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Local task force releases guide to hiring skilled immigrants

By [Peter Kovessy](#), Ottawa Business Journal Staff

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Employers who are looking to hire skilled immigrants, but are uncertain how to evaluate an applicant's foreign work experience, should look at a prospective employee's skills and competencies, rather than just their credentials, according to a recently released report.

While outside agencies such as World Education Services-Canada can provide information about an applicant's 'hard' skills, including foreign academic credentials and institutions, an employer can elicit an immigrant's 'soft' skills by asking for examples of, for instance, working as part of a team, during an interview or by looking beyond resumes and into portfolios or dossiers.

The tip is one of dozens in an employer's guide to integrating immigrants into the workplace, prepared by several Ottawa-based business organizations and social agencies and released Tuesday afternoon.

The guide, which is targeted at small and medium-sized enterprises without a full-time human resources department, also outlined the advantages to a business of hiring immigrants, recruiting and retaining skilled immigrants, finding and interviewing applicants, and specific concerns about language and cultural differences.

Hydro Ottawa CEO Rosemarie Leclair, who participated in the project as co-chair of the Employer Council of Champions, which promotes the hiring of skilled workers, said she hopes the release of the guide is only be a starting point as Ottawa businesses continue to build on their recruitment efforts.

"What was really encouraging was the amount of interest it has generated from the employment community ... It really tells us that we are on to something timely," she said.

Likewise, Ottawa Chamber of Commerce chair Richard Clayman said he hopes the release of the guide will not only lead to more professionally trained immigrants finding permanent positions, but also be applied in non-professional work sectors to the benefit of the community as a whole.

"There is no better way to integrate immigrant neighbourhoods into a Canadian way of life and to enrich our own cultural fabric than through gainful employment," he said.

Hire Immigrants Ottawa's website has the full report, titled, [An Employer's Guide to Integrating Immigrants into the Workplace](#) .

See also: [Immigrant workers face uphill battle](#).

