationship between a new employee and a more experienced co-worker. ✓ Depending on your organization’s size and how formal your program will be, you might need to identify a resource to oversee the program (mentoring coordinator). ✓ Participation for both parties must be voluntary – each person should have the option to withdraw and be matched with someone else. ✓ Ensuring that both parties make the time commitment to get together a couple of hours each month is key to the program’s success – this could be promoted by formalizing the frequency in the performance goals of both mentor and mentee.
<p>Success Factors for Employers</p>	<p><i>Provide a senior mentor to high potential IEPs</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ When you identify an IEP who shows potential for advancement, consider asking a senior manager to act as a mentor to this employee; this type of mentoring is most valuable in raising the employee’s visibility with senior decision-makers and in building his or her ‘political astuteness’ and strategic understanding of the organization’s goals.

Success Factors
for Employers
(cont.)

Select qualified mentors

- ✓ Criteria for selection of mentors should include:
 - Have a deep understanding of the organizational culture
 - Have good awareness of cultural differences and how they impact interactions in the workplace
 - Be objective (not competing), so ideally from another team in the organization, and have a stake in the mentee's success – an IEP may not be willing to be open about vulnerabilities to a person responsible for their performance management
 - Be in a position to provide a structured, safe environment for the IEP to talk when struggling with any issue

Identify appropriate goals

- ✓ Specific learning goals for the relationship could include:
 - Canadian and the specific corporate work values and culture
 - Current workplace and industry trends
 - How to become successful in the organization and how to advance

Leverage professional development for mentors

- ✓ The mentor role might provide an opportunity for a more senior IEP who you are developing as a leader in your company to enhance communications and coaching skills, or for a Canadian manager to build cross-cultural awareness and communication skills.

Tips for IEPs

See tip sheet on Understanding, Managing and Achieving Professional Objectives for advice on making the most of a mentoring program for career success

Additional
resources

Making Connections: A New Model of Mentoring for Internationally Trained Professionals – A How-To Manual published by St. Michael's Hospital – includes a mentoring program model

Hire Immigrants **webinar and resources** on mentoring IEPs

TRIEC's Mentoring Partnership **Handbook** for mentors and mentees

Implementation Guide for mentoring from BuildForce Canada

For access to information and support from your province, please refer to Hire Immigrants' **local resources**.

Managing Performance¹

Identifying goals will set a new hire up to grow and succeed, and knowing that he or she is developing and learning will support his or her engagement and retention. As a first professional experience in Canada, a new IEP hire will be particularly keen to hear how he or she is performing.

LESSONS LEARNED...

“Employers should give an IEP two or three months to fit in, then check if he or she is performing well – give the person time to prove him or herself.”

IEP employed in ICT

Description	Performance management allows an employer to observe the growth of an employee, and provides the opportunity to highlight strengths while also identifying areas requiring improvement. The employee, in turn, has an opportunity to receive feedback on, and be recognized for, his or her performance.
Objectives	To analyze employee performance while ensuring job satisfaction and fostering professional and personal growth.
Key components	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Set individual goals and priorities 2) Assess the employee’s competencies against your requirements 3) Provide regular and accurate performance feedback 4) Develop individual learning plan 5) Conduct annual performance appraisals 6) Reward and recognize
Success Factors for Employers	<p><i>Provide regular feedback</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Manage employees’ goals throughout the year to encourage two-way communication on an ongoing basis. ✓ Schedule monthly one-on-ones with each team member to effectively monitor their progression so as to both address any issues and recognize their contributions promptly. ✓ Don’t wait for the next meeting to provide feedback – start a culture of incorporating two-way, “just-in-time” feedback, which is positive and constructive, into daily operations. Keep in mind that this may be difficult for employees from cultures in which providing critical feedback to one’s manager is not the norm. <p><i>Be explicit about processes and expectations</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Clearly explain how performance reviews are handled – how frequently they occur, who initiates them, and what the employer and employee should expect to happen. These meetings can be very effective when there is clarity, mutual understanding and agreement. <p>Work collaboratively with IEPs to determine valid and representative performance criteria against which they will be evaluated.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>¹ Source: ICTC. <i>Human Resources Management Guide for Canadian ICT Companies.</i></p>

Be explicit about processes and expectations (cont.)

- ✓ Be aware that the standard “sandwich”-type (positive comments to start and end, with constructive feedback in between) feedback is not universal. Some IEPs might be used to receiving feedback in a more or less direct manner.² To ensure that what you have said is understood, ask the employee to repeat his or her understanding of what you have said. If needed, clarify any misunderstandings and emphasize your point until you both have the same understanding of the issue.

Consider cultural differences

- ✓ In some cultures, an employee’s appraisal (and their prospects for promotion) is as likely to deal with attributes such as thoughtfulness towards co-workers, skills for reconciling conflict and creating harmonious environments, and sociability as individual achievement of results.
- ✓ Recognition and rewards are different across cultures – some IEPs might be more used to being recognized for strong group performance. To accommodate this, be sure to identify and recognize both individual and group accomplishments, as well as both the task- and relationship-focused contributions of your employees.
- ✓ IEPs from some cultures may operate from the perspective that his or her actions reflect on the manager, his or her co-workers, and the company as a whole. Before communicating unfavourable feedback to such an employee, keep in mind its perceived far-reaching implications, and adapt your communication style as appropriate.
- ✓ Some IEPs may provide modest descriptions of their accomplishments and self-effacing answers. To circumvent this, try asking a third-party question – i.e. think of someone from the employee’s team who knows the person’s work intimately and ask, “If I were to call this person for a two- or three-word description of you, what would he or she say?”
- ✓ Keep in mind that what you might consider as low performance by an IEP may be due to cultural differences in interpersonal communication and leadership skills. As a manager you need to be aware of the possible impact of culture on performance, and be prepared to provide access to coaching or mentoring for the employee on Canadian norms.³

ICTC HRM Guide on [Performance Management](#)

ICTC [My Career Map](#) competency self-assessment for IEPs that allows users to determine strengths and areas for development on topics including workplace communication

Hire Immigrants [Roadmap](#) – Talent Management > Manage Performance

For access to information and support from your province, please refer to Hire Immigrants’ [local resources](#).

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² Adapted from Lionel Laroche and Dan Rutherford. Recruiting, Retaining and Promoting Culturally Different Employees. Butterworth-Heinemann. 2006, p. 206-207.

³ Hire Immigrants. [Unlocking Potential: From Underperformer to Asset](#). July 29, 2013.

Career Development

Particularly in the ICT field, employees want to know that they are developing and keeping their skills current. For IEPs, as many accept positions for which they are over-qualified in order to gain experience in Canada; career advancement and development is one of their top priorities. Developing the complementary skills of IEPs will not only boost the capacities of your workforce, but also enable IEP talent to develop and engage in a career at your company.

LESSONS LEARNED...

“To facilitate learning, I look for opportunities for cross-training – for example, if a large project comes up I give another group an opportunity to get involved and learn a new technology.”

ICT Employer

Description	Career development is about identifying the skills and competencies that an employee needs to develop in order to advance in their careers.
Objectives	Career development helps employees become more proficient, efficient, work more independently and productively, and prepares them to advance in their career.
Key components	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Individual learning and development plans2. Targeted learning and training3. Fostering an environment of learning4. Coaching (and mentoring)
Success Factors for Employers	<p>Discuss early</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ As career development and advancement is a priority for IEPs, an employer should begin discussions and be transparent about such opportunities with new hires as early as possible – this is a key retention strategy. <p>Consider cultural differences</p> <p>Some IEPs may have different expectations of career development based on their culture – e.g. some might come from the perspective that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ It is the manager’s role to determine the employee’s development, and to tell the employee what is needed to be successful - be prepared to provide more direction in this case.✓ An individual’s educational background or specialized technical training will influence his or her performance evaluation and opportunities for advancement. Some IEPs might prioritize additional technical training if they are interested in more senior roles. These individuals will benefit from a clear explanation of the value of “soft skills” such as business acumen, teamwork, cross-functional collaboration, and conflict resolution for advancement. Consider providing coaching and mentoring to IEPs so that they can develop culturally appropriate soft skills that can help their career development.✓ Workplace harmony is valued over competitiveness and ambition (pursuing job promotions is frowned upon), and hard work is understood implicitly to lead to a future promotion. It may also be held that new responsibilities are expected to come only after the formal promotion. Coaching on the Canadian norms in this aspect would be useful.

Success Factors
for Employers
(cont.)

Offer learning and development opportunities

- ✓ Some ways of assisting IEPs in achieving professional goals include⁴:
 - Creating career management workshops specifically geared to the needs of IEPs;
 - Making sure that IEPs receive more comprehensive, clear and frequent feedback than other employees;
 - Emphasizing the importance of professional networking both with internal and external stakeholders, and professional association membership;
 - Providing additional support to the managers of IEPs (e.g., training them in leading culturally diverse teams); and
 - Providing targeted training and development opportunities for IEPs, especially with a view to adapting their soft skills to the Canadian workplace.
 - Facilitating access to stretch assignments and mentoring programs
- ✓ Some IEPs may need to adapt their technical skills, or obtain local licensure/certification for the Canadian context. Employers can support IEPs through financial support for exams, or paid time-off for study.
- ✓ To help IEPs improve language abilities and develop enhanced communication skills, partner with external training providers, such as colleges or immigrant-serving organizations, to provide occupation- or sector-specific language training.

Foster a culture of learning

- ✓ Research shows that experience and informal methods of skill acquisition are often more important than formal training and education in the Canadian ICT workplace.⁵ To make the most of this, employers need to:
 - Structure aspects of the work environment to encourage such informal methods (e.g. mentoring, coaching, job rotation, teams); and
 - Ensure access to these methods and provide incentives to recognize and reward the sharing of knowledge acquired through experience.

Additional
resources

TRIEC training videos: [Integrating Talent](#)

Hire Immigrants [Roadmap](#) for sample career development plan

ICTC HRM Guide on [Training](#)

On-site, occupation-specific [English language training](#) available at no cost from The Centre in Halton and Peel

[Business Edge](#), a bridging program for IEP executives at the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management

For access to information and support from your province, please refer to Hire Immigrants' [local resources](#).

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² Laroche and Rutherford, *Recruiting, Retaining, and Promoting Culturally Different Employees*, pp. 277–278.

³ ICTC and The Diversity Institute at Ryerson University. *Diversity - The Competitive Edge: Implications for the ICT Labour Market*. March 2007. P.10.

Networking⁶

“The higher the number of links the person has, the more an employee is bound to the job or the organization.”⁷ As a result, networking is a good practice to facilitate the professional development and engagement of any new hire.

Exclusion from informal networks, however, is a key barrier for IEPs in the Canadian workplace. With “who you know” being a key factor for success, helping IEPs to expand their professional network will open many doors to assist their career.

LESSONS LEARNED...

“Networking is very helpful – you need to be visible and get to know people to be recognized. Volunteer for assignments to work across departments to get to know other systems, processes and managers. This will grow your knowledge and improve your career prospects.”

ICT Employer

Description	<p>Networking consists of an individual attempting to develop and maintain relationships with those deemed to have the potential to assist them in their work or career development.</p>
Objectives	<p>Networking enables an employee to build up professional connections to build his or her career. By actively facilitating access to these networks, an employer will benefit from increased employee satisfaction, engagement and retention.</p>
Key components	<p>Employers can support networking through several channels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee networks: establishing a group for employees with similar backgrounds or interests to provide peer support and networking opportunities. • Targeted networking events: organizing a special event to provide, for example, access to senior management and guest speakers. • Mentoring: introducing a mentoring program that involves encouraging mentors to link mentees to their network • Professional associations: facilitating employee participation in association meetings, conferences and social media. • Volunteering: facilitating an employee’s participation in a non-profit organization’s campaign, committee or board. • Informal networking: company events that allow employees to meet other teams and managers.
Success Factors for Employers	<p><i>Communicate the benefits of networking</i></p> <p>✓ Make IEPs aware of the value of networking: successful networking can positively influence a variety of career outcomes such as increased job opportunities, job performance, income, promotions and career satisfaction. Networking is also extremely important in providing other benefits, such as access to information, gaining visibility, career advice, friendships, social support, business leads, resources, collaboration, career planning, professional support and encouragement.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>⁶ Some content adapted from the Corporate Leadership Council; Diversity Inc.; <i>John Deere Employee Network Guidelines</i>; and <i>So, You Want to Set up a Diversity Council?</i> by Gregg Ward, CMC – Workforce Diversity Network.</p> <p>⁷ Mitchell et al. (2001) cited in <i>Making Good Connections: Best Practice for Women’s Corporate Networks</i>. Prof. S. Vinnicombe et al. Cranfield University School of Management. September 2004.</p>

Success Factors
for Employers
(cont.)

Leverage mentoring relationships

- ✓ Lack of connections or lack of awareness of the nuances and expectations of management in Canadian culture may lead IEPs to be excluded from informal social events which are often critical to the formation of relationships, informal communications networks and deal-making. Giving an IEP access to ways to build awareness of, and practice the nuances of communication, in conjunction with a mentor, can help break down some of these barriers.

Leverage employee networks

- ✓ By establishing and supporting employee networks, employers are:
 - Providing a peer support system where members can share advice, and speak up for members' issues with management;
 - Facilitating the career development of individuals by providing an environment for members to share personal experience, and offer access to role models and mentors; and
 - Highlighting to management important issues facing a particular employee group.

Organize targeted events

- ✓ Host a “**speed networking**” event whereby groups of two to three IEPs are paired with a mentor (senior executive) to ask questions and pick up job and career advancement tips. Every 15 minutes, the mentees move to a different mentor for another round of networking. An informal, open networking follows where participants continue with discussions started during the speed networking session.

Additional
resources

Professional Immigrant Networks – a TRIEC initiative that aims to work collaboratively with immigrant networks to increase their capacity, so they can achieve more success in connecting their skilled immigrant members to meaningful employment.

Network Groups: Setting up Networks for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Employees. (Stonewall. 2005.) – includes useful information on the benefits of employee networks and how to set one up.

For access to information and support from your province, please refer to Hire Immigrants' **local resources**.

Funded by:

Financé par :



Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada

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