



March 30, 2017

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## Report

Smart Networking: Practical networking skills for job ready newcomers from the IT and Engineering sectors

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# I. Summary

With an aging population, below replacement level birth rate and skills shortage in many sectors, immigration “will arguably be the single most important direct mechanism through which Canada will be able to influence its future path of economic growth” and “fill the country’s demographic needs”( Pollack & Ramlo, 2016). As Canada expands its immigration system, effective planning and service delivery will be essential at all levels of the private and public sector, preparing communities across the country to welcome new immigrants while meeting the needs of their current residents.

Successful integration of new Canadians requires active participation from both the newcomer as well as the receiving community. Of the many factors that influence settlement and integration outcomes for newcomers, meaningful labour attachment has been identified as one of the main factors that influence how newcomers learn about their new homeland and become its integral part. (Pollack & Ramlo, 2016)

However finding commensurate employment has been a challenge and unemployment and underemployment remain a problem for immigrants, especially recent immigrants. Recent immigrants experience lower employment rates and lagging incomes than do Canadian-born residents or immigrants as a whole. Regardless of their gender, English skills, education and length of time in Canada, immigrants, in general take a long time to find a job in their field. (Galarneau & Morissette, 2008) (Burnaby Settlement and Integration Plan 2016-2019, 2016). This issue which impacts the Canadian economy has not only been identified as a strategic priority in the two year research conducted by the Burnaby Intercultural Planning Table (BIPT) but is also a concern shared across Canada. (Galarneau & Morissette, 2008).

BIPT studies bring attention to the multiple challenges immigrants and refugees face when looking for employment as well as the challenges employers face when hiring newcomers. The studies also highlight recommendations made by both immigrants and employers for improving employment outcomes. The recommendations highlight the need for providing opportunities for newcomers to make more meaningful connections with employers and learn about the hiring process in the Canadian job market. While employers have recommended creating activities that connect employers to and increase awareness of the skilled immigrant talent pool.

Taking these research findings and recommendations into consideration BIPT has developed a strategic action plan to help improve labour market attachment of newcomers. The implementation of this plan is guided by a working group of six BIPT member organisations that was established in June 2015.

As part of this action plan the BIPT Employment Working Group has proposed an advanced/comprehensive networking initiative. The rationale is building a strong network is important not only do one’s job effectively but also gain employment opportunities that otherwise newcomers may never have access to. This initiative will provide practical knowledge and skills for building strong networks and the opportunity for newcomers to connect with potential employers while introducing employers to the available skilled immigrant talent pool.

This document describes the “Smart Networking” initiative a project in partnership with the Burnaby Board of Trade, Douglas College, MOSAIC and the Simon Fraser University.

## II. Introduction

The Burnaby Intercultural Planning Table is Burnaby's Local Immigration Partnership (LIP). LIPs do not provide direct services rather they build on local services in order to optimize engagement, planning and coordination in the area of newcomer settlement and integration. The mission of BIPT, a working group of 22 prominent organisations/agencies and institutions, is to work collaboratively to facilitate the integration of immigrants and refugees.

The BIPT has developed a three year Settlement and Integration Strategic plan for immigrants and refugees. This Strategic Plan ensures that Burnaby continues on its path towards being an exceptionally welcoming and inclusive community in which every resident, whether native born, immigrant or refugee, enjoys equal opportunities to live, work and play.

The Strategic plan has identified four priorities namely, Access to information and Services, Employment, Intercultural Connections and Civic Engagement and Cultural Representation.

This document describes an advanced networking initiative designed to address the strategic priority for employment with a goal to ensure Burnaby immigrants and refugees have access to services and supports to attain commensurate employment.

## III. Needs

BIPT's research highlights some of the challenges and barriers, immigrants and refugees to finding suitable employment. It also brings attention to some of the challenges employers face when hiring newcomers.

- The number of jobs in Burnaby is expected to increase from 136,000 in 2006 to 203,000 by 2041, a 49.2% increase in total employment.
- Slightly more than half of the employers surveyed anticipated skills shortage in the next 3 years.
- Recent immigrants in Burnaby experienced a two-digit unemployment rate at 11.9% in 2010, while the City's overall unemployment rate was 7%. Recent immigrants' median income was almost 45% less than that of the total population (\$25,463).
- Only 2.6% community service providers surveyed believe that "newcomers are able to find employment opportunities that use their education, skills and abilities."
- Less than half (42.9%) of immigrants surveyed reported to be employed in their occupational field. 27.6% of the respondents work in a totally unrelated field.
- Approximately half (49.4%) of immigrants surveyed had been looking for work in their field for more than six months, including approximately 20% who have been searching for more than three years.
- A very small proportion (13.2%) of Burnaby's employer respondents reported using different methods or recruitment strategies to recruit immigrants.

- Approximately one-third (32.4%) of employer respondents have experiences working with Burnaby-based Immigrant Service Organizations (ISOs) and their immigrant employment services in hiring recent immigrants. The outcome of their involvement is favourable: 81.8% indicated they would use these employment programs or services again.
- Relatively fewer immigrant respondents used employment services in job finding, either employer services run by immigrant serving or community agencies (37.5%), or provincial employment services (36.9%).
- Major difficulties of accessing employment services among immigrant respondents are:
  - Lack of the employment services they need
  - Personal obligations
  - Insufficient language skills
  - Ineligible for the services
- Employer respondents identified several inhibiting factors to immigrant workplace volunteer and work experience programs.
  - Barriers due to company policies, such as safety concerns or a union environment Additional time, manpower and resources required for training and monitoring
  - Policy of hiring best candidate regardless of their ethnic background
  - Lack of awareness of workplace volunteering initiatives
  - Lack of meaningful return

The research also highlights key recommendations that were made by immigrants, refugees and employers for improving employment outcomes:

- More targeted or sector/occupation specific programs and services
- More opportunities for meaningful connections with employers and recruiters
- More advanced and sector specific English language programs
- Building awareness amongst immigrants about the hiring practices of local employers and specific sectors/occupations
- Better designed activities and promotion of activities that would be beneficial for connecting immigrants job seekers with Burnaby employers

Source: Burnaby Settlement and Integration Plan 2016-2019, Prepared for the Burnaby Intercultural Planning Table by PEERs Employment and Education Resources, March 2016

## IV. Project Description

Project name:	Smart Networking: Skills training and networking for internationally trained professionals
Planning Committee:	Representatives from member organisations - BBOT, Douglas College, MOSIAC, SFU
Project Owners:	BBOT, Douglas College, MOSIAC, SFU
Description:	<p>An introductory practical skills training and networking event for internationally trained professionals from the IT and Engineering sectors</p> <p>The program will provide opportunities for participants to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a better understanding the Canadian job market</li> <li>• Learn and practice skills for effective networking</li> <li>• Connect and network with potential employers</li> </ul> <p>The program will also provide opportunities for employers to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• connect with a job ready internationally trained professionals</li> </ul>
Training topics:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduction to the Canadian Workplace</li> <li>2. Using social media “schedule conversations” to build your network</li> <li>3. Making the most of your Information Interview</li> <li>4. Mastering the 30 second pitch</li> </ol>
Program Length:	8:00 am to 7:00pm, All day (Please refer to the schedule below)
Program participants:	Internationally Trained Professionals (Job ready skilled immigrants and refugees)
Sector for training:	Engineering & Information Technology
Date:	March 30, 2017
Venue:	Holiday Inn Metrotown, 4405 Central Boulevard, Burnaby

# V. Goals/Objectives

Goal: Immigrant and refugee job seekers have the essential skills to compete in the Canadian job market

Objective 1:	Internationally Trained Professionals from the IT and Engineering sector have a better understanding of the Canadian job market
Objective 2:	Immigrant and refugee job seekers learn and practice skills for competing in the Canadian job market
Objective 3:	Immigrant and refugee job seekers have an opportunity to connect with prospective employers in the IT and Engineering sectors
Objective 4:	Employers in the city of Burnaby connect with job-ready skilled immigrants and refugees (internationally trained professionals)

## VI. Training Themes

Topics to be covered during training:	Objective	Description	Time	Responsible Trainers/Facilitators:
Introduction to the Canadian Workplace	Internationally Trained Professionals from the IT and Engineering sector develop an understanding of the Canadian job market context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canadian workplace culture</li> <li>• Intercultural effectiveness</li> <li>• Communicating in the workplace</li> <li>• Soft Skills versus hard Skills</li> <li>• Learning about your own expectations and the expectations of your workplace</li> </ul>	120'	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Douglas College  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SFU
Using Social media to build your network	Internationally Trained Professionals from the IT and Engineering sector increase their skills related to networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why networking?</li> <li>• How do I build a strong network?</li> <li>• How and why using LinkedIn?</li> <li>• How do I follow up with professionals in my field? The power of informational meetings.</li> </ul>	95'	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Douglas College
Making the most of your Informational Interview	Internationally Trained Professionals from the IT and Engineering sector increase their skills related to networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparing for the interview</li> <li>• Types of questions</li> <li>• After the interview</li> </ul>	90'	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MOSAIC
Mastering the 30 second pitch	Internationally Trained Professionals from the IT and Engineering sector increase skills related to networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training on how to deliver an effective 30 second pitch to a potential employer</li> </ul>	90'	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BBOT
Networking	<p>Immigrant and refugee job seekers have opportunities to connect with employers</p> <p>Burnaby employers meet with job ready skilled immigrant and refugee job seekers (Internationally Trained Professionals)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One employer per table</li> <li>• Participants will be equally distributed at each employer table.</li> <li>• Participants will be able to deliver their 30second pitch to the employer and will move to the next able until all employers have been covered.</li> </ul>	120'  5:00 to 7:00 pm	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Douglas College  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MOSAIC  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SFU  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BBOT



## VII. Training Day Schedule

<b>7:45 – 8:00am</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registrations</li> <li>• Breakfast</li> </ul>
<b>8:00 – 8:30am</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introductions</li> <li>• What to expect?</li> </ul>
<b>8:30 – 10:30am</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to the Canadian Workplace</li> </ul>
<b>10:30 – 10:45am</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BREAK - Coffee/tea refill</li> </ul>
<b>10:45 – 12:30</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to “schedule conversations” using social media to build your network</li> </ul>
<b>12.30 – 1:00pm</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LUNCH - Wraps and sandwiches</li> </ul>
<b>1.00 – 2.30pm</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making the most of your Informational Interview: What to ask an employer during the Networking Session</li> </ul>
<b>2:30 – 4:00pm</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mastering the 30 Second Pitch</li> </ul>
<b>4:00 – 5.00pm</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BREAK - Coffee/tea refill</li> </ul>
<b>5:00 – 7:00pm</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Networking Event             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5:00pm to 5:15pm: Employer welcome &amp; Dinner</li> <li>• 5:15 to 6:45: Meet &amp; Greet</li> <li>• 6:45 to 7:00pm: Wrap up and Thanks</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

# VIII. Program Logic Model

Planning Committee: MOSAIC, SUCCESS, SFU, BBOT, Douglas College,					
Goal: Immigrant and refugee job seekers attain commensurate employment					
Objective	Activities	Responsibility	Outputs	Short-Term Outcomes	Success Indicators
<p><b>Objective 1:</b> Internationally Trained Professionals from the IT and Engineering sector have a better understanding of the context of the Canadian job market</p> <p><b>Objective 2:</b> Immigrant and refugee job seekers learn and practice skills for competing in the Canadian job market</p> <p><b>Objective 3:</b> Immigrant and refugee job seekers have an opportunity to connect with prospective employers in the IT and Engineering sectors</p> <p><b>Objective 4:</b> Employers in the city of Burnaby connect with job-ready skilled immigrants and refugees (internationally trained professionals)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop p Curriculum</li> <li>▪ Referrals by Immigrant Serving Organisations e.g. MOSAIC, ISS of BC, SUCCESS refer clients to this program</li> <li>▪ Registration</li> <li>▪ Training Sessions: Intensive career development program for immigrant and refugee job seekers providing skills training, connections and tools necessary to compete in the job market</li> <li>▪ Networking Event: The training will culminate into a networking event with employers</li> <li>▪ Process to earn a Certificate: Participants will receive a certificate of completion.</li> <li>▪ Evaluation survey</li> </ul>	<p>Planning committee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Training workshops</li> <li>▪ Networking event</li> <li>▪ Evaluation Report</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Immigrant and refugee job seekers have increased knowledge of and skills related to networking</li> <li>▪ Immigrant and refugee job seekers have increased knowledge of workplace culture.</li> <li>▪ Immigrant and refugee job seekers have opportunity to network with employers</li> <li>▪ Employers have increased knowledge of available immigrant talent pool</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Employers have access to the immigrant talent pool</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Immigrant and refugee job seekers are connected with employers</b></li> </ul>
<b>Timeline : <u>January to March 2017</u></b>					

## IX. Event Description: Smart Networking

Practical networking skills for job ready newcomers from the IT and Engineering sectors

### **Organisers:**

The Smart Networking event was a collaboration between the Burnaby Board of Trade, Douglas College, MOSAIC and Simon Fraser University.

### **Target Audience and Participants:**

This event was targeted to both Internationally trained Professionals as well as employers from the IT and Engineering sectors.

- Thirty newcomers registered for the Smart Networking event.
- Final attendance at the event was twenty two.

### **Educational Qualifications**

From the registered participants fourteen had an IT background and sixteen had an Engineering background.

- Of the 30 those who had registered
- Seventeen held a Bachelor's degree
- Ten held a master's degree and only
- Three had a diploma. ,
  
- Eighteen registered participants had participated in an employment Skills training Canada.
  
- Ten had participated in a networking session in Canada

### **Employment Status**

Twenty two participants were unemployed.

Of those who were employed on 1 participant was currently employed in his/her professional field.

**Employer Attendees:**

Nine employers had registered of which seven attended the networking session.

List of employers who responded to the invitation for the Smart networking event:

Company Name & Website	
Clio <a href="http://www.clio.com">www.clio.com</a>	Attended
Tek Systems <a href="http://www.teksystems.com">www.teksystems.com</a>	Attended
BC Jobs <a href="http://www.bcjobs.ca">www.bcjobs.ca</a>	Attended
City of Burnaby <a href="http://www.burnaby.ca">www.burnaby.ca</a>	Attended
Assoc. of Professional Engineers & Geoscientists of BC <a href="http://www.apeg.bc.ca">www.apeg.bc.ca</a>	Attended
Telus <a href="http://www.telus.ca">www.telus.ca</a>	Attended
Traction on Demand <a href="http://www.tractionondemand.com">www.tractionondemand.com</a>	Attended
Paradox Learning Inc <a href="http://www.paradoxlearning.com">www.paradoxlearning.com</a>	Did not attend
Vling <a href="http://www.vling.io">www.vling.io</a>	Did not attend

## X. Event Evaluation: Feedback from participants

The Evaluation survey was completed by 14 participants.

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements using a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is totally disagree and 5 is totally agree.

Answer Options	1 Totally disagree	2	3	4	5 Totally agree	Rating Average	Response Count
The training was informative and useful	0	0	0	7	7	4.50	14
The knowledge I gained from this training has helped me gain a better understanding of the Canadian job market and workplace	0	0	2	5	7	4.36	14
I have a better understanding of my own expectations and the expectations of the workplace	0	0	1	8	5	4.29	14
I have a better understanding of how to use social media to build professional networks.	0	0	1	7	6	4.36	14
I have a better understanding of the how to request and set up an informational interview	0	1	4	5	4	3.86	14
I have the knowledge to prepare and deliver a 30 second pitch to an employer	0	0	0	1	13	4.93	14
The knowledge I gained from this training will help me with my networking skills	0	0	0	5	8	4.62	13
<i>answered question</i>							<b>14</b>

Which presentation was of most interest to you?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Introduction to the Canadian workplace	14.3%	2
How to schedule conversations using social media to build your network	7.1%	1
Making the most of your informational interview	0.0%	0
Mastering the 30 second pitch	50.0%	7
All	42.9%	6
<i>answered question</i>		<b>14</b>

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements using a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is totally disagree and 5 is totally agree.

Answer Options	1 Totally disagree	2	3	4	5 Totally agree	Rating Average	Response Count
I had an opportunity to practice the skills I learned today	0	0	0	0	7	5.00	7
I had an opportunity to connect with employers	0	0	0	1	6	4.86	7
The knowledge I gained from the training was helpful in the Networking session with employers	0	0	0	1	5	4.83	6
<i>answered question</i>							<b>7</b>
<i>skipped question</i>							<b>7</b>

### What did you like the most about this training?

- All
- L Learned about the importance of Linked in networks and soft skills
- I like the most about the mastering the 30 s elevator pitch.
- It was a good opportunity to get the knowledge about networking and how to improve interaction with people.
- Interaction with the presenters.
- All
- Facilitators are from different organisations.
- Excellent overview, tools, technics and keys to success.
- Friendly and knowledgeable presenters,
- Nice and clean location.

### What topics would you like to learn more about?

- To learn more about how to prepare for informational interview
- I like to learn more about the speaker if Mastering the 30 s elevator pitch
- On line networking and more examples.
- 30 second speech and know how to get the confidence.
- All.
- Bring the presentations available online or printed and able to take notes within the presentation.
- I would like to learn more about technical job market in Metro Vancouver by company representors.

### **What suggestions do you have for improvement?**

- Very good set up!
- The activity is very helpful to understand each session.
- It would be better to have group discussions or opinions.
- It would be great if someone from APEGBC or ASTCBC had a presentation too.

### **What did you like the most about the networking session?**

- Networking activity for 9 companies
- This was good practice for presenting and introducing myself,
- If it is possible more company or orgasaiont joined the event.
- All of them
- Having the chance to connect with other professional and hiring manager

### **What suggestions do you have for improvement?**

- Probably I would give more importance to the networking evening part with the Company

### **Additional feedback, comments or thoughts?**

- I love it. I found it very interesting.
- It needs to have more time with each session.
- It needs to talk about background and to have opportunity for networking.
- Its wonderful experience for me. I will recommend for other people. It would be better to inform or notify got information.
- Thank you so much hope these kind of workshops will be held again.
- It could be more specific about IT and Engineering. I wish to hear about engineers in the filed and hear their stories.
- Thanks for your work.

# XI. Event Evaluation: Feedback from employers

The employer evaluation was completed by four employers.

Please rate the following:					
Answer Options	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	Response Count
Pre-event communications	0	1	2	1	4
Networking event format (activity to meet the ITPs)	0	0	3	1	4
<i>answered question</i>					<b>4</b>

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following:						
Answer Options	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Response Count
The Networking session met my/our expectations	0	0	1	1	2	4
The Networking event provided me/us with opportunities to network with internationally trained professionals.	0	0	0	2	2	4
<i>answered question</i>						<b>4</b>

Would you like to receive more information about BIPT and its work?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	100.0%	4
No	0.0%	0

Would you consider getting involved in the work of BIPT?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	75.0%	3
No	25.0%	1



If yes, how would you like to participate?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Become a BIPT member	33.3%	1
Join one of our working groups	66.7%	2
Participate in future events, research and survey projects	66.7%	2
<i>answered question</i>		<b>3</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>1</b>

### What was the most effective element of this networking event?

- The rotation format of the networking event is great. By allowing all ITPs to sit at each table gives them a more level "playing field" than traditional networking events (e.g., mingling over food and drink). This format allows ITPs to be courageous in talking to employers without feeling that awkwardness on how to approach them, and to have shared time to converse with all employers in attendance.
- 5 min get to know you sessions
- One-on-ones with candidates.
- having the people pre screened

### What would have made this networking event better?

- I wish there were an extra few minutes to talk to the ITPs. I also felt that with 3 ITPs per table, some ITPs were a little more quiet (or conscientious so not to interrupt the existing conversation) and were not able to have enough time to talk about their experience. I tried to "moderate" the table by asking questions to each individual, but at times was difficult to fit it all in with the amount of time allotted.
- More SW Engineers!
- background info./resume/profile on candidates before the event.
- Give the companies 2 minutes to pitch

### Additional feedback, comments or thoughts?

- Thank you so much for having me at your event. I thought it was great (and apologies for the delay in sending in feedback).

## XII. References

- Galarneau, D., & Morissette, R. (2008). Immigrants' education and required job skills. Retrieved from <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/75-001-x/2008112/pdf/10766-eng.pdf>.
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- Pollack, K., & Ramlo, A. (2016, August 6). National Conversation On Immigration. p. 1.