



Upwardly Global (or UpGlo for short) builds an inclusive, future-ready workforce that embraces the skills of immigrant and refugee professionals. The organization advances equity, powers the economy, and champions human potential through innovative skill-building, coaching, and networking programs.

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As a key supporter, Upwardly Global would like to thank Accenture for their support and contributions to this initiative. Accenture is a leading global professional services company, and through Corporate Citizenship, is working to innovate for social impact and build a future of shared success. As part of this program, Accenture has provided pro bono support to Upwardly Global to help it expand its future of work services.

PROJECT SPONSORS



IMPLEMENTATION PARTNER



ABOUT THE INITIATIVE

The project brings together employers and skilled immigrants through design thinking sessions (facilitated by Accenture) to co-create products and solutions that will move the mark on promoting inclusive workplaces. The initiative design includes a market research and landscape interview phase, along with a development and pilot phase, where Upwardly Global will work with select corporate participants to continue to build, refine product and service ideas, and beta test solutions.

Inclusive workplaces for all is a complex challenge to tackle in the U.S. Now, unemployment rates are projected to reach 20-30%, and given the current circumstances, companies are working to understand current & future skills needs and priorities to better prepare for a strong economic recovery. By sharing and learning from each other during the interviews, workshops, and beyond, we hope to ideate on strategies that will lead to an inclusive economic recovery for all.

PROJECT APPROACH



MARKET RESEARCH

Conducted research to understand barriers & challenges surrounding the immigrant and refugee population's workforce integration and to understand leading practices around I&D

LANDSCAPE INTERVIEWS

Conducted 45+ interviews of Corporate & Upwardly Global Alumni participants to better understand their context, business drivers & obstacles

WORKSHOPS

Conducted workshops in NYC & San Francisco to identify opportunities to "build towards an inclusive & equitable workforce recovery"

INSIGHTS & ACTION

Prioritize opportunities for Upwardly Global to utilize for employer partnerships and initiatives

MARKET RESEARCH & LANDSCAPE INTERVIEW KEY FINDINGS

THE FUTURE OF WORK



The immigrant and refugee population is a viable market to the future of the U.S. workforce:

Between 2000 and 2050, new immigrants and their children will contribute to 83 percent of the growth in the working-age population.¹ There is an increasing number of highly educated immigrants coming to the U.S. with 48% having received a bachelor's degree. However, over 2 million immigrant and refugee college graduates are experiencing "brain waste" or the underutilization of skills through under and unemployment.² Addressing this missed opportunity to integrate the highly skilled immigrant and refugee population into our workforce will help ensure continued economic recovery and growth.



Research has found benefits to a diverse & inclusive corporation:

There are enormous bodies of research and consensus within industry that a diverse workforce leads to increased productivity, better ideas, and happier workers.

LEADING PRACTICES



Leading practices provide strong examples and guidance to corporations.

Promising practices can be learned from the Tent Foundation's U.S. Employers' Guide to Hiring Refugees, which offers examples of how to build a recruitment strategy for the immigrant and refugee population. This guide highlights that out-of-date skills, differing communication styles, cultural differences, and lack of credentials are potential challenges that must be addressed.³ The Human Rights Campaign's (HRC) Corporate Equality Index (CEI) provides examples of how to measure the inclusion of the LGBTQ+ population through the implementation of policies and practices, as well as how to build a coalition around the movement. HRC's CEI launched in 2002 with 13 companies scoring 100 out of 100 in the first index and by 2019, had 572 top scoring companies.⁴ By understanding these leaders and others, insights were provided into how to better achieve and track workforce initiatives.

BARRIERS & CHALLENGES



Limited reporting on diversity:

According to Fortune, only a small share of Fortune 500 companies report diversity statistics. In 2017, only 3.2% of companies on the Fortune 500 list released complete data for the race and gender of their employees in each job category and mgmt. level.⁵

BARRIERS & CHALLENGES (CONTINUED)



Immigrant and refugee jobseekers face barriers at various intersections of their career, from the job search, interview, onboarding and career advancement stages: Matching foreign experience to job titles and explaining employment gaps is a barrier to effectively securing interviews. Cultural differences (e.g. eye-contact, firm handshakes, and marketing oneself), as well as the American-style of storytelling present barriers for immigrant and refugee professionals, especially those who have not mastered these culturally specific nuances. In addition, phone or virtual screenings are harder to navigate due to reliance on language over body language.



Immigrant and refugee employees often face challenges when others do not fully understand characteristics of different cultures:

Immigrant and refugee employees face U.S. corporate cultural barriers, as well as a lack of formal mentorship, making it hard to navigate the U.S. workplace & leading to feelings of being excluded.



Most corporate participants have a high-level understanding of the immigrant and refugee challenges: Of the corporate participants interviewed, over 75% have a high-level understanding of the challenges and barriers that the immigrant and refugee population faces in the U.S. job search process and with inclusion in the workplace. Those same corporate participants also believe that organizational barriers can be addressed and accelerated with greater buy-in from colleagues and leadership in the organization.



Companies would need a strong case to include immigrant and refugee populations in their I&D initiatives:

To move an inclusion agenda forward, organizations need a strong business case and best in class examples on why to include immigrant and refugee professionals in their existing I&D initiatives. This includes a robust business case, best in class examples, and demand from employees to consider immigrant and refugee populations in their I&D diversity metrics, workforce planning strategy, and inclusion goals.

Source:

¹Center for American Progress "Progress 2050";

²Migration Policy Institute "Untapped Talent: The Costs of Brain Waste among Highly Skilled Immigrants in the United States"

³Tent Foundation "U.S. Employers' Guide to Hiring Refugees";

⁴Human Rights Campaign Foundation "Corporate Equality Index 2019"

⁵Fortune "Why We Logged Every Fortune 500 Company's Diversity Data, Or Lack Thereof" 2017

COVID-19 IMPACTS & IMPLICATIONS: UPWARDLY GLOBAL JOBSEEKER IMPACTS

In early April, Upwardly Global assessed the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on 74 of their job seekers; the results showed:

The impact of COVID-19 has heightened the need of Upwardly Global's collective talent to weather this storm. There is now greater market demand for STEM & healthcare jobs which comprise of 65% of UpGlo's jobseekers. In addition, COVID-19 has disproportionately impacted underrepresented communities, making it harder for them to compete in the job market.



LIVELIHOOD IMPACTS

Nearly 50% have lost their job as demand for survival jobs such as restaurant work and ride-sharing services has plummeted, leaving jobseekers without a primary source of income

69% have no savings or one month's worth of expenses or less in savings. With no safety net, it will be very difficult to meet basic needs



JOB SEARCH IMPACTS

73% reported the COVID-19 crisis has impacted their professional job search

40% have experienced slowing in the job market, including hiring freezes, halted interview processes, and suspended credential & training programs



EMOTIONAL IMPACTS

1 in 3 specifically mentioned anxiety stemming from the uncertainty of the situation and the pandemic's unknown long-term impact

18% feel isolated as a result of the emotional distress caused by the pandemic



STRENGTH & RESILIENCY

58% of jobseekers expressed a desire to continue to actively invest in their job search

40% want to continue building hard skills, through online upskilling

74% are interesting in building soft skills, through virtual job coaching

COVID-19 IMPACTS & IMPLICATIONS: CORPORATE IMPACTS

Workforce challenges & opportunities as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, based on the NYC & San Francisco Workshop Sessions:

Additionally, jobseekers often do not have established professional networks to tap into and are now feeling more isolated and disconnected. On the other hand, employers are experiencing a variety of different pain points, but there is an opportunity of convergence to address the impacts of both corporations and immigrant and refugee jobseekers.

1 REMOTE WORK: SHIFTING MINDSETS

Supporting employees through the transition to remote work while keeping teams motivated

2 REMOTE WORK: HEALTH, WELLNESS & CARETAKING

Supporting employees through high levels of stress, anxiety, and competing priorities (i.e. childcare, family support)

3 REMOTE WORK: TECHNICAL ENABLEMENT

Ensuring that people have the technical capabilities & support for entire companies to work from home at the same time

4 TECHNOLOGY SOLUTION OPPORTUNITIES

New opportunities for tech leaders to move the needle on AI & workforce automation to better develop future workforce products in the digital age

5 REMOTE WORK: INCLUSIVE CULTURE

Establishing inclusive workplace culture virtually, that allows for open communication & collaborative teamwork, while also integrating newly hired employees

6 FUTURE & CURRENT WORKFORCE UNCERTAINTY

Determining what to do about talent pipelines & forecasting future skill needs in a time of great uncertainty. Opportunity to expand thinking on remote roles & diverse talent pipelines

7 UPSKILLING / RESKILLING OPPORTUNITIES

Finding new ways to upskill / reskill resources and reallocate the workforce to better meet organizational & customer needs

These 7 corporate insight themes emerged as the top workforce challenges & opportunities that have resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic. The bottom 3 themes were explored further and ideated on for potential solutions.

INNOVATIONS & TOP IDEAS

The following ideas were developed during the workshops to help pave an inclusive recovery path for corporations & the workforce:

<p>REMOTE WORK: INCLUSIVE CULTURE</p>	<p>FUTURE & CURRENT WORKFORCE UNCERTAINTY</p>	<p>UPSKILLING / RESKILLING OPPORTUNITIES</p>
<p> JOURNEY TOOLKITS TO BUILD INCLUSION & UNDERSTANDING</p> <p>The toolkit would help companies embed inclusion into the everyday core by driving inclusion strategy & implementation at all levels of the organization. The toolkit would showcase a walk-through of the stages of an employee’s journey through the lens of inclusion.</p>	<p> COMMITMENT & PLEDGE TO DIVERSIFYING PIPELINES</p> <p>A commitment to maintain focus & investment in the diversification of talent pipelines and to continue to collaborate on leading practices in this space. The concept timeline includes the establishment of the pledge elements and the determination of leading practices, followed by public promotion & member recruitment.</p>	<p> CAREER COUNSELING PLATFORM TO CONNECT & GROW</p> <p>This platform would provide a central area for current & perspective employees to gather information on how to align upskilling opportunities to career advancement. The platform would also provide 1-on-1 coaching to guide them through different career paths within the organization.</p>
<p> THE TEAM DECODER: A FRAMEWORK FOR INCLUSION</p> <p>Create strong team cohesion by quickly ramping up on a shared understanding of team members and organizations through a framework of people, processes, tools, and data. This decoder would include tools for shared agreement of cultural / unspoken “norms”, a repository for team member skills and work styles, and more.</p>	<p> PLAYBOOK FOR INCLUSIVE HIRING GUIDELINES</p> <p>Geared towards small to mid-sized companies, the adoption of this playbook would provide guidance on how to embed the leading practices of inclusive hiring. Elements of the playbook include adopting a “screen-in” vs. “screen-out” mentality, developing a value-based recruiting strategy, and providing unconscious bias training.</p>	<p> REAL-WORLD, IMMERSIVE JOB SHADOWING EXPERIENCE PROGRAM</p> <p>Develop a paid, virtual job shadowing program with built-in 1-on-1 mentorship, job coaching & shadowing, and networking opportunities. By providing an immersive experience, the program could benefit a diverse range of potential candidates by helping them gain a holistic, real-world experience in their desired field.</p>

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