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Mar 26, 2010

Immigrant Success award winners announced

Awards recognize innovation in integrating skilled immigrants into labour market

Attracting and integrating skilled immigrants is increasingly becoming a priority for Canadian organizations.

The fourth annual Immigrant Success Awards, an initiative of the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC) recognizes innovation and leadership in integrating skilled immigrants into the Toronto labour market.

“Vision, innovation, leadership and commitment set this year’s Immigrant Success Award winners apart from the rest,” said Zabeen Hirji, chief human resources officer at RBC and co-chair of TRIEC.

“If Canada is to realize the global advantage of its diversity and become the destination of choice for professionals, skilled people, and entrepreneurs, we must do a better job of helping new immigrants integrate into society and recognize their achievements as well as their contributions to the prosperity of our country.”

Four organizations and one individual were honoured at a reception on March 25 for their steadfast commitment to recruiting and integrating skilled immigrants.

“At TRIEC we know that tapping the skilled immigrant talent pool is smart business,” said Elizabeth McIsaac, executive director at TRIEC. “As we look to our city’s future and demographic trends, we also know that those employers that are finding ways to do this more effectively will be the leaders of tomorrow.”

2009 IS Award recipients:

Michael Bach, the national director of diversity, equity and inclusion at KPMG Canada — *Canadian HR Reporter* Individual Achievement Award

Michael wrote KPMG’s business case for diversity, received buy in from leadership and now heads the company’s diversity initiatives. Amongst other achievements, he entrenched a truly open recruiting process for skilled immigrants; introduced diversity training for all new hires and cultural competence training for managers.



Photo: MANSA Photography

Michael Bach, winner of Canadian HR Reporter Individual Achievement Award

Samtack — RBC Immigrant Advantage Award

With over 90 per cent of its 100-plus workforce comprised of immigrants, this computer manufacturing and distribution company has leveraged skilled immigrant talent to respond to changing needs of mass merchant customers, increased market share with smaller, local and diverse retailers and purchased parts from overseas suppliers, mainly from China.

Pitney Bowes — RBC Immigrant Advantage Award

More than one-half of mail and document mailstream technology company's high-potential leaders are diverse employees, while 15 per cent of senior leaders are skilled immigrants. The company developed its talent and inclusion plan in order to be positioned as a diversity employer of choice and embed skilled immigrants in its succession planning.

St. Michael's Hospital — *Toronto Star* Award for Excellence in Workplace Integration

St. Michael's Hospital implemented the Career Bridge internship program for skilled immigrants, which has spread to eight departments. The organization has created a full-time position responsible for integrating skilled immigrants into the organization and has achieved a high conversion rate from its 32 interns.

Fraser Milner Casgrain — CBC Toronto Vision Award for Immigrant Inclusion

A Canadian business and litigation law firm, FMC established a six-month paid internship for internationally trained lawyers – a first in Canada. FMC is now working with the University of Toronto's Faculty of Law to develop a bridging program that will create new pathways to employment for internationally trained lawyers.



Photo: MANSA Photography

Back row from left: Michael Bach, KPMG; Chris Pinnington, Fraser Milner Casgrain; John King, St. Michael's Hospital. Front row from left: Karen Bell, Pitney Bowes; Royson Ng, Samtack.