

*Employer Practices for Attracting, Retaining and Integrating Skilled Immigrants: An Analysis of Canada's Leading Employers*  
Ashleigh Dalton, ALLIES; 2011

Organizations across Canada have developed and implemented practices to attract, retain and integrate skilled immigrants into their workforce. This report examines such practices in the winners and shortlisted candidates of the *Best Employers for New Canadians*, an annual competition managed by the editors of *Canada's Top 100 Employers*.

### **Method**

The findings focus on 40 shortlisted applications and 13 key informant interviews with applicants from the 2010 competition. In addition, it examines trends from 101 shortlisted applications in the 2008, 2009, and 2010 competitions.

### **The Applicants**

Ontario employers are over-represented, with more than two-thirds of shortlisted employers from 2008-2010 coming from this province. The employers with the highest number of practices were from Toronto, Calgary and Vancouver.

Large businesses were also highly represented; 92 percent of employers with five or more types of practices were large businesses with 500+ employees.

The energy and environment, financial, and health industries are leading the field in attraction, retention and integration practices for skilled immigrants.

### **Effective Practices**

In the 2010 competition, reported practices fell into eight categories:

1. **Recruitment and Hiring** – 70 percent report practices related to job postings, interviews, candidate screening and evaluation, and salary determination.
2. **Credential Recognition** – 50 percent conduct practices to facilitate understanding and acceptance of international credentials.
3. **Mentoring** – 62.5 percent participate in some form of mentoring for mentees in the organization or in the community.
4. **Internships** – 55 percent offered internship, work placement or co-op opportunities in some form.
5. **Upgrading Skills and Designations** – 35 percent provided employees with support to pursue licensure or a professional designation, or upgrade their skills.
6. **Language Training** – 42.5 percent supported language and/or communication training for immigrant employees.
7. **Partnerships** – 75 percent reported partnerships with community organizations that focus on skilled immigrant employment.
8. **Diversity Training** – 65 percent had training for new hires, managers and/or all employees.

### **Rationales for Practice**

The employers who were interviewed expressed the desire to enhance their reputation – to build their brand as an employer of choice. Further, these employers discussed these practices as a way to access a larger pool of candidates in the ‘war for talent.’

In addition, employers acknowledged that these practices foster inclusivity, create fair and equitable workplaces, fit with community needs, and therefore contribute to the public good.

### **Trends**

Winning employers are increasingly using practices to attract, retain and integrate skilled immigrants. From 2008-2010, almost all of the categories of practice showed an increase in adoption and frequency. The exceptions are in the Recruiting and Hiring, and Language Training categories, which did not show a steady increase.

The increase in types of employer practices from 2008-2010 suggest that employers will not only continue what they are doing, but will also develop additional practices and policies.

### **Recommendations**

1. Employers should look for ways to track and measure their workforce representation, and the outcomes of their attraction, retention and integration practices.
2. Immigrant employment councils, immigrant associations, government and other stakeholders should continue to share and promote good practices.