



Finding Talent Video

Facilitator's Guide

Intended for an Employer Audience

Developed by:

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TRIEC

Toronto Region Immigrant
Employment Council



Citizenship and
Immigration Canada

Citoyenneté et
Immigration Canada



Ontario

Ontario receives support for
some skills training programs
from the Government of Canada

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Overview of the Video	2
Overview of the Manual	3
Scene by Scene Segments	4
Scene 1: Essential vs. Non-essential Skills	4
Scene 2: Attracting Qualified Skilled Immigrant Job Candidates	6
Scene 3: Accent and Odours – Considerations for Hiring Decisions?	9
Scenes 4/5: Telephone Screening Interview	11
Scene 6: Screening Resumes of Skilled Immigrant Job Candidates	12
Scene 7: Interviewing Skilled Immigrants	15
Scene 8: Tell Me About Yourself	16
Scene 9: Social Activities	19
Scene 10: Call of Duty	20
Scenes 11/12: Assertiveness	21
Scenes 13/14: Past Accomplishments	22
Scenes 15/16/17: Colloquialisms and Business Idioms	24
Scenes 18/19: Interview Guides	25
Cultural Sensitivity vs. Cultural Competence	27
Complete List of Discussion Questions	28
Conclusion	36

Introduction

The loss of a key staff member to the competition just when an important new contract has been awarded is stressful and the right hire is essential. By charting the story of a firm in need of an employee and a skilled immigrant in need of a position at his level of education and relevant experience, ***Finding Talent*** highlights key issues related to recruiting and selecting skilled immigrants in the Canadian workplace.

The characters in this story speak candidly about several issues: sourcing channels; resume screening; telephone interviews; face-to-face interviews; the use of unfamiliar idioms; company-specific jargon and slang; and the notion of “organizational fit.” This video provides techniques that are sensitive to cultural differences and that focus on eliciting knowledge, skills and attitudes relevant to the job.

TRIEC creates and champions solutions to better integrate skilled immigrants in the Greater Toronto Region labour market. ***Finding Talent*** is a television-style narrative that uses a storytelling approach to present the hiring challenges faced by employers and the cultural biases they must overcome to attract and recruit skilled immigrants.

Overview of the Video

This cultural competence video was created to support the learning outcomes of the “Recruitment and Selection of Skilled Immigrants: How-To HR Workshop.” The workshop is designed to educate employers about the benefits and importance of tapping into the skilled immigrant pool to meet their recruitment gaps or skills shortages.

The video follows the story of Tarek Khan, a skilled immigrant from India looking for his first job in Canada. He is a recent newcomer who has come with his wife and young daughter. Henry Sutherland is the Director of Research and Development at MetroCan Technologies and Dana Bowen is an HR Manager. Henry and Dana share their insights as they seek a replacement for a project manager who has left to work for a major competitor. Tarek faces an unfamiliar approach to hiring with enthusiasm and candour.

The target audience for the video and the workshop is HR professionals and individuals in a hiring capacity within organizations, in particular those who are well-informed of barriers to employment faced by skilled immigrants.

- Read through the remainder of this manual, especially the discussion questions section.
- Convene a group of viewers so they may be able to learn from each other’s reactions and experiences. (An individual viewer will still benefit from watching the video but will likely learn more when accompanied by his or her peers.)
- Watch the video in sequence based on the designated scenes and allow ample time for group discussion. (It is divided into scenes of varying lengths and some may be viewed together before pausing, as noted below.)

- Consider screening the video over more than a day to accommodate busy schedules and to allow for more reflection – perhaps over a few “lunch-and-learn” sessions, for example.
- Encourage participants to reflect on their own practices and complete work experience, as well as to relate the video to the company in which they are currently employed.
- Document additional issues, questions and insights that arise during the discussion and keep them for future reference.
- Share your experience with the video with other colleagues who may wish to use it.
- Consult the links to resources and supplementary material that are provided in this manual.

Finding Talent has been developed to meet the following high-level learning objectives.

Viewers will:

- Understand potential challenges with recruiting and selecting skilled immigrants.
- Understand the importance of creating competence-based job descriptions to remove systemic barriers.
- Understand the limitations of sourcing job candidates by using traditional sourcing channels or recruitment methods.
- Identify and explore employment barriers faced by skilled immigrant job candidates.
- Understand the limitations of existing telephone and resume screening techniques.
- Identify strategies to increase the likelihood of identifying qualified skilled immigrant job candidates through resume screening.
- Understand the cultural limitations of behavioural interviewing.
- Understand business drivers for hiring skilled immigrants.
- Develop strategies to work with hiring managers to increase the likelihood of identifying qualified skilled immigrants in interview settings.

Overview of the Manual

This manual is designed for HR professionals, trainers, diversity consultants and immigrant-serving organizations that work with skilled immigrants and employers – all of whom play a role in increasing the awareness of other HR professionals and hiring managers about issues related to screening and recruiting skilled immigrant job candidates.

The overview of the video provides suggestions on how to use the video as a learning tool and includes high-level learning objectives.

The next section is divided scene by scene as recommended for training purposes. The following information, which the trainer will find useful while planning, accompanies each scene:

- Brief description of what happens in the scene or scenes.
- Timestamp and duration of each scene.
- Specific learning objectives, phrased from the perspective of the viewers.

- Discussion questions, which include some background information for trainers.
- Brief summary of key learnings of the scene(s).
- Additional resources for the issue(s) covered in the scene(s).

Each audience will be different and the trainer may pick and choose the discussion questions and specific learning objectives to focus on. This manual should be treated as a “living document.” The trainer may choose to document additional learning objectives, questions and insights for use with future groups.

Scene by Scene Segments

Scene 1: Essential vs. Non-essential Skills

In this scene, Henry Sutherland learns his firm has been awarded a significant contract. Immediately afterwards, Henry discovers that his star project manager has been recruited by the competition. He and Dana Bowen discuss the replacement’s qualifications. Henry’s list of requirements is long and Dana helps him distinguish between the essential and non-essential skills for the position. Dana ends by reminding Henry that specialized superstars “don’t grow on trees.”

Scene 1:

Duration of scene: 0:00 to 4:35; 4 minutes, 35 seconds

By the end of this scene, viewers will be able to:

- Differentiate between essential and non-essential skills requirements for jobs.

Discussion Questions

Note to Trainer:

This chapter addresses employment barriers faced by skilled immigrants when employers create job descriptions that emphasize non-essential skills over essential skills. Essential skills are skills that are required for the effective performance of a job. Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) identifies nine of them:

- Reading Text
- Document Use
- Numeracy
- Writing
- Oral Communication
- Working with Others
- Continuous Learning
- Thinking Skills

- Computer Use

http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/essential_skills/general/understanding_es.shtml

Each of these nine essential skills varies in complexity depending on the profession. Non-essential skills are complementary skills without which a person can still effectively function in a position. These can be personal attributes such as how personable, likeable or charming one is and whether one can readily “fit in” with the rest of the team members. Emphasizing non-essential skills can create a barrier for skilled immigrant job candidates because they often do not share the same culture as Canadian employers.

Questions:

Dana, the HR professional, stresses that it is important to separate the “must-haves” from the “nice-to-haves” when attracting the right talent.

- ✓ What approach does your current organization use to create job postings?
- ✓ Is this approach similar to or different from the approach that your previous organization used? If so, how?

From your experience, how much emphasis do hiring managers place on non-essential skills?

- ✓ Do you feel that hiring for non-essential skills ensures optimal performance? Why or why not?

Do you find that job postings which emphasize non-essential skills tend to screen out most or all skilled immigrant job candidates?

- ✓ How might you know?
- ✓ If the answer to the first question was yes, how can this be avoided for skilled immigrant job candidates who are qualified but may not have the desired non-essential skills?

Henry, the hiring manager, needs someone who knows the company’s specific software system.

- ✓ Is this a reasonable expectation? Why or why not?
- ✓ Have your employers ever expected this from external applicants?
- ✓ To your knowledge, how have organizations handled this kind of expectation from hiring managers?

In summary,

- It is important for hiring managers to determine and communicate what the true minimum requirements are for a position.
- Emphasizing non-essential skills in job postings may screen out qualified skilled immigrant job candidates.
- Hiring managers may need to realign their expectations of what a new hire can do right away.

Resources

Visit <http://www.hireimmigrants.ca/resources/?resource=teleseminar&id=7> to listen to a webinar called “Planning and sourcing to reach your company’s full potential.”

Visit http://www.hrvc-rhsbc.ca/hr-toolkit/right-people-job-descriptions.cfm#_secA2 for guidelines on conducting a job analysis and writing a job description.

Scene 2: Attracting Qualified Skilled Immigrant Job Candidates

In this scene, Henry and Dana discuss the advisability of including other channels or recruitment methods to source qualified candidates, as well as opening up the search to skilled immigrants and how to do so. Dana attempts to allay Henry’s concerns by presenting a business case for considering skilled immigrants.

Scene 2:

Duration of scene: 4:36 to 5:17; 41 seconds

By the end of this scene, viewers will be able to:

- Identify some common strengths that skilled immigrants bring to the Canadian labour market.
- Recognize community agencies as a potential source for attracting skilled immigrant job candidates.

Discussion Questions

Note to Trainer:

This scene introduces the benefits of tapping into the skilled immigrant talent pool and leveraging cultural differences in order to compete in a global marketplace. Here is some background information on how skilled immigrants can contribute to a company’s bottom line.

- Companies operating in a globalized economy can benefit from recruiting skilled immigrants who bring language skills and a solid understanding of business cultures in international markets.
- Canada’s domestic markets are now highly diversified. For example, almost half the population of Canada’s largest city, Toronto, was born outside of Canada.
- Companies that are sensitive to diverse cultures will emerge as highly competitive in increasingly diverse domestic markets.
- Companies that hire skilled immigrants can leverage their knowledge to develop products that meet the needs of the culturally diverse groups and brand them in a culturally appropriate way.

When skilled immigrants first come to Canada, they may go to community agencies to find job-related assistance and employment opportunities. Some companies may be unaware of these agencies and the services that they offer to employers. Also, most companies continue to approach the same sourcing channels that they've learned to trust and are not broadening their search to include skilled immigrants. Existing sourcing channels may have limitations in that they may not cater to the skilled immigrant population.

Questions:

Which of the following sourcing channels have you used for sourcing skilled immigrant job candidates?

- community agencies
- internship programs targeted at skilled immigrants
- bridge training programs at colleges and universities
- mentoring programs
- government programs such as Employment Ontario and HRSDC
- job fairs
- immigrant networking organizations
- none of the above

How was your experience with the sourcing channel(s) from which you recruited talent?

- ✓ Which ones have been successful and unsuccessful? Why?

How familiar is your company with the sourcing channels listed on hireimmigrants.ca?

- ✓ What other recruitment methods have you used to attract skilled immigrant job candidates?
- ✓ Which one(s) were the most and least effective in attracting skilled immigrant job candidates?

The HR professional, Dana, and the hiring manager, Henry, both discuss the possibility of the company's products being manufactured offshore. Dana stresses the value of languages like Mandarin and Hindi.

- ✓ Does your company value language skills to compete in a global economy or marketplace?
- ✓ If not, could your company benefit by recruiting someone who can speak a language other than English or French and who can understand another country's business culture?
- ✓ What technique(s) can you use to convince your hiring managers of the benefits of international language skills for your company?

What is your company's experience with hiring skilled immigrants with little or no Canadian work experience?

- ✓ When might work experience in other countries be equally valuable or more valuable?

- ✓ What practices are in place to help skilled immigrants with little or no Canadian experience get “noticed”?
- ✓ What are some practices that any of your previous organizations used to mitigate the importance of having Canadian work experience and place greater emphasis on having the essential skills to succeed?

Henry doesn't feel a skilled immigrant will “fit” in the organization.

- ✓ What is your company's definition of “fit” and “personable” in relation to job applicants?
- ✓ How much importance is placed on recruiting someone who “fits” and is personable in relation to the essential skills for the job?
- ✓ How much does your assessment of “fit” affect your hiring decisions?
- ✓ Does the importance of “fit” constitute a barrier to hiring skilled immigrants?
- ✓ If so, what are some ways in which your organization can remove such barriers?

When Dana suggests the option of opening up the search to skilled immigrants, Henry remarks that the company already employs immigrants.

- ✓ Do you think Henry has ever stopped to think that not all newcomers arrive with the same level of education, skills and experience?
- ✓ Does he mean that immigrants, skilled or unskilled, should always be employed in entry-related roles regardless of the relevance of their previous educational background and work experience?
- ✓ What is your company's experience in hiring skilled immigrants in positions that are commensurate with their educational qualifications and work experience?

In summary,

- Broadening the scope of a recruitment search will increase the chances of finding good candidates for the position.
- There is a solid business case for considering skilled immigrants.
- It is important for members in a hiring team to bring differing perspectives.

Resources

Visit <http://www.hireimmigrants.ca/resources/?resource=workshop&id=1> for a downloadable presentation entitled “Why Hire Skilled Immigrants?”

Visit <http://www.hireimmigrants.ca/Roadmap/#/recruit/the-job-advertisement> for information on writing barrier-free job advertisements.

Visit <http://www.hireimmigrants.ca/Roadmap/#/recruit/market-the-job> for ways in which you can market recruitment opportunities directly to skilled immigrants.

Visit <http://hireimmigrants.ca/resources/?resource=teleseminar&id=5> for a webinar on “building buy-in from hiring managers” about convincing managers to consider accepting and evaluating candidates with international experience.

Scene 3: Accent and Odours – Considerations for Hiring Decisions?

Henry presents his notion of “organizational fit” and his concerns about a newcomer’s ability to “take the ball and run.” He stresses the importance of learning the business “from the ground up.” Dana addresses discrimination based on accent.

Tarek Khan, a skilled immigrant, is excited about a job opportunity and preoccupied about how he may present in a job interview.

Scene 3:

Duration of scene: 5:18 to 9:15; 3 minutes, 57 seconds

By the end of this scene, viewers will be able to:

- Gain a deeper understanding of the possible meanings of “fit” and how that translates to the business world.
- Understand that discriminating against someone because they have an accent is against the law.
- Identify at least two barriers to employment faced by some skilled immigrants.

Discussion Questions

Note to Trainer:

Many employers fail to leverage the essential skills that skilled immigrants bring to Canada because of cultural biases. What might look like a legitimate reason to reject a candidate might just be a difference in cultural values. This chapter of the video deals with some of these cultural biases and how they may affect a good hiring decision.

Questions:

Henry, the hiring manager, uses the analogy of Crosby (Canadian hockey player) and Malkin (Russian hockey player) when he describes to Dana what he is looking for in the new project manager. Malkin is technically a better player, but Crosby is more “well-rounded.”

- ✓ What does Henry mean by “well-rounded” here?
- ✓ Is Henry’s comment typical of what you have heard your hiring managers say?

Think back to the Crosby-Malkin analogy.

- ✓ Do your hiring managers prefer to recruit someone who is the right “fit” rather than someone who may have the essential skills necessary to succeed in a particular position?
- ✓ If so, how does that promote your organization’s need to recruit and retain top talent?

Is accent a concern when hiring for your organization?

- ✓ If so, is that the case for all roles?

- ✓ Some organizations prefer candidates without a foreign accent in client-facing roles. What has been your organization's experience in choosing candidates for client-facing roles?
- ✓ Do you think an accent creates a barrier in considering skilled immigrant job candidates? If so, why?

Tarek thinks that the smell of the food he eats may be the reason why he doesn't get hired.

- ✓ In your experience, is this a genuine concern?
- ✓ Have you ever known a hiring manager to base a hiring or promotion decision based on cooking smells?

Is it a discriminatory practice to assess organizational "fit" in a job candidate?

- ✓ What is your company's definition of "fit" and "personable" in relation to job applicants?
- ✓ How much importance is placed on recruiting someone who "fits" and is personable in relation to the essential skills for the job?
- ✓ How much does your assessment of "fit" affect your hiring decisions? Does the importance of "fit" constitute a barrier to hiring skilled immigrants? If so, what are some ways in which your organization can remove such barriers?
- ✓ Why do organizations look for "fit" and how does it help them compete?

Henry indicates that he's looking for someone who can "take the ball and run."

- ✓ Do your hiring managers assume that skilled immigrant job candidates may need more "hand-holding" since they're not accustomed to "the Canadian way of doing things"?
- ✓ To your knowledge, do skilled immigrants have difficulty in assuming full responsibility without direction or supervision?
- ✓ Do you feel that the learning curve is greater for a skilled immigrant than a new hire who is Canadian-born? Why or why not?

In summary,

- It is valuable to reassess our own notion of "organizational fit", to define what it means and to explore whether our views are excluding groups of potential candidates.
- Cultural values may create unconscious and conscious biases in hiring.
- Discriminating against someone because they have an accent is against the law.

Resources

Viewers with an interest in learning first-hand about the experience of skilled immigrants looking for employment may visit www.thementoringpartnership.com/ for information on becoming a mentor.

Scenes 4/5: Telephone Screening Interview

Tarek wonders whether he should join a club with “Canadian” in the title and include it in his resume so that resume screening software would screen him in.

Dana conducts a telephone interview with Tarek for the project manager position by using a standard telephone pre-screen form available at www.hireimmigrants.ca. In a talking head, she provides advice on how to address cultural nuances in candidates’ answers to interview questions and stresses that cultural difference may be an important asset for organizations to leverage to compete in an increasingly global marketplace.

Scene 4:

Duration of scene: 9:16 to 11:12; 1 minute, 56 seconds

Scene 5:

Duration of scene: 11:13 to 11:57; 44 seconds

By the end of these scenes, viewers will be able to:

- Know that they can find screening and recruitment tools at www.hireimmigrants.ca.
- Identify one or two ways in which hiring managers may address cultural nuances in candidates’ answers to interview questions.

Discussion Questions

Note to Trainer:

Because of language issues and cultural differences, conducting telephone screening interviews with skilled immigrant job candidates can be especially challenging for employers. What might seem to be an unprofessional telephone demeanor might just be a cultural difference.

A skilled immigrant job candidate may be unnecessarily screened out if HR is unfamiliar with ways in which to mitigate cultural biases in interviewing and with ways to emphasize searching for essential skills.

Questions:

Dana, the HR professional, mentions that there are tools for conducting telephone screening interviews with skilled immigrant job candidates on hireimmigrants.ca.

- ✓ How familiar is your organization with cross-cultural interviewing?

Tarek mentions his lack of Canadian work experience as a barrier to finding meaningful work. He suggests ways in which he could overcome it.

- ✓ What does the term “Canadian experience” mean to you?

- ✓ Would skilled immigrant job candidates have a better chance at securing meaningful employment if they had relevant Canadian work experience?

Rank your answer to the following question on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 as the least important and 10 as the most important. Explain your answer.

- ✓ How important is it for skilled immigrants to be familiar with Canadian business practices, norms and expectations to be successful in the Canadian workplace?

Dana mentions that interviewing skilled immigrants by telephone can be challenging.

- ✓ Why is that?
- ✓ What cultural differences are you able to identify when conducting a telephone screening interview with a skilled immigrant job candidate?
- ✓ Are you able to mitigate those cultural differences to make a good hiring decision?
- ✓ Have cultural differences or an accent been a concern for you before considering to interview skilled immigrant job candidates over the phone?

In summary,

- Resume screening software programs may screen out good candidates for a position.
- A standard telephone pre-screen form provides consistency in this step of the recruitment process.
- Hiring managers can learn about cultural differences and apply their understanding of different ways of presenting qualifications to the hiring process.

Resources

Visit <http://hireimmigrants.ca/Roadmap/#!/assess-and-select/assess/prepare-for-the-interview> for a sample telephone pre-screen form.

Scene 6: Screening Resumes of Skilled Immigrant Job Candidates

Dana and Henry react to Tarek's resume that includes extraneous details (picture attached, marital status, age, gender, etc.) and follows an atypical format. This leads to a discussion on cultural bias in considering skilled immigrant job candidates for positions above entry-level. Dana warns against eliminating someone due to unconscious (cultural) bias on their part.

Tarek is invited to a face-to-face job interview with Dana and Henry.

Scene 6:

Duration of scene: 11:58 to 15:00; 3 minutes, 2 seconds

By the end of this scene, viewers will be able to:

- Identify and discuss selection bias and the possible impact of cultural bias on the recruitment process.

- Explain the business case for considering a skilled immigrant at his or her level of experience and education.

Discussion Questions

Note to Trainer:

There are many different culturally appropriate ways to describe one's work experience on paper. Hiring managers in Canada tend to look down on what they consider atypical resume formats, for examples resumes that include extraneous details.

For this reason, many skilled immigrant job seekers are screened out at this early stage. Some more open-minded Canadian employers have found great hires by screening in skilled immigrants on the basis of their essential skills, not screening them out because of their choice of resume style.

Questions:

Tarek, the skilled immigrant job candidate, attached a photograph to his resume and his resume was longer than the standard one to two pages.

- ✓ Why do you think he did this?
- ✓ How does your company evaluate resumes that are formatted differently and/or may include extraneous details?
- ✓ Is an atypically formatted resume a good reason to disqualify a candidate?

Do your hiring managers assume that if a candidate has difficulty condensing their qualifications and experience to two pages they would struggle in the workplace?

When screening resumes for an in-person interview, Henry, the hiring manager, says, "Do you see where he lives?"

- ✓ Does your organization consider the neighbourhood or residential address of an applicant when screening resumes?
- ✓ Will this screen out most skilled immigrant job candidates who typically find their first accommodation in neighbourhoods where rentals are affordable?

At what level does your company typically hire skilled immigrants?

- ✓ Should they start at an entry level in order to learn the Canadian way of doing things and be incentivized to learn the business from "the ground up"?
- ✓ Should that be mandatory for all new external hires unfamiliar with the organization or business?

Are you aware of cultural biases that may determine the way you screen resumes of job applicants?

- ✓ Do you believe these cultural biases can result in an inaccurate assessment of skilled immigrant job applicants?
- ✓ What practices are effective in ensuring that hiring managers overlook cultural differences and select resumes on the basis of essential skills?

Tarek Khan is a non-English name and may be difficult to pronounce for some hiring managers.

- ✓ Does this tend to create a barrier for candidates who have names that are difficult to pronounce?
- ✓ Do individuals with non-English names tend to be promoted easily?
- ✓ What is your opinion about hiring managers screening out resumes because they can't pronounce the applicants' names? Is this a valid practice? Why or why not?

Research has shown that most skilled immigrants have resumes longer than the typical two pages.

- ✓ Approximately how long do you take to review a resume?
- ✓ In light of the aforementioned research, should HR professionals be prepared to spend more time reviewing resumes that they view as different?

In summary,

- A resume that looks different from what hiring managers expect to see may still describe a worthwhile candidate.
- Flexibility in assessing atypical resumes may yield positive results.
- An open discussion among hiring managers to unveil their cultural biases can help them understand what causes selection bias and may lead to a more positive attitude towards changing hiring practices.

Resources

Visit <http://www.hireimmigrants.ca/resources/?resource=teleseminar&id=19> for a webinar and resources on "Resumes and Cultural Bias: How Many Qualified Candidates Has Your Company Screened Out?"

<http://www.hireimmigrants.ca/Roadmap/#/assess-and-select/assess/screen-resumes> provides information, videos and case studies on screening resumes.

<http://hireimmigrants.ca/Roadmap/#/assess-and-select/assess/prepare-for-the-interview> offers a link to an implicit associations test that helps you identify your own biases.

Scene 7: Interviewing Skilled Immigrants

Tarek arrives for his interview. Both he and Henry experience culturally-based misunderstandings as they engage in small talk before the interview begins.

Scene 7:

Duration of scene: 15:01 to 18:01, 3 minutes

By the end of this scene, viewers will be able to:

- Describe how cultural references and differences in body language may result in miscommunication.

Discussion Questions

Note to Trainer:

A behavioral interviewing style is widely used. The logic is that how you behaved in the past will predict how you will behave in the future. Questions centre on how the interviewee acted in specific employment-related situations. Interviewers may assume that all candidates will act similarly regardless of their cultural background; however, they may learn that this kind of interview question may not transfer well from one culture to another.

This video introduces cross-cultural interviewing as a way to remove the potential for bias.

Questions:

Small Talk

- ✓ When you engage in small talk before an interview, what kind of topics do you typically talk about?
- ✓ Have you ever tried to make someone feel comfortable by engaging in small talk and then found that you had chosen a topic the other person wasn't interested in?
- ✓ What did you learn from that situation?
- ✓ How have you changed your approach following that experience?
- ✓ What has happened when you have chosen more neutral topics?

Body Language

Henry does not understand when Tarek responds by shaking his head from side to side.

- ✓ How would you interpret that behaviour?
- ✓ What could have helped Henry understand Tarek's behaviour better?

How much weight should be placed on body language as a criterion for determining whether a candidate can be successful on the job? Why?

- ✓ How much weight would you place on culturally different behaviour (verbal and nonverbal) during the interview?

How do culturally different behaviours get translated in a homogenous culture where people undoubtedly know what is being communicated by a particular behaviour or gesture?

Are you aware of culturally different behaviours that skilled immigrants may demonstrate, such as nodding one's head from side to side, not making direct eye contact with a female interviewer, or not shaking hands with a female interviewer?

In summary,

- Neutral topics are best for small talk.
- Body language is an important component of communication.
- Some background knowledge on differences in body language across cultures is useful; however, stereotypes must still be avoided.

Resources

Visit <http://hireimmigrants.ca/Roadmap/#/assess-and-select/assess/prepare-for-the-interview> for case studies on organizations that excel at conducting interviews with skilled immigrants.

Visit <http://hireimmigrants.ca/Roadmap/#/assess-and-select/assess/prepare-for-the-interview> for additional tools and resources on interviewing.

Scene 8: Tell Me About Yourself

Henry tries to determine whether Tarek will “fit in” and strays from the interview guide. Tarek answers the question, “Tell me about yourself” and provides more personal details than expected. Both Henry and Tarek share their reactions with the viewer.

Scene 8:

Duration of scene: 18:02 to 19:32; 1 minute, 30 seconds

By the end of this scene, viewers will be able to:

- Gain insight into what is seen as essential detail to describe oneself in other countries.
- Gain insight into how hiring managers in Canadian workplaces might feel about responses that are atypical.
- Understand how interviewees may respond differently than expected to open-ended interview questions.

Discussion Questions

Note to Trainer:

Educational standards differ from country to country and different schools have different reputations. Some employers are unfamiliar with international educational institutions and their ranking in comparison to Canadian educational institutions. They do not know the names of famous faculty members.

Sometimes interviewers take for granted that every interviewee, regardless of background, understands and knows how to respond to typical interview questions. They may not realize that the way in which a question is asked is based in a language and culture that may be confusing to the interviewee.

Questions:

International Education

Tarek mentions his former university and “drops” his professor’s name.

- ✓ Why might Tarek “name drop”?
- ✓ Could it be a cultural practice or a personal habit?

In your experience, what happens when a candidate’s resume lists an educational institution that is unknown to your hiring managers?

- ✓ Is that candidate screened out or in?
- ✓ How important is it for your hiring managers to recognize the name of the educational institution that the candidate attended in order to make a good hiring decision?
- ✓ How important is the prestige of the candidate’s educational institution to your present and past employers?
- ✓ How can this act as a barrier for highly competent skilled immigrant candidates who may have graduated from educational institutions which are not as popular or well-known to Canadian employers?

Some employers make negative assumptions about job candidates who have not attended an educational institution that the employers themselves view as prestigious.

- ✓ Why might that be?
- ✓ How might we encourage employers to question these assumptions?

Could the lack of knowledge about an educational institution be one of the reasons why employers may disqualify skilled immigrant job candidates?

Interview Questions

What do you think of Tarek's response to "Tell us about yourself."?

- ✓ What is a preferred response?
- ✓ What could the interviewers have done differently to encourage Tarek to provide a response that stressed relevant educational and work achievements?
- ✓ Does Tarek's response demonstrate poor professional judgment, cultural differences or a lack of interview experience here in Canada?
- ✓ How can this question be reworded to elicit whether Tarek has the relevant skills to qualify for this job?
- ✓ Have you experienced a situation in which native-born Canadians have had trouble answering this question effectively?
- ✓ Why do you think Henry asked this question? Is this a typical question to ask in an interview or is it a way to assess Tarek's ability to "fit in"?

In summary,

- Interview guides allow for a more consistent approach to hiring.
- It is valuable to reassess the wording of interview questions that may be unclear to candidates in order to create a more level playing field.
- What is considered important information to share during a job interview varies from culture to culture and does not necessarily relate to someone's ability to do the job well.

Resources

Visit <http://hireimmigrants.ca/Roadmap/#/assess-and-select/assess/evaluate-credentials> for information on evaluating international credentials.

<http://hireimmigrants.ca/Roadmap/#/assess-and-select/assess/prepare-for-the-interview> provides a variety of resources on preparing to interview skilled immigrants. These include a "guide to cross cultural recruitment and selection", and "raising awareness about cultural differences",

<http://hireimmigrants.ca/resources/?resource=trainingtool&id=1> includes a workshop on cross-cultural interviewing prepared by Upwardly Global.

<http://hireimmigrants.ca/Roadmap/#/assess-and-select/assess/prepare-for-the-interview> - video with questionable and preferred interviewing practices related to the question, "Tell me about yourself."

Scene 9: Social Activities

Henry continues to try to determine whether Tarek will “fit in” and asks him what he likes to do on weekends. Tarek mentions that on Friday nights he and his family are usually at the mosque and Henry becomes concerned.

Scene 9:

Duration of scene: 19:33 to 20:33; 1 minute

By the end of this scene, viewers will be able to:

- Gain insight into how one may or may not be able to assess organizational fit.
- Provide an example of how an interviewer may jump to conclusions.
- Learn about the possible connection between a conversational interviewing style and barriers to skilled immigrants during an interview.

Discussion Questions

Note to Trainer:

Workplace legislation prohibits employers from discriminating against candidates on the basis of their religious affiliation. Some employers may try to get around this legislation by using a conversational interview style to get personal information about the candidate’s activities outside of work. Being unfamiliar with Canadian culture and the style of interviewing, skilled immigrants may unwittingly volunteer information that can impede their chances of being hired. A conversational interviewing style used in this manner can, knowingly or unknowingly, become a barrier to skilled immigrants.

Questions:

When Tarek mentions that he visits the mosque most Fridays, Henry looks concerned and wonders whether Tarek would go out for a beer with the clients and go the extra mile to acquire business.

- ✓ Should a candidate’s life outside of work be a hiring consideration?

Should a candidate’s religious and/or political beliefs be a consideration when hiring?

- ✓ Are they taken into consideration by some interviewers? What are some examples?
- ✓ Why might an employer find it easier to hire candidates who are not religious?

In summary,

- A conversational interviewing style may yield information that feeds into the interviewer’s biases and affects a hiring decision.
- A conversational interviewing style may pose unnecessary barriers to the employment of skilled immigrants.

Resources

Visit <http://www.hireimmigrants.ca/resources/?resource=teleseminar&id=15> for a webinar on religious accommodation in the workplace.

Visit <http://www.hireimmigrants.ca/resources/?resource=news&id=9> for an article entitled “The Separation of Church and Work.”

Scene 10: Call of Duty

Dana asks a question about going “above and beyond the call of duty.” Tarek provides an example from a previous job, even though he is not really sure he has understood the question.

Scene 10:

Duration of scene: 20:34 to 21:27; 53 seconds

By the end of this scene, viewers will be able to:

- Increase their awareness of the impact of using idiomatic expressions during an interview.

Discussion Questions

Note to Trainer:

Skilled immigrants may have trouble understanding idioms, jargon and slang, in part because they are deeply rooted in an unfamiliar culture. Employers need to take this into consideration when designing interview questions.

Questions:

How would you define the following business-related idioms:

- “call of duty”
- “lone wolf”
- “get the ball rolling”
- “the bubble has burst”
- “the buck stops here”
- “burn your bridges”
- “someone means business”
- “a fat cat”
- “come full circle”
- “in a tight corner”?

What are some suggestions you can make to ensure that culturally sensitive idioms, company-specific jargon and slang are not used during interview settings with candidates whose first language is not English?

What jargon and slang that you often use in everyday communication might you carry into an interview setting?

In summary,

- The use of jargon and slang can include members of some groups and exclude others.
- Hiring managers need to conduct a clear language audit of their recruitment and selection tools.

Resources

Visit <http://hireimmigrants.ca/Roadmap/#/assess-and-select/assess/prepare-for-the-interview> for a video on questionable and preferred interviewing practices related to past accomplishments.

Visit <http://www2.literacy.bc.ca/facts/clear.htm> for resources on clear language.

Scenes 11/12: Assertiveness

Tarek is uncomfortable answering a question about a time when he disagreed with his boss. Dana shares her views on differing cultural values related to assertiveness at work.

Scene 11:

Duration of scene: 21:28 to 22:08; 40 seconds

Scene 12:

Duration of scene: 22:09 to 22:39, 30 seconds

By the end of these scenes, viewers will be able to:

- Understand different cultural values with regard to being assertive and handling disagreements or workplace conflicts with individuals in positions of higher authority.
- Understand how these different cultural values could impede a good hiring decision.

Discussion Questions

Note to Trainer:

Different cultures have differing views of assertiveness in the workplace. In some cultures, being assertive at the expense of offending one's superior is not considered acceptable. In fact, it could damage one's career if the culture values strong deference to authority.

Questions:

Tarek stated that he wouldn't argue with his supervisor even if he didn't agree with his idea or approach.

- ✓ How might this response reflect someone's ability to resolve workplace conflicts and resolve differences with superiors?

How does culture play a role in Tarek being unable to challenge his supervisor or boss?

Is Tarek representative of someone who lacks the confidence and directness necessary for the Canadian business environment?

- ✓ Does an answer like his demonstrate a cultural divide?

Does Tarek's response imply that he lacks strong conflict resolution skills?

In summary,

- The awareness that different cultures view topics in different ways provides hiring managers an opportunity to probe more deeply during job interviews and to interpret responses differently.

Resources

View <http://hireimmigrants.ca/Roadmap/#/assess-and-select/assess/prepare-for-the-interview> for a video on questionable and preferred interviewing practices related to dealing with conflict.

Scenes 13/14: Past Accomplishments

Tarek answers a question about standing up for an unpopular decision at work and reveals how much he values the achievement of the team over the achievement of an individual. Dana addresses group harmony and individual achievements and recommends acknowledging cultural differences when making good hiring decisions.

Scene 13:

Duration of scene: 22:40 to 23:13; 33 seconds

Scene 14:

Duration of scene: 23:14 to 23:42; 28 seconds

By the end of these scenes, viewers will be able to:

- Understand different cultural values regarding group harmony and individual achievements.
- Understand how these different cultural values could influence a good hiring decision.

Discussion Questions

Note to Trainer:

Different cultures have differing views of the group harmony and individual achievement in the workplace. Canadian employers often want to know about a candidate's decision-making skills and ability to take initiative because these are the kinds of skills and behaviours expected on the job. Many skilled immigrants struggle with providing responses because they were not in a position to make decisions on their own at work or to take initiative before getting consent from their supervisor.

Questions:

Tarek asks for clarification as to whether standing up for an unpopular decision implies taking credit or taking blame. He then states that whatever decision he makes must be one that the rest of the team supports.

- ✓ How appropriate is his answer given that the interviewers were looking for a response that would reflect his decision-making skills?
- ✓ Does an answer like this one demonstrate a cultural divide? Why or why not?

How should interview questions be structured so as not to screen out candidates who emphasize team accomplishments over individual accomplishments?

Could there be a cultural reason for Tarek to emphasize his team's accomplishments over his individual ones?

- ✓ Should the interviewer have been explicit by asking for an "individual" accomplishment rather than leaving it open for the interviewee to interpret the question?

Is it fair to expect interviewers to be explicit when asking questions to ensure that the interviewee has clearly understood what is being asked of them?

How beneficial is it to have people in the organization who emphasize the importance of teamwork over individual accomplishments?

How important is it to have someone with cultural competence training on the interview panel to evaluate candidates' responses through a cultural lens?

In summary,

- Interview questions about past accomplishments may yield answers which highlight differing cultural views about work.
- The awareness that cultural values differ provides hiring managers an opportunity to probe more deeply during job interviews and to interpret responses differently.

Resources

Visit <http://hireimmigrants.ca/Roadmap/#!/assess-and-select/assess/prepare-for-the-interview> for a video on questionable and preferred interviewing practices related to past accomplishments.

Scenes 15/16/17: Colloquialisms and Business Idioms

Both Henry and Tarek struggle with the use of unfamiliar terms but get their points across with some help from Dana. Tarek finds it easier to mention his weaknesses than his strengths.

Scene 15:

Duration of scene: 23:43 to 25:58; 2 minutes, 13 seconds

Scene 16:

Duration of scene: 25:59 to 26:12; 13 seconds

Scene 17:

Duration of scene: 26:13 to 27:41; 1 minute, 28 seconds

By the end of these scenes, viewers will be able to:

- Learn to pay close attention to their use of idioms, company-specific jargon, and/or slang during job interviews and everyday business language.
- Learn to paraphrase idioms in order to communicate more clearly in interview settings.

Discussion Questions

Note to Trainer:

Since language is based in culture, certain business idioms and jargon may not be obvious to skilled immigrants.

In some cultures, talking about one's strengths is considered boastful because one must follow a path of continuous improvement. As a result, some skilled immigrants who tend to downplay their strengths. This may come across negatively in an interview setting where Canadian employers are accustomed to hearing responses that highlight one's strengths over weaknesses.

Questions:

Why do you think Tarek placed more emphasis on highlighting his weaknesses than his strengths?

- ✓ Does this mean he is a weak candidate?
- ✓ Does this indicate a cultural divide? Why or why not?

Should a candidate who does not boast about his or her strengths be considered unsuitable for the job?

In summary,

- The use of jargon and slang can include members of some groups and exclude others.
- Hiring managers need to conduct a clear language audit of their recruitment and selection tools.
- Hiring managers need to be able to monitor their own speech during job interviews and paraphrase as required.

Resources

Visit <http://hireimmigrants.ca/Roadmap/#!/assess-and-select/assess/prepare-for-the-interview> for a video on questionable and preferred interviewing practices related to the use of informal language in an interview.

Visit <http://www2.literacy.bc.ca/facts/clear.htm> for resources on clear language.

Scenes 18/19: Interview Guides

Dana and Henry discuss Tarek’s suitability for the job and decide to offer him the position. They agree on the need to coach new hires and reduce systemic barriers to employment for skilled immigrants through the use of an interview guide. (The guide would provide clearly worded interview questions that do not contain idioms and complex syntax.)

Dana also stresses the importance of mitigating cultural bias in considering a good hire.

Scene 18:

Duration of scene: 27:42 to 29:19; 1 minute, 57 seconds

Scene 19:

Duration of scene: 29:20 to 33:32; 4 minutes, 12 seconds

By the end of these scenes, viewers will be able to:

- Learn the value of interview questions that do not contain jargon and complex syntax.
- Consolidate their understanding of the contribution of skilled immigrants to the Canadian labour force.
- Differentiate between the terms “cultural sensitivity” and “cultural competence.”

Discussion Questions

Note to Trainer:

Interview guides that include interview questions based on the knowledge, skills and attitudes (KSA) model can significantly reduce cultural bias in the interview process as the questions are focused on the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to succeed in a job. Good interview guides include clearly defined guidelines that show how the interview should be structured to mitigate selection bias. In this way, the best candidate will be selected irrespective of their cultural differences and behaviours.

(Trainers may consult the section on cultural sensitivity and cultural competence on page 27 and present definitions of these terms to the group before asking the last set of questions below.)

Questions:

Did Tarek really avoid the question about a decision he didn't make because he lacked the support of his team?

- ✓ Could this question have been answered differently if it were a Canadian candidate? Why or why not?
- ✓ How could the question have been asked using plain language?

Should an organization have a different interview guide for people whose mother tongue is not English?

Consider the definitions of culturally sensitive and culturally competent provided to you by your trainer.

- ✓ Given, the above definitions, do you consider your organization to be **culturally sensitive** or **culturally competent**?
- ✓ Provide an example of a culturally competent organization and a culturally sensitive organization.

In summary,

- The use of an interview guide may help to reduce systemic barriers against skilled immigrants.
- There is a solid business case for considering skilled immigrants.

Resources

Visit <http://hireimmigrants.ca/Roadmap/#/assess-and-select/assess/prepare-for-the-interview> for a video on questionable and preferred interviewing practices related to the use of informal language in an interview.

Cultural Sensitivity vs. Cultural Competence

This section provides background information for the users of this manual to review before addressing the questions that surface in the final two scenes of the video.

Cultural Sensitivity: Cultural sensitivity refers to “sensitivity to the importance of cultural differences and to the points of view of other people.” {Reference: Bhawuk and Brislin (1992)}. Cultural competence, defined as a set of “congruent behaviours, attitudes and policies that come together among professionals to work effectively with diversity” {Reference: Mercedes Martin & Billy Vaughn (2007)}, builds on cultural sensitivity: the concept that knowing as much as possible about specific cultures enhances one’s ability to work effectively with one another. Cultural sensitivity manifests itself in more superficial measures, such as potluck lunches and diversity calendars. These may be good measures in working towards creating an inclusive work environment, but systemic barriers need to be identified to encourage the inclusion of all employees and full participation by all members of the organization, including skilled immigrant employees {Reference: Ontario Volunteer Centre Network (2009)}.

Cultural Competence: Cultural competence is defined as a set of congruent behaviours, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals and enables that system, agency, or those professionals to work effectively in cross cultural situations. Cultural competence refers to an ability to interact effectively with people of different cultures.

Cultural competence is comprised of four components:

1. Awareness of one's own cultural worldview
2. Attitude towards cultural differences
3. Knowledge of different cultural practices and worldviews
4. Cross-cultural skills

Developing cultural competence results an ability to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across cultures. {Reference: Mercedes Martin & Billy Vaughn (2007)}.

Cultural competence focuses on identifying systemic barriers, such as employment barriers, which prevent skilled immigrant employees from fully participating as an equal member of the organization and being recognized for higher positions of authority. Cultural competence acknowledges and incorporates, at all levels, the importance of the following principles:

- Increasing inclusiveness, accessibility and equity
- Fostering human resources that is reflective of and responsive to a diversity of communities
- Creating a climate where discrimination and oppressive attitudes and behaviours are not tolerated
- Valuing cultural differences
- Promoting human rights and the elimination of systemic biases and barriers

- Practising self-awareness and self-reflection
- Demonstrating personal responsibility and accountability

Complete List of Discussion Questions

Scene 1:

Dana, the HR professional, stresses that it is important to separate the “must-haves” from the “nice-to-haves” when attracting the right talent.

- ✓ What approach does your current organization use to create job postings?
- ✓ Is this approach similar to or different from the approach that your previous organization used? If so, how?

From your experience, how much emphasis do hiring managers place on non-essential skills?

- ✓ Do you feel that hiring for non-essential skills ensures optimal performance? Why or why not?

Do you find that job postings which emphasize non-essential skills tend to screen out most or all skilled immigrant job candidates?

- ✓ How might you know?
- ✓ If the answer to the first question was yes, how can this be avoided for skilled immigrant job candidates who are qualified but may not have the desired non-essential skills?

Henry, the hiring manager, needs someone who knows the company’s specific software system.

- ✓ Is this a reasonable expectation? Why or why not?
- ✓ Have your employers ever expected this from external applicants?
- ✓ To your knowledge, how have organizations handled this kind of expectation from hiring managers?

Scene 2:

Which of the following sourcing channels have you used for sourcing skilled immigrant job candidates?

- community agencies
- internship programs targeted at skilled immigrants
- bridge training programs at colleges and universities
- mentoring programs
- government programs such as Employment Ontario and HRSDC
- job fairs
- immigrant networking organizations
- none of the above

How was your experience with the sourcing channel(s) from which you recruited talent?

- ✓ Which ones have been successful and unsuccessful? Why?

How familiar is your company with the sourcing channels listed on hireimmigrants.ca?

- ✓ What other recruitment methods have you used to attract skilled immigrant job candidates?
- ✓ Which one(s) were the most and least effective in attracting skilled immigrant job candidates?

The HR professional, Dana, and the hiring manager, Henry, both discuss the possibility of the company's products being manufactured offshore. Dana stresses the value of languages like Mandarin and Hindi.

- ✓ Does your company value language skills to compete in a global economy or marketplace?
- ✓ If not, could your company benefit by recruiting someone who can speak a language other than English or French and who can understand another country's business culture?
- ✓ What technique(s) can you use to convince your hiring managers of the benefits of international language skills for your company?

What is your company's experience with hiring skilled immigrants with little or no Canadian work experience?

- ✓ When might work experience in foreign countries be equally valuable or more valuable?
- ✓ What practices are in place to help skilled immigrants with little or no Canadian experience get "noticed"?
- ✓ What are some practices that any of your previous organizations used to mitigate the importance of having Canadian work experience and place greater emphasis on having the essential skills to succeed?

Henry doesn't feel a skilled immigrant will "fit" in the organization.

- ✓ What is your company's definition of "fit" and "personable" in relation to job applicants?
- ✓ How much importance is placed on recruiting someone who "fits" and is personable in relation to the essential skills for the job?
- ✓ How much does your assessment of "fit" affect your hiring decisions?
- ✓ Does the importance of "fit" constitute a barrier to hiring skilled immigrants?
- ✓ If so, what are some ways in which your organization can remove such barriers?

When Dana suggests the option of opening up the search to skilled immigrants, Henry remarks that the company already employs immigrants.

- ✓ Do you think Henry has ever stopped to think that not all newcomers arrive with the same level of education, skills and experience?

- ✓ Does he mean that immigrants, skilled or unskilled, should always be employed in entry-related roles regardless of the relevance of their previous educational background and work experience?
- ✓ What is your company's experience in hiring skilled immigrants in positions that are commensurate with their educational qualifications and work experience?

Scene 3:

Henry, the hiring manager, uses the analogy of Crosby (Canadian hockey player) and Malkin (Russian hockey player) when he describes to Dana what he is looking for in the new project manager. Malkin is technically a better player, but Crosby is more "well-rounded."

- ✓ What does Henry mean by "well-rounded" here?
- ✓ Is Henry's comment typical of what you have heard your hiring managers say?

Think back to the Crosby-Malkin analogy.

- ✓ Do your hiring managers prefer to recruit someone who is the right "fit" rather than someone who may have the essential skills necessary to succeed in a particular position?
- ✓ If so, how does that promote your organization's need to recruit and retain top talent?

Is accent a concern when hiring for your organization?

- ✓ If so, is that the case for all roles?
- ✓ Some organizations prefer candidates without a foreign accent in client-facing roles. What has been your organization's experience in choosing candidates for client-facing roles?
- ✓ Do you think an accent creates a barrier in considering skilled immigrant job candidates? If so, why?

Tarek thinks that the smell of the food he eats may be the reason why he doesn't get hired.

- ✓ In your experience, is this a genuine concern?
- ✓ Have you ever known a hiring manager to base a hiring or promotion decision based on cooking smells?

Is it a discriminatory practice to assess organizational "fit" in a job candidate?

- ✓ What is your company's definition of "fit" and "personable" in relation to job applicants?
- ✓ How much importance is placed on recruiting someone who "fits" and is personable in relation to the essential skills for the job?
- ✓ How much does your assessment of "fit" affect your hiring decisions? Does the importance of "fit" constitute a barrier to hiring skilled immigrants? If so, what are some ways in which your organization can remove such barriers?
- ✓ Why do organizations look for "fit" and how does it help them compete?

Henry indicates that he's looking for someone who can "take the ball and run."

- ✓ Do your hiring managers assume that skilled immigrant job candidates may need more “hand-holding” since they’re not accustomed to “the Canadian way of doing things”?
- ✓ To your knowledge, do skilled immigrants have difficulty in assuming full responsibility without direction or supervision?
- ✓ Do you feel that the learning curve is greater for a skilled immigrant than a new hire who is Canadian-born? Why or why not?

Scenes 4 / 5:

Dana, the HR professional, mentions that there are tools for conducting telephone screening interviews with skilled immigrant job candidates on hireimmigrants.ca.

- ✓ How familiar is your organization with cross-cultural interviewing?

Tarek mentions his lack of Canadian work experience as a barrier to finding meaningful work. He suggests ways in which he could overcome it.

- ✓ What does the term “Canadian experience” mean to you?
- ✓ Would skilled immigrant job candidates have a better chance at securing meaningful employment if they had relevant Canadian work experience?

Rank your answer to the following question on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 as the least important and 10 as the most important. Explain your answer.

- ✓ How important is it for skilled immigrants to be familiar with Canadian business practices, norms and expectations to be successful in the Canadian workplace?

Dana mentions that interviewing skilled immigrants by telephone can be challenging.

- ✓ Why is that?
- ✓ What cultural differences are you able to identify when conducting a telephone screening interview with a skilled immigrant job candidate?
- ✓ Are you able to mitigate those cultural differences to make a good hiring decision?
- ✓ Have cultural differences or an accent been a concern for you before considering to interview skilled immigrant job candidates over the phone?

Scene 6:

Tarek, the skilled immigrant job candidate, attached a photograph to his resume and his resume was longer than the standard one to two pages.

- ✓ Why do you think he did this?
- ✓ How does your company evaluate resumes that are formatted differently and/or may include extraneous details?
- ✓ Is an atypically formatted resume a good reason to disqualify a candidate?

Do your hiring managers assume that if a candidate has difficulty condensing their qualifications and experience to two pages they would struggle in the workplace?

When screening resumes for an in-person interview, Henry, the hiring manager, says, “Do you see where he lives?”

- ✓ Does your organization consider the neighbourhood or residential address of an applicant when screening resumes?
- ✓ Will this screen out most skilled immigrant job candidates who typically find their first accommodation in neighbourhoods where rentals are affordable?

At what level does your company typically hire skilled immigrants?

- ✓ Should they start at an entry level in order to learn the Canadian way of doing things and be incentivized to learn the business from “the ground up”?
- ✓ Should that be mandatory for all new external hires unfamiliar with the organization or business?

Are you aware of cultural biases that may determine the way you screen resumes of job applicants?

- ✓ Do you believe these cultural biases can result in an inaccurate assessment of skilled immigrant job applicants?
- ✓ What practices are effective in ensuring that hiring managers overlook cultural differences and select resumes on the basis of essential skills?

Tarek Khan is a non-English name and may be difficult to pronounce for some hiring managers.

- ✓ Does this tend to create a barrier for candidates who have names that are difficult to pronounce?
- ✓ Do individuals with non-English names tend to be promoted easily?
- ✓ What is your opinion about hiring managers screening out resumes because they can't pronounce the applicants' names? Is this a valid practice? Why or why not?

Research has shown that most skilled immigrants have resumes longer than the typical two pages.

- ✓ Approximately how long do you take to review a resume?
- ✓ In light of the aforementioned research, should HR professionals be prepared to spend more time reviewing resumes that they view as different?

Scene 7:

Small Talk

- ✓ When you engage in small talk before an interview, what kind of topics do you typically talk about?
- ✓ Have you ever tried to make someone feel comfortable by engaging in small talk and then found that you had chosen a topic the other person wasn't interested in?
- ✓ What did you learn from that situation?
- ✓ How have you changed your approach following that experience?
- ✓ What has happened when you have chosen more neutral topics?

Body Language

Henry does not understand when Tarek responds by shaking his head from side to side.

- ✓ How would you interpret that behaviour?
- ✓ What could have helped Henry understand Tarek's behaviour better?

How much weight should be placed on body language as a criterion for determining whether a candidate can be successful on the job? Why?

- ✓ How much weight would you place on culturally different behaviour (verbal and nonverbal) during the interview?

How do culturally different behaviours get translated in a homogenous culture where people undoubtedly know what is being communicated by a particular behaviour or gesture?

Are you aware of culturally different behaviours that skilled immigrants may demonstrate, such as nodding one's head from side to side, not making direct eye contact with a female interviewer, or not shaking hands with a female interviewer?

Scene 8:

International Education

Tarek mentions his former university and "drops" his professor's name.

- ✓ Why might Tarek "name drop"?
- ✓ Could it be a cultural practice or a personal habit?

In your experience, what happens when a candidate's resume lists an educational institution that is unknown to your hiring managers?

- ✓ Is that candidate screened out or in?
- ✓ How important is it for your hiring managers to recognize the name of the educational institution that the candidate attended in order to make a good hiring decision?
- ✓ How important is the prestige of the candidate's educational institution to your present and past employers?
- ✓ How can this act as a barrier for highly competent skilled immigrant candidates who may have graduated from educational institutions which are not as popular or well-known to Canadian employers?

Some employers make negative assumptions about job candidates who have not attended an educational institution that the employers themselves view as prestigious.

- ✓ Why might that be?
- ✓ How might we encourage employers to question these assumptions?

Could the lack of knowledge about an educational institution be one of the reasons why employers may disqualify skilled immigrant job candidates?

Interview Questions

What do you think of Tarek's response to "Tell us about yourself."?

- ✓ What is a preferred response?
- ✓ What could the interviewers have done differently to encourage Tarek to provide a response that stressed relevant educational and work achievements?
- ✓ Does Tarek's response demonstrate poor professional judgment, cultural differences or a lack of interview experience here in Canada?
- ✓ How can this question be reworded to elicit whether Tarek has the relevant skills to qualify for this job?
- ✓ Have you experienced a situation in which native-born Canadians have had trouble answering this question effectively?
- ✓ Why do you think Henry asked this question? Is this a typical question to ask in an interview or is it a way to assess Tarek's ability to "fit in"?

Scene 9:

When Tarek mentions that he visits the mosque most Fridays, Henry looks concerned and wonders whether Tarek would go out for a beer with the clients and go the extra mile to acquire business.

- ✓ Should a candidate's life outside of work be a hiring consideration?

Should a candidate's religious and/or political beliefs be a consideration when hiring?

- ✓ Are they taken into consideration by some interviewers? What are some examples?
- ✓ Why might an employer find it easier to hire candidates who are not religious?

Scene 10:

How would you define the following business-related idioms:

- "call of duty"
- "lone wolf"
- "get the ball rolling"
- "the bubble has burst"
- "the buck stops here"
- "burn your bridges"
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- "come full circle"
- "in a tight corner"?

What are some suggestions you can make to ensure that culturally sensitive idioms, company-specific jargon and slang are not used during interview settings with candidates whose first language is not English?

What jargon and slang that you often use in everyday communication might you carry into an interview setting?

Scenes 11 / 12:

Tarek stated that he wouldn't argue with his supervisor even if he didn't agree with his idea or approach.

- ✓ How might this response reflect someone's ability to resolve workplace conflicts and resolve differences with superiors?

How does culture play a role in Tarek being unable to challenge his supervisor or boss?

Is Tarek representative of someone who lacks the confidence and directness necessary for the Canadian business environment?

- ✓ Does an answer like his demonstrate a cultural divide?

Does Tarek's response imply that he lacks strong conflict resolution skills?

Scenes 13 / 14:

Tarek asks for clarification as to whether standing up for an unpopular decision implies taking credit or taking blame. He then states that whatever decision he makes must be one that the rest of the team supports.

- ✓ How appropriate is his answer given that the interviewers were looking for a response that would reflect his decision-making skills?
- ✓ Does an answer like this one demonstrate a cultural divide? Why or why not?

How should interview questions be structured so as not to screen out candidates who emphasize team accomplishments over individual accomplishments?

Could there be a cultural reason for Tarek to emphasize his team's accomplishments over his individual ones?

- ✓ Should the interviewer have been explicit by asking for an "individual" accomplishment rather than leaving it open for the interviewee to interpret the question?

Is it fair to expect interviewers to be explicit when asking questions to ensure that the interviewee has clearly understood what is being asked of them?

How beneficial is it to have people in the organization who emphasize the importance of teamwork over individual accomplishments?

How important is it to have someone with cultural competence training on the interview panel to evaluate candidates' responses through a cultural lens?

Scenes 15 / 16 / 17:

Why do you think Tarek placed more emphasis on highlighting his weaknesses than his strengths?

- ✓ Does this mean he is a weak candidate?
- ✓ Does this indicate a cultural divide? Why or why not?

Should a candidate who does not boast about his or her strengths be considered unsuitable for the job?

Scenes 18 / 19:

Did Tarek really avoid the question about a decision he didn't make because he lacked the support of his team?

- ✓ Could this question have been answered differently if it were a Canadian candidate? Why or why not?
- ✓ How could the question have been asked using plain language?

Should an organization have a different interview guide for people whose mother tongue is not English?

Consider the definitions of cultural sensitivity and cultural competence provided to you by your trainer.

- ✓ Given, the above definitions, do you consider your organization to be **culturally sensitive** or **culturally competent**?
- ✓ Provide an example of a culturally sensitive organization and a culturally competence organization.

Conclusion

There is a wealth of talent in the skilled immigrant labour pool. They bring a breadth of international experience, innovative ideas and cultural competence of global markets that could be valuable assets to any company that is competing, or considering competing, in local ethnic markets and global markets. Henry has come a long way in learning from Dana's knowledge and approach to hiring. Tarek has spent time analyzing his job search experience. When Tarek starts working at MetroCan Technologies, no doubt Henry and Dana will continue to learn about cultural differences and how to work towards creating an inclusive work environment that welcomes and leverages cultural differences. With that, issues related to effectively integrating Tarek into MetroCan Technologies will arise.

We would like to leave you with a few parting words of advice:

- ✓ Be open and accepting of cultural differences in the ways in which skills and work experience are presented during a candidate search – in this case, resumes and responses to interview questions.
- ✓ Review your approaches to recruitment and selection to identify ways to expand the scope of your search.
- ✓ Phrase interview questions more clearly to ensure that you are using a bias-free approach to hiring.

TRIEC wishes you all the best with this training video and would be very pleased to hear your comments and feedback.

Please contact,

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