

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan Presentation

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1. Star 7 International Inc.

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Owner, President and inspiration
Immigration consultant

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Employer relations

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Employee

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Former educator
Immigration consultant

- Immigration consulting firm established in 1996
- Assisting skilled/semi-skilled workers, business persons and professionals to immigrate to Canada
- Have assisted hundreds of families from western and eastern Europe, Asia and Latin America (40 different countries) to immigrate to Manitoba
- Working with over 200 Manitoba employers in more than a dozen communities
 - Developing job offers
 - Assisting with interviews
 - Attending orientation sessions
 - Providing translation services
- Working primarily with the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program (PNP)
- Matching immigrant worker skills appropriately to the needs of employers

2. Our Commitment:

- To operate our business in a professional manner, with honesty and integrity
- To stay informed so as to provide assistance in a knowledgeable manner.
- To provide personal and friendly service
- To treat all our clients with equality and respect
- To ensure client visits to Manitoba are as informative as possible
- To assist clients with their settlement in Manitoba
- To be available to our clients when they need us, for as long as they need us

3. About the MB Provincial Nominee Program

- Established under the Canada-Manitoba Immigration Agreement
- Province is best positioned to determine its specific economic needs in terms of immigration
- Province recruits and assesses immigrants best suited to contribute to economy
- Immigrants commit to live and work in Manitoba
- Points awarded for age, education, occupational demand, guaranteed employment, regional development, work experience, language skills and adaptability

Skilled and Semi-Skilled Workers

- Province recruits, screens and nominates prospective immigrants with skills to fill specific Manitoba labour market requirements
- Skilled/Semi-Skilled workers have best chance of being nominated if:
 - Their training and work experience are in demand in Manitoba
 - They have a guaranteed job offer consistent with their training and experience
 - They have settlement supports in Manitoba to assist them upon arrival in Manitoba
- Our people usually fall into the skilled/semi-skilled class.
 - Two to three year vocational training diploma
 - All building construction trades, welding, metal fabrication, machining, lathe work, machine operating, industrial mechanics, auto mechanics, semi truck driving, heavy equipment operating
 - Transferable skills - for example they have built their own homes in Germany from the ground up and are proficient in a variety of tasks

The Employer

- Manitoba employer forms backbone of PNP
- Immigration application cannot proceed without guaranteed job offer from employer
- Average processing time for application is one year
- Every effort made to honour commitments however, circumstances and staffing needs may change
- When required, alternate arrangements are developed for both immigrants and employers
- Inherent program flexibility assumes on-going communication and trust

4. Immigrants – who are they?

- Educated and experienced people – out front/risk takers – they have moved into new countries, new communities and languages at least twice
- Skilled and semi-skilled workers
- By now, they frequently have family or friends already in Manitoba
- According to religion – Evangelical Free Church, Pentecostal, Baptist, Lutheran...smallest portion are Mennonite
- More traditional (fundamentalist) faith stance and practice
 - Many parents, if they are persons of faith, have known religious persecution in Russia in the form of restricted educational opportunities, job opportunities and advancement, ridicule...
- Moved from Russia to Germany 25, 20, 15, 10 years ago

- Quickly became well established in Germany
 - Left Russia with nothing
 - Generous loan offers from German government
 - Hard-working, vocational education, transferable skills
- Strong sense of community (church-centred)
- Strong sense of family (working together with extended family)
- Strongly patriarchal but the men generally very good with their children and take active part in upbringing
- Large families not really accepted in Germany
- Perhaps some resentment over their success (houses), which is attributable in large part to their life-style (cooperate as family, raise own food, don't eat out...)
- Usually no mortgage and debt-free, so starting wage of \$9.00 - \$12.00 works when combined with child allowance

5. Push-pull factors

- Issues with German economy
- High unemployment is
- Lack of apprenticeship placements for young people
- Uncertainty about the future
- Feel hemmed in (too hectic/too many people) in Germany
- Displaced persons syndrome in Russia / in Germany
- Dissatisfaction with school system
 - Teacher-student relationships
 - Respect and caring
 - Explicit sex ed at an early age
- Concern about social life to which youth in cities have access

- Future for children (parents willing to sacrifice career and start over)
- Work opportunities in Manitoba

- Wide open spaces
- Opportunity to establish home on small acreages
- Canada a land of immigrants – a feeling of acceptance
- Appreciation for school system and teachers
- Life is somewhat less regulated - more relaxed as a society
 - E.g. hunting and fishing licenses, operating a power boat...

6. Issues

- Recognition of certification / underemployment
 - Manitoba is losing out (paid nothing for all this education and experience)
- English language acquisition for adults at front end
 - Children are ahead of parents – control issue
- Women don't get out as easily (language acquisition more difficult)
- Initial housing availability
- As groups, tend to stick to themselves
 - Reasonable under the circumstances
 - Will change with the next generation
- Distrust school outings (based on German experience)
- Integration issues for older students
 - Respect and cheating
 - Had to defend themselves as 'Russians' in the German schools
- Vocational education is valued (college or university)
- Want to see order, respect in schools (can be a negative when it restricts children's opportunities according to our values and goals)
- Integration into community
- Doing business – masters of the 'deal' (press local businesses to the point where they would rather have them go somewhere else)

7. Questions

Community-Employer Initiative

Immediate support

- Meet families at airport
- Initial paperwork
 - Provincial Health Insurance application
 - PR card application
 - Social Insurance Number application
 - Child Tax Credit application
- Orientation to the community
- Support initial search for housing
- Work arrangements for main applicant
- Opening bank account
- Obtaining Driver's License
- All arrangements for clearing containers through customs
- School registration for children

Long-term support

- Support search for secondary employment
- Assist families dealing with utilities and other agencies
- ESL classes for adults

Support mechanisms

- Settlement Committee
- Host families
- Transition house
- Employer supported ESL classes

THE CHANGING FACE OF MANITOBA
INTRODUCTION:
Why the making of this film?

Winkler Project – 1996

- 50 German immigrant families
- Beginning of Star 7 International

From mother and grown children around kitchen table to a staff of 12

Over 800 families to date (also other consultants)

- 7000 – 8000 people

Quarterly newsletter with circulation of 1000 – 1500

This wave of immigration affects our economy

- families bring significant settlement funds
- buy/build houses
- buy cars
- shop
- spin offs are endless
- transfer payments of \$32,000 per individual

Skilled and semi-skilled workers add to our labour force

- a desire to settle and put down roots in rural Manitoba (i.e. stable labour force)
- allows businesses to grow and expand
- skill level not readily available in Manitoba

Over time many establish their own businesses

- employ other Canadians

Children are heading off to colleges and universities

- many will return to our communities as skilled workers, professionals (teachers, computer programmers, engineers, etc.)

Establish their own institutions

- churches
- financial institutions (example in Germany)

This is a movement and it will change the face of southern Manitoba (in fact it already has).

Our purpose in sponsoring the making of this film...

- in Germany to give people insight into the huge step they are undertaking
- in Manitoba to inform communities and employers about these people
 - o who are they
 - o what is their experience in immigrating
 - o why are they coming

We want to build bridges of understanding in both directions.

In the end it is not about the labour pool, the economy or population growth.

It is about people.