



# TRIEC

Toronto Region Immigrant  
Employment Council

New Realities. New Opportunities.

## Skilled immigrants critical to innovation; savvy GTA employers tap into this talent pool

### TRIEC and RBC announce winners of 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Immigrant Success Awards

**TORONTO, April 3, 2013** – Canada is facing a serious labour shortage. Our population is aging, the birth rate is slowing and there are fewer people with the requisite skills to fill vacant jobs. Skilled immigrants are a key source for new talent with Statistics Canada predicting that by 2031, one in three workers will be born outside the country. Toronto is currently one of the world's most culturally diverse cities and leading GTA businesses already recognize the critical opportunity this provides for their growth and innovation.

"With our rich diversity, Toronto area business and organizations have a wonderful opportunity to become even more innovative. Our annual Immigrant Success Awards prove that great things can happen when immigrants and businesses come together," says Margaret Eaton, Executive Director of the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC). "Yet, the competition for skilled immigrant talent is increasing and other companies need to follow these winners' leads in order to attract the best and the brightest to our region before it is too late."

The risk is real. Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) recently released 2012 immigration statistics and the number of immigrants settling in Toronto is on the decline. In 2012, almost 10,000 fewer immigrants made Toronto their home compared to 2008. Yet, top employers already recognize the advantages when immigrants choose to settle here and are leading the way in attracting and integrating skilled immigrant talent into the Greater Toronto Region labour market.

Today, the [Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council](#) (TRIEC) and RBC are recognizing these employers at the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Immigrant Success (IS) Awards. The four IS Awards winners demonstrate how skilled immigrants have a direct impact on innovation and success within each organization; these organizations serve as examples for others to follow.

"TRIEC's IS Awards showcase the potential that businesses in Toronto and the entire Greater Toronto Region stand to gain if skilled immigrants are fully integrated into the labour market," says Zabeen Hirji, Chief Human Resources Officer at RBC. "RBC is pleased to support the IS Awards, which is also a reflection of our belief that a diverse workplace makes for a more innovative, more competitive, stronger business."

Over the past seven years, TRIEC has recognized more than 25 employers for their leadership in recruiting and retaining skilled immigrants. Each organization is different, but each recognizes the value of a diverse workforce for both the individual employer and the larger economy:

1. **Diversity breeds innovation** – skilled immigrants bring diverse thinking and problem-solving skills that advance innovation
2. **Language skills and cultural know-how are key** – a workforce that reflects the community it serves allows a business to more effectively engage with its customers and access networks locally and overseas that might otherwise go untapped

3. **Access to greater talent** – the Toronto and GTA offers a major talent pool of potential employees who are often highly educated and possess unique skills and can help address skills shortages

The four winners – three organizations and one individual – all recognize this value and will be honoured at a ceremony tonight for their leadership in integrating immigrant talent.

## Winners

### **André Goh, Manager, Diversity Management Unit, Toronto Police Services**

*Canadian HR Reporter Individual Achievement Award*

<http://youtu.be/7pNypyYdnS0>

André Goh, an immigrant from South East Asia, made Toronto his home in the early 1980s. He arrived in a city that is very different than Toronto today. An active member of the LGBTQ community, his experience led to a lifelong commitment for inclusion and integration of skilled immigrants both personally – he helped establish Gay Asian Toronto – and professionally. As Manager of the Diversity Management Unit with the Toronto Police Service, Goh has been a quiet, innovative and persistent force “within the force” since 2002. He is responsible for the strategic direction, implementation and alignment of the Service’s integrated diversity initiatives, working hard to propel the Service forward with progressive practices. Today, the Toronto Police Service boasts a workforce that is 40 per cent diverse and was recognized as one of Canada’s Best Diversity Employer for 2008-2010.

---

### **Trinity Tech Inc.**

*RBC Immigrant Advantage Award for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs)*

<http://youtu.be/wHkGF9kDXag>

Engineering consulting firm, Trinity Tech Inc., knows that skilled immigrants have direct impact on the success of the business: the firm attributes 40 per cent of its innovation to its immigrant workforce. And with business expanding internationally, Spanish-speaking employees are critical to the growing success of the company’s Mexican operations – 15 per cent of total revenues come from Mexico. At the helm of Trinity Tech is Dunstan Peter, who came to Canada from Sri Lanka in 1993 when he was 17 years old. Peter founded the firm in 2009 and in a short time the company now boasts a workforce that employs over 300 people in Canada, Mexico and the United States. Of the approximate 120 Canadian employees, 60 per cent are newcomers. Peter knows that a diverse workforce is an innovative workforce.

---

### **SMTC Corporation**

*CBC Toronto Immigrant Advantage Award*

<http://youtu.be/wGzWrDwsqLc>

Founded in 1985, SMTC Corporation is a Markham-based manufacturer specializing in electronics. Truly a diverse culture, SMTC employs individuals from over 20 countries and across five continents. On the production floor, 95 per cent of employees are immigrants and one-third of the manufacturer’s senior management team are skilled immigrants. With business thriving and the necessary skilled employees in place, SMTC is transforming its Markham

manufacturing plant into an intelligence centre – good for business globally and great for home-grown innovation here in the GTA.

---

### **The Regional Municipality of York**

*Toronto Star Award for Excellence in Workplace Integration*

[<http://youtu.be/990ySeU8aos>](http://youtu.be/990ySeU8aos)

Recognition of foreign credentials and experience is often a major barrier for immigrants seeking employment. Created in 2010, the Regional Municipality of York developed an innovative tool to remove this barrier with its *Foreign Credential Evaluation Process Guide* – the only municipality with the process of its kind. This guide outlines an assessment process to recognize relevant international education and work experience as equivalent to comparable Canadian experience. The result? Twenty seven per cent of the workforce is immigrants and the region has received numerous award recognitions including Best Employers for New Canadians in 2011 and 2012.

---

*The IS Awards are presented by TRIEC and sponsored by RBC, with funding from Citizenship and Immigration Canada and the support of media partners Canadian HR Reporter, CBC Toronto and the Toronto Star.*

-30-

**For more information or to request an interview, please contact Andrea Ellison at [andrea.ellison@rogers.com](mailto:andrea.ellison@rogers.com) or 416-762-3792.**