

Making diversity a recruiting competitive advantage

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MCB Solutions

What is the issue?

- The issue is
cultural / group differences.
- Immigrants often try to achieve their professional objectives thinking that Canada operates according to the same unwritten rules as their home country.
- When they come from countries that are very different from Canada, this approach does not produce the expected results because of cultural differences.

Recruitment

- Culturally different candidates are often rejected for reasons that are not related to their ability to do the job for which they applied:
 - Poor soft skills
 - No Canadian work experience
 - Poor communication skills (ESL)

Recruitment

Cultural differences create issues at every stage of the recruitment and selection process:

- Resume screening
- Interviewing
- Probation period

Screening resumes

Cultural issues when screening resumes:

- Education
- Generalist vs. specialist
- Accomplishments
- Spelling errors/language

Interviewing candidates

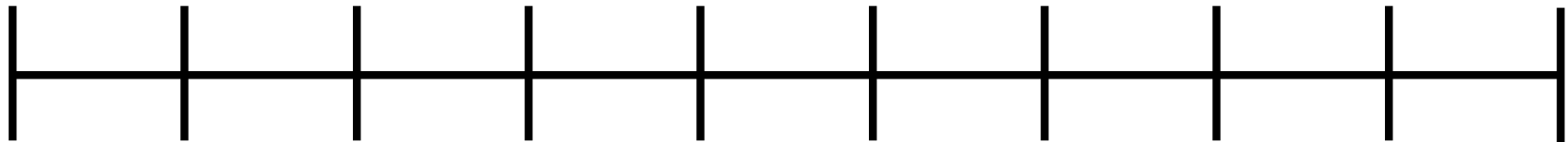
- Cultural issues during interviews:
- Different non-verbal communication styles
 - Body language, eye contact
 - Physical space / distance
- Different verbal communication styles
 - English as a Second Language
 - Accents/connotations
 - Order in which information is presented
 - Chit chat

What is the issue?

I prefer working for managers who

**give me enough freedom
so that I can determine the
best direction for myself**

**give me clear directions
so that I know what
they want me to do.**

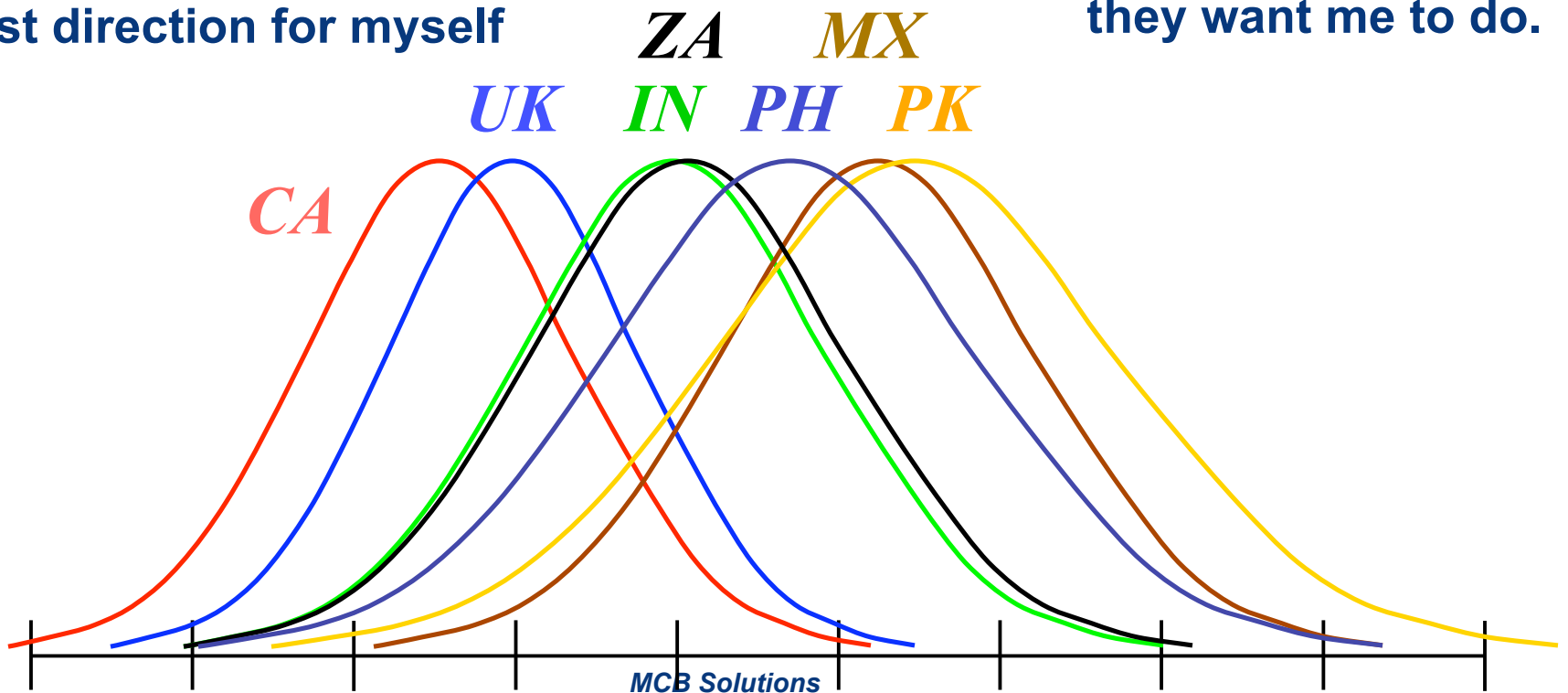


The real issue

I prefer working for managers who

give me enough freedom
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What do immigrants need to learn?

Immigrants need to learn:

- Where they “fit” within the Canadian labour market
- How to “canadianize” their technical skills
- How to “canadianize” their soft skills
- How to “canadianize” their resume
- What Canadian interviewers expect

What can employers do?

- Cross-cultural training for all HR professionals, particularly those involved in recruiting
- Prepare and support the managers of culturally diverse new hires
- Provide coaching and/or mentoring to culturally diverse new hires
- Provide extensive orientation to culturally diverse new hires – 1 day upfront is often insufficient; spread orientation over 6 months

Bridging the gap

At the resume stage:

- Look for **transferable** skills and experience
- Forgive spelling errors and typos
- Focus on candidates' job/progression in their home country
- Consider culturally different candidates who are slightly over-qualified (by Canadian standards)

Bridging the gap

At the interview and hiring stage:

- Include HR / diverse people in recruiting team
- Focus on transferable skills
- Use short-term contracts to test candidates
- Use internships and/or volunteer positions to build strong potential candidates
- Hire diverse candidates who still need to learn the Canadian system at the low end of the pay scale and put them in developmental positions with managers who know how to develop people

Bridging the gap

- Compare two professional service firms that are both trying hard to attract diverse people, both in Canada and overseas:
 - A is trying to create an inclusive environment by focusing the majority of its efforts on its employees
 - B is trying to help its new hires understand and adapt to its current workforce by focusing the majority of its efforts on new hires

Bridging the gap

- B is getting better results than A:
 - A significant fraction of A's employees respond negatively to the efforts of the organization
 - Many people hired by A think that they do not need to adapt to the organization
 - The failure rate of foreign workers is higher in A than in B
 - The number of international new hires was higher in B than in A

Bridging the gap

- 80% of the organization's efforts to bridge the gap should be focused on helping foreign employees integrate
- 20% should be focused on helping existing staff understand the challenges of foreign employees and help them integrate

Conclusions

- Cultural differences are a fact of life in many Canadian organizations. If you haven't experienced them yet, it is a matter of time.
- Culture is related to the way people think
- Culture plays a major role in recruitment and often leads to the rejection of candidates for reasons that are unrelated to their ability to perform the job
- Cultural differences create both challenges and opportunities; the challenges come first!
- If you want copies of these slides, please give me your business card and I will email this presentation to you.