

# A growing thirst for skills and talent

For knowledge-based industries, access to a rich and diverse talent pool is as vital as a sustainable supply of trees is to forestry.

Finding these people is a chronic and growing challenge due to the coming demographic crunch and an increasing labour market imbalance. Our industry currently runs at virtually full employment, and the Information and Communications Technology Council (ICTC) anticipates that we will be dealing with 106,000 unfilled jobs over the next four years.

This has reaffirmed one of ITAC's priorities, namely, to make sure that the ICT industry has a strong talent pool from which to recruit the skilled women and men it needs to fuel growth today and in the future.

To address this, ITAC's Talent Committee works closely with such organizations as the Canadian Coalition for Tomorrow's ICT Skills (CCICT) and the ICTC to help fortify Canada's talent pool. CCICT has made significant advances in changing the way our industry communicates the impact and relevance of ICT careers to young Canadians who are making educational and career decisions. It has significantly improved the way a number of post-secondary institutions design and deliver curriculum that lead to careers in our field. And ICTC provides labour market intelligence and programs that support the building of a stronger, more skilled workforce.

ITAC also works closely with key federal and provincial government departments such as Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC), and Citizenship and Immigration (CIC) to encourage policies that address our community's need for talent.

In 2012, the federal government expressed a strong commitment to a faster, more flexible economic immigration system. This has produced reforms in the government handling of labour market opinions and the treatment of entrepreneurial immigrants that will continue to benefit our industry.



“The long-term success of ICT is based on driving innovation and the lifeblood of innovation is talented people. We therefore have significant opportunities around diversity and, in particular, gender diversity in our industry to be more innovative in bringing more of these talented people on board in a way that tackles the diversity challenge head-on.”

**Lloyd Bryant**

*Vice President and General Manager, Printing and Personal Systems, Hewlett-Packard Canada, Chair of the ITAC Diversity Advisory Group*



“The ITAC HR Forum gives HR professionals unique knowledge sharing and networking opportunities, as well as invaluable insight into HR best practices across our industry.”

**Bruce Markowitz**

*Human Resources Practice Leader, Unisys Canada Inc. and Co-Chair of the ITAC HR Forum*

As part of talent and skill development, ITAC is committed to improving the engagement of women in the ICT industry—the ITAC Board passed a motion in support of this in June 2011.

Women in ICT have constituted 25 per cent of the workforce for the past decade. ITAC has determined that concertedly taking action to move that to 30 per cent will enrich the ICT labour pool and provide a greater talent depth.

The ITAC Board’s own experience in changing its composition to over 30 per cent female in the space of two years provided the impetus to tackle the daunting task of improving the industry ratio. A large number of committed men and women in our community have taken on this task by breaking the problem into four parts:

- Women in the “pipeline”—in appropriate post-secondary education disciplines,
- Women in management,
- Women on boards, and
- Women entrepreneurs.

By setting measurable objectives and persistently reporting results, ITAC’s Diversity Advisory Group is confident that they can change the face of our industry by maintaining a valuable disclosure on all aspects of diversity.

Given the importance of human capital to the ICT sector, ITAC strives to provide excellent support and professional development opportunities for HR professionals in the ICT industry through its HR Forum.

This forum is comprised of HR professionals who come together to share and discuss information and best practices in a confidential and open group environment. The forum manages a compensation survey for ITAC members and provides strategic-level recommendations and timely feedback to our third party survey provider. The forum also hosts external subject matter experts to speak to the group on the latest trends and hot topics—it is however not a venue to promote one’s goods or services.

In short, the HR Forum is an environment which supports and develops ICT HR professionals for the challenges of the 21st century workplace.

“The HR Forum provides a venue for us to network with, and learn from, our peers in the industry. With the pace of change that we all experience every day, being connected and having access to timely, relevant information is critical.”

**Sheryl Helsdon-Baker**

*HR Senior Director, Oracle Corporation Canada Inc. and Co-Chair of the ITAC HR Forum*