

## Diversity at Work in London

## Newsletter

Diversity at Work  
in London

## EDITORIAL



## Dear Readers;

For those of you that we “lost” in recent months as a result of computer difficulties presented by our trying a new e-mail marketing tool – Welcome Back! We realized that the firewalls on your computers were not allowing you to receive our newsletter. In any event, we are back to using Outlook – as awkward as it is-- to send out a massive distribution list but, at least, it seems more reliable.

As soon as I’ve completed a newsletter, I’m always thinking about the subject of the next one. I want to demonstrate the complexity and multi-dimensionality of workplace diversity management. I had already dealt with mental health disability issues in the workplace in a previous issue, but I realized that I had never really discussed physical disabilities. What I did not realize was that I, too, would become a living example of what life is like for a physically disabled person experiencing chronic pain for the next two months as the result of significant back problems.

At the time of this writing, my mobility has been quite restricted, and I’m relying on family members to put on my socks and pick up everything I drop during the day (you would be surprised how many things you drop in a day!). Everyday, I am problem-solving, planning ahead and finding new ways of doing things. I need to grab onto structures to help myself get up from a chair or out of bed, etc. in my attempts to cause the least amount of injury to myself. Sorry! To the last hotel that I stayed in (which will remain nameless!) for yanking the towel rack off the wall ---Oops!

The experience of enduring a temporary mobility problem and chronic pain can be described as very humbling, enlightening, and disheartening. This experience has made me an even stronger advocate for accessibility and the employment of people with disabilities.

With some creativity and extra planning, I was able to continue with my pre-booked speaking engagements throughout Southwestern Ontario. On top of having the back pain, on one trip I pinched a nerve before getting onto the train. After that happened, my mobility became exceedingly compromised. I was no longer able to climb or descend stairs. This presented the worst possible scenario. I couldn’t get down the stairs of my house, but I had a whole day workshop to do the next day out-of-town. Thankfully, family members helped carry me down the stairs, while all along, I was just praying that I could go to Guelph and return without having to navigate a single stair! (Continued on page 2)

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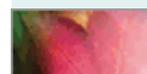
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To my amazement, I was able to do just that without further injuring myself. The Via Rail staff were amazing at every station by helping me onto and off the train in a wheelchair, I had patient cab drivers, and managed to get to my destination without having to climb up any curbs. I couldn't believe my accomplishment! Without having had accessible transportation, hotel, and workshop facilities, I would have had to cancel my workshop and thus suffer a financial loss. The experience really hit home about how important accessibility and disability etiquette are to the full inclusion of people with disabilities in the workplace. It also demonstrated for me that there are a ton of hurdles to face each day just to get through it in one piece! I found myself praising myself for every accomplishment, however small it may seem for a person with full mobility.

I don't mean to give the impression that this has been easy. At times, it has invoked a very real emotional response when, I encountered some very disappointing and horrifying experiences right in my home town of London, Ontario.

I would like to share with you a few of my experiences.

- The glares that I received from passengers boarding the train when I was being lowered down in a wheelchair lift.
- After asking a cab driver to close the door for me, he reached over to my cane and reached over me attempting to close the door with my cane without getting out. After attempting this twice, visibly angry, he decided to finally get out to close the door. I cannot tell you how vulnerable I felt having a cane so close to my face and being in the presence of a person who obviously did not realize how violating this was.
- People who saw me with a cane and did not hold the door open for me.
- Whenever I was using a wheelchair, it appeared that the attendants did not know or care to lift the pedals to make it easier for me to sit down. On one occasion, my foot got pressed against the wheel of the chair and that certainly did not help the pain!

There were many places that I've wanted to go to since I had these mobility

problems but I haven't been able to. I think of all of the businesses, I could have frequented, but I was unable to get up the curb or the step. These businesses missed out on some sales opportunities. I frequently came across inaccessible doors that had broken buttons, or extremely heavy doors that were very difficult to open holding a cane and being in pain. All of this has been extremely eye-opening! I also know that, unlike many other people, I can take comfort knowing that my current condition is likely temporary. I really see people with physical disabilities as very courageous to venture out every day having to face both the attitudinal and physical barriers on a regular basis.

Over the last few years I have been talking to groups about the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act of 2005. I am constantly surprised about the number of people who have not heard about it or care to learn about it. It is the Law. Just about every business and organization is going to be effected by it, so I would recommend that you check out some of the resources that we are suggesting in this issue.

This month's issue is dedicated to Disability Etiquette. With the increasing pressure on businesses and organizations to provide an equal level of service for those individuals who have a disability (physical, mental, cognitive, learning etc) it will be especially important to know how to be polite and respectful to differently-abled people. Most people it seems, do not have a lot of experience and therefore comfort with dealing with people with disabilities. This is an area that is rarely discussed, but should be included in any customer service and business etiquette training.

On behalf of the team at Diversity At Work, we would like to wish our readers a Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and a restful vacation. We look forward to providing you with more best practices to help you manage your workplace diversity. Just remember, we are only a phone call away for a free one hour no obligation consultation.

Enjoy this issue!

**Evelina Silveira,**  
President and Editor

# ARE YOU UP ON YOUR DISABILITY ETIQUETTE?

## What is a "Disability"?

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) uses the same definition that is employed by the Ontario Human Rights Commission which states;

- any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device
- a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability
- a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language
- a mental disorder, or
- an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 ("handicap").



## OUR FEATURE (continued)

# ARE YOU UP ON YOUR DISABILITY ETIQUETTE?

### What is the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act?

The legislation was enacted in 2005. The Act is based on the premise that people with disabilities should have the same kinds of opportunities as others. Businesses and organizations will have to meet accessibility standards in five areas:

- Customer service
- Transportation
- Information and Communications
- Built Environment
- Employment

### Did You Know? Canadian Disability Facts

- Approximately 4.4 million people in Canada have disabilities, representing 14.3% of Canada's population. (Source: Statistics Canada's Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS), December 2007)
- In 2006, half (49.5%) of working age adults (15 - 64) with disabilities are either unemployed or not in the labour force, compared to a quarter (24.5%) of working age adults without disabilities. (Source: Statistics Canada, Participation and Activity Limitation Survey 2006: Tables (Part III). Catalogue no. 89-628-X - No. 008.)
- Within the working-age population, activity limitations related to pain or discomfort are the most widespread, having been reported by nearly 1.5 million persons aged 15 to 64. Thus, 7.5% of all working-age persons are limited in their activities due to pain or discomfort. (Source: PALS 2001 EPLA)

### Best Practices for Interviewing People with Disabilities

- Make sure the selection process, including interviews, tests and other

screening tools is consistent, fair, and accessible to all applicants.

- Know what questions you can legally ask.
- Ask people being called for interviews if they require accommodations; it is up to them to let you know.
- The receptionist and selection committee should be informed about the proper way to greet people with different types of disabilities.
- Speak directly to people with disabilities and not through their companions.

- Make sure you know the law and what questions you can and cannot ask. For example, do not ask questions about a disability or make assumptions about the candidate based on lack of information. People with disabilities are not obligated to disclose their disabilities during an interview or even after they are hired.
- Disability information is confidential when disclosed and cannot be disclosed to other parties without the written consent of the candidate/employee.
- Just like any other candidates, remember to let people with disabilities know why they were unsuccessful in obtaining a job.

For helpful hints for interviewing people with different types of disabilities please visit:

[http://www.easterseals.com/site/Pages/eServer?pagename=ntl\\_interview](http://www.easterseals.com/site/Pages/eServer?pagename=ntl_interview)

### Guide to the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07

Excerpts

### Who must be provided with training?

#### Customer Service Standard

6. (1) Every provider of goods or services shall ensure that the following persons receive training about the provision of its goods or services to persons with disabilities:

1. Every person who deals with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of the provider, whether the person does so as an employee, agent, volunteer or otherwise.
2. Every person who participates in developing the provider's policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to members of the public or other third parties.

### What training must be provided?

#### Customer Service Standard

6. (2) The training must include a review of the purposes of the Act and the requirements of this Regulation and instruction about the following matters:
1. How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disability.
  2. How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a guide dog or other service animal or the assistance of a support person.
  3. How to use equipment or devices available on the provider's premises or otherwise provided by the provider that may help with the provision of goods or services to a person with a disability.
  4. What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing the provider's goods or services.

### Remember Respectful Language

- Use "disability" or "disabled," not "handicap" or "handicapped."
- Always remember to say "people with disabilities" instead of disabled people
- Or for example, "people with hearing loss", "people with low vision"

For information about how to make services more accessible for your clients and customers visit:

<http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/mcass/english/pillar>

# Ask the Elocution Instructor



## Dear Elocution Instructor:

I recently come here from Latino-America and I have a question for you. Why is it that while in university I was able to read and understand all the texts, which were mostly American English publications, but I'm not able to hold a basic conversation with a speaker of native Canadian English?

## Signed: **Not able to hold a basic conversation**

With the proliferation of English language around the world, whether as technical or scientific jargon, through commerce, or ultimately as popular culture, many of us find ourselves immersed in the language even though we may live in countries where English is not the first language. Thank you for this wonderful yet intriguing question, I hope I can do it justice.

The basis of English is composed of two linguistic traditions: Words that come into English as Greek/Latin derivatives and those that come into English through their Anglo-Saxon forms. So we can say, she entered the room or she came into the room. Within this context ENTER, a Greek/Latin derivative, and COME IN, an Anglo-Saxon derivative, have the same meaning.

Your observation about being able to understand the texts is sound. You were able to adapt yourself into a reading form of English because in its written form English becomes more formal, and in its formality, it adheres to a greater use of Greek/Latin derivatives. Furthermore, coming from a part of the world where Romance languages (Italian, French, Spanish and/or Portuguese) are spoken, languages that derive from both Greek and Latin, the connection can be clearly drawn.

This is the interesting part of English and its complexity also. Its linguistic tradition serves

to distinguish between oral and written language. In English, written language is always formal, notwithstanding our current age of e-mails and texting, where written language seems to flow much more colloquially. It's once we move into the sphere of conversation and the oral use of the language were things become more complex.

Your comment regarding not being able to hold a basic conversation with a speaker of native Canadian English (and thank you for phrasing it in this way) is very telling about the New Canadian experience. The novelty of a new language and the stress about not understanding or not being understood can be a source of great anxiety. Please know that you are not alone.

Moreover, I've mentioned elsewhere in this column that language acquisition brings into question voice: not just what we say in the new language, but just as importantly formulating how we're going to sound saying it can bring about delicate implications about identity. This can make the individual feel paralyzed and keep the experience of being in contact with others inaccessible.

In conversational English, the greater use of Anglo-Saxon derivatives makes the language less formal and in a way more colourful. It's here that we formulate many of language's colloquialism (Hey, what's up? for How are you?) and vernaculars (Neat, Eh! for How very interesting!).

At the core of Anglo-Saxon derivatives are phrasal verbs and they're various permutations. The complication is that phrasal verbs can be literal in one sense and figurative in another. So we can say, the keys fell through the crack (literal) or the business deal fell through (figurative). In this case literally FALL THROUGH means the keys dropped or slipped, whereas figuratively it gives the understanding that the deal was cancelled or annulled.

Maintaining a good grasp of these two linguistic traditions can be of great benefit in our understanding and development of the language. The challenge for foreign-trained individuals is that phrasal verbs become an arduous task that takes time to develop, and time is what they at this stage of their lives don't have.

If I could offer any direction, it would be to simply take it easy, prick up your ears – learn to listen well. I encourage you to go out and find your Canadian life, make friends, mingle and soon enough you'll surprise yourself at finding that you're fully articulating the language of Shakespeare.

## Signed the Elocution Teacher

**Alfredo Garcia**

## Quick Links

### Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

Contains everything you need to know about this legislation.

<http://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/mcss/english/pillars/accessibilityOntario>

### ATN Access Inc.

A London agency that offers information to employers and people with disabilities regarding accommodations etc..

<http://www.atn.on.ca/>

### Diversity At Work in London Website

A London business, that provides seminars on the business case for hiring and marketing products and services to people with disabilities.

[www.yourdiversityatwork.com](http://www.yourdiversityatwork.com)

### Easter Seals

Offers helpful information regarding best practices for interviewing people with different kinds of disabilities

[http://www.easterseals.com/site/PageServer?pagename=ntl\\_interview](http://www.easterseals.com/site/PageServer?pagename=ntl_interview)

### Government of Alberta – Alberta Learning Information Service

Tip Sheet - Finding Work Opportunities as a Person With a Disability

<http://alis.alberta.ca/ep/eps/tips/tips.html?EK=12435>

# INTERVIEW WITH VICKI MAYER

Executive Director ATN Access for Persons with Disabilities Inc. (ATN Access INC.), a Not-For-Profit organization located in London, Ontario



## **Diversity @ Work (D@ W) - What signs do you see in London that employers are starting to understand the business case for hiring people with disabilities?**

Vicki Mayer (VM) - Employers who have made the decision to hire people with the abilities, regardless of the type of disability, report that many of these individuals become the top performers in their businesses. They are sharing their stories and are starting to encourage their colleagues to do the same. The Ability First initiative spear-headed by TD Canada Trust ([www.abilityfirst.on.ca](http://www.abilityfirst.on.ca)) is just one example of this. ATN is finding more and more employers who are open to discussing working with service providers to meet their hiring needs.

## **D@ W- In our consulting business we hear a lot of employers expressing concerns about the costs of accommodating employees with disabilities. How much onus is it on the employee to provide some of the assistive devices etc. to help them with their work?**

VM - Employers have a duty to provide accommodations to their employees in order that they can perform the required tasks undeterred by their disabilities. The costs are born by the employer, as long as they are not considered to be an undue hardship. Employees with disabilities provide information about their needs and accommodation requirements to help in determining the best solution. Research has indicated that most accommodation costs are still under \$500, and can be beneficial to other employees or business customers. Most accommodations do not require costly equipment or computer programs, and involve such simple changes as rearranging furniture or altering the way a particular task is performed.

## **D@ W - Could you explain how AT can help employers?**

VM- ATN Access Inc. provides a variety of resources to help educate and inform employers about hiring people with disabilities. Workplace assessments can be arranged to assist the employer in determining what needs to be changed in their workplace to help accommodate the needs of a worker who has been injured or become disabled. Employers are provided with assistance in assessing available community and government resources to help them access and purchase furniture, equipment, and assistive technology. Our staff can work in partnership with employers to assist them with recruiting, interviewing, hiring, determining accommodations, training, job-coaching, and job maintenance for their employees with disabilities. We also work to break down the physical and attitudinal barriers so that everyone involved can discover the possibilities for success for both employers of people with disabilities and employees who have disabilities in the workplace.

## **D @ W - Given the economic constraints facing most businesses today, small business owners are really concerned about the potential costs associated with accommodating employees and customers. Can you give us some examples of low-cost or no-cost ways to accommodate?**

VM - ATN staff can assist employers in making inexpensive changes to the workplace that will better accommodate their employees and customers. Awareness of the issues can lead to innovative ideas that can really make a difference for people with disabilities. Some simple changes we have suggested that have benefited the employer, the employee, and even customers, have included:

modifying an employee's work hours to accommodate the use of specialized transportation; providing some opportunities for an individual to work from home; providing an employee a stool to allow them to sit and stand while they perform their work; relabeling shelves with large print or clearer information; changing the set-up of a computer workstation; and providing written or emailed instructions for job-related tasks. The list is endless. The key is to be open to simple changes that may make the essential difference for an individual with a disability.

## **D @ W - Your Learning Disabilities newsletter is a great resource for persons with Learning Disabilities (LDs) their families and employers. Can you tell us how you go about subscribing to this?**

VM - People who wish to subscribe to the newsletter can simply contact the agency at 519-433-7950 and ask to speak with one of our Learning Disability Specialists about receiving the newsletter electronically or by mail. They can also visit our website at [www.atn.on.ca](http://www.atn.on.ca) and click on the appropriate link to provide us with their contact information to be added to our distribution list.



<http://www.atn.on.ca>



142 Clarke Road, P.O. Box 35008  
London, ON. N5W 5Z6  
Phone: 519-659-4777 | Fax: 519-659-3282  
<mailto:info@yourdiversityatwork.com>  
<http://www.yourdiversityatwork.com>

# Do You or One of Your Employees Need Help With Your English Pronunciation Skills?

Here are some signs that a pronunciation class may be well-suited for you:

- People tell you that they don't understand you when you speak.
- Errors are frequently made because of misunderstanding.
- Conflicts arise as a result of miscommunication ---the intonation that the speaker has used has been mistaken for anger, lack of interest, lack of self-confidence etc.
- Opportunities to speak in front of others are turned down because of feeling self-conscious.
- Increasing frustration on the part of the speaker, clients and co-workers because of misunderstanding.
- Your boss has identified that you need to improve your speaking skills to advance in your position.
- You are finding it difficult to get past a first job interview.
- You may not fit any of the categories mentioned above, but you feel that a pronunciation class will help you to refresh and recall particular mouth positions and sounds

## Consider Pronunciation Classes with Diversity At Work! LONDON AND TORONTO LOCATIONS

These classes will help you to become more comfortable with North American English pronunciation and its usage. This is particularly the case if you are unsure of how and when to use it properly. You will learn the grammar rules to help you become a more confident and successful speaker. In addition, learning proper pronunciation will also help you learn the particular mouth positions needed in order to create the proper sounds. The classes suit everyone, and are given in a warm and friendly atmosphere at a pace that will meet your needs, make you feel relaxed and support you throughout the course.

Investing in your verbal communication skills can lead to: improved self-confidence; obtaining and retaining a job; and widening your customer base. Give yourself or your employees the gift of clearer pronunciation. Call us today and have your name placed on a list for public classes in London and Toronto. Ask us about our onsite classes for a group of your employees.

## Diversity and Inclusion On A Budget Seminar

Is your organization putting your diversity initiative on hold because of budgetary constraints? Are you hard-pressed for ideas to keep the momentum going without breaking the bank? This seminar is chock-full of ideas that will lead you to say, "yes we can make this work!" Call us today and let us help you put your diversity to work! Yes we do travel outside of Southwestern Ontario.

## Advertise in Diversity Works!

Stretch your advertising dollars and reach an international audience that supports workplace diversity. Call us for our rates.

Phone: 519-659-4777 |



# EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

## Collège Boréal Student Placement Program

- Would you like to contribute to your local community?
- Do you have a special project you would like to tackle but don't have the time?
- Have you been wondering how you can increase the diversity of your workforce?
- Would you like to give a New Canadian an opportunity to gain valuable experience?
- Would you like an opportunity to test our potential employees with little risk?
- Do you have an interest in increasing your cultural competency?

Collège Boréal Student Placement Program is the answer. Our placement coordinators are cultural specialists who match your employment needs with a highly qualified student. You will receive support along the way, to make your 5 week placement experience a success. There is a no cost to you. Additionally, your workplace insurance will be covered by Collège Boréal and in some cases you may be compensated to cover any training costs. To learn, how you can be a part of a

growing list of employers who chose Collège Boréal for their placement needs, please contact Evelina Silveira at 519-659-4777.

We are especially in need of placements in the finance, business and technical fields.

## Collège Boréal Course Calendar

Collège Boréal offers courses and programs for your personal enjoyment and professional growth right in downtown Citi Plaza in London. In this winter course calendar, you will find new courses such as Optimal Health and Beauty and professional development courses in language studies. Learn French, English or Spanish fast, in small group settings and with dedicated teachers. We also have many different courses with an abundance of training for newcomers in Canada financed by Citizenship and Immigration Canada and by the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration of Ontario. Call us at 519-451-5194 to get more details or for a [brochure of our courses](#).



Collège Boréal  
[www.borealc.on.ca](http://www.borealc.on.ca)

**Hiring Now**

# Ask the Consultant

**Dear Ask the Diversity Consultant:**

I have lived in Canada now, for five years. I started a new job and I've found it strange that my boss is always asking for "feedback" and "suggestions". I've never had this experience before. If he is the boss, why doesn't he know how to do his job, instead of asking us?

**Signed Shocked**

**Dear Shocked:**

Over the decades, Canadian workplaces have become more flattened in their organizational structures. This means that management and staff interact more closely now than ever before to achieve the organizational goals. Organizations, which have taken on a more "egalitarian" structure, have found that they have benefited from: increased innovation, better problem-solving, higher morale, and thus increased productivity. A lot of this can be attributed to the fact that management and staff communicate more now, and a good manager recognizes the value of his or her staff.

Given what I have just said, this means that when your boss is asking you for suggestions it is because he values you as an employee, and the insight that you have into the project. He believes that you have the potential to make things better for the organization.

**The Diversity Consultant**

Collège Boréal est à la recherche d'un coordonnateur (coordonnatrice) pour assurer la coordination, l'administration, la gestion administrative et la mise en œuvre de son nouveau programme-relais pour immigrants formés à l'étranger en administration, finances et affaires.

La personne recherchée doit faire preuve d'initiative, avoir une bonne compréhension de la réalité immigrante et être familière avec les organismes d'accréditation et avec les enjeux dans le domaine de l'employabilité. Elle devra également être détentrice d'un diplôme collégial en administration des affaires ou l'équivalent avec deux années d'expérience.

Une excellente connaissance du français et de l'anglais est requise. Une bonne connaissance de ADOBE Creative Suite 4 serait également un atout important. Ce contrat sera d'une durée de deux ans avec un salaire annuel d'environ 48,750\$

Vous pouvez faire parvenir votre curriculum vitae avec votre lettre de présentation au chef régional du Campus de London à l'adresse courriel suivant : [jean-pierre.cantin@borealc.on.ca](mailto:jean-pierre.cantin@borealc.on.ca). Toutes les applications seront traitées de façon confidentielles. Seules les candidatures retenues seront contactées.

**College Boreal (London Campus) is seeking a project coordinator to ensure the coordination, administration and implementation of its new bridging program for internationally trained immigrants in business, finance and administration.**

The person we are looking for shall demonstrate a great sense of initiative, have a great comprehension of the immigration reality and be knowledgeable and familiar with employment issues and accreditation bodies. The person shall also have a College Diploma in Business, finance or administration and two years of related working experience. An excellent knowledge of French and English is also required. A good knowledge of ADOBE Creative suite 4 will be considered as an asset. This contract is for a two year period starting January 2010. The yearly remuneration is around 48,750\$

Please forward your resume to the Regional Manager for the London campus at the following e-mail address: [jean-pierre.cantin@borealc.on.ca](mailto:jean-pierre.cantin@borealc.on.ca) All applications will be kept confidential. Only the selected candidates will be contacted.