



# NATIONAL FORUM 08

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Canadian Council of Human Resources Associations  
Conseil canadien des associations en ressources humaines

**Integrating New Canadians**  
**into Canada and the Workplace: Maximizing Potential**

## White Paper

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## A Word From the Co-Chairs

It has often been repeated that Canada's talent shortage is one of the top business challenges today, and that employers are increasingly relying on immigration as a source of talent.

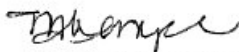
Much has already been written on the topic of immigration, integration, foreign credential recognition and the employment of immigrants in Canada. Very little, however, has been directly targeted to human resources professionals. And even less has been developed with their collaboration. Yet HR professionals are instrumental to successfully recruiting and retaining much-needed immigrant talent.

The 2008 CCHRA National Forum was a unique opportunity to bring together senior HR professionals and key players from government and the immigrant services sectors to discuss real actions each group can take to facilitate the integration of new Canadians into Canada and the workplace.

We wish to thank all the participants for taking the time out of their work schedules to join us, and for putting their heads together to develop these strong recommendations. We also thank the speakers who presented their original research findings, and our panel members who shared with us their varied experiences and views on how every individual and each sector represented at the Forum could facilitate the integration of new Canadians. Of course, we must also recognize the sponsors: without their support, this event would not be possible.

Special thanks also to Dr. Linda Manning, who moderated the panel and roundtable discussions at the National Forum and has since lent us her subject-matter expertise to develop this White Paper.

We hope the recommendations contained in this document will help you and your organization open your minds – and your doors – to the potential new Canadians can bring to our country and our workplaces.



MaryAnn Kempe, CHRP  
Co-chair, 2008 CCHRA National Forum



David Knudson, CHRP  
Co-chair, 2008 CCHRA National Forum

# About CCHRA

The Canadian Council of Human Resources Associations (CCHRA) is a collaborative effort of human resources associations from across Canada, which represents more than 37,000 professionals, 18,000 of whom hold the Certified Human Resources Professional (CHRP) designation. CCHRA is the national voice on the enhancement and promotion of the profession across Canada, through established and credible designations, collaborating on national issues related to the profession, leading federal government relations, and proactively positioning the national human resources agenda at the international level.

A solid economy, reduced birth rate and an aging workforce have created a 'hot market' for the talent that organizations need today to compete in the global marketplace. The role of the human resources practitioner is changing to meet these challenges, and organizations understand first hand the value that the human resources professional can bring in developing solutions.

In this new century, the range of activities performed by the HR professional has expanded. In addition to excellence in the traditional HR skill set (recruitment and staffing, employee and labour relations, total compensation, organization learning, training and development and occupational health, safety and wellness), HR professionals are increasingly called upon to understand and help address the business challenges organizations face. In this tight labour market, developing creative solutions to labour shortages, providing better onboarding and integration, consulting to the organization on ways to enhance employee engagement and understanding and effectively using the tools of the trade – legislation, information systems, research – and applying these in a global context are much more the reality of the emerging field of human resources.

HR as a career is experiencing exciting times, and is evolving to reflect changes and new trends in Canadian society. It is important to keep HR professionals informed and better prepared to meet these changes.

In 2007, the CCHRA offices moved from Toronto to Ottawa in an effort to better meet the needs of our member provincial HR associations and to facilitate work in one of our key strategic priority areas: government relations. As the voice of the HR profession in Canada, the CCHRA is uniquely positioned to advise the government of Canada on key issues from the perspective of human resources practitioners. Our goal is to provide government officials with the insight needed to create workable, practical policy and legislation relevant to the HR profession.

The 2008 National HR Forum was the CCHRA's third. Our two previous forums also led to the development of White Papers: one on the role of HR professionals, provincial associations and the CCHRA in the promotion and development of the HR profession in Canada; and the other, on managing multi-generational workforces. These White Papers are available on the CCHRA website at [www.cchra.ca](http://www.cchra.ca). The CCHRA intends to continue with these events, offering key stakeholders a unique platform to provide input on issues that can move the HR profession forward in Canada.

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# Executive Summary

There is considerable research and anecdotal evidence that employers are experiencing skills shortages across Canada. HR professionals typically are the “go-to” staff responsible for workforce planning, recruitment and employee retention in both public and private sector organizations.

In March 2008, the Canadian Council of Human Resources Associations (CCHRA) held its third National HR Forum, bringing together senior HR professionals, government representatives and specialists from the immigrant services sector to bring forward concrete actions that can be undertaken by these key players.

This White Paper is an outcome of the National Forum and is designed to serve the needs of human resources professionals within the broader context of their relevant business or organization across Canada. The objectives of this paper are to:

- provide a perspective on labour force and immigration challenges that reflects our professional training and experience;
- advance the understanding of this complex policy area and identify areas where HR professionals can make positive change in their work organizations; and,
- offer credible recommendations for addressing the challenges we have identified to HR professionals, employers and governments at all levels.

Recommendations developed by these stakeholders can be classified along the main themes explored during the National Forum:

- *The disconnect* between the perception of a skills shortage and the number of skilled applicants already in Canada – and how to capitalize on this highly skilled workforce
- *Talent acquisition* – organizational approaches must adapt to a new set of recruitment challenges in order to attract and hire skilled immigrants
- *Screening with confidence* – the need to develop methods for screening candidates to make sure that we maximize the potential of qualified immigrants
- *Retention and leadership* – ensuring that skilled immigrant employees stay in Canada, stay with the organization, and become part of the future leadership of the organization.

A fifth theme, *Settlement and society*, emerged as the day progressed and it became impossible to discuss the four initial topics without touching upon the need for a comprehensive, collaborative approach to settlement success and integration into Canadian society.

Certainly, HR professionals, businesses and governments have a clear role to play in each of these key areas. The outcome of discussions during the National Forum point to a number of clear actions each stakeholder group should implement to help maximize the potential of new Canadians.

## **HR Professionals**

Ways HR professionals can be key enablers in the sustainability of our organizations are to:

- Make the business case for enhancing diversity
- Promote awareness among executives and hiring decision-makers that skilled immigrants are now a significant segment of the Canadian population and talented labour pool
- Build a hiring/promotion plan specifically focused on skills, as well as training managers on diversity principles, including principles most relevant to skilled immigrants
- Develop and implement a policy where recruiting and selection staff will base their decisions on skills and abilities. This might include screening resumes, conducting interviews and recognizing international credentials and experience or equivalencies.
- Support new colleagues through mentorship programs, diversity awareness workshops or leadership modules that include high potential skilled immigrant employees
- Evaluate performance accurately and fairly and ensure performance management is bias free
- Create an inclusive climate celebrating and taking advantage of the cultural diversity Canadians and immigrants bring to your organization.

## **Employers**

Employers, and business in general, have a crucial role to play in ensuring the success of any efforts to create a more inclusive workplace and community:

- Accept corporate accountability: develop and implement organization-wide policies on the recognition of foreign credentials, on diversity or on other related issues, and ensure they are adhered to uniformly across the organization
- Enhance recruitment, hiring and retention planning by breaking through systemic barriers and by monitoring efforts (and adjusting plans if necessary)
- Form creative partnerships with business and cultural communities
- Establish long-term training for employees, both old and new, on diversity and integration, establish mentoring programs and offer ongoing support.

## **Governments**

Historically, governments have been key players in the area of immigrant services. National Forum participants without a doubt agreed that this responsibility must be shared with businesses (and HR professionals in particular), but governments are still an important player moving this agenda forward:

- Promote a culture of diversity with policies, programs and procedures
- Develop a clear business case for enhancing diversity, for example by gathering and sharing best practices and promoting employer role models
- Review and develop policies that support employers who are leading the way in employing immigrants
- Work with diverse partners to create programs that will address diversity in the workplace, including long-term initiatives that will support the integration of new hires and their families in the broader community
- Commit to lifelong learning, in the context of training and accreditation for new Canadians and in terms of continuing education and diversity training
- Promote Canada as a desirable place to live and work and ensure policies position Canada (and governments as employers) as leaders
- Act as a role model to other employers.

# 1.0 Introduction

*Integrating New Canadians into Canada and the Workplace: Maximizing Potential*, is a response to the reality that Canadian employers and human resource specialists face because of increasing numbers of retirements and declining numbers in the qualified Canadians in the labour force. The Corporate Executive Board of Canada recently conducted an international poll of senior executives, three-quarters of whom said that attracting and retaining talent was their #1 priority, while 62% worried about company-wide talent shortages.

Research has shown that without immigration there would be only two ways to fuel the workforce: natural increase (more births than deaths) or movement from rural to urban areas. Both have levelled off in Canada in recent years, making the role of immigrants more important for the Canadian economy. In order to capitalize on qualified employees who are immigrating to Canada in increasing numbers, and help fill the skills gap left by retiring workers, Canadian employers and human resources specialists must reconsider their practices and learn new competencies to create a more inclusive workplace, community, and society.

But there is a **disconnect**. There is a perception that there are too few qualified applicants for positions being left open by retirements, and while there is recognition that immigration can be part of the solution, many employers are not aware of the numbers of skilled applicants already in Canada, or how to capitalize on this highly skilled workforce.

The profile of Canadian immigrants has shifted dramatically over the last 30 years, especially in relation to their levels of education and countries of origin. Among recent immigrants, the proportion of university graduates is much higher than among Canadian-born people in the same age group. Of the immigrants who immigrated between 2001 and 2006, 51% had a university degree. This was more than twice the proportion of degree holders among the Canadian-born population (20%) and much higher than the proportion of 28% among immigrants who arrived in Canada before 2001 (Statistics Canada, 2007).

In the 2001 and 2006 Canadian censuses, the top four source countries for immigration to Canada were China, India, the Philippines and Pakistan which represents a significant shift. The declining number of qualified Canadian-born employees combined with the shift in source countries of immigrants contributes to the sense that there is a shortage of qualified applicants. **Talent acquisition** approaches must adapt to a new set of recruitment challenges in order to attract, hire, and retain skilled immigrants. The competition is just too great. Other countries, including Australia and the US are facing the same challenges, and they are ahead in adapting.

One of the major issues with hiring and promoting skilled immigrants is the recognition of foreign credentials and experience. In other words, we need to develop methods for **screening candidates with confidence** to make sure that we maximize the potential of qualified immigrants. According to a recent study, international education receives lower returns than schooling obtained in Canada (in fact, it is worth only about 70% as much) (Alboim, Finnie and Meng, 2005). More dramatic, however, are the differences in the economic returns for experience gained inside versus outside Canada. A 2005 study noted: "... we find that the benefit of four years of foreign experience yields a total return of 7.6% [of income], while four years of domestic experience yields a total return of 19.3% [of income]. In other words, one year of domestic experience generates the same economic return as two-and-a-half years of foreign experience" (Alboim, Finnie and Meng, 2005). A study done in 2007 found the problem to be even more severe: "... foreign work experience is particularly discounted by the labour market: one year of it is worth only about one-third of a year of Canadian work experience" (Alboim and McIsaac, 2007).

Once qualified applicants are successfully recruited and hired for the right positions, it is critical that RETENTION approaches ensure that skilled immigrant employees stay in Canada, stay with the organization, and become part of the future **leadership** of the organization. The Conference Board of Canada estimates that non-recognition of immigrant credentials costs the Canadian economy \$3.4 to 5 billion annually (Alboim, 2002). A longitudinal survey by Statistics Canada of 12,000 immigrants who arrived in 2000-01 found only 40% of skilled immigrants working in the occupation or profession for which they were trained – in other words, six out of ten are downwardly mobile, which means moving to a lesser social class, or having less wealth and status than previously. There is increasing evidence that despite their educational attainment, labour market outcomes of highly skilled, professional immigrants are not comparable to those of previous cohorts of immigrants or their Canadian-born counterparts. For example, historically, immigrants have caught up with their Canadian-born counterparts within 10 years of arrival. This trend has not continued for immigrants who arrived in the 1990s (Alboim & McIsaac, 2007).

While there is extensive literature on this issue, there has been relatively little effort to bring together key players to work collaboratively on these issues. Collaboration is critical among HR professionals who represent the front line in talent management, senior management in Canadian businesses facing a growing talent shortage, and policy makers in governments who can influence the processes and motivations for collaboration, and strategically solve the talent shortage problem. Maximizing the potential for employers requires changes in practices and policies that consciously embrace diversity. Four themes emerged from the National Forum discussions associated with human resource practices and policies that we can use to drive discussions on how to embrace diversity.

1. *The Disconnect*
2. *Talent Acquisition*
3. *Screening Candidates with Confidence*
4. *Retention and Leadership*

A fifth theme, which we call **settlement and society**, became an underlying theme as the day progressed. It became impossible to discuss the other four themes without touching upon the need for a comprehensive, collaborative approach to settlement success and integration into Canadian society.

Presentations and discussions in the National Forum encompassed all of these themes, with a presentation of research findings, a moderated panel and a facilitated discussion to identify challenges and recommendations for action. The research findings established the context for the event and the moderated panel presented successful practices and resources to motivate a discussion of how individual human resources professionals, HR associations, businesses, and governments can work independently and collaboratively to influence employer strategies and success. The facilitated discussion consisted of cross-sector groups of participants identifying challenges and recommendations for change and strategy. In the sections that follow, each of these activities will be described in more detail.

The challenges and recommendations made are as diverse as the groups themselves. The complete list is included in the appendix of this document, but detailed summaries are presented herein that can be used to motivate change by individual HR professionals, employers, and government, together and separately.

These recommendations are shared in the spirit of collaboration and cooperation with the country's top HR professionals, key government representatives, and experts from the immigrant services sector to develop strategies for maximizing potential of Canadian employers by embracing diversity.

## 2.0 The HR Challenge

There is considerable research and anecdotal evidence that employers are experiencing skills shortages across Canada. Half of small business owners report employee shortages (Bourgeois et al., 2006). A 2007 update on small and medium-sized firms published in March 2008 found that the incidence of long-term vacancies (inability to fill a position for more than four months) ranged from 34% in small firms (5-19 employees) to 60% in firms of 100-4999 employees. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business estimates that these findings point to 309,000 job vacancies across Canada and notes that they “demonstrate that the shortage of labour has forced SMEs to pass on business opportunities and has restrained their growth” (Debus et al., 2008). Alberta is expected to experience a shortfall of 100,000 skilled workers over the next ten years, with BC close behind, especially in skilled trades. More than one quarter of the federal Public Service’s 250,000 personnel can retire by 2012. The average age of Public Service executives is 51 years old (Lynch, 2008).

There are a variety of factors that contribute to these shortages: shortages of candidates with appropriate skills or required educational credentials, shortages of candidates in specific professions are all part of the problem. Low Canadian unemployment rates and the high rate of retirement among baby boomers (i.e., those with birth dates from 1945 to 1964) exacerbate the problem. All this suggests that very active recruitment, retention and succession planning programs need to be in place to maintain the efficiency of Canadian employers, both private and public. Even after having cast a wider net in recruiting and hiring efforts, employers find limited supplies of qualified candidates in the existing Canadian labour pool, and have begun to tap into skilled immigrant talent.

The pool of skilled immigrants in the Canadian labour market is large and growing. More than 1.1 million immigrants arrived in Canada between 2001 and 2006, accounting for more than two-thirds of the population growth in the same period. Canada is now home to people who speak over 150 languages from more than 200 countries (Statistics Canada, 2007). In fact, Canada’s immigrant population could reach between 7 million and 9.3 million by 2017, an increase of 24-65% over 2001 (Belanger & Canon, 2005). By 2011, 100% of Canada’s net labour market growth may depend on immigration (Statistics Canada, 2003). The skills shortage faced by Canadian employers appears to be a problem with a built-in solution. There is a labour shortage, and there is a skilled labour force already imbued with the talent and skills needed to close the gap. It would seem the challenge can be met simply by using existing labour market matching mechanisms.

While the pool of qualified employees seems to be at our fingertips, there are challenges associated with attracting and retaining them. In 2006, 94.9% of Canada’s foreign-born population and 97% of recent immigrants who landed in the previous five years lived in either a census metropolitan area or another urban centre, compared with 78% of the Canadian-born population (Statistics Canada, 2007).

Some employers are trying to avoid those problems by recruiting directly from abroad, which is costly, and where competition is great. Even if international citizens are attracted to Canada, currently, about 500,000 applications (representing 800,000 people) exist for immigration to Canada, reflecting a four to five year wait for processing. The current use of temporary resident status to meet labour shortages – especially in Alberta – carries many risks, including exploitation of workers and political pressure to create a “back door” to the normal immigration process (Albion and McIsaac, 2007).

However, they are also aware that the lack of recognition of qualifications and experience alone – a common phenomenon for immigrants – costs Canada an estimated \$4.1 to \$5.9 billion each year. At the end of the day, if all immigrants’ foreign credentials and work experience were recognized, between \$3.42 and \$4.97 billion would be added to the Canadian economy every

year (Source: Hireimmigrants.ca). However, a recent report from CCHRA and SHRM shows how very few organizations provide training to managers and supervisors to help them understand cultural issues in working with foreign national workers (Source: March 2008 CCHRA press release).

The pool of skilled immigrants in Canada is underemployed and unemployed. We need to maximize the potential of the existing pool of labour. Human resources professionals are at the forefront of employer practices as they relate to talent acquisition, recognition of international credentials, professional development, and retention, all of which must become part of the organization's overall strategy. HR professionals typically are the "go-to" staff responsible for workforce planning, recruiting and management in both public and private sector organizations.

Some ways HR professionals today can be key enablers in the sustainability of our organizations are:

- Promoting awareness among executives and hiring decision makers that skilled immigrants are now a significant segment of the Canadian population and a talented labour pool
- Building a hiring/promotion plan specifically focused on skills, as well as training managers on diversity principles, including principles most relevant to skilled immigrants
- Developing and implementing a policy where recruitment and selection decisions are based on skills and abilities. This might include screening resumes, conducting interviews and recognizing international credentials and experience or equivalencies
- Supporting new colleagues through mentorship programs, diversity awareness workshops or leadership modules that include high potential skilled immigrant employees
- Creating an inclusive climate celebrating and taking advantage of the cultural diversity Canadians and immigrants together bring to your organization (Source: HireImmigrants.ca).

It is in this context that the goal of the CCHRA's 2008 National HR Forum was to bring together some of the country's top HR professionals, key government representatives and experts from the immigrant services sector to discuss these challenges. This type of exchange will undoubtedly result in several concrete outcomes: supporting networks, new ideas, policy reviews, program development and ultimately, real and tangible actions.

## 3.0 National Forum

### 3.1 Keynote Speaker

#### **Philip C. Wilson, CHRP**

*Vice President, Global Human Resources, Corel Corporation – Mr. Wilson set the stage for the National Forum by sharing his experience leading global human resources in highly competitive business markets and outlining the challenges and opportunities facing businesses today.*

Mr. Wilson noted that he wished to use his keynote address to share his perspective and knowledge gained through over 25 years of experience with some very progressive companies (CAE, CIBC, Northern Telecom and now, Corel), all of which are Canadian leaders in globalization, integrating diverse cultures and skilled workers, including recently-arrived immigrants into their organizations.

He shared his own family's story of immigrating to Canada in 1963 from Aberdeen to Montreal, his father having been offered a position with Canadian Vickers. As is typical of most immigrant stories, Mr. Wilson said that his parents gave up what was close to them – family, comfort, friends, and culture – so that their children could be afforded opportunities and growth. What Canadian Vickers did for his family was ease the transition, help them with the visa process, find accommodations, guarantee employment, and most importantly, fulfill a dream for his parents.

Mr. Wilson believes the scenario hasn't changed in 25 years. Rather, it's just been ratcheted up because of demographics and an abundance of jobs. Back in his early days with CAE, he said, the focus was on "hiring the best" and it was necessary to have attraction, motivation, development and retention strategies.

#### **What are the challenges for Canadian employers?**

Mr. Wilson shared some key facts on the challenges facing Canadian employers. In addition to some of the data that was mentioned in the preceding pages, Mr. Wilson reminded the attendees that Accenture calculates that intangible assets have shot up from 20% of the value of firms in the Standard & Poors Index in 1980 to around 70% today. He asked, "Do we realize that at the end of the day, a huge part of your company's assets (intellectual capital) are walking out the door?"

He shared with attendees ongoing efforts around the world to entice first and second generation children of emigrants to return "home". The brain drain is giving way to "brain circulation" and returning émigrés are turning into economic dynamos. These are just but a microcosm of the challenges employers face.

#### **What are the challenges newcomers face when coming to Canada?**

Mr. Wilson also referred to research that points to challenges faced by recent immigrants: finding an adequate job, learning English or French, practical and emotional adjustments to settling in a new country, and the imperative of finding meaningful work that fully leverages acquired skills and professional credentials. Managing the various dimensions of the integration process – cultural, business and social, are all challenges to newcomers to Canada.

#### **What are the stakeholders doing to meet these challenges?**

Mr. Wilson noted that current models and thinking place the heaviest burden of responsibility on the newcomer. He suggested that in today's increasingly competitive labour market, the employer must take a more proactive role in facilitating the integration process – emphasizing creativity and flexibility through the onboarding process. Some companies have created customized onboarding programs for newcomers to Canada, but discrete programs only address part of the issue. What is truly required is developing a "global sensibility" across the organizations.

He shared the story of CAE Electronics, designated as one of the Top 20 Best Employers for New Canadians by Media Corporation in 2008. Mr. Wilson's first experience in HR was at CAE, where he was responsible for the recruitment of skilled trades people and engineers from overseas. He hired at least 50 air frame fitters and sheet metal workers from the UK and engineers from Europe and Asia, especially India. His role was not just recruiting, but helping families to integrate into Canada, as well as meeting them at the airport, setting them up in their hotels and at home, anything he could do to ease the transition.

"Why is CAE tops," he asked? Because early on, they recognized foreign degrees on par with Canadian ones. They paid for courses to improve a newcomer's skills such as language and supporting them in obtaining their Canadian equivalency and certification. They helped newcomers to Canada obtain their visas and clear a path to take care of complex paperwork. They offered language training and cultural integration training. In other words, they valued the diversity of skills and cleared the many daunting hurdles.

CIBC is another Top 20 winner for Best Employers for New Canadians. When Mr. Wilson worked for CIBC, he hired foreign national newcomers who couldn't find a job in their field through an innovative program called Career Bridge, which is part of Career EDGE.

He shared the story of an employee, "J", who was hired into his HR Group at CIBC. She immigrated from Indonesia in 2000 with experience at a bank. But that did not help her find a job. She worked as a cashier at a fast food restaurant and held other survival jobs. She had an accounting degree but had to go back to school in Canada to re-certify. She was about to return to Indonesia when she was hired into Mr. Wilson's HR team to manage budgets and project finances. Mr. Wilson quoted her saying "*I almost lost hope. After so many years it's like working in a desert, you're very thirsty. Now I have water.*" Within 6 months, she applied to an internal posting in Finance and has flourished at CIBC ever since.

HR professionals can meet the challenges that are uniquely positioned to provide leadership and shared accountability in welcoming newcomers to Canada.

### **Corel's experience & approach**

Corel was founded in 1985 by a newcomer to Canada, Michael Cowpland. Cowpland was born in Sussex, England, and obtained a degree in engineering from Imperial College in London before moving to Canada in 1964. Cowpland founded Corel in 1985, and together with other newcomers like Terry Matthews, was instrumental in establishing the high tech sector in Canada. Today, Corel has more than 100 million customers in over 75 countries. They develop products in over 17 languages and their employees around the world speak between 20 to 30 different languages and dialects.

Following some recent global expansion, Corel moved from having a largely western orientation to incorporating a greater appreciation and understanding of eastern thinking, culture and business norms. This appreciation of diversity extends to hiring practices here in Canada. While the requirement for "Canadian experience" has become a barrier for many highly-qualified newcomers to our country, Corel is much more focused on technical skills and capabilities. This takes priority over "Canadian experience", and the Corel team will work with the successful candidate to provide any additional language or soft skills training that may assist them in integrating more quickly into a Canadian work environment.

In conclusion, Mr. Wilson noted that Canadian companies need to be creative and flexible in finding ways to integrate newcomers into their organizations. The benefits can be enormous as new ideas, energy, and perspectives infuse the environment and bring valuable global insights to the decision-making table. Artificially restricting access through an over-emphasis on “Canadian experience” deprives Canadian employers of the talent, technical skills, and unique perspectives that can create new sources of competitive advantage.

Having employees who understand those markets by virtue of their background and experience are valuable assets that enrich companies and bottom lines. With demographic change, globalization, and the rise of the knowledge worker, employers need to take talent management more seriously and as a business priority. Senior executives need to invest time in creating strategies that Attract, Motivate, Develop and Retain talent.

## 3.2 Research Panel

To set the stage for discussions about challenges and opportunities for HR professionals and HR associations, several pieces of original thought-provoking research were presented and discussed.

### **Mary C. MacDonald**

*Vice President, Human Resources, Snap-on Business Solutions, Richfield, Ohio, representing the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM).*

Ms. MacDonald presented findings of a joint research project: *SHRM-CCHRA 2008 Global Talent Sourcing in the US and Canada*, conducted in June 2007, for which HR professionals in the US and Canada were surveyed.

This presentation on global talent sourcing highlighted the disconnect between the skills shortage in Canada and the availability of skilled immigrants (Theme 1). The findings underscore the disconnect between the demand for skilled labour and the perception that there is insufficient supply in Canada, and speak to how costly the disconnect is. It also highlighted not only policy issues but the centrality of the HR profession in developing responses, noting that HR is at the forefront of staffing efforts within organizations, and is instrumental in recruiting, hiring and retaining workers.

Key findings of the SHRM-CCHRA study include:

- HR professionals in Canada reported increased difficulties in recruiting talent from the local labour pool of citizen and landed immigrant workers
- About two-thirds of HR professionals indicated that their organizations had increased efforts to recruit and retain citizen and landed immigrants as a result of immigration policy
- HR professionals in Canada reported greater recruitment and retention challenges posed by various workforce factors. For example, the greatest average degree of challenge was posed by shortages of citizen and landed immigrant candidates with applied skills such as professionalism, work ethics and communication skills
- Because of the difficulties facing employers in recruiting and retaining citizen and landed immigrant employees, many Canadian employers are hiring foreign national workers. These employers are very likely to provide orientation or onboarding programs to new foreign national workers to help them to acculturate to Canada
- HR professionals in Canada reported substantial challenges encountered with regard to the amount of time it takes to process paperwork for foreign national workers, identifying equivalent degrees and insufficient amount of time on temporary work visas before they expire. About one-half of HR professionals indicated that the average verification and hiring process requires more time now than it did just two years ago.

## **Neil Crawford, CHRP**

*Principal & Senior Consultant, Leader Best Employers in Canada study, Hewitt.*

Mr. Crawford presented *Attracting, Retaining and Engaging a Vastly Diverse Workforce* with findings from Hewitt's Best Employers in Canada study, with a focus on HR and leadership practices to engage a diverse workforce, highlighting the challenges for recruitment and talent acquisition (Theme 2).

As the workforce shortage becomes more critical, many employers will look to previously untapped sources of labour for employees. Increasingly, recruitment of more diverse talent makes good business sense.

The results of the Hewitt study suggest a perfect storm, created by the convergence of labour shortages, skills shortages and greater workforce diversity. “[O]nly 56% of Canadian employees believe that their employers are attracting the people needed for success, and that critical industries are currently feeling pain in terms of skill shortages, including oil, gas, and other energy sectors, health care, and government.” Management guru Peter Drucker has remarked that “the dominant factor for business in the next two decades is not going to be economics or technology; it will be demographics.” Mr. Crawford offered a challenge to the audience: “Diversity is the mix. Inclusion is making the mix work.”

Workplace inclusion is a function of employee engagement, and Mr. Crawford presented the factors for employee engagement for different demographic groups. The study examined the work characteristics that drive worker engagement, and the top five personal work values affecting the decision to join or stay in an organization by generation and by membership in various “employment equity” categories: women, aboriginals, visible minorities and persons with a disability. Key observations made by Mr. Crawford include:

- Employee engagement and decisions to join or stay with an organization are influenced by similar factors for the most part
- While factors are similar, different groups value key factors differently, especially supportive supervisors, work-life balance and convenient hours, continuous learning and benefits
- Different groups also have different needs in terms of education, communication and delivery

The study noted that with a diverse workforce, there is a desire for an increasingly flexible employment deal. Imperatives for employers who wish to remain competitive were suggested:

- Identify the key engagement drivers and personal work values of your critical talent segments;
- Define the employment deal that is right for your organization with a focus on your critical talent segments; and,
- Segment employee population for communicating and delivering your programs.

## **Dave Dinesen**

*President & CEO, BackCheck™*

In Mr. Dinesen's presentation, *Verifying Credentials*, he shared insights on employment screening with international employees, and some of the challenges employers need to consider (Theme 3).

BackCheck is a company which provides pre-employment screening for Canadian and multi-national employers. Based on their experience in reviewing over a million candidates, their presentation provided some information on the challenges – and increased necessity – of pre-employment background screening in the context of international recruiting in a global economy.

Common recruiting challenges for Canadian employers can be exacerbated when recruiting international candidates or landed immigrants. Some of the most current problems encountered

in screening international candidates include: language barriers, time zone differences, difficulties in performing comprehensive criminal record checks, lack of access to a comprehensive education database, establishing appropriate contacts, cultural barriers, unavailability of records and longer lead times.

Despite these challenges, pre-employment screening remains an essential part of the pre-employment process, particularly at a time when foreign credential verification and recognition are crucial issues for both employers and potential employees.

**Dr. Rick Lash**

*North American Director for the Hay Group’s Leadership & Talent Practice*

The presentation made by Dr. Lash, *Leadership in a Diverse World*, explored questions about what it takes to be an effective leader globally by presenting findings of a recent study of what differentiates high performing executives in different business contexts (i.e., different countries). This presentation addressed some of the challenges and opportunities for leading multi-cultural workplaces in Canadian business, and provided some lessons for leadership and organizational strategy (Theme 4).

In a study of 180 senior executives in Chinese, Indian, and Western businesses, it was found that leadership characteristics that develop are a function of the business environment in which the leader works. This provides important insights into how we interpret leadership in Canada, and how our own business potential can be maximized by understanding the strengths that immigrants bring. The key findings include:

1. Leadership situations (the context) differ sharply among the three groups, as summarized in the table below, which presents the most common leadership situations for Chinese, Indian, and Western leaders.

<b>Chinese</b>	<b>Indian</b>	<b>Western</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raising or investing capital</li> <li>• Mergers</li> <li>• Understanding the market</li> <li>• Improving established business</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting permissions from governments</li> <li>• Launching new innovations</li> <li>• Turnarounds</li> <li>• Improving established business</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talent (coaching, deploying, recruiting)</li> <li>• Re-organizing the business</li> <li>• Turnarounds</li> <li>• Negotiating and influencing others</li> </ul>

2. There are corresponding differences in each group’s most characteristic form of business thinking, which are presented in the table below:

<b>Chinese</b>	<b>Indian</b>	<b>Western</b>
<i>Markets and regulation</i>	<i>Adaptive thinking</i>	<i>Strategic insight</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding and predicting industry developments</li> <li>• Acting to shape the regulation of the industry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dealing with changing technologies, methods or business models</li> <li>• To meet country’s unmet needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing direction based on understanding the market and competitors, market trends, and changes in paradigms</li> </ul>

3. It is important to note that each group would be judged as having strengths and shortcomings if measured against the other groups. Chinese leaders might consider adding innovative thinking (from India) to broaden their competitiveness. Similarly, Indian leaders might consider adding interpersonal understanding (from the West) in dealing with developing talent in their organizations. Finally, Western business leaders might consider adding inner strength (from India) and social responsibility (from China) as part of their business thinking, to ensure sustainability

### 3.3 Moderated Panel

The National Forum featured a moderated panel of leaders in the area of integrating new Canadians into Canada and the workplace, during which they shared experiences and presented resources and promising practices.

Each panel member discussed successful programs in their own organization along with roles that business leaders and businesses, HR professionals and non-governmental players can have to integrate new Canadians as a source of talent.

In this activity, the focus was still on the 5 themes, but there was considerable overlap as the speakers presented their perspective on the overall theme of maximizing organizational potential by embracing diversity. Four perspectives were represented by the moderated panel: Government, Skilled Immigrants, Employers, and Community/Business/Government alliances.

#### **Corinne Prince-St-Amand**

*Director General of Labour Market Information (standing in for Janice Charette, Deputy Minister of Human Resources and Social Development Canada [HRSDC])*

Ms. Prince-St-Amand spoke to the following issues: immigrant supply and current labour market shortages; the labour market challenges – like credential verification – facing immigrants; and, key initiatives underway at HRSDC aimed at strengthening Canada's capacity to recruit and retain a skilled and diverse workforce.

Immigrants and Canadian employers face a number of challenges in the context of the perceived labour shortage. Recent immigrants to Canada have encountered a number of challenges when trying to enter the labour market at a level that is commensurate with their skills and experience. Within two years, 80% of immigrants to Canada find full-time work, but only 42% are working in their field. There are three main barriers, each of which presents an opportunity for Canadian employers:

- Canadian work experience – Canadian employers seem to be discounting work experience gained abroad
- Recognition of credentials – particularly in regulated occupations
- Language skills – French/English fluency

A fourth, harder to quantify, but consistently reported barrier is a poor understanding of Canadian workplace culture (Source: LSIC, 2007).

The Government of Canada is committed to ensuring that immigrants in Canada are able to fully utilize their skills and knowledge (Source: Advantage Canada). A condition to achieving that commitment is the efficient and timely assessment and recognition of international credentials, which is integral to ensuring the effective employment integration of immigrants. Equally important is the support and engagement of Canadian employers to help facilitate the hiring of immigrants into employment commensurate with their experience and skills. Foreign-trained workers who have Canadian work experience have greater chances to find employment within or closely related to their field of expertise.

HRSDC's Foreign Credential Recognition Program (FCRP) works to improve the integration of internationally trained workers into the Canadian work force by partnering with key stakeholders to develop and improve international credential assessment and recognition processes, thus ensuring that Canadian employers have access to a large pool of talented workers.

The FCRP provides strategic financial support to develop FCR processes that are fair, consistent, transparent and rigorous in targeted regulated and non-regulated occupations and sectors. The Program has made numerous advancements since it was launched in 2003. For example:

- Among regulated occupations: Self-identified foreign-trained engineers are the single largest group of skilled immigrants entering Canada every year. HRSDC has invested over \$2.5 million in projects with Engineers Canada in order to substantially improve the assessment and recognition process of foreign trained engineers. Last year, Ontario licensed more internationally-trained engineers than domestic engineering graduates.
- Among non-regulated occupations: BioTalent Canada is creating better opportunities for foreign-trained immigrants in the non-regulated biotechnology sector to connect with employers and integrate in the labour market through internship programs, which include curricula to help employers coach internationally-trained professionals, as well as national practical assessment tools. The project is increasing cooperation between governments, community agencies, industry and immigrants to better integrate internationally-trained professionals within Canada's biotechnology sector.
- Innovative approaches to Employment Bridging: The Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters (CME) organization offers the Engineering Matching and Placement Program (E-MAP), which is designed to match internationally-trained engineers with relevant manufacturing operations in British Columbia. The program provides opportunities for newcomers to gain Canadian work experience and fill gaps in their knowledge of technical job requirements. It is also raising awareness about internationally-trained engineers with employers across British Columbia.
- Innovative approaches to support immigrant integration starting early from overseas: The Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC) offers the Canadian Immigration Integration Pilot Project (CIIP), which provides services to help newcomers prepare for entry into the Canadian labour market *before and after* their arrival in Canada. With pilots currently in China, India and the Philippines, the project's interventions have helped immigrants choose where to settle and learn which employers to approach, as well as how best to do so.

HRSDC, in collaboration with Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), has developed the *Going to Canada Immigration Portal* – an online tool for prospective immigrants, new Canadians, and those who interact with them, to learn about integration into the Canadian labour market. The Portal assists immigrants in learning about job search and preparation strategies, foreign credential recognition, online skills assessments, and contains other information on services and tools to support labour market integration.

Additionally, Service Canada's website contains a *Services for Newcomers to Canada* section, which offers access to a wide range of government services and benefits for immigrants in Canada, including language training, labour market information, citizenship processes and SIN card applications.

Moreover, the Government of Canada announced in Budget 2007 an investment of \$500 million per year for 6 years to provinces and territories to implement new programming that will, among other things, provide opportunities for literacy and basic skills upgrading, job readiness assistance, wage subsidies, on-the-job training and workplace-based skills upgrading. This will help Canadians develop the skills they need and employers want. Immigrants have been identified within the under-represented groups and may be targeted under P/Ts investments.

The importance of recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce cannot be underestimated. Receiving skilled workers raises the average human capital in the economy and thus boosts long-term growth rates. Immigrants bring necessary skills, diversity, links with other economies and contribute to maintaining and improving public services. Those companies that succeed in integrating immigrants in their workforces may well find that they are better positioned to compete in the global knowledge economy. Skilled immigrants possess the necessary global skills and international networks which are essential for maintaining global competitive advantage. Knowledge of global business opportunities, cultural nuances, laws and business practices are key assets in today's global economy.

The Government of Canada is committed to expediting the movement of skilled workers into Canada and enhancing their labour market integration in order to pass on such productivity gains to firms, and ultimately, to the economy as a whole. Better integration will also enhance our ability to compete for internationally trained workers.

As an employer, the federal government puts forward initiatives to assist immigrants to integrate into Canada and the workplace, while also facing a common imperative with other Canadian employers to foster inclusiveness and equity in its human resource practices.

The Public Service Employment Act stipulates that preference should be given to Canadian citizens – however, preference does not mean exclusivity. The HR profession is currently examining ways in which we can demonstrate innovative leadership in this regard.

**Stan Antony**

*Chairman of Canadian Multicultural Radio (CMR) and Tamil Vision Inc.*

Mr. Antony spoke of his own immigration to Canada from Sri Lanka in 1986. He started as a newspaper delivery person, and with an entrepreneurial talent, acquired an Imperial Oil Ltd and Tim Hortons franchise. After telling the audience about the path that brought him to Canada and Tim Hortons, he described how he founded the Canadian Multicultural Radio (CMR) station by acquiring the last FM frequency license available in Toronto and the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). The audience listened with great interest as they learned how CMR broadcasts in 22 languages in the GTA, and that he expanded into TVI, a 24-hour specialty television station located in Mississauga, Ontario.

Mr. Antony's story is a success story by any definition – one that reflects the potential that immigrants bring to Canada's economy. It doesn't end there: Mr. Antony presented a model of inclusion of those from different cultures in the way that he runs his own enterprises, and in his commitment to helping those who were once in the same shoes he was when he immigrated. His company hosts an annual two day festival and trade show called *The South Asian Business Festival* that draws in about 100,000 people at the International Centre in Toronto. As well, his organizations provide scholarships awarded through Humber College to deserving students who want to pursue their education in broadcasting and journalism, as well as summer internships for broadcasting/journalism students who speak one of the stations' broadcasting languages.

Mr. Antony brought a unique perspective to the moderated panel, speaking at once as an immigrant who overcame many challenges upon his arrival in Canada; as an individual who has provided services and support to Canada's immigrant population; and, as an employer of a very diverse organization.

**Ruth Brothers, CHRP**

*Vice President of Human Resources at Novopharm Ltd.*

Novopharm Limited is a generic pharmaceutical company, based in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), with 1,400 employees. Novopharm was founded by an immigrant who has always believed in the strength and value of immigrants to the workforce of his company. All of Novopharm's employees are non-union. In recent years, a large number of entry level positions have been filled by new Canadians, the majority of whom are also visible minorities, and many of whom have had previous experience in the pharmaceutical industry and are highly qualified in terms of academics and experience. These roles are the most readily available and represent a means of gaining related Canadian experience, and often serve as a "stepping stone" for individuals seeking to develop their careers within the Canadian pharmaceutical industry.

With this strong internal pool of qualified employees, Novopharm focuses on promoting from within. Novopharm has an internal job posting policy and process that encourages professional development and progression to new opportunities. The company's commitment to internal development and advancement has multifold benefits, not the least of which is improved retention. This is especially significant in an industry where there is considerable competition for a relatively small market of skilled, knowledgeable and experienced workers. Providing opportunities for advancement or parallel development is therefore a source of strength for the business. In 2006 and the first quarter of 2007, more than 80% of positions posted at Novopharm were filled from within the organization.

Novopharm employees consistently report that for them, one of the most inspiring features of their organization is the diversity of their workplace and the value of this diversity.

The four key areas for workplace diversity objectives at Novopharm include:

1. Promote workplace diversity and respectful workplace principles as a source of strength and pride
2. Enhance the awareness, understanding and skills of managers and employees dealing with the complex challenges of our extensive workplace diversity
3. Strengthen employment systems and alternative resources to reinforce the framework of fairness and consistency, while also continuing to support workplace diversity needs
4. Provide outreach to designated group members, resources and expertise in the community to ensure better understanding of issues affecting designated group members and encourage greater participation.

Some of the initiatives implemented by Novopharm to achieve these objectives include:

- Diversity days
- Diversity calendar
- Respectful workplace training
- Education verification resources
- Internal job posting policy & procedure

**Elizabeth McIsaac**

*Executive Director, Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC)*

The Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC) was established in 2003. TRIEC comprises of members representing various groups: employers, labour, occupational regulatory bodies, post-secondary institutions, assessment service providers, community organizations, and all three levels of government. TRIEC's primary goal is to find and implement local solutions that help break down the barriers immigrants face when looking for work in the Toronto region. To achieve this goal, the council focuses on three objectives:

- Increase access to and availability of services that help immigrants gain access to the labour market more efficiently and effectively
- Change the way stakeholders value and work with skilled immigrants
- Change the way governments relate to one another in planning and programming around this issue.

TRIEC is particularly noteworthy because it is civic-led rather than initiated by government. The TRIEC model and its initiatives – including its *Career Bridge* internships, *its Mentoring Partnerships* program involving 50+ corporate partners, and its workshops, teleseminars and e-tips reaching hundreds of employers – deserve careful attention.

## 4.0 Conclusions from the Facilitated Discussions

After the presentations were made and the participants discussed them with the speakers during a Q&A forum, participants were divided into groups. Each group was asked to consider one of the four themes:

*The Disconnect*  
*Talent Acquisition*  
*Screening Candidates with Confidence*  
*Retention and Leadership*

Groups were tasked with discussing and reporting on what they saw as the key challenges relating to their issue, the positive opportunities they saw for improvement, and recommendations for action on the part of HR professionals, business and government. The results of these discussions are appended.

Both the discussion of the external research in the morning plenary and the breakout sessions made clear that the challenges outlined in the problem definition section are being felt in public and private-sector organizations across Canada. The varied backgrounds of the participants provided a fascinating range of perspectives on the intersections of workplace demands, skilled labour shortages, settlement of immigration and integration of their families. These in turn correspond to positive opportunities and many recommendations – some short, others medium and long-term – for action by human resources professionals, business leaders, and managers and governments, particularly the federal government.

**Fig. 1: Round-table discussion summaries**

### ***THE DISCONNECT***

#### **Key Challenges**

- Competition for skills with other countries
- Foreign credentials and lack of Canadian experience
- Skills shortages in traditional areas – e.g. plumbing, tool and die making
- Remote areas: social and community environment not conducive to attracting and retaining immigrants – cultural differences become acute

#### **Positive Opportunities for Change**

- Role for governments – with employers, educational institutions and community organizations – to raise awareness of immigrants' cultures
- Shift emphasis to defining jobs in terms of technical skill sets – open the door wider
- Creating forums where key stakeholders can access solutions and best practices
- Better and culturally sensitive onboarding and orientation processes

## **TALENT ACQUISITION**

### **Key Challenges**

- Competition for skills with other countries
- Foreign credentials and lack of Canadian experience
- Skills shortages in traditional areas – e.g. plumbing, tool and die making
- Using yesterday's recruitment system to hire skills of tomorrow
- Settlement and community integration
- Volatility of business cycles – reduced time for planning
- Reactive, not proactive practices
- Aboriginal community sense of being overlooked – high unemployment among Aboriginal people
- Social and community environment of remote areas not conducive to attracting and retaining immigrants – cultural differences become acute
- Lack of standardization and access to shared definitions and practices
- Cultural bias
- Lack of understanding of immigration processes
- Slowness and unpredictability of immigration processes

### **Positive Opportunities for Change**

- Shift emphasis to defining jobs in terms of technical skill sets – open doors wider. Separate core and non-core elements in formal job requirements – i.e. address relationship of standards to requirements – shift from credential-based to skill-based
- Fora where key stakeholders can access solutions and best practices
- Better onboarding, orientation processes
- Learn from high-performing organizations – e.g. Maple Leaf Foods in Brandon, Manitoba reportedly employs more than 800 employees, 70% of whom are immigrants
- Remove cultural barriers in workplaces
- Develop immigrant-friendly tools, assessment and supports
- Recognize and adapt to changing global landscape
- Planning for quantitative and qualitative organizational growth. NB – this also creates loyalty

## **SCREENING WITH CONFIDENCE**

### **Key Challenges**

- Difficulties in assessing foreign credentials and experience
- Reactive, not proactive practices
- Overcoming risk-aversion and resistance to change – institutional, organizational (i.e. work practices), personal
- Lack of standardization and access to shared definitions and practices
- Cultural bias
- Employer resistance to paying for credential validation

### **Positive Opportunities for Change**

- Role for government, with community, educational organizations and employers to create awareness of immigrants' cultures
- Shift emphasis to defining jobs in terms of technical skill sets – open doors wider. Separate core and non-core elements in formal job requirements – i.e. address relationship of standards to requirements – shift from credential-based to skill-based
- Develop immigrant-friendly tools, assessment and supports
- Fora where key stakeholders can access solutions and best practices
- Learn from high-performing organizations – e.g. Maple Leaf foods in Brandon, Manitoba employs more than 800, 70% of whom are immigrants

## **RETENTION AND LEADERSHIP**

### **Key Challenges**

- How real is the retention concern
- Introducing diversity in a homogeneous environment – resistance to climate of inclusion – need to go beyond HR to impact organizational culture
- Need to align and partner with broader community – manage expectations internally
- Have to build critical mass – alignment of business and government objectives

### **Positive Opportunities for Change**

- Go beyond “recruiting an individual” to include their family – maintain continuing support
- HR professionals – make program recommendations
- Governments and business cooperating

The following items reflect discussions that occurred in all breakout groups. They are presented separately because they underpin each of the more focused discussions. They merit separate attention and reproducing them in each group’s summary would result in un-helpful repetition.

## **SETTLEMENT AND SOCIETY**

### **Key Challenges**

- Lack of awareness of the scope of the problems in all constituencies
- Uneven acceptance of the need for change at different levels of organizations
- Resistance to change – clinging to familiar approaches. This has both perceptual and work practice dimensions
- The lack of a clearly articulated business case for celebrating and promoting diversity
- Complexity within organizations – many perform a wide range of activities and contain a complex mix of job responsibilities
- Lack of multicultural views and cultural competencies among managers and supervisors. Interestingly, no participant specifically mentioned senior management leadership capabilities or attitudes. In two of the groups that included people with considerable hands-on experience in diversity issues, one discussant noted that “diversity initiatives get traction when employers are part of the process,” while another noted that she has “never met a CEO who doesn’t get it [regarding the business case for diversity].” One way of reconciling these two observations is that senior management has a clear role, which is currently underutilized.

### **Positive Opportunities for Change**

- Role for governments – with employers, educational institutions and community organizations – to raise awareness of cultural diversity
- Creating fora where key stakeholders can access solutions and best practices
- Better and culturally sensitive onboarding and orientation processes
- Removing cultural and attitudinal barriers in workplaces
- Recognizing and adapting to the changing global landscape
- Planning for quantitative and qualitative organizational growth. NB – this also creates loyalty

## 4.1 The Disconnect

In addressing what was probably the theme with the broadest scope, participants tended to identify ways in which the current system could be made to work more effectively. Because Canada competes with other countries for skilled workers, employers should do more to promote themselves and Canada as desirable places to live and work. Many skills shortages are felt in remote areas, especially in resource sectors. Therefore, governments should consider incentives for settlement in remote areas.

More should be done to improve the receptivity of Canadians to immigrants. Governments should work with community and educational organizations and with employers to create awareness of immigrants' cultures. Employers should carefully assess job requirements to ensure they are defined in terms of required skills and not traditional credentials. Governments and employers should work to establish and coordinate prior learning and assessment programs and establish forums where employers and other stakeholders can access solutions. To facilitate assessments, they also should establish reciprocal agreements among educational institutions. Such institutions should modularize requirements for various trade and professional certifications, to enable newcomers to fill gaps in technical or professional training.

Governments should consider assessing credentials at the point of immigration and provide such services to recent immigrants who have not gone through the process. Settlement assistance should be tailored to meet the needs of whole families, not just the newly recruited individual.

Employers should consult with unions about the advantages of inserting enabling language into collective agreements. HR professionals should work closely with immigrant-serving organizations and build closer relationships with professional and trade associations.

## 4.2 Talent Acquisition

This theme elicited a wide range of ideas on how to embrace greater diversity, to do a better job of recruiting employees from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Reflecting the variety of experiences represented in the groups, many participants advanced lessons from their own and other organizations directly engaged in promoting diversity and serving immigrants, while others focused on challenges and barriers and suggested ways of resolving or surmounting them.

The key challenge is to embrace greater diversity. Participants pointed to both a lack of awareness of the scope of the problem and an uneven acceptance of the need for change at different levels of organizations. This often leads to resistance to change. Managers and supervisors often lack multicultural competencies. Businesses – with help from governments and educational and community organizations – need to develop and aggressively promote a clearly articulated business case for celebrating and promoting diversity. This is a business imperative not a “soft” objective. Many participants described it in terms of recognizing and adapting to the changing global landscape.

Discussants identified a role for governments – working with employers, educational institutions and community organizations – to raise awareness of cultural diversity and create forums where key stakeholders can access solutions and best practices.

Two of the breakout groups included people with considerable hands-on experience in diversity issues. One discussant noted that “diversity initiatives get traction when employers are part of the process,” while another noted that she has “never met a CEO who doesn’t get it [regarding the business case for diversity].” This suggests that senior management has an important leadership role to play, which is currently underutilized.

Within organizations, employers and HR professionals need to ensure that onboarding and orientation processes are more sensitive to cultural differences – this is part of removing cultural and attitudinal barriers in workplaces. In planning for quantitative and qualitative organizational growth, organizations need to take account of their internal complexity: many perform a wide range of activities and contain a complex mix of job responsibilities.

In implementing processes and practices to foster and promote diversity, several things are critical, according to participants. Organizations must identify where responsibility resides for overcoming denial and creating a climate of inclusion, at all levels. They further suggested that it is critical to communicate, support and embed values of diversity and that this requires leadership, support and reinforcement. Making the commitment of the organization to embrace diversity as an explicit value is also important and should be promoted.

Governments, employers and community organizations should share best practices. Employer role models and champions should be identified and promoted. Employers, perhaps with support from governments, should advance partnerships between large and small businesses to support capacity-building. Governments should be leaders in their role as major employers.

Participants felt that senior governments should try to speed up the immigration process: above all, they should work to improve its predictability and reliability. There is a significant public policy role in supporting effective integration. Municipal involvement is very important, and it is important to include the broader community in newcomer orientation and to ensure long-term support and not just initial welcoming. Because such support will evolve over time, multi-stakeholder initiatives are particularly valuable and should be encouraged and supported.

It was recommended that diversity competency should be a requirement for the Certified Human Resources Professional (CHRP) designation and should be included as part of the Code of Ethics. Finally, participants recommended that the HR community should identify and access possible government funding, to assist in providing services and training to employers and the broader community.

### **4.3 Screening Candidates with Confidence**

Participants noted various difficulties in assessing foreign credentials and experience. In particular, they noted a lack of standardization and access to shared definitions and practices and employer resistance to paying for credential validation. Related to these difficulties is the tendency in many organizations to define job requirements in terms of conventional credentials, rather than the underlying skills. Various recommendations were advanced to address this, such as a broader use by employers and HR professionals of TOWES (Test of Workplace Essential Skills), and a centralized, federal-provincial assessment capacity.

Discussants also recommended that some of the “long-distance” challenges of verifying credentials could be addressed in Canadian embassies if immigrants’ home countries participated in assessments of skills and experience. They also recommended that embassies improve information provided to prospective immigrants, including information that directly addresses Canadian workplace culture and norms.

A number of potential obstacles to attracting and recruiting more diverse candidates were also identified, including the use of reactive, rather than proactive practices, overcoming risk-aversion and resistance to change (both individual and organizational) and cultural bias. It was suggested that there were opportunities to learn from high-performing organizations. One example given was Maple Leaf Foods in Brandon, Manitoba, which was said to employ more than 800 personnel, 70% of whom are immigrants.

## 4.4 Retention and Leadership

The breakout groups addressing this theme spent most of their time discussing opportunities and recommendations. The discussion in these groups reflected agreement with the evidence of a wide range of challenges and the need to do a better job of retaining employees from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

One participant noted that making retention problems real and evidence-based and planning to resolve them will also have the effect of bolstering employee engagement and loyalty. Others noted that the orientation in addressing retention issues must be successful resolution and not simply defence of the status quo. One of the groups voiced some scepticism about the business commitment to retention issues – is it real? If it is, discussants agreed that it is necessary to go beyond HR to include the whole organization and to impact organizational culture. It is critical to align and partner with the broader community – and to manage expectations internally. The goal is to build a critical mass of support – alignment of business and government objectives

A number of recommendations for actions by HR professionals were advanced. In addition to upgrading their skills and working with their provincial HR association, it was recommended that they solicit employee feedback and develop action strategies and program recommendations for senior management incorporating their findings. It was also recommended that HR professionals work more closely with settlement and other immigrant-service organizations.

Business was encouraged to think more holistically about diversity (among other things, seeing it as encompassing a range of opportunities, and not just challenges) and to work more closely with Chambers of Commerce to advance these approaches at a variety of levels within the employer community.

Governments were encouraged to work with HR associations, provide funding for internships and ensure that settlement funding includes adequate English/French as a second language instruction and programming for families and children.

## 5.0 Recommendations for Action

### 5.1 Recommendations for HR Professionals

- **Make the business case for enhancing diversity**
- **Optimize selection and hiring**
  - Focus on competencies and capabilities, not credentials
  - Ensure that the orientation is toward success and not defensibility of status quo
- **Enhance organizational effectiveness**
  - Issue explicit value commitment to diversity
  - Communicate, support and embed values of diversity – requires leadership, support and reinforcement at all levels (culture, leadership, policies and practices) – build awareness and leadership
  - Remove cultural barriers in workplace
  - Create climate of inclusion at all levels of organization
  - Provide diversity training in workplace
  - Identify and promote employer role models and champions – create inventory of best practices
  - Solicit employee feedback and develop action strategies
- **Evaluate performance accurately and fairly**
  - Make retention concerns real and evidence-based.
  - Focus on performance, not credentials
  - Ensure leadership, support and reinforcement at all levels (culture, policies and practices) – HR professionals should make program recommendations
  - Solicit employee feedback and develop action strategies
- **Beyond the organization – networking**
  - Build relationships with professional and trade associations
  - Work closely with settlement and immigrant-service organizations
  - Share best practices of employers and communities
  - Access government funding to provide services and training
  - Join provincial HR associations to assist with their professional development and seek contact with other HR professionals facing the same or similar challenges in the workplace
  - Promote your workplace as a desirable place to work
  - Emphasize government's public policy role
- **HR profession**
  - Make diversity competency a requirement for CHRP designation and include as part of the Code of Ethics

## 5.2 Recommendations for Employers

- **Accept corporate accountability**
  - Focus on competencies and capabilities, not credentials
  - Ensure that the orientation is toward success and not defensibility of status quo
  - Develop and implement internal communication practices to ensure that all diversity policies and plans are communicated to management and staff
  - Ensure that all employees, both management and staff, agree to adhere to diversity policies and practices.
  - Appoint or designate a senior executive to be responsible for the development, implementation and evaluation of diversity practices and initiatives within organization
  - Incorporate diversity objectives within its business plans, at the departmental, divisional and/or corporate level
- **Enhance recruitment, hiring and retention planning**
  - Ensure that all human resource policies clearly articulate a commitment to diversity, reviewing and eliminating on an ongoing basis all human resource policies and practices relating to recruitment, hiring and retention that act as systemic barriers
  - Develop and implement mechanisms that foster an inclusive and accepting work environment aimed at increasing workforce retention
  - Place advertisements for employment opportunities beyond mainstream media by placing advertisements in media targeted to diverse communities.
  - Ensure that employees responsible for hiring and managing staff are provided with training on systemic barriers.
  - Monitor progress and assess the effectiveness of policies and initiatives in furthering diversity objectives
  - Make retention concerns real and evidence-based. Leadership, support and reinforcement at all levels (culture, policies and practices)
  - Take ownership of retention efforts – business is the main beneficiary
- **Outreach**
  - Work in partnership with other organizations, agencies and government to identify programs for training and recruitment to meet diversity objectives, and to support capacity-building
  - Promote themselves as a desirable place to work
  - Think more holistically, work closely with Chambers of Commerce to engage at a variety of levels
- **Establish ongoing training**
  - Educate unions on advantages of inserting enabling language into collective agreements
  - Work to include broader community in newcomer orientation – ensure long-term support, not just welcoming newcomers. Need multi-stakeholder initiatives
  - Use TOWES (Test of Workplace Essential Skills) nationally
  - Promote mentoring and coaching programs for new employees, but also for old time staff that might need an update in diversity appreciation

## 5.3 Recommendations for Government

### Government as Employer

- **Promote a culture of diversity and inclusion**
  - Remove cultural barriers in government workplaces
  - Provide diversity training in government workplaces
  - Create climate of inclusion, at all levels of organization
- **Develop clear business case for enhancing diversity**
  - Communicate, support and embed values of diversity – requires leadership, support and reinforcement at all levels (culture, leadership, policies and practices) – build awareness and leadership
  - Identify and promote employer role models and champions – create inventory of best practices
  - Issue explicit value commitment to diversity
  - Engage actors from different backgrounds to provide feedback and suggest recommendations in terms of diversity at the workplace
- **Commit to lifelong learning**
  - Encourage continuing education in the workplace and a culture of constant learning and adaptation to change
  - Provide guidelines for diversity training in the workplace
  - Support informed decision making in terms of employing highly skilled immigrants
- **Communicate core and strategic goals**
  - Governments should be leaders in their role as major employers

### Government as Policy & Program Leader

- **Promote a culture of diversity and inclusion**
  - Encourage employers to remove cultural barriers in workplaces
  - Promote diversity training in communities, educational institutions and workplaces
  - Create climate of inclusion, at all levels of society
  - Share best practices of employers and communities
- **Review and develop policy**
  - Analyze, develop and improve employment programming to ensure that it remains well suited in terms of diversity to the needs of the local/provincial/federal workforce and labour market
  - Engage key population sectors from diverse backgrounds in public consultancies about expectations and issues to be addressed
  - Identify strengths and needs in terms of workforce diversity and productivity and implement a balance to reconcile both
  - Promote public policy role in supporting effective integration – municipal involvement is very important

- **Create programs and support initiatives**
  - Build partnerships with different organizations and programs that will support diverse working environments and link them to others that have not done so yet
  - Fund research that will address issues about cultural diversity and the workplace
  - Be accountable for implications and results in terms of efforts for improving the diverse workplace environment
  - Develop a profile of leadership in terms of embracing diversity in the workplace, and promote it across the different sectors of employers
  - Evaluate, revise and improve these programs and initiatives constantly
  - Work to include broader community in newcomer orientation – ensure long-term support, not just welcoming newcomers. Need multi-stakeholder initiatives
  - Improve predictability and reliability of immigration system
  - Provide access to skills for the whole family, not just the new hire
  - Promote tax incentives & educational supports for immigrants to settle in remote areas
  
- **Commit to lifelong learning**
  - Encourage continuing education in the workplace and a culture of constant learning and adaptation to change
  - Provide guidelines for diversity training in the workplace
  - Support informed decision making in terms of employing highly skilled immigrants
  - Create prior learning and experience assessment programs – centralized and standardized across provinces
  - Assess credentials at the point of immigration and make this service available to previous immigrants who have not gone through this process
  - Work with employers to educate unions on the advantages of inserting enabling language into collective agreements
  - Modify educational programs – modularize requirements to allow faster accreditation
  - Re-evaluate requirements for licensing and professional accreditation
  - Create exams in mother languages of immigrants in selected skills areas
  - Create international reciprocal agreements among educational institutions
  
- **Communicate core and strategic goals**
  - Promote Canada as a desirable place to work
  - Speed up immigration process – improve information to potential immigrants

## 6.0 Looking Ahead

Human resources professionals have long been saying that their role within an organization increasingly needs to be strategic. Providing a strong voice to facilitate the integration of new Canadians into Canada and the workplace is an opportunity for HR professionals to take a leading role in planning and implementing key solutions that will help advance businesses and improve the socio-economic prospects for immigrants and their families.

As part of their responsibilities in workforce planning, staffing, training and development, performance management, etc. HR professionals are the liaison between employers and an invaluable pool of talented, potential employees. The recommendations contained in the previous pages highlight some critical actions that HR professionals should consider for their organizations. It will be up to each individual professional to design and execute an appropriate plan for their organization and to promote awareness among executives.

As the voice of the human resources profession in Canada, there is clearly a role for the Canadian Council of Human Resources Associations in moving this agenda forward. As the voice of HR professionals on a provincial level – and as the direct link to the HR community across the country – collaboration from the provincial HR associations will also be invaluable.

The CCHRA, through its Government Relations and Professional Standards committees composed of volunteers from across the country, is committed to working with the Government of Canada to move this agenda forward and add value to businesses, human resources professionals and key stakeholders.

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## 8.0 Appendices

### 8.1 Recommendations (by theme)

<b><i>THE DISCONNECT</i></b>	<b>HR Action</b>	<b>Business Action</b>	<b>Gov't Action</b>
Share best practices of employers and communities	Y	Y	Y
Create partnerships between large & small businesses to support capacity-building		Y	
Governments should be leaders in their role as major employers			Y

<b><i>TALENT ACQUISITION</i></b>	<b>HR Action</b>	<b>Business Action</b>	<b>Gov't Action</b>
Identify and promote employer role models and champions. Create inventory of best practices	Y	Y	Y
Remove cultural barriers in workplaces	Y	Y	Y
Conduct diversity training within organizations	Y	Y	Y
Create climate of inclusion, at all levels of organization	Y	Y	Y
Develop clear business case for enhancing diversity	Y	Y	Y
Communicate, support and embed values of diversity – requires leadership, support and reinforcement at all levels (culture, leadership, policies and practices); build awareness and leadership	Y	Y	Y
Communicate an explicit value commitment	Y	Y	Y
Make diversity competency a requirement for CHRP designation – include as part of Code of Ethics	Y		
Join provincial HR associations in order to learn more about the issues of employing immigrants and meet other HR professionals facing the same challenges in their workplaces	Y		
Solicit employee feedback and develop action strategies	Y		
Business should think more holistically, work closely with Chambers of Commerce to engage at a variety of levels		Y	

<b>SCREENING WITH CONFIDENCE</b>	<b>HR Action</b>	<b>Business Action</b>	<b>Gov't Action</b>
HR community access government funding to provide services & training	Y		
Educate unions on the advantages of inserting enabling language into collective agreements		Y	Y
Government assess credentials at the point of immigration – expand program to recent immigrants who have not gone through process			Y
Modify educational programs – modularize requirements to allow faster accreditation			Y
Create prior learning and experience assessment programs			Y
Create international reciprocal agreements among educational institutions			Y
Create inventory of best practices & share them	Y	Y	Y
Use TOWES (Test of Workplace Essential Skills) nationally	Y	Y	
Central assessment, federal-provincial standardization			Y
Re-evaluate requirements for licensing and professional accreditation			Y

<b>RETENTION AND LEADERSHIP</b>	<b>HR Action</b>	<b>Business Action</b>	<b>Gov't Action</b>
Ensure the orientation is toward success and not defending the status quo	Y	Y	
Focus on performance management	Y	Y	
Make retention concerns real and evidence-based.	Y		Y
Leadership, support and reinforcement at all levels (culture, leadership, policies and practices). Explicit value commitment to diversity. Ensure that the orientation is focused on success and not defence of status quo – needs to be welcoming, not just friendly	Y		Y
Business must take ownership of retention efforts – it is the main beneficiary		Y	
Remove cultural barriers in workplaces	Y	Y	Y
Conduct diversity training within organizations	Y	Y	Y
Create climate of inclusion, at all levels of organization	Y	Y	Y
Develop clear business case for enhancing diversity	Y	Y	Y
Communicate, support and embed values of diversity – requires leadership, support and reinforcement at all levels (culture, leadership, policies and practices) – build awareness and leadership	Y	Y	Y
Identify and promote employer role models and champions. Create inventory of best practices	Y	Y	Y
Join provincial HR associations in order to learn more about the issues of employing immigrants and meet other HR professionals facing the same challenges in their workplaces	Y		
Governments should be leaders as employers			Y

<b>SETTLEMENT AND SOCIETY</b>	<b>HR Action</b>	<b>Business Action</b>	<b>Gov't Action</b>
Employers need to work to promote themselves and Canada as desirable places to live and work		Y	Y
Emphasize the public policy role in supporting effective integration – municipal involvement very important			Y
Work to include broad community in newcomer orientation – ensure long-term support, not just welcoming newcomers. Need multi-stakeholder initiatives		Y	Y
Provide access to skills for the whole family, not just new hire			Y
Speed up immigration processes – improve information to potential immigrants			Y
Improve predictability and reliability of immigration system			Y
Conduct exams in mother language of immigrants in selected skills areas			Y
Create incentives for immigrants to settle in remote areas (tax incentives and educational support)			Y
Build relationships with professional and trade associations	Y		
Build relationships and work closely with settlement and immigrant-serving organizations	Y		
Work closely with immigrant-service organizations	Y		
Governments as employers should be leaders			Y
Governments should work with HR associations, provide funding for internships, ensure adequate programming for E/FSL and family and children's programming			Y

## 8.2 Speaker Biographies

### Keynote Speaker

#### **Philip C. Wilson, CHRP**

##### **Vice President, Global Human Resources, Corel Corporation**

Philip has served as Corel's Vice President, Global Human Resources since June 2007. Prior to joining Corel, Mr. Wilson spent over 12 years with CIBC where he led the company's global HR initiatives, including employee training, organizational development, talent management, succession planning, and global recruiting. Prior to CIBC, Mr. Wilson held executive positions at Northern Telecom, Bell Northern Research and CAE Electronics. Mr. Wilson was recently recognized as one of *Canada's 5 Stars of HR Innovation* as selected by HR Professional Magazine. Mr. Wilson graduated from McGill University with a major in Industrial Relations and a minor in Economics.

### Facilitator

#### **Dr. Linda Manning**

##### **President, Leadership Mosaic Inc. and Adjunct Professor, Faculty of Social Sciences, Economics, University of Ottawa**

Linda is President of Leadership Mosaic, Inc., which is dedicated to comprehensive and measurable integration of diversity into the Canadian workplace through strategic learning solutions. She is also an adjunct professor of Economics and senior researcher at the University of Ottawa. Educated in the U.S., she holds a doctorate in International Economics. She currently leads a multi-million dollar project funded by HRSDC designed to facilitate and foster organizational growth in the face of the impending skills gap by helping Canadian small to medium sized enterprises develop strategies for advancing highly skilled immigrants into the leadership positions left empty by retirements.

### Research Panel

#### **Mary MacDonald**

##### **Vice President of Human Resources, Snap-on Business Solutions and Board Member, Society for Human Resource Management**

After 30 years in global senior HR roles, Mary joined Snap-on Business Solutions as Vice President of Human Resources in March 2005. She is responsible for ensuring that SBS has the best talent in place to drive business results and achieve their growth strategy. Mary has served on the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) Global Advisory Panel and in 2003, she was the lead Subject Matter Expert and co-authored the *SHRM Global Learning System Global Staffing Model*. She currently represents SHRM as a board member of the North American Human Resource Management Associations (NAHRMA), the regional grouping within the World Federation of Personnel Management Associations (WFPMA).

#### **Rick Lash**

##### **North American Director, Leadership and Talent Practice, Hay Group**

Rick is the North American Director for the Hay Group's Leadership and Talent Practice. He has spoken widely on leadership development and organizational transformation, and is a regular conference presenter. He has appeared on CBC's *This Morning* with Sheilagh Rogers and *Workology*. Rick has published numerous articles and book chapters on leadership and personal transformation and has written several articles for the Globe and Mail's Careers section.

**Neil Crawford, CHRP****Principal and Senior Consultant, Hewitt and Leader, Best Employers in Canada study**

Neil is a principal and Senior Consultant with Hewitt Associates. He is also the leader of the annual *Best Employers in Canada* study, conducted by Hewitt and published in the Globe and Mail's Report on Business magazine. In addition, Neil consults in the areas of strategic people management, business restructuring and HR effectiveness. He has over 20 years experience as an HR consultant. Neil has worked extensively with many organizations to improve the effectiveness of their HR functions, measure and improve employee engagement, and track cultural change. Neil is a mathematics graduate of the University of Waterloo and is a qualified actuary. He has also obtained the CHRP designation.

**Dave Dinesen****President and CEO, BackCheck**

Dave founded BackCheck in 1997. Previously, he served as co-founder and Senior Vice President of a large investigation and due diligence firm. Realizing that pre-employment background checks were the future, he founded BackCheck which is now the industry leader in Canada. With account executives from coast to coast, BackCheck serves thousands of Canadian employers with industry leading pre-employment screening services. Dave sits on the board of the Langara College Criminology Advisory Committee, and is a member of the BC HRMA and the National Association of Professional Background Screeners (NAPBS).

**Moderated Panel****Corinne Prince-St-Amand****Director General, Labour Market Integration Directorate, Human Resources and Social Development Canada**

Since October 2007, Corinne has been Director General of the Labour Market Integration Directorate in the Skills and Employment Branch at HRSDC. She is responsible for the work of the Foreign Credential Recognition Program, Labour Mobility (Chapter 7 of the Internal Trade Agreement), the *Going to Canada Immigration Portal*, and the Skills and Labour Market Information Division. Previously, Corinne was Director General of the Foreign Workers and Immigrants Directorate and the Director of the Foreign Credential Recognition Program at HRSDC. Prior to that, she managed the National Occupational Classification system, occupational information, Essential Skills research and pilot projects, as well as the development of generic and sectoral career information. Corinne was also responsible for the Skills & Learning file for her directorate and was departmental lead on the Rural file.

Corinne began her career with the Legal Branch of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) and is a member of the Law Society of Upper Canada. She graduated with a Bachelor of Social Science from the University of Ottawa in 1985 and received her Bachelor of Laws from the University of Calgary in 1991.

**Stan Antony  
Chairman, CMR FM**

Stan is Chairman of CMR FM, an organization he founded by investing and acquiring the last FM frequency license available in Toronto and the GTA. This station (Canadian Multicultural Radio) now broadcasts in 22 languages in the GTA. It also owns a 24 hour specialty television station located in Mississauga, ON. Stan was born in 1962 in Jaffna, Sri Lanka. He was the first person in his family to immigrate to Canada in 1986, where he started employment as a newspaper delivery person and subsequently acquired an Imperial Oil Ltd and Tim Hortons franchise. Today, Stan is active in giving back to the community and holds an annual two day festival and trade show called *The South Asian Business Festival* that draws in about 100,000 people at the International Centre in Toronto, ON. As well, his organizations provide scholarships awarded through Humber College to deserving students who want to pursue their education in broadcasting and journalism, as well as summer internships for broadcasting/journalism students who speak one of the stations' broadcasting languages.

**Elizabeth McIsaac  
Executive Director, Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council**

Elizabeth is the Executive Director of the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC), a multi-stakeholder collaboration that identifies and implements local and practical solutions that lead to meaningful employment for skilled immigrants. Elizabeth has worked with TRIEC since it was launched in 2003 as a project of The Maytree Foundation. She has also held various positions at the Maytree Foundation, most recently as the Director of Policy. Before joining the Foundation, Elizabeth was the Executive Director of the Association of International Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, a non-governmental organization advocating for policy changes that would create better access to licensing for immigrant doctors. Previous to this she worked in direct service with immigrant and refugee communities, as well as holding various roles in research and teaching. On the issue of immigrant labour market integration, Elizabeth has most recently co-authored *Making the Connections: Ottawa's Role in Immigrant Employment* published by the Institute for Research on Public Policy in Canada (2007), and *Integrating Immigrants in Canada: Addressing Skills Diversity* in the OECD publication, *From Immigration to Integration: Local Solutions to a Global Challenge* (2006).

**Ruth Brothers, CHRP  
Vice President Human Resources, Novopharm Limited**

Ruth Brothers is a senior Human Resources executive with extensive experience in leading the HR function across a variety of industry sectors including advanced technology, packaged goods, manufacturing, automotive and petrochemical. Currently, Ruth is the Vice President of Human Resources for Novopharm Limited, the second largest generics pharmaceutical company in Canada and a division of Teva, the world's largest. Previously, Ruth was a Principal of her own HR consulting practice specializing in the development and implementation of human resource strategies. Her diverse career includes VP Human Resources roles with CAE Inc., General Electric – CAMCO Inc., and Christie Brown and Co. a Division of Nabisco Ltd. Ruth also spent over ten years in various human resources functions with Shell Canada in both Montreal and Toronto, and is fluently bilingual. Ruth's areas of expertise include HR strategy development, organizational design, team-building, leadership development and succession planning. A francophone from Montreal, Ruth attended Sir George Williams University, now Concordia. She is actively involved in the community, serving as a Director of Ballet Jorgan and a foundation based in Quebec, On the Tip of Your Toes. She will be joining the Board of the Human Resources Professional Association (HRPA) in May of 2008.