Unravelling Hiring An Immigrant Through Express Entry



Immigration continues to be a hot topic in Canada. A lot of evidence points to the reality that to remain economically viable and compete on a global scale Canada needs more people contributing to our economy.

As baby boomers retire and tap into both retirement support from the government and increased services while making less contributions the income pool needs to be a sustainable and a growing pool of non-baby boomers need to be funnelled in to compensate. The most recent stats Canada data tells us that for the first time in Canadian history there are more single people or married couples without children at home; as of the 2011 census only 39% of 'families' have children under 24 in the home and 'couples with children' comprise only 26% of all households.

In response to the need to increase immigration in Canada on January 1st, 2015 the government launched their new Express Entry initiative, the goal of which was to make it easier or at least quicker for Canada to increase it's pool of skilled immigrants looking to settle permanently in Canada. Express Entry is serving as a portal for economic immigrants in the Federal Skills Workers, Skilled Trades and Canadian Experience class to apply to obtain a permanent residency (some Provincial Nominee Programs – PNP are also using the Express Entry system).

For 2015 the government was targeting accepting between 169,000 and 185,200 economic immigrants. As of February 7th the government has invited the first two groups of immigrants entered in the Express Entry pool to apply for their permanent residency. In these two rounds the government invited to apply 1,588 immigrants. Based on the points it appears that all of these immigrants are currently working in Canada and most of them are working in lower skilled jobs, including those already here as foreign temporary works. Over the remaining 11 months of the year the government has indicated they plan on holding another 20-23 draws, averaging one every 2-3 weeks.

The Employers Challenge

One of the goals of the new Express Entry program was to drive economic immigration based on the needs of employers. Unlike previous years where the government capped and identified specific jobs that were eligible for immigration the government is now saying economic immigration is being driven based on what jobs employers want immigrants to fill. This means the most common way for an immigrant to receive an Invitation to Apply (ITA) to Canada for a PR (Permanent Residency) is if they have a

job offer in hand from a Canadian employer (in addition to meeting certain criteria such as passing an English language assessment and having their credentials assessed). As a result of this many immigrants or organizations working with immigrants (recruiting companies, immigration organizations, HR companies, placement agencies) are trying to find employers willing to hire and then wait around for a skilled immigrant to arrive in Canada. The government of Canada had promised that they would streamline the process of processing the application for a PR to 8-12 weeks, but officially there is still a posting on their website that says the process could take 6 months.

Primary concerns for employers: 1) the effort required to find, hire and relocate an immigrant, 2) the process for hiring an immigrant including obtaining an LMIA (labour market impact assessment), 3) the cost of recruiting, possibly relocating and the cost of the application, 4) the wait times for the employee to arrive and 5) integrating the foreign worker into the workplace immediately and long term.

Employers Long Term Vision

Generally there are a two reasons why an organization may select hiring an immigrant through Express Entry: 1) they have a current need or 2) they have a future need. In both of these instances Express Entry has problems because to fill a current need an organization needs an employee who can get to Canada in less than 6 months and to fill a future need it is difficult to find and offer a job to someone who cannot even work for the company for 6 months. This has been especially true since the recession created for many organizations a just-in-time and contingent workforce-hiring atmosphere.

However, many organizations have realized that there is an impending labour shortage and a skills shortage and they are looking for solutions. It appears that Express Entry offers a partial solution but it is not yet demonstrating how it will meet an employers needs.

Steps Organizations Can Take To Benefit from Express Entry

- Evaluate if Express Entry is a potential match for your organization. Consider if based on your geographic region, availability of relevant talent in Canada and current workforce demographics (age and skills) you will need more employees in the next 6-12 months.
- Become familiar with Express Entry, the LMIA process and steps for recruiting foreign talent.
- Begin advertising for future positions several months in advance if you anticipate any problems filling the need from the Canadian labour pool. Remember you must demonstrate you first looked for and could not find a Canadian to fill the role. You can post a job in the Canadian Job Bank at [the Jobbank.gc.ca](Jobbank.gc.ca) as a first step.
- Consider finding and partnering with an organization who recruits, screens and then supports foreign skilled immigrants (there are several organizations working to assist organizations to recruit skilled foreign workers, only one that we identified, Skills International.com offers a complete support package for these foreign workers and matches them with Canadian employers at no cost to the Canadian Employer).
- Prepare materials for your new hires and for all staff and leadership and prepare your organization to understand how to work effectively with a new arrival in Canada.

The bottom line is that Canada is not producing enough skilled workers to match our economic need and compensate for impending loss of skills and knowledge workers.

Skilled Immigrants can bring to Canada their knowledge, hard work and contribute both to your organization and community. With the vision to see both future needs and the future opportunities your organization can be better prepared to meet your current and future hiring needs by taking advantage of the level of talent offered through Express Entry.

For more information on Express Entry visit the Canadian Government page called ‘Express Entry What Employers Need To Know”

For more from the HR Insider visit:

Now You Can Hire Foreign Workers Through Express Entry