

Cultural competencies: Climate for diversity in the Workplace

Lionel Laroche, Ph.D., P.Eng.

President

MCB Solutions

(647) 287-6700

lionel@mcbso.com

Presentation outline

- How do corporations see diversity in general and immigrants in particular?
- What does it mean for non-profit agencies that help immigrants find jobs?
- What can individual counsellors do to help immigrants find jobs more quickly?

The corporate perspective

- Diversity is a double-edged sword
- Canada is a land of specialists
- Canada has a strong short-term orientation
- Immigrants are often the last hired and the first fired because:
 - They lack soft skills by Canadian standards
 - They are not able to get across their technical competencies

The corporate perspective

- Learning to work with people who are different from you is going to be a critical skill in the future
- When the economy is booming, immigrants have a chance to prove their worth

Impact on agencies

- Need to learn the corporate perspective
- What can you do concretely to achieve this goal?

Impact on agencies

- Job shadow a corporate recruiter
- Attend (cheap) corporate conferences – volunteer as a way to get in at a reduced rate
- Ask a corporate HR professional to mentor you
- Read “Recruiting, retaining and promoting culturally different employees”
- Attend train-the-trainer organized by APEGGA on February 1 & 2, 2010

What is the issue?

- The issue is
cultural / group differences.
- Immigrants try to get their work done thinking that Canada operates according to the same unwritten rules as their home country.
- When their home country is very different from Canada, this approach does not produce the expected results because of cultural differences.

What is the issue?

- Many superimposed levels of issues
- Language and behaviours are well-understood by non-profit agencies
- Biggest gaps:
 - Projecting a specialist's image
 - Describing one's accomplishments
 - Networking effectively
 - Learning to influence people
- **What can you do?**

What can you do?

- Need to learn how to teach them these skills
- Need to apply the rules of the corporate world in your programs
- Six-step coaching process

Six-step coaching process

1. Start by getting all the issues on the table
2. Validate your understanding of their goals
3. Ask them how they think people interpret their words, behaviours or actions
4. Explain to them how people actually interpret their words, behaviours or actions
5. Brainstorm with them approaches that they can live with and that are more likely to yield the results they are looking for
6. Let them make the final decision, but don't hesitate to be more directive when they trust you

Conclusions

- The boom – bust cycle is a fact of life in Alberta and we all need to adapt to it
- Non-profit agencies can be even more effective than they are currently by learning to understand better the corporate perspective
- Consider attending the train-the-trainer sessions organized by APEGGA on February 1 & 2, 2010

Conclusions

- Consider reading “Recruiting, retaining and promoting culturally different employees”
- Please give me your card if you would me to email you the slides of this presentation