

Canada's best companies find strength in diversity

 theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/careers/top-employers/canadas-best-companies-find-strength-in-diversity/article29038539/

DIANE
JERMYN

Today, as refugees from Syria and many other countries arrive on our shores, Canada's Best Diversity Employers for 2016 are showing how to welcome them into the workplace. These employers are leaders in creating an inclusive environment where individuals from a wide variety of backgrounds are recognized and valued for who they are at work, setting an example not only for Canadian business but also organizations around the world. In reflecting the diversity of the people who make up Canada – including new immigrants, aboriginal people, LGBT employees and those with disabilities – these organizations also reap the benefits, becoming stronger and more innovative through the addition of fresh voices.

For instance, Rogers Communications Inc. partners with the Career Bridge internship program to provide employment opportunities to internationally educated professionals. Accenture Inc. maintains a global Persons with Disabilities Champions program, which is focused on workplace accommodations. And British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority encourages managers to hire skilled newcomers at junior-level positions, providing a defined career advancement plan, including timelines for performance and development reviews.

Kristina Leung, senior editor of Canada's Top 100 Employers, notes that employers continue to have conversations about diverse groups outside of those captured by the competition, such as those with “invisible” disabilities such as mental health issues, cognitive and learning disabilities, and persons with lived experience of addiction. Examples include Ryerson's mental health policy lens and advisory committee and Sodexo's Williwag Café, which provides opportunities for persons with mental health challenges to gain practical work experience. Additionally, a growing number of employers, such as Mount Sinai Hospital and Dentons Canada, are further addressing LGBT awareness and inclusion by creating formal gender transition policies for the workplace.

In promoting inclusiveness and diversity through their workplaces, these Canadian employers represent Canada at its best.

Methodology

Canada's Best Diversity Employers competition recognizes the leading organizations across the country when it comes to creating inclusive workplaces for employees from five diverse groups: women; visible minorities; persons with disabilities; aboriginal peoples; and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) peoples.

To determine the 65 winners for 2016, Mediagroup editors reviewed the submissions of all the employers that applied for Canada's Top 100 Employers project, shortlisting those with noteworthy and unique diversity initiatives. Those candidates were further reviewed to determine how their programs compared to others in the same field. The finalists chosen represent the diversity leaders in their industry and region of Canada.

Canada's Best Diversity Employers (2016)

Accenture Inc., Toronto. Management consulting; 3,476 employees. Manages a “transgender portal” intranet site to provide a venue for transgender employees to connect.

Agrium Inc., Calgary. Fertilizer manufacturing; 3,560 employees. Developing an aboriginal workforce strategy.

Air Canada, Saint-Laurent, Que. Airline; 23,142 employees. Played host to two “Women in Aviation” events to encourage female employees to establish networks in the workplace.

Amex Canada Inc., Toronto. Credit card issuing; 1,614 employees. Recently partnered with the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council to host cultural training sessions.

Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC), Montreal. Secondary-market financing; 1,978 employees. Created an aboriginal summer-student internship program to provide work experience and mentoring opportunities.

Blake, Cassels & Graydon LLP, Toronto. Law firm; 1,375 employees. Offers the Blakes/Juriansz inclusivity fund to support student-led initiatives and organizations that promote recognition and respect for diversity, inclusion and accessibility.

British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority (BC Hydro), Vancouver. Hydroelectric power generation; 5,048 employees. Encourages managers to hire skilled newcomers for junior-level positions and offers a defined career advancement plan.

British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT), Burnaby, B.C. Colleges; 1,787 employees. Maintains a diversity and inclusivity committee comprised of representatives from all employee groups.

Cameco Corp., Saskatoon. Uranium mining; 3,030 employees. Employs aboriginal elders at their northern sites to ensure that employees and contractors have a dedicated resource person on-site familiar with aboriginal culture and language.

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp. (CMHC), Ottawa. Federal government; 1,780 employees. Launched a company-wide mental health initiative that promotes awareness, engagement and sustainability.

Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, Toronto. Banking; 35,438 employees. Established WorkAbility, an employee network for persons with disabilities.

Capgemini Canada Inc., Toronto. Information technology; 389 employees. Employs a supplier diversity director, who is responsible for liaising with related associations to increase the diversity of the company's supply chain.

Cargill Ltd., Winnipeg. Agricultural products; 7,741 employees. Publishes the Everyone Counts newsletter, which keeps employees up-to-date on employment equity issues.

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), Toronto. Hospitals; 2,212 employees. Partners with TD Bank to organize education sessions on how to be competitive when applying for jobs at the bank and elsewhere.

Children's Aid Society of Toronto, Toronto. Child and youth services; 749 employees. Established Out and Proud Affirmation Guidelines in support of equity in gender and sexual diversity.

Corus Entertainment Inc., Toronto. Media production and broadcasting; 1,525 employees. Maintains an equity and diversity committee comprised of management, non-management and unionized employees.

Deloitte LLP, Toronto. Accounting; 8,960 employees. Manages a number of inclusion initiatives supporting the firm's diverse workforce, including the Canadian Asian Network, Canadian Black Professionals Network and Latin American Network.

Dentons Canada LLP, Toronto. Law firm; 1,253 employees. Ensures that LGBT-focused resources are available to employees, such as information on LGBT adoption in Ontario and parenting.

Edmonton, City of, Edmonton. Municipal government; 9,681 employees. Supports the employment efforts of job seekers with disabilities through the Abilities in Action work experience program.

Enbridge Inc., Calgary. Natural gas distribution; 6,014 employees. Maintains Women@Enbridge committees in Calgary, Edmonton and Toronto to facilitate leadership, mentoring and the professional development of female

employees.

Health Canada/Santé Canada, Ottawa. Federal government; 9,140 employees. Created a teaching and healing centre to encourage greater understanding of First Nations, Inuit and Métis cultures, traditions and perspectives.

Hewlett-Packard (Canada) Co., Mississauga. Electronic computer manufacturing; 4,988 employees. Supports minority, female and aboriginal-owned businesses through a supplier diversity program.

Home Depot of Canada Inc., Toronto. Retail; 12,000 employees. Maintains an action committee to work on implementing measures to ensure compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

Jazz Aviation LP, Dartmouth, N.S. Air transportation; 4,362 employees. Established a pilot wellness committee to support pilots with disabilities.

KPMG LLP, Toronto. Accounting; 6,165 employees. Employs a chief diversity officer who oversees the organization's progress toward achieving diversity and inclusion objectives.

Lafarge Canada Inc., Calgary. Concrete manufacturing; 3,166 employees. Partners with local employment and career services organizations to help new Canadians find work.

Loblaw Cos. Ltd., Brampton, Ont. Supermarkets; 28,580 employees. Recently hosted its first Women@Loblaw Success Talk, a 60-minute interactive discussion between Loblaw employees and senior leaders on the secrets to success.

Manitoba Hydro, Winnipeg. Hydroelectric power generation; 6,031 employees. Manages an acquired brain injury program to help persons who have sustained severe brain injury reintegrate into the workforce.

Manitoba Public Insurance Corp., Winnipeg. Insurance; 1,852 employees. Maintains a professional 12-month paid internship program to recruit postsecondary students in their final year of study who identify as a diverse group.

Manitoba, Government of, Winnipeg. Provincial government; 14,320 employees. Manages a Safe Spaces initiative to create awareness of LGBT issues in the workplace.

McCarthy Tétrault LLP, Toronto. Law firm; 1,426 employees. In the process of launching a multiyear endeavour focused on mental health.

Medtronic of Canada Ltd., Brampton, Ont. Electro-medical apparatus manufacturing; 700 employees. Partners with ACCES Employment and COSTI Immigrant Services to recruit internationally educated professionals and recognize foreign credentials.

Monsanto Canada Inc., Winnipeg. Research and development in life sciences; 388 employees. Provides developmental assignments and projects to high-potential female employees.

Mount Sinai Hospital, Toronto. Hospitals; 2,344 employees. Manages an anti-homophobia-transphobia subcommittee, which is responsible for creating a welcoming environment for LGBT staff and patients.

National Bank of Canada, Montreal. Banking; 15,579 employees. Participated in a mentoring program to facilitate the integration of new Canadian employees.

Northwest Territories, Government of the, Yellowknife. Provincial government; 5,839 employees. Maintains an aboriginal management development program offering developmental opportunities for aboriginals entering management positions.

Ontario College of Trades, Toronto. Professional organization; 170 employees. Maintains an accessibility policy for customer service, as well as a multiyear accessibility plan and an accessibility website.

Ontario Public Service (OPS), Toronto. Provincial government; 61,698 employees. Created the internship program for internationally trained individuals, featuring six-month paid placements to help newcomers transition to the Ontario labour market.

Osler, Hoskin & Harcourt LLP, Toronto. Law firm; 1,038 employees. Maintains the online Osler Women's Network Teamsite, which functions as a virtual employee resource group for female lawyers.

Ottawa, City of, Ottawa. Municipal government; 12,220 employees. Developed an immigration strategy, which features employment initiatives and economic development programs.

Overwaitea Food Group LP, Vancouver. Retail; 5,243 employees. Offers online courses to help employees increase their understanding of diversity in the workplace.

PepsiCo Canada, Mississauga. Beverage and food manufacturing; 9,163 employees. Incorporated diversity and engagement training into several of the company's core HR procedures.

Procter & Gamble Inc., Toronto. Consumer product manufacturing; 1,729 employees. Conducts in-depth diversity reviews on an annual basis with senior-level employees from across all business units.

Red River College, Winnipeg. Colleges; 1,321 employees. Developed an internship program for aboriginal students in their final year of study.

Rogers Communications Inc., Toronto. Communications, cable publishing and subscription programming; 23,325 employees. Created the Rogers Women's Network to promote the retention and professional development of female employees.

Royal Bank of Canada, Toronto. Banking; 52,026 employees. Recently introduced an inclusion webcast series featuring LGBT and awareness training.

Ryerson University, Toronto. Universities; 2,816 employees. Created a mental health advisory committee to improve on-campus services, training, policy and curriculum, and pedagogy to support mental well-being.

Saskatchewan Government Insurance (SGI), Regina. Insurance; 1,850 employees. Provides work placements and internship opportunities to members of visible minorities.

Saskatchewan Telecommunications Holding Corp. (SaskTel), Regina. Telecommunications; 3,147 employees. Has maintained an aboriginal employee network for over 20 years.

Saskatoon Health Region, Saskatoon. Hospitals; 6,642 employees. Established "Awaken the Power of Change," an organizational strategy to increase the representation of employees who self-declare as First Nation, Métis or Inuit.

Saskatoon, City of, Saskatoon. Municipal government; 3,041 employees. Employs a Diversity Coordinator to help manage the development of diversity-related programs and policies.

SaskPower, Regina. Hydroelectric power generation; 3,394 employees. Maintains a joint diversity committee comprised of representatives from unionized and management employee groups.

Scarborough Hospita (TSH), Toronto. Hospitals; 1,757 employees. Established a global community resource centre, a source of health and community information in a range of languages and formats.

Shell Canada Ltd., Calgary. Oil and gas extraction; 9,194 employees. Launched its fourth annual cross-regional diversity and inclusion week across Canada, Brazil and the United States.

Sodexo Canada Ltd., Burlington, Ont. Food service contractors; 5,945 employees. Maintains a “disABILITY” strategy to promote the inclusion and accommodation of persons with disabilities.

Telus Corp., Vancouver. Telecommunications; 24,241 employees. Created Mosaic, an employee resource group to support new Canadians.

Toronto, City of, Toronto. Municipal government; 23,096 employees. Established an aboriginal employment strategy to increase workforce representation at all occupational levels.

Toronto-Dominion Bank, Toronto. Banking; 45,399 employees. Developed a 10-day program in partnership with the University of Toronto’s Rotman School of Management to help women who have been out of the workforce update their knowledge, skills and networks.

University of British Columbia (UBC), Vancouver. Universities; 10,524 employees. Organizes an annual Gender Diversity in Leadership Forum to connect female faculty members to leaders in their faculty, as well as within the university.

University of Toronto, Toronto. Universities; 9,167 employees. Helped facilitate a Queer Orientation series in partnership with the Sexual & Gender Diversity Office (SGDO) student committee and more than 25 participating campus groups.

University of Victoria, Victoria. Universities; 2,874 employees. Recognizes employee champions of social equity through the Provost’s Advocacy and Activism Awards.

Vancouver, City of, Vancouver. Municipal government; 6,953 employees. Manages a number of advisory committees which provide city council with guidance on important community issues.

William Osler Health System, Brampton, Ont. Hospitals; 2,972 employees. Recently created a new multidisciplinary LGBT Advisory Group, comprised of clinical and non-clinical staff.

Xerox Canada, Toronto. Computer equipment manufacturing; 3,061 employees. Maintains an executive diversity council comprised of senior leaders from across the company.

YMCA of Greater Toronto, Toronto. Individual and family services; 1,528 employees. Created the Newcomer Youth Leadership Development initiative to support the skills development of new Canadian youth.