

IMMIGRANT
EMPLOYMENT
COUNCIL OF BC **IEC_{BC}**

Rotman | **Intercultural
Skills Lab**

The Saint John
Newcomers
Centre




Le Centre
de nouveaux arrivants
de Saint-Jean

triec ▶▶▶
Toronto Region Immigrant
Employment Council
Diversity Drives Success

Adapting Services during Covid-19: Innovative Approaches in Addressing Immigrant Unemployment and Underemployment across Canada

About IEC-BC



We work with employers to equip them with solutions, tools and resources they need to connect to global talent.

Connecting Employers
to Immigrant Talent

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About TRIEC

Our Vision

A Greater Toronto Region that prospers by fully engaging the contributions of skilled immigrants

Our Mission

Create and champion solutions to better integrate skilled immigrants in the Greater Toronto Region labour market

Our Reach

We work in the GTA— Toronto, Peel, York, Durham and Halton

And across Canada with national employer partners and local immigrant employment councils

About The St. John Newcomers Centre



To improve the **cultural, social,** and **economic** well-being of the community through the promotion of **multiculturalism** and support to newcomer **settlement** in the Saint John region.

About Intercultural Skills Lab

Rotman

- [ISL](#) - *platform* and *resource* that supports employees at all levels to develop intercultural competencies
- Programs for individuals- [Business Edge Campus](#) and [Business Edge Digital](#)
- Customized programs for employers- [Culture Counts](#)
- Cultural assessment tool - [MAPLE](#)



**Intercultural
Skills Lab**

Immigrant talent during a period of uncertainty

- Worst economic downturn since Great Depression - Canadian economy expected to **contract 6.6%** in 2020 (CBoC, 2020)
- Newcomers were more **vulnerable** to unemployment and underemployment with the pandemic
 - Newcomers in employment declined by **22.6%** from February to May (StatCan, 2020)
- **Intersectionality:** Immigrant women, especially with university degrees, experienced higher unemployment rates in May 2020 than women and men born in Canada, as well as immigrant men (IRPP, 2020)

Immigrant talent during a period of uncertainty

- Leveraging immigrant talent slipped down in the list of employer **priorities** during the first wave
- **BUT** not all sectors were equally affected – and immigrants filled critical roles to respond to the **pandemic-induced demand**, e.g. in e-commerce
- Immigrants as essential workers: ~**80%** of the nurse aides & patient service associates in Toronto's long-term care (StatCan, 2020)



Immigrant talent during a period of uncertainty

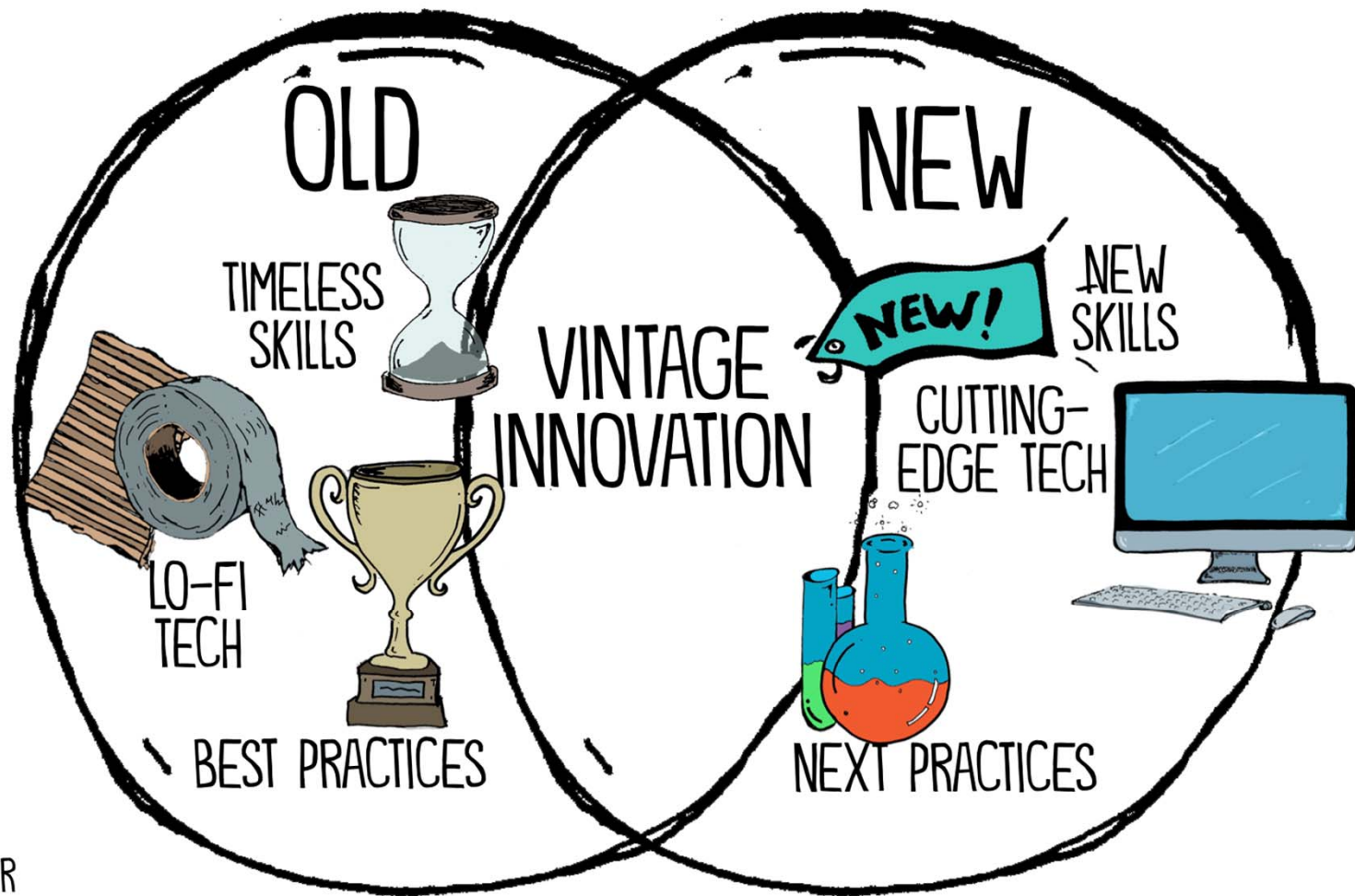
- Employees born in Canada regained **86%** of the full-time jobs lost during April to August vs. immigrants have recovered only **60%** (LMIC, 2020)
- **Talent crunch:** Only **70%** of the targeted number of permanent residents will be admitted this year – under the ‘most optimistic’ scenario (RBC, 2020)
- The government has set an ambitious target to admit **over 1.2 million** new permanent residents over the next three years

Paradigm Shift



- Shift from “credentials to competencies”
- Translate competencies into the local context of the occupation in a “language” that employers understand
- Hearts and minds: making the human connection and understanding the value that newcomers can bring to the workplace

Partnerships: employers, business and industry associations and the “unusual suspects” e.g. post-secondary, VR/AI companies




JOHN SPENCER

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About TRIEC Mentoring Partnership

- TRIEC Mentoring Partnership helps **job ready skilled newcomers** to Canada obtain employment **in their field or a related field**.
- The program matches newcomers with a mentor who has a **similar professional background** for a 3-month period.
- Mentors help their newcomer mentees understand how the local job market works and build professional networks in the GTA.
- In return, they learn leadership and coaching skills, gain knowledge of international business practices, and how to better communicate with colleagues.

COVID-19 Challenges – TRIEC Mentoring Partnership

- Newcomer mentee pipeline was hard-hit with the first wave:
 - **50%** decline in the number of registrations in April-May compared to 2019
- Slowdown in **employer cycles** with the lockdown and uncertainties
- Decline in **new mentor** uptake
- Redefining '*virtual*' mentorship

Adapting to the Pandemic – TRIEC Mentoring Partnership

- Communicating the **impact**
 - **2.5x** more likely to be in 'good quality jobs' and **4x** more likely to expand their network
- Mentor **re-engagement** campaigns
- Targeted **content & workshops** based on mentor and mentee needs and learnings
- Flexibility and openness to listen and consult



Are you an immigrant professional?
Feeling lost in your job search?
#MentoringEmpowers – become a mentee

We are a proud partner of
TRIEC Mentoring Partnership

Quick Mentoring
Leave your advice

**I got laid off due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
The HR team says it's temporary and I'm still
part of the company. What should I have to do?
Should I just wait or start to look for jobs?**

Newcomer Mentee
Marketing Professional

New Approaches

Increased use of technology - AI, VR and AR:

- Interview Skills (Be Confident app)
- Virtual Connections Events – recruitment, sector-specific, speed networking, hackathons
- Pivoting employment readiness “soft/essential” skills to employer onboarding resource (ASCEND)
- *Upcoming: Bootcamps*



NOURISH

Partnerships, relationships
and existing efforts.



BUST

~~Myths~~ **SILOS**
Guided by strategic alignment
and informed processes.



COORDINATE

Coordinate efforts and identify
synergies. Bring alignment and
harness the motivation
to stay together.



RAISE

National common goal,
awareness towards action,
and level of enagagment.

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The Context

Lack of employer engagement

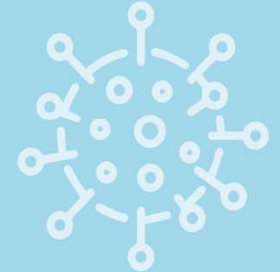
Low enthusiasm, apprehension
and "fatigue"



Manage: Relationships and building trust
Mitigation: Focus WIFM + WIN/WIN

COVID-19

Economic impact,
lack of jobs, uncertainty



Manage: Contingency and agile planning
Mitigation: Arising opportunities

D&I Hiring Practices & Workplaces



Limited resources & capacities may
result in ability to respond to new
opportunities and take what is
perceived to be higher risk

Manage: Resource optimization
Mitigation: Capitalize partnerships + networks

Anti-immigrant sentiments



Calls for limiting immigration levels,
racism on the rise, and we are
not immune to populism

Manage: Robust Communication –
economic benefits & success stories
Mitigation: Engagement and involvement –
"Involve me and I will understand"

Breaking Through the Glass ~~ceiling~~ Door

- Hiring freezes and/or or focused on bringing back laid off employees
- Tech and essential services sectors continue to recruit
 - Tech: protracted hiring processes; increased requirements
 - Essential services: broad outreach, easy, online application processes

Not able to get through the door or the door opens only to junior/lower skilled positions.



Pervasive Employment Barriers



**No Canadian
experience**



**Understanding international
credentials and experience**



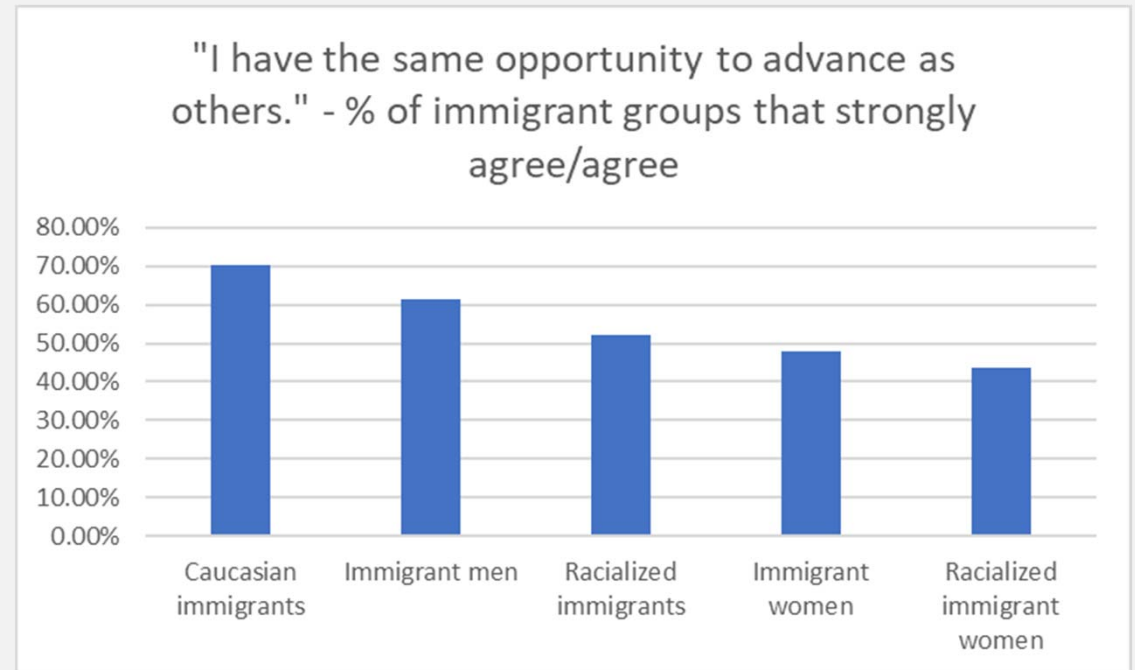
Local professional networks

Engaging Employers during COVID-19

- Restructuring, lay-offs and hiring freezes
- Renewed focus on **diversity and inclusion** with rise of anti-Black racism
- Internal hiring - leveraging **underutilized** skills of immigrant employees
- **Skills shortages** beyond the pandemic
 - **48%** of Canadian employers couldn't find the workers to fulfill their talent needs (Manpower, 2020) before the outbreak.

Building Back Better: A Call to Employers

- Tackling the “sticky floor”
- Bias awareness
- Expanding access to professional development and management support
- Employee perceptions of whether they can advance



TRIEC, Immigrant Career Trajectories Survey, 2020. n=387

Building Back Better: A Call to Employers

- **Talent evaluation:** Non-Western names are **20 to 40%** less likely to get a call for an interview (Banerjee, Reitz, and Oreopoulos, 2018)
- **Intentionality:** Paying attention to how cultural differences affect workplace practices
- **Intercultural competence:** Every employee needs some degree of intercultural skills
- **Performance assessment and KPIs:** Incentivizing inclusive behavior
- **Flexible work policies:** Flexibility options beyond the pandemic