



MEDIA RELEASE

KIVUTO SOLUTIONS INC. AND BRIDGEHEAD RECOGNIZED AT THE 2013 EMPLOYER COUNCIL OF CHAMPIONS SUMMIT

Wednesday, March 6, 2013, Ottawa – Hire Immigrants Ottawa (HIO) and the Employer Council of Champions (ECC) presented Kivuto Solutions Inc., and Bridgehead Coffee Houses and Roastery with Employer Excellence Awards today at the 2013 Employer Council of Champions Summit. Bridgehead was recognized for its outstanding practices in retention and engagement of skilled immigrants. Kivuto Solutions Inc. was recognized for its work in recruiting skilled immigrants.

HIO uses their annual summit as an occasion to recognize some of the city's workplaces that demonstrate ongoing efforts to attract and retain talented immigrants and new Canadians for their workforces. Since 2008, more than 15 organizations have been recognized for their practices, including Pythain, the City of Ottawa, University of Ottawa, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, and CGI.

"Our ability to continue to attract top talent to Ottawa will depend in great measure on how effective we are at using the great opportunities they present. It is our job, and I would suggest, our responsibility, to take advantage of those opportunities and those skills", said Gaye Moffett, Founder, GEM Healthcare Services and Co-Chair, Employer Council of Champions. "These two organizations have gone to great lengths to do just that in our city and we are pleased to honour them for their efforts."

"By improving our recruiting and hiring practices, adopting innovative mentoring and coaching programs, and enhancing our cross-cultural competencies, we are helping to overcome the barriers that have prevented so many talented immigrants from finding employment that is in line with their skill levels," added Gaye Moffat.

Every year, employers from a variety of sectors participate in HIO's annual summit. The employers have the opportunity to learn best practices on attracting and retaining skilled immigrants through a variety of presentations and education sessions. In addition, employers have the opportunity to network with skilled immigrants and new Canadians at an evening reception.

This year's keynote speaker was Mary Karamanos, Senior Vice President, Human Resources, Business Development Bank of Canada. Karamanos, in her address to participants, underscored the business opportunities that result from today's diverse population and how the effective engagement of global talent can strengthen entrepreneurialism and innovation among Canadian businesses.

About the 2013 Employer Excellence Award recipients:

Small-Size Employer, Recruitment Category

Kivuto Solutions (previously known as e-academy) is a global leader in complex digital distribution solutions. Its employee base reflects this global reach, with half of its employees, including the founder and CEO, born outside of Canada and many of its clients spread around the world. The company uses a number of sources to hire its skilled talent. Interview questions have been simplified to avoid misunderstanding, and acronyms and culturally based expressions are avoided if possible. Staff members from other countries are invited to participate in the interview process to assess the candidate's foreign language skills and to provide guidance on rephrasing interview questions that a candidate may be unfamiliar with.

"Everyone at Kivuto has been exposed to the value that immigrants bring to the table. Inclusion, openness and respect has been naturally embedded into all of the company's human resources management and business practices since the day it was founded," says Janet Robertson, Human Resources Consultant. Kivuto recognizes that skilled immigrants have been an integral part of their business growth and success, and that diverse talent has given their company a competitive edge when it comes to serving and expanding their international client base.

Medium-Size Employer, Retention Category

For Bridgehead, a coffeehouse and roaster business that operates in various 'neighbourhoods' across the city, diversity in its employee base is at the root of its growing success. Bridgehead recognizes that employees with different maturity levels, advanced skills, international experience and work ethic help to enhance service, as well as mentor and develop younger employees. "Having a more diverse workforce and access to internationally trained workers gives us an opportunity to better understand and meet the needs of the fairly diverse clientele we serve," says Mia Eriksson Blundell, HR Manager.

Bridgehead has taken many measures to attract and retain a diverse team. The company has built networks with community organizations serving immigrants, actively participates in community job fairs, and is committed to providing all employees with opportunities for personal and professional growth. All staff, including entry-level employees, are offered an opportunity to become a team leader and are encouraged to build their leadership and supervisory skills. For new hires, Bridgehead's buddy system has proven to be a real success. New hires are matched with current employees who have the same cultural or linguistic background — making it that much easier for newcomers to adjust to their work environment.

About Hire Immigrants Ottawa

Hire Immigrants Ottawa (HIO) is a community-based initiative that brings together employers, immigrant agencies, and other stakeholders to enhance employers' ability to access the talents of skilled immigrants in the Ottawa area. The initiative was launched in 2006 in response to a growing need to identify and address barriers faced by employers in the hiring and integration of skilled immigrants into the labour force. Hire Immigrants Ottawa is funded by the Government of Ontario.

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