

## *News Release*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**February 28, 2007**

**Claire M. Tallarico, Catalyst Canada**  
(416) 690-0316  
**Kathleen Powderley, Ryerson University**  
(416) 979-5000 ext 7505

**Visible Minorities in the workplace: foreign educational credentials not seen as on par with Canadian equivalents**  
New Research Findings by Catalyst and Ryerson University

TORONTO, February 28, 2007 —Preliminary findings from a national research study by Catalyst Canada and the Diversity Institute in Management and Technology at Ryerson University sheds new light on the recognition of foreign educational credentials. The study, which examines the career development and advancement of visible minorities in Corporate Canada, is based on the responses from more than 6000 professionals, managers and executives in Canadian corporations and professional service firms. These findings are part of a larger study in progress: **Career Advancement in Corporate Canada: A Focus on Visible Minorities**.

By 2017, visible minorities are expected to represent one in five people in Canada's available workforce. In major cities across the country, the visible minority representation in the labour force will be closer to half.

While the labour market experiences of unemployed and under-employed immigrants have been well documented, much less is known about the career experiences of visible minority professionals, managers and executives. This is especially true when it comes to those employed in large Canadian businesses – the place where skills and opportunity come together most directly.

These early findings from the Catalyst/Ryerson research team provide new information on a timely topic: the recognition of foreign educational credentials (degrees, diplomas and certificates). Previous research by others has shown that the lack of recognition of foreign education credentials is related to lower employment rates and underemployment for immigrants. Until now, the available knowledge about foreign educational credentials recognition in the professional workforce has been mostly anecdotal.

### **Preliminary Research Findings:**

The Catalyst/Ryerson research notes clear differences in the perceptions of visible minority and white/Caucasian respondents. All Survey participants have been working in Canada for an average of 20 years.

- Overall, visible minority managers, professionals and executives experienced lower rates of career satisfaction than white/Caucasian respondents.

The survey findings suggest that a perceived lack of recognition of foreign educational credentials may have implications for employees' career satisfaction and their interest in exploring opportunities outside Canada.

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- Approximately 50 percent of visible minority respondents with foreign educational credentials felt their employers did not recognize their educational credentials as being “on par” with equivalent Canadian degrees, diplomas or certificates. Only 23 percent of white/Caucasian respondents with foreign educational credentials felt the same way.
- Visible minority respondents with foreign educational credentials that were not recognized as being on par were **the least** satisfied with their careers. Twenty-four percent of these individuals plan to explore career opportunities outside Canada in the next three years.

Catalyst’s Executive Director Deborah Gillis said: “Concerns about the recognition of foreign educational credentials extend beyond newcomers to Canada to some of the country’s most experienced and highly educated professionals, managers and executives. If our final research confirms that this group is most likely to seek opportunities outside of Canada, the implications for competitiveness, economic growth and productivity could prove to be significant.”

"The talent war --the intense competition for well qualified professionals, is a key strategic issue in virtually every sector. Diversity is more than a matter of equity or human rights, it is also the single most competitive issue we face as a nation. The preliminary results of this study provide organizations with a wake up call to further recognize and leverage the talent of their work force," says Wendy Cukier, Associate Dean, Faculty of Business at Ryerson University.

"Integrating immigrants and visible minorities is critical to the growth and productivity of Canada. It's an issue of economic prosperity for our country. The challenge for corporate Canada is finding exactly what barriers are preventing visible minorities from advancing in their chosen careers and then addressing those barriers. We need to take a close look at the findings of this report and seriously consider what they mean for our future prosperity," says Zabeen Hirji, Chief Human Resources Officer at RBC Financial Group, the study's lead sponsor.

In addition to lead sponsor RBC Financial Group, IBM Canada and Deloitte & Touche LLP are participating sponsors, and the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration is a supporting sponsor.

The Catalyst/Ryerson study will be complete and a full report is expected to be released in June 2007 in order to provide a more complete picture of the perceptions and experiences of visible minority managers, professionals, and executives in the Canadian workforce and the employer’s organizational practices that may impact their employee’s career advancement.

Visible minorities are individuals who self-identify as being non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour and exclude Aboriginal persons. As visible minority employees are not a homogeneous group, the Catalyst/Ryerson research team will gather data on the following *Census Canada* classifications: White/Caucasian, Chinese; South Asian; Black; Arab, West Indian; Filipino; Southeast Asian; Latin American; Middle Eastern, Japanese; Korean, multiple visible minority and Other.

**Visit [www.catalyst.org](http://www.catalyst.org) or [www.ryerson.ca/faculties/business/diversityinstitute/](http://www.ryerson.ca/faculties/business/diversityinstitute/) for full findings.**

#### **About Catalyst**

Catalyst is the leading research and advisory organization working to advance women in business, with offices in New York, San Jose, Zug, Switzerland and Toronto. As an independent, nonprofit membership organization, Catalyst conducts research on all aspects of women's career advancement and provides strategic and web-based consulting services on a global basis to help companies and firms advance women and build inclusive work environments. In addition, we honor exemplary business initiatives that promote women's leadership with the annual Catalyst Award.

#### **About the Diversity Institute in Management and Technology at Ryerson University**

The Diversity Institute in Management and Technology is located in the Faculty of Business at Ryerson University in Toronto, Canada. The Diversity Institute undertakes diversity research with respect to gender, race/ethnicity, disabilities and sexual orientation

in the workplace. The goal of the Institute is to generate new, interdisciplinary knowledge about diversity in organizations to contribute to the awareness and the promotion of equity in the workplace.