

For the past five years, I have found it to be a truly rewarding experience volunteering as a strategic advisor on the development of various cutting edge ICTC Immigration Initiatives (i.e. training programs, self-assessment tools and online resources) to help better integrate IEPs into the Canadian labour market. For example, ICTC's *Integrated Work Experience Strategy (IWES)* bridging program provides IEPs with the skills training they need to succeed in terms of understanding communication and culture in the Canadian workplace context, as well as recent Canadian work experience. New online tools developed such as *Workshops Online: Immigration to Integration* and the *Canada Readiness Tool* have tremendous value internationally as IEPs can visit www.ictc-ctic.ca and benefit from these free employment-readiness tools before immigrating to Canada. A new *Human Resources Management Guide for Canadian ICT Companies* is also now available online, which includes modules on diversity, inclusion and retention strategies.

Research has repeatedly shown that a diverse workforce outperforms a homogenous organization on many bottom line levels, including higher productivity, engagement and retention. Data from major organizations indicate that performance improves significantly when employers and candidates alike become better aligned with each others' cultures and values. This can be facilitated through a variety of approaches from providing appropriate cultural training, followed by organizational incentives to adapt behavior, cultural competency assessments, and recruitment/retention strategy reviews.

So what are we waiting for?

The beauty of diversity in thinking is innovation. Let's spend the rest of 2010 and beyond working together to help create a well-prepared, diverse, innovative workforce for the future. By gaining knowledge, being mindful, and growing our own cultural intelligence, we can increase competence as Career Professionals to help global talent innovate, be it in Canada or worldwide.

Are you ready for the challenge?

Rhonda Singer is President of Noanda Enterprises, Ltd. in Toronto, Canada. She is a business-focused visionary, passionate and respected leader, and frequent speaker on Cultural Intelligence. Currently, Rhonda works with private, educational, and non-profit sector organizations on the myriad implications of the 'chemistry of culture'. Her services include keynote speaking, facilitation and project management, as well as consultation on systems thinking, training and evaluation initiatives. Presently she serves as Chair, Immigration Initiatives National Steering Committee, ICTC and Member, Board of Directors, ACP International (Toronto Network).

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