

*The results are in:
Mentoring improves
employment outcomes for
skilled immigrants*



Report Highlights

ALLIES supports local efforts in Canadian urban centres to develop, implement and enhance mentoring programs for skilled immigrants. These mentoring initiatives focus on job-ready, pre-assessed skilled immigrants with high degrees of language proficiency. The mentoring programs match these internationally-trained professionals with their Canadian counterparts in structured relationships.

ALLIES engaged Accenture in a pro-bono capacity to measure the impact of mentoring on skilled immigrants.

Key Findings:

- By all measures, mentees significantly improved their economic standing twelve months after mentoring. On average, unemployment decreased from 73% at the time of mentoring to 19% twelve months later. Full-time earnings increased from \$36,905 to \$59,944, an improvement of 62%.
- In addition to improved earnings, 71% of employed immigrants were employed in their field, and 47% were employed at their appropriate level.

The Accenture analysis also points to additional benefits:

- Successful mentees find employment faster than the average newcomer.
- Most mentees find work in their field. This means that their starting salaries (and future salary trajectory) are likely higher than those working outside their field of expertise and experience.
- Most mentees find permanent work. They likely receive employee benefits from their company which increases their effective earnings.

The report's findings make a compelling case for scaling up mentoring in Canadian cities. Mentoring is a low-cost, high impact intervention that delivers on the promise of opportunity made to newcomers that make Canada their home every year. The results are in. The time to expand mentoring is now.



The results are in: Mentoring improves employment outcomes for skilled immigrants

Introduction

Canada is a nation of immigrants. Today, Canada welcomes approximately 250,000 immigrants every year. Immigrants account for almost all net labour force growth and have become woven deeply into the prosperity of our nation. Skilled immigrants fill important skill gaps in the Canadian economy. In fact, according to Prime Minister Steven Harper, this skills gap is "... the biggest challenge our country faces."¹ As such, the success of skilled immigrants has become of prime importance for this country.

These newcomers are educated (over 50% of them have completed tertiary education – the highest level among developed countries). Yet despite this fact, skilled immigrants continue to face challenges in finding work that is commensurate with their education and professional experience. Latest figures show that employment rates for recent immigrants are 19 points lower than their Canadian-born counterparts.² Estimates show that if recent immigrants' observable skills were rewarded in a manner to that of Canadian-born workers, this would have resulted in \$30.7 billion in increased incomes for immigrants or about 2.1% of GDP in 2006.³

Mentoring has proven to be one of the most successful strategies to assist newcomers find suitable employment. The idea behind mentoring is a simple one – connecting an internationally-trained professional with his or her Canadian counterpart. It is effective in helping many newcomers overcome some of the most significant barriers that they may face as they try to enter the labour market. Specifically, mentors can help a newcomer connect

with other professionals in their field, provide critical information about their profession in Canada, and enhance the mentee's knowledge of the Canadian workplace culture and norms.

Recognizing the importance of mentoring as an effective program, ALLIES launched the National Mentoring Initiative in 2009 with support from TD Bank. ALLIES provided funding, coaching and technological support, connections to national employers, and other program supports to twelve mentoring programs in seven provinces.

Through supporting mentoring programs in cities across Canada, ALLIES hopes to reduce a number of common barriers that immigrants face in trying to enter the Canadian job market, namely:

- Lack of an effective professional networks, which limits their access to the "hidden job market"
- Lack of understanding of Canadian recruiting norms and effective job search strategies
- Unfamiliarity with Canadian workplace culture and employer expectations in different roles

Based on our on-going support of the various mentoring programs, we learned that mentoring relationships led to positive employment outcomes for mentees. To gauge how effective mentoring has been in helping newcomers find employment ALLIES invited Accenture to conduct a survey of mentees in various programs across Canada and analyze the results.

1. McKenna, Barrie. (2012, December 16). "Why training workers in Canada beats importing them from abroad." *The Globe and Mail*. Retrieved from <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/economy/jobs/why-training-workers-in-canada-beats-importing-them-from-abroad/article6460050/>

2. Statistics Canada. (2012). "Study: Canada's immigrant labour market, 2008 to 2011." *The Daily*. December 14, 2012. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 11-001-X. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/121214/dq121214b-eng.htm>

3. RBC Economics. (2011). Immigrant labour market outcomes in Canada: The benefits of addressing wage and employment gaps. Retrieved from <http://www.rbc.com/economics/market/pdf/immigration.pdf>

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The Survey Results

Demographic Information	
Average Age	42
Visible Minority %	80.9%
Male/Female %	53.5% / 46.5%
3 Years or Less in Canada	85%
With University Degree	100%
Over 5 Years of Work Experience	100%

By all measures, mentees had significantly improved their economic standing after mentoring. On average, unemployment decreased from 73% at the time of mentoring to 19% twelve months later. Full-time earnings increased to \$59,944 from \$36,905; an improvement of 62%. We also saw a substantial increase in the number of mentees who secured full-time work. In addition to improved earnings and full-time employment, we also saw a considerable improvement in the number of mentees who were employed in their field of expertise and experience.

Employment Indicators	At Start of Mentoring	Twelve Months After Mentoring
Unemployment	73%	19%
Working Full-Time	13%	65%
Working in Field %	27%	71%
Working at Level %	14%	47%

Improvements in Earnings	At Start of Mentoring	Twelve Months After Mentoring
Average Full-Time Earnings	\$36,905	\$59,944
Average Earnings (of employed)	\$26,838	\$52,406
Average Overall Earnings	\$16,088	\$44,262

The Economic Benefits of Mentoring

As seen above, there are a range of economic benefits that accrue to mentees. Firstly, mentees significantly improved their chances of finding employment. From a mentee's perspective, this is the direct and primary benefit of mentoring.

However, the survey results also suggest the following additional benefits:

- Since a majority of mentees secure full-time employment, they gain access to health and other benefits which improve their effective earnings.
- Given that most mentees find employment in their field, they will have an improved earning trajectory - their salaries will grow faster working in fields that properly reward their credentials and experience.

In addition to the previously mentioned benefits there is also the additional pay off that these mentees would consume less government services. We know that the rate of poverty among immigrants was 60% greater than among Canadian-born.⁴ Although it is often argued that in aggregate low-income individuals consume proportionally more government services than those with higher incomes, there is no specific information available on government services provided to recent immigrants. Nevertheless, it can be concluded that improved employment outcomes for newcomers would decrease the cost to government.

4. Picot, Garnett, Yuqian Lu and Feng Hou. (2009). "Immigrant low-income rates: The role of market income and government transfers." Perspectives. December 2009. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 75-001-X. <http://www.statecan.gc.ca/pub/75-001-x/2009112/pdf/11055-eng.pdf>

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Conclusion

The success of mentoring is clear. Mentees have significantly improved employment outcomes, earning trajectories and shorter times to find employment. Twelve months after the start of their mentorship relationship, unemployment dropped from 73% to 19%. In addition, 71% of mentees were employed in their field with average full-time earnings of \$59,944.

This research makes a compelling case for scaling up mentoring in Canadian cities. Mentoring is a low-cost, high impact intervention that delivers on the promise of

opportunity made to newcomers that make Canada their home every year.

The results are in. The time to expand mentoring is now. We should make the right investments in mentoring to engage more employers, government and other key stakeholders so that we can reach many more skilled immigrants. We all stand to gain - our businesses become more competitive, our newcomers are better integrated, and our economy is made stronger.

Method

For the survey, mentees were identified as those who had completed a mentoring relationship between February 2010 and February 2012. In total, the survey was sent out to approximately 1,900 mentees (in eight cities) with whom the mentoring programs still had contact. Of this base of 1,900 mentees, 292 respondents completed the survey, representing an overall response rate of 15%. The survey was conducted between November 7th, 2012 and December 7th, 2012.

Acknowledgements

We acknowledge and thank the following organizations for assisting in the survey of mentoring programs:

1. Calgary Region Immigrant Employment Council
2. La Conférence régionale des élus de Montréal
3. Edmonton Region Immigrant Employment Council
4. Immigrant Employment Council of BC, Vancouver
5. Immigrant Services Society of BC, Vancouver
6. Immigrant Settlement and Integration Services, Halifax
7. MOSAIC, Vancouver

8. Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization
9. S.U.C.C.E.S.S., Vancouver
10. Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council
11. YMCAs of Cambridge & Kitchener-Waterloo

Many thanks to Accenture for their time and expertise in creating, administering, and analyzing the results of the survey. Their invaluable contribution helps build a stronger case for mentoring skilled immigrants.