



KAMLOOPS
IMMIGRANT SERVICES
TOGETHER WE'RE BETTER



INCLUSIVITY AT WORK:

EMPOWERING NEWCOMER TALENT FOR LONG-TERM IMPACT

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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Kamloops Immigrant Services would like to acknowledge that this guide was created within the ancestral, traditional, and unceded territory of the Secwepemc Nation.

GREETINGS

Greetings from Kamloops Immigrant Services! We are happy and excited to partner with all employers in the community and deeply appreciate your drive to prioritize the inclusion of skilled newcomers in your workplaces.

We understand that training and onboarding new employees takes a lot of time, money, and effort. We also know that by investing in new hires there is a hope to gain a return through increased productivity, revenue, employee loyalty and long-term commitment. This guide invites you to take the time to understand and intentionally support newcomer employees using an approach of inclusion and accessibility, so that you too can enhance the success of your business in the long run.

INTRODUCTION

When onboarding and training new immigrant employees, employers can follow these recommendations to promote a smooth integration and to provide necessary support. It is essential to view each of these elements as equally important, as it all builds into the understanding of how to create successful and impactful orientation of a newcomer into the workplace.

CULTURAL SENSITIVITY / AWARENESS

Imagine newcomers arriving in a foreign country, excited to become part of Canadian life. To support their successful contribution to your business, it's essential to also recognize their cultural backgrounds. By incorporating cultural awareness into onboarding and training, we can draw upon the richness of diverse practices and realize their potential. By customizing your approach to appreciate and celebrate their unique traditions, you will be fostering enthusiasm and long-term commitment.



An article from Hire Immigrants Ottawa provides some practical, simple examples on how you can implement cultural sensitivity and awareness in the workplace:

01

Organizing group meals where employees can learn about each other's cultures by sharing food and showcasing music and art.

02

Creating multicultural calendars to avoid scheduling important meetings on major cultural holidays.

03

Acknowledging all the faiths within your workplace by adding some recognition of other staff holidays.

04

Holding a focus group for your diverse staff to discover how they have adapted to the work culture and use their feedback to improve your integration practices.

"Accommodation leads to mutual trust, higher staff retention, better morale, more effective working teams and greater productivity."

<https://www.hireimmigrantsottawa.ca/cultural-accommodation-in-the-workplace-tips-and-practices/#:~:text=Accommodation%20leads%20to%20mutual%20trust,working%20teams%20and%20greater%20productivity>.



LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

Communication is a hot topic and essential in creating a smoother workflow. Addressing barriers in language and communication can be a challenge, but it is still worth taking the time to overcome those obstacles and support newcomer employees to increase their English language proficiency. Here’s why:

Effective communication: Vital for teamwork and productivity, reducing misunderstandings in job roles.

Customer interaction: Strong language skills enhance customer satisfaction, trust, and contribute to company success.

Integration: Language aids cultural adjustment, boosting confidence, and a sense of belonging.

Legal compliance: Clear communication ensures safety and compliance, crucial in industries with strict protocols.

Equal opportunity: English proficiency opens doors for growth, training, and equitable participation.

Reduced isolation: Language support mitigates newcomer stress, promoting mental well-being and job satisfaction.

Chances are that many newcomer employees know more English than it seems. However, previous experiences with English interactions may cause nervousness because it sometimes takes longer to fully understand or to clearly express themselves. Using plain and clear language when explaining and giving instructions can have a huge benefit.

Incorporating English language development and communication support into workplace practices inspires commitment, loyalty and increases the likelihood of long-term retention while signaling appreciation for adaptability and resilience. If you need resources to assist with English language proficiency for newcomer employees, check out these options provided by our agency:

Kamloops Immigrant Services offers free Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC):

<https://immigrantservices.ca/learn-english/signup-for-english-classes/>

Conversation Circles:

<https://immigrantservices.ca/learn-english/enjoy-conversation-circle/>

and Mentorship to support with English practice and learning:

<https://immigrantservices.ca/learn-english/be-matched-with-a-mentor/>

For more information and support, reach out to our Employer Advisor. Please note* LINC classes are based on eligibility and availability, KIS will do its utmost to help newcomers access English language development resources but cannot guarantee immediate access or enrollment.

ORIENTATION AND ONBOARDING

When developing a comprehensive onboarding process to familiarize newcomers with the company's values, policies, and expectations, remember to also include information about workplace norms, dress code, and social interactions. This may seem like something small and insignificant, but it greatly affects the way that newcomers integrate successfully into your company and how they can in turn mentor other newcomer employees to do the same.

Use a variety of methods to train the employee on workplace safety regulations, emergency procedures, and any specific safety measures related to their role. Having checklists and maps they can reference and doing a physical walk through of the procedures can help solidify understanding so that further questions may not be needed.

Clearly outline the employee's job description, responsibilities, and performance expectations. Emphasizing clarity on expectations for task completion, role scheduling, and providing constructive criticism will drive newcomers to feel more confident in contributing to the workplace. It can also decrease chances of miscommunication and issues.



For more on how to effectively create a welcoming workplace to successfully integrate new employees check out this video created by **IECBC**

Link:

<https://iecbc.ca/how-to-effectively-create-a-welcoming-workplace-and-successfully-integrate-new-employees/>



RECOGNITION OF FOREIGN CREDENTIALS & ASSISTANCE WITH CERTIFICATIONS

Recognizing and validating foreign credentials and qualifications is necessary from a business perspective for several reasons:

1 It allows you to tap into a diverse talent pool to enhance the competitiveness and innovation of your company and helps address skill shortages.

2 It demonstrates a commitment to cultural competence and inclusion which promotes a welcoming workplace culture leading to better employee morale and productivity.

3 It produces cost effective hiring processes saving you time and resources on retraining and reassessing candidates, and it enhances a company's reputation as a globally aware organization which attracts a broader customer base.





Incorporating foreign credential recognition into the onboarding process is a strategic move that not only benefits newcomers but also contributes to the overall success and growth of the business while complying with legal and ethical standards.

See the Employer Roadmap from IRCC for resources on foreign credential assessment:

https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/employer-roadmap-hiring-retaining-internationally-trained-workers.html#_3.3_Assessing_credentials



For other certifications needed for the job, please clarify if they are required before starting the job, or if they can be obtained within the initial weeks. Many newcomers aim to get a BC driver's license, and some are eager to buy a vehicle for easier commuting, but transferring a license from another country to a BC driver's license may take some time. For help with finding information on license transfer or access to the Learner's Training Manual, employees can contact our team of Settlement Counsellors at KIS. **Electronic versions of the driving guides can be downloaded here:**

<https://www.icbc.com/driver-licensing/driving-guides>

Additional certifications like First Aid and Food Safe may receive financial assistance through Kamloops Immigrant Services. Permanent Residents, Refugees, or Citizens may also access support through WorkBC. For details on financial assistance from WorkBC, **please visit their website:**

<https://www.workbc.ca/discover-employment-services/workbc-centres/employment-services>

MENTORING, PEER SUPPORT & WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY

Pairing a newcomer employee with a mentor who can provide guidance and support during the onboarding process encourages continuous learning and professional development. It not only helps new hires to adapt and thrive, but also uses the mentor's experience as a guide to understand the right networks, resources, and processes to use which can facilitate quick and successful achievement of job goals.

A qualified mentor, can provide knowledge based on their experiences that isn't written in an employee handbook. This insight can accelerate the onboarding process. The new employee is able to become well-versed in their role and company faster than if they had to learn and discover information and processes themselves.

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/onboarding-success-5-key-benefits-mentorship-joyofpursuit/>



Workplace flexibility:

Another key factor in determining successful onboarding and retention of a newcomer employee is workplace flexibility. We understand that it can be challenging to accommodate the needs of newcomers while meeting operational needs, however benefit can outweigh the cost when it comes to long-term retention of global talent.

Supporting this work-life balance while a newcomer is adapting to Canadian work culture allows employees room to improve their skills and contribute more effectively. Flexible scheduling provides opportunity for newcomers to meet family needs, increase English proficiency through attending classes, and reduce costly turnover by increasing ongoing motivation and engagement.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & ACCESS TO SUPPORTS FOR FAMILY INTEGRATION

Employers can play a pivotal role in facilitating the successful integration of newcomer employees, which not only benefits the employees themselves but also your business as a whole.



Encouraging newcomer employees to actively participate in local community events and initiatives creates a sense of inclusion and connection to the new environment which drives a strong sense of belonging to enhance well-being, engagement, and long-term commitment to their job.



By encouraging employees to connect with colleagues from various teams, employers create a workplace environment that values diversity and collaboration, leading to better teamwork, knowledge sharing, and innovative problem-solving.



Support networks can be nurtured through team-building activities or participation in employee resource groups (ERGs). These networks provide a valuable safety net for newcomers, helping them navigate challenges, adapt to the workplace culture, and overcome any potential barriers to their success.



Offering information about available social services, including healthcare, legal assistance, and financial support, demonstrates a commitment to the holistic well-being of employees, reducing stress and distractions related to personal concerns, allowing newcomers to focus more effectively on their work.



Assisting newcomers in accessing family-related services such as schools, healthcare, and housing is not just supportive but also practical. A stable foundation for employees and their families leads to greater overall job satisfaction and performance, as family well-being is closely tied to individual success in the workplace.



Incorporating these practices into your organization's approach to onboarding and employee support will contribute to a more inclusive and cohesive work environment. It also reflects positively on the company's image, potentially making it more attractive to top talent from diverse backgrounds.

Ultimately, investing in the integration and well-being of newcomer employees is a strategic move that pays dividends in terms of employee retention. Here at KIS we have a team of Settlement Counsellors who are eager to support in providing resources and opportunities for your newcomer employees to connect to the community. Contact us today to get started. We've also created Job Ready 101: A Practical Employment Guide for Newcomers, which includes tips for your employees on how to navigate the first 90 days of a new job:

<https://immigrantservices.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Stage-5-Starting-a-new-job.pdf>



CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND MEDIATION

Resolving conflicts with newcomer employees in a culturally sensitive and proactive manner allows employers to contribute to a positive organizational culture, increased employee satisfaction, and overall business success. It helps in building a diverse and dynamic workforce that can bring different perspectives and ideas to the table, bolstering innovation and creativity.

Here are some considerations employers should keep in mind when addressing conflicts with immigrant employees:

Cultural Sensitivity

1 Recognize that people from different cultural backgrounds may have varying communication styles, conflict resolution approaches, and workplace expectations.

Language Barriers

2 Acknowledge that language differences may lead to misunderstandings. Promote open communication and provide language support or interpretation services when needed, facilitating better communication and integration.

Awareness of Immigration Challenges

3 Be aware of the potential stressors associated with immigration, such as adjusting to a new country, dealing with visa issues, or navigating unfamiliar systems. This awareness can help in addressing the root causes of conflicts.

Fair and Unbiased Resolution

4 Ensure that conflict resolution processes are fair and unbiased. Avoid making assumptions based on cultural stereotypes and focus on the specific behaviors or issues at hand. Ensure that employees know who they can contact about different inquiries and if issues arise.

If you need language support, KIS offers translation & interpretation services that may be available:

<https://immigrantservices.ca/immigration-kamloops-services/translation-interpretation/translation-process/>



For more strategies and tips for the how's and why's of incorporating cultural awareness into conflict resolution practices check out this article from Creative Word UK:

<https://creativeword.uk.com/blog/uncategorised/cultural-awareness-conflict-resolution/>



And this article on "How to communicate respect and interest in conflict resolution" by experts on LinkedIn:

<https://www.linkedin.com/advice/1/how-do-you-communicate-respect-interest/>



USING WORKPLACE TOOLS AND TECHNOLOGY

TRAINING FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Workplace tools & technology:

When it comes to tools and tech in the workplace, providing access to additional resources ensures that the newcomer employee is receiving comprehensive training necessary for their job. Proper training also reduces the likelihood of errors, improves the quality of work, and allows employees to stay up to date and adapt effectively, which saves on costs over time.

Here are some options:

1. In-House training programs & internal knowledge base creation (include FAQs, troubleshooting guides, and best practices)
2. Online courses and learning platforms (consider using online learning platforms such as LinkedIn Learning, Coursera, Udemy, or Pluralsight to provide courses on specific software or technology skills)
3. Vendor resources (many technology vendors offer free resources and training materials for their products. These can include knowledge bases, forums, and webinars)
4. Regular workshops and training sessions
5. Simulations and virtual labs
6. YouTube and video tutorials

The key is to offer a variety of resources and support options to accommodate different learning abilities and styles. Additionally, regular updates, assessments, and feedback opportunities can help ensure that employees are effectively learning and applying the knowledge and skills related to workplace tools and technology.

EMPLOYEE FEEDBACK, COLLABORATION & ONGOING SUPPORT

Establishing effective channels and prioritizing ongoing communication creates a workplace culture that not only welcomes diverse perspectives but actively seeks input to improve support initiatives. Here's an example of a checklist to help you gauge your current approach:

Open Communication

Are feedback channels used and promoted through team meetings, suggestion boxes, and digital platforms. Can newcomers feel safe sharing experiences and suggestions, both verbally and in writing.

Regular Check-ins

Is progress proactively gauged beyond work tasks. Is there a discussion of personal experiences, challenges, and job satisfaction. Do you acknowledge achievements, promptly address concerns, and demonstrate commitment to well-being.

Emphasize Ongoing Support

Do you highlight continuous support throughout onboarding, reassure newcomers of adaptation priority, provide necessary resources, and stress the importance of ongoing check-ins to aid in success.

Practical Training

Are hands-on sessions and access to diverse resources provided. Is training tailored or adjusted to individual learning styles, empowering newcomers to navigate their roles effectively.

Continuous Improvement

Do you seek feedback on training and support initiatives on a continual basis. Regularly assessing onboarding processes and adapting for the benefit of newcomers and workplace inclusivity.

This article by Workplace shares some great tips and suggestions on how to create a feedback channel with your staff, including timelines and progress goals for 1 week, 1 month, 3 months and 6 months

<https://www.quantumworkplace.com/future-of-work/new-hire-feedback>



It's important to note that not all onboarding timelines for new staff are going to look the same. By spending the time to intentionally create and facilitate open feedback with newcomer hires, you can expand your ability to successfully integrate and retain top talent in your business.

CONCLUSION

Remember that every individual's needs and experiences may vary. It's essential to personalize the onboarding and training process based on the specific requirements and circumstances of the newcomer employee to create a confident and independently working team member who can utilize their skills & strengths to bolster productivity in the workplace.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For more support with onboarding & retention, check out these extra resources we've included. You can also reach out to our Employer Advisor any time for assistance.

KIS Welcoming Workplace DEI Toolkit:

<https://immigrantservices.ca/immigration-kamloops-services/inclusive-workplace-program/>

Venture Kamloops – Workforce Development & Global Talent Recruitment

<https://venturekamloops.com/programs/workforce-development>

IECBC Retaining Immigrant Talent Checklist:

https://iecbc.ca/files/doc/Tips%20on%20Retaining%20Talent_0.pdf

Diversity Thermometer – WorkBC Employer Toolkit: Diversity at Work – Recruiting and Retaining Immigrants

<https://iecbc.ca/files/WorkBC%20Employers%20Toolkit%20Book4%20-%20Diversity%20at%20Work.pdf#page=11>

IECBC: How to Effectively Create a Welcoming Workplace and Successfully Integrate New Employees – Video

<https://iecbc.ca/how-to-effectively-create-a-welcoming-workplace-and-successfully-integrate-new-employees/>

Article: Immigrants make up the largest share of the population in over 150 years and continue to shape who we are as Canadians

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/221026/dq221026a-eng.htm>

IECBC Onboarding Newcomers Toolkit

<https://iecbc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/IECBC-Onboarding2018-webV2.pdf>

2018 GTA Employer Survey: Employment and Retention of Newcomers

<https://peelhaltonworkforce.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/2018Survey.pdf>

Article: By Employers for Employers – Tips for Recruiting International Talent https://www.conferenceboard.ca/product/tips-for-recruiting-international-talent_2023/

DISCLAIMER

The information included in this guide has been generated with assistance by an AI model, but the ideas and underlying themes are original and created by a human author. The contents are intended to assist employers with developing best practices for onboarding newcomer employees and to increase awareness of the challenges and barriers that newcomers experience in the workplace. We encourage readers to focus on the content and not the method of its creation. We hope that you will choose to take these recommendations into consideration and implement them into your company framework.