

Creating a virtual community: strategies learned through the pandemic

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What Clients Need

- Importance of pre-arrival networking
- SOPA: Ensure clients are prepared to settle and work in Canada, sometimes even finding a job before they arrive.
- How can we help clients make connections in their field, learn about opportunities, and connect with other immigrants that could help them settle in their new city?



Challenges



- How do you network with employers and peers when you're in another country and another time zone?
- What kind of virtual tools do we have?
- Pandemic: number of SOPA clients decreased; presented a unique opportunity to innovate.
- SOPA Networking Working Group

Opportunities

- Developed different virtual strategies to help build a virtual community for our clients
- We used different technologies such as Zoom and LinkedIn
- This included connecting with employers, reaching out to subject-matter experts and working with past clients



Initiatives

- **Conversation Circles**
 - We have presentations on a relevant topic
 - Clients are split into groups of about 4-8 people to discuss further
 - These are monthly events with anywhere from 20 to 70 participants



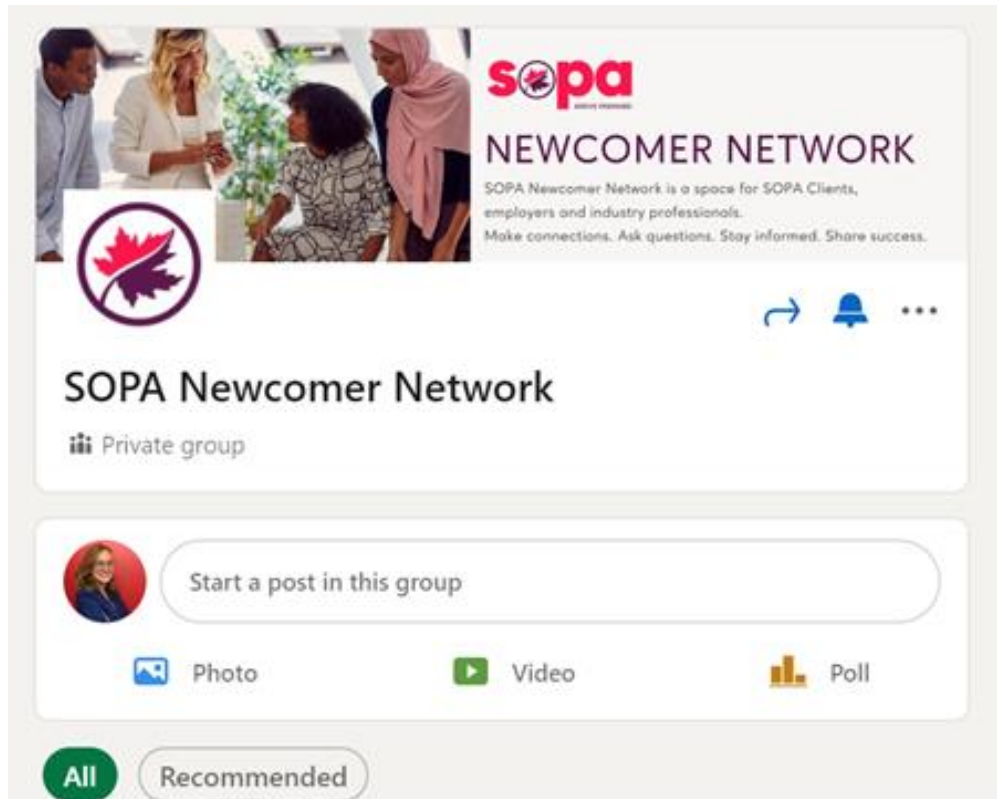
Initiatives

- **Conversation Circles (Testimonial):**

I am grateful to have attended the SOPA Social Café Networking Event. It is a wonderful event to network and meet amazing people from different backgrounds, cultures, communities, and countries, and hear many success stories, instantly motivating you. Through this event, I had a fantastic opportunity to network with people from my field who shared valuable insights about the same. Thank you, SOPA and all the facilitators. A special thanks to the SOPA AB Team, who guided me throughout and has always gone out of the way to extend her help".

Megha Thakuri

Initiatives



- **SOPA LinkedIn Volunteer Ambassador**
- How do we improve engagement? How do we connect clients?
- Encourage previous clients to become SOPA volunteer ambassadors
- Currently: 903 members / 642 active members
- 9 current volunteers

Initiatives

- **SOPA LinkedIn Volunteer Ambassador**

Most engaging group posts

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Priyanka Chauhan • 2nd [+ Follow](#)
Content Writer | Communic...
1mo • Edited

Hi everyone, it's time for a Tuesday Trivia!

Calgary is one of the best cities in t ...see more

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Manager, Digital Communications at Wind...
5mo

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JOB APPLICATION

13 4 comments

Hemamalini SC (Hema) • 1st
Financial Controller @ SELC Coll...
11mo

Hi All,

It's a really surreal feeling to be tak ...

Initiatives

• SOPA LinkedIn Volunteer Ambassador



Priyanka Chauhan • 2nd

Content Writer | Communication | Copy Editor | SEO | Repor...
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+ Follow ...

Hi everyone,

I'm Priyanka Chauhan and I am very excited to be here as a SOPA Ambassador! I will be sharing my time, support and evolving experience as a Permanent Resident, with newcomers, and people that are coming to Canada soon as Permanent Residents. I will also be available along with my Co-Ambassadors to clarify all your queries on making this place your home and pass on the motivation whenever needed! And of course, help each other and learn as we move forward together! I represent SOPA Alberta Team.

Thank you.



16

4 comments



Like



Comment



Hemamalini SC (Hema) • 2nd

Financial Controller @ SELC College | Experienced Finance ...
11mo

+ Follow ...

Hi All,

It's a really surreal feeling to be taking on this role as a SOPA Ambassador! I'm so thrilled to be sharing with you all, my journey as a Permanent Resident to Canada, this beautiful land of opportunities!

As a finance professional, who also got my Canadian CPA designation, I will be sharing my learning curve by way of professional updates, the pathway to the accounting designation, essentials for job search, professional communication, and adapting to the Canadian workplace culture.

In addition, I will also be available along with my Co-Ambassadors to clarify all your queries on making this place your home and pass on the motivation whenever needed! And of course, help each other and learn as we move forward together!

As a receiver of the exemplary services from the [SOPA Settlement Online Pre-Arrival](#) Team, I would like to thank them for giving me this opportunity to pay forward!

Initiatives

- **My City (city name). Let's Connect!**



Initiatives

- **My City – Winnipeg! Let's connect! (testimonial)**

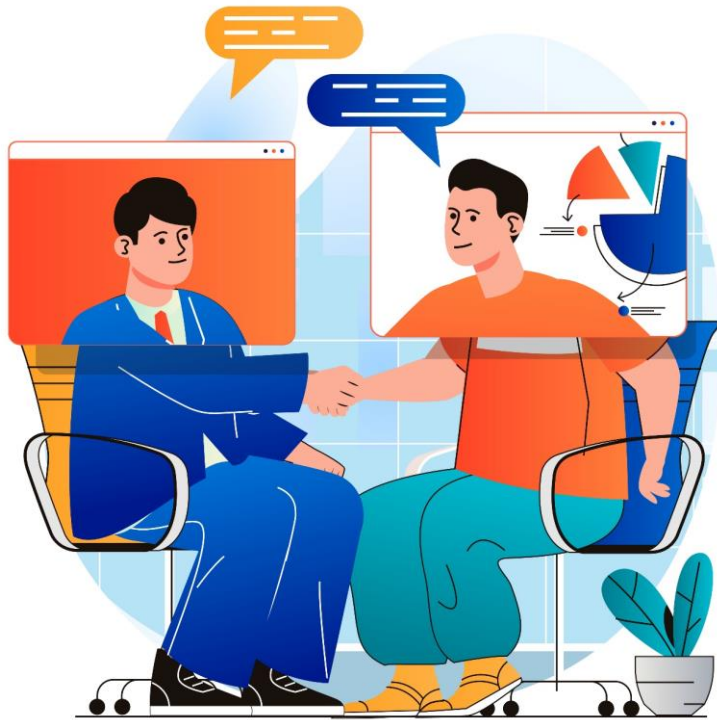
"This is great, thank you! I loved every piece of the information shared especially stores to shop for winter wears, how to have fun during that period of time and the health aspect of using lots of vitamins. You all are doing a great job."

Folakemi Shobayo

"The session was educative and informative. I have been to some thrifts stores to get some winter stuffs. I like the fact that I can have fun in winter. Thank you for the information".

Juliet Funke Ajoloko

Some results...



- 15 Conversation Circles – 682 total clients attended
- 13 LinkedIn volunteers
- 3 My City Events in Halifax, Ottawa and Winnipeg – 57 total clients

Thank you!

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