

Small Business Matters

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52 TIPS FOR YOUR BUSINESS

#34 – Solving the Foreign Hiring Puzzle

Nationals of other countries represent a significant portion of the U.S. workforce. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, there were 25.7 million internationally born employees working in the United States during 2014, a figure that represents 16.5% of the total workforce in the country.

As hiring foreign nationals is essential to the U.S. economy—the BLS notes that the number of these workers over the age of 16 comprised 16.1% of the nation's workforce in 2012—employers need to understand the process, limitations and benefits of hiring a foreign national, said attorney Erin Brown, a partner at Robert Brown LLC.

“Before making an offer, companies need to be asking themselves, ‘What do we need to do to be sure we are complying with U.S. Immigration laws?’”

She identified a number of factors an employer should be aware of in advance of hiring a candidate who is not a citizen or permanent resident of the United States.

SPONSORSHIP

The first step is to determine whether the potential new hire requires visa sponsorship. If the person is a foreign national, know what type of visa the foreign national currently possesses, the type of visa they may require and the expiration dates (and maximum stay) for the particular visa type.

Expiration dates can be particularly tricky,



Erin Brown,
Robert Brown LLC

she warned. Some visas, for example, are good for a limited duration, usually a few years, and need to be renewed. It is good practice to put a system in place to keep track of such expiration dates.

Further, many visas are employer-specific. The employer will need to file a petition with U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services to obtain employment authorization in the United States.

PLAN AHEAD

Advance planning will help ease employment headaches later on, Brown said.

Employers sponsoring a foreign national may have certain obligations and responsibilities as the petitioner.

“You want to know that before you hire somebody,” Brown said. Seeking consultation from a qualified professional early on can help facilitate the process and eliminate potential employment eligibility issues.

At the end of the day, forward planning goes a long way, she said. “The further companies plan ahead, the less likely they are to run into issues or interruptions in employment.” She added that there are many benefits to hiring a foreign national and the more an employer is educated on the visa options, the smoother the hiring process will be.

Want more expert advice? Check out *Linktunity* (www.cose.org/linktunity), an online forum connecting business owners with creative solutions to the tough questions they face every day.

COSE'S TAKEAWAY

There are a lot of moving parts involved in hiring a foreign national. Companies should start the planning process early to help guard against any hang-ups.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

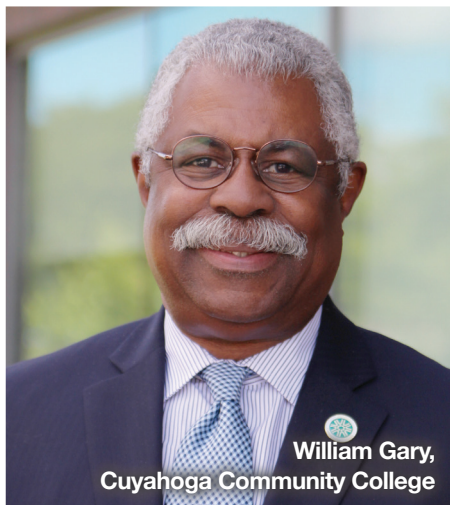
Tri-C Focuses on Key Employment Areas

William Gary has heard a familiar refrain from employers in the year he has served as executive vice president, workforce development division, at Cuyahoga Community College.

“They are saying, ‘We need qualified individuals now,’” he said during an August 14 meeting of COSE's Advocacy Committee. “We need skill sets that will help build our bottom lines now.”

Tri-C is working to address those concerns. Ohio's first community college is refocusing on key areas that are expected to be areas of employment growth going forward: information technology, health-care, professional services, public safety and advanced manufacturing.

“These are the sectors that drive the Northeast Ohio economy,” he said, adding the college's executives do not want to train students for jobs that might be in short supply in the future.



William Gary,
Cuyahoga Community College

One example of Tri-C's renewed focus was seen earlier this summer when it held the first 3-D manufacturing conference in Ohio, which was attended by more than

300 people. The conference featured a wide variety of computer-printed goods, including a car.

“That's where technology is moving and in order for us to prepare to potentially support this technology, we have to make sure our programming is state of the art,” he said.

Tri-C is helping students understand the skills they are going to need to be successful in the evolving economy. Gary also discussed the college's “Right Skills Now” program with Swagelok, in which students are taught the skills they need to know in order to get a job with Swagelok. The program participants are guaranteed employment with Swagelok upon completing the program.

“We're helping students get placed in your jobs,” he said. “We're helping individuals understand the soft skills they need that really contribute to the success of all of us.”



Join us on Sept. 10 for the 16th annual OHTEC CIO Symposium, the longest-running gathering of IT executives in Northeast Ohio.

OHTEC brings together thought leaders from the region and from around the country to bring valuable, strategic-level information to CIOs and IT executives leading the region's enterprise IT organizations.

Register today at www.ciosymposium.org.

August 24

By The Numbers Small Business Labor Trends

2,026,700
Northeast Ohio employment in 2012

2,161,100
Projected Northeast Ohio employment in 2022

Projected Northeast Ohio employment in 2022

6.6
Percentage change

SOURCE: OHIO DEPARTMENT
OF JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES



Connection Calendar

COFFEE WITH COSE

Get an early start with other COSE members at this casual round table session. Discuss tips and tricks of the trade over a cup of coffee. Share your challenges and successes with your peers, and get real advice on how to grow your business!

SEPTEMBER 16

8:30 – 10:00 AM

Panera Bread, Solon

Cost: \$5

Register at www.cose.org/events.



ADVOCACY MEETING

Join us for the fifth Advocacy Committee Meeting of the year! The COSE Advocacy Committee provides a forum for volunteers to discuss, research and share the specific values, principles and policies of COSE on public issues affecting our members.

OCTOBER 9

8:00-10:00 AM

COSE offices, Cleveland

Register at www.cose.org/events.



10TH ANNUAL COSE SMALL BUSINESS CONVENTION

Now in its 10th year, the COSE Small Business Convention is the premier event for entrepreneurs and small business owners in the Midwest. Partners from across the region come together to produce the ultimate experience for small business professionals, complete with nationally-recognized keynote speakers, a business-to-business trade show, special events and unforgettable networking experiences.

OCTOBER 21-22

Cleveland Public Auditorium &
Conference Center, Cleveland



Cost: COSE members \$159, non-members \$310
Register at www.smallbizconvention.com

Check out www.cose.org/events
for all the latest happenings.