

**Human Resources**

# MARKET LEADER



**Business English**

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This unit looks at the business benefits of having an ethnically diverse workforce.

**BEFORE YOU READ**

Discuss these questions.

- 1 Does your country or city have many different ethnic groups, or is it relatively monocultural? Has this changed much over the last few years?
- 2 Think of a company or educational establishment you know well. How many different nationalities or ethnic groups can you find there?

**READING****A Understanding the main points**

Read the article on the opposite page and choose the best option to complete each statement.

- 1 Canada is becoming one of the world's most .....
  - a) profitable countries
  - b) multicultural societies
- 2 For the last few years, the largest number of immigrants have come from .....
  - a) China and India
  - b) India and Vietnam
- 3 Professor Richard Florida suggests that successful cities are ones which .....
  - a) attract talented employees from all around the world
  - b) have the largest immigrant populations
- 4 The ..... population offers the best source of growth for some companies.
  - a) local
  - b) immigrant
- 5 Some US companies have moved their operations to Canada because .....
  - a) it can provide employees from diverse backgrounds who speak diverse languages
  - b) the food at the company parties is much more interesting
- 6 The immigrant population in Canada still has to overcome obstacles in finding the best jobs because they .....
  - a) find it hard to achieve a high-level English language qualification
  - b) have difficulty getting local employers and professional bodies to recognise qualifications they have obtained overseas
- 7 The other advantage of employing people from overseas is their .....
  - a) broader cultural understanding and experience
  - b) better technical knowledge and skills

# The united colours of Canada

by Bernard Simon



**A** As part of its annual charity drive, CAE Industries encourages 3,000 head-office employees in Montreal to bring in a dish that is emblematic of their country of origin. Pasta, curry, enchiladas and chow mein are just a small sample of the offerings. CAE, one of the world's biggest suppliers of flight simulators, has 110 nationalities on its payroll.

**B** Such diversity has also proved popular for CAE's business. An Indian-born Canadian heads up the company's Middle East and Indian division, while a Chinese-Canadian is in charge of operations in China. It makes life

much easier if it's a Hindu speaking to a Hindu. The company is among a growing number that have come to appreciate the benefits of one of the world's most multicultural societies.

**C** 'Our people and our organisation are very reflective of the "globalness" of our industry,' says Klaus Dohring, who was born in Germany and who is responsible for the Ontario-based automotive division of Leggett & Platt, a US conglomerate. Almost two-thirds of Leggett & Platt's technical employees in Windsor and 40 per cent of its sales staff were born outside Canada or have immigrant parents. 'Having a multitude of ethnically diverse people on staff is a real strength of ours.'

**D** Some 255,000 immigrants arrived in Canada in 2005, almost 0.8 per cent of the population, the highest of any industrialised country. The leading sources of migrants to Canada for the last few years have been China and India.

**E** Richard Florida, Professor of Public Policy at George Mason University in Virginia, believes the world's most successful cities are those that become 'global talent magnets'. In his book *The Flight of the Creative Class*, he cites Toronto and Vancouver as two prime examples. 'What makes these cities such formidable challengers to US regions,' he asserts, 'is that many of them, in particular the Canadian cities, not only boast a high immigrant population, but a diverse one too.'

**F** Canada's strong flow of immigration from many different countries may provide one of the country's most important competitive advantages in an increasingly global economy.

Immigrants offer one of the few sources of domestic retail growth for Canada's five big banks. The banks pay special attention to China, where they compete to sign up customers before they even set foot in Canada.

**G** Some companies based outside Canada see the benefit in its skilled multicultural and multilingual workforce. Global Crossing, a US-based telecoms operator, has set up a call centre in Montreal to handle conference calls for US companies. The Montreal operators can handle calls in 16 languages, an important factor in Global Crossing's decision to locate the centre there. Another company has turned to employees with Indian, Chinese, South Korean and Japanese backgrounds, among others, to spearhead sales and investments in their countries of origin.

**H** Nevertheless, Roger Martin, Dean of the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Business, says Canadian businesses are far from realising the full potential of an ethnically diverse society. One awkward issue is the difficulties faced by immigrants in gaining recognition for foreign qualifications, especially in the engineering, technical and medical fields.

**I** Mr Dohring, however, remains convinced. Such employees 'are intimately familiar with the country where you want to do business'. At the same time, 'they know you, they know your language, they know your culture.'

FT

## B Understanding details

Read the article again and answer these questions.

- 1 How many different nationalities does CAE employ?
- 2 Where was CAE's Head of Middle East and India division born?
- 3 What percentage of Leggett and Platt's sales staff were born outside Canada or have foreign parents?
- 4 Which two Canadian cities does Richard Florida describe as being 'global talent magnets'?
- 5 At which part of the immigration process do some banks register new customers from outside Canada?
- 6 What type of company in Montreal particularly benefits from having a multilingual workforce?
- 7 How many languages do its employees work in?

## VOCABULARY

**A** Word search

Find words or phrases in the article which fit these meanings.

- 1 something which represents something else, such as a country or nationality (paragraph A)  
e.....
- 2 employs (paragraph A)  
has o.....its p.....
- 3 variety of backgrounds (paragraph B)  
d.....
- 4 worldwide nature (paragraph C)  
g.....
- 5 multicultural (paragraph C)  
e.....d.....
- 6 someone who moves to a country from abroad (paragraph D)  
i.....
- 7 people who go to another area or country, especially to find work (paragraph D)  
m.....
- 8 cities or companies which attract skilled employees from all around the world (paragraph E)  
g.....t.....m.....
- 9 worldwide economy (paragraph F)  
g.....e.....
- 10 speaking a wide variety of languages (paragraph G)  
m.....

**B** Prepositions

Complete these verb phrases from the article using the correct prepositions.

**Responsibilities in a company**

- 1 to be in charge .....operations in China
- 2 to head .....the company's Middle East and Indian division
- 3 to be responsible .....the Ontario-based automotive division of Leggett & Platt

**Companies and their activities**

- 4 to have 110 nationalities .....its payroll
- 5 to have a multitude of ethnically diverse people .....staff
- 6 to sign .....customers
- 7 to set .....a call centre

**C Sentence completion**

Use phrases from Exercises A and B to complete these sentences.

- 1 In this ..... , some CEOs head multinational companies.
- 2 People who are responsible ..... large companies which deal with many nationalities talk about the benefits of employing ..... from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds.
- 3 Some cities are so ethnically diverse that they have become ..... .
- 4 An ..... company can benefit from having a ..... workforce who can communicate with people from a large number of countries.
- 5 For these companies, ..... of the workforce is the secret of their success.

**D Understanding expressions**

Choose the best explanation for each phrase from the article.

- 1 ‘As part of its annual *charity drive*, ...’ (line 1)
  - a) car race for charity
  - b) money-raising event
- 2 ‘Having a *multitude* of ...’ (line 33)
  - a) wide range of nationalities
  - b) large number
- 3 ‘... one of the country’s most important *competitive advantages* ...’ (lines 58–59)
  - a) better chances of success than one’s competitors
  - b) better competition
- 4 ‘... before they even *set foot in* Canada.’ (lines 65–66)
  - a) arrive in
  - b) travel around
- 5 ‘... to *spearhead* sales and investments ...’ (line 81)
  - a) lead
  - b) fight
- 6 ‘... in *gaining recognition* for ...’ (lines 89–90)
  - a) winning prizes
  - b) getting acceptance

**OVER TO YOU**

- 1 Visit the websites of a few multinational companies and write a short report comparing their policies on ethnic diversity.
- 2 Give a short presentation on the advantages for multinational companies of having a multicultural workforce. Include any specific examples you know of.