



Workplace & Immigrant Network

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BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Understanding Employment & Immigration Law Changes 2026 (Waterloo Region)**

March 11th, 2026

Register: [Here](#)

**Build Your Topline Through Belonging (Guelph-Wellington)**

March 18th, 2026

Register: [Here](#)



## Editor's Note

As more employers turn to AI-powered tools such as applicant tracking systems (ATS) and generative tools like ChatGPT to streamline recruitment, new risks are emerging alongside new efficiencies.

While these tools can improve speed and consistency, they can also unintentionally reinforce bias against marginalized and immigrant talent if not designed and used thoughtfully.

Recent and emerging ESA-related updates have brought increased attention to transparency, fairness, and accountability in employment practices. This means employers may face real liabilities if AI-driven hiring decisions disadvantage candidates in ways that are discriminatory, opaque, or inconsistent with employment standards.

The answer isn't to avoid AI altogether but to use it responsibly. With the right guardrails, employers can design hiring processes that leverage AI while remaining inclusive, compliant, and competitive.

In this issue, Ogho Ikhala, Founder & Executive Lead, AFROdisiac Consulting, shares valuable insight to help employers rethink how they use AI in job postings and interviews. We hope you find the perspectives and takeaways useful.

If your organization has been rethinking how you attract, hire and retain talent, and you'd like to share your journey in a future edition, we'd be happy to hear from you.

-Olusola Oladele

## EMPLOYER SPOTLIGHT

**OGHO IKHALO (SHE/HER)**

FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE LEAD, AFROdisiac Consulting

**AI tools are often described as “neutral,” yet we know they can reflect existing biases. From your experience, how can AI-based hiring tools unintentionally disadvantage marginalized or immigrant talent?**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is only as “neutral” as the data it’s built on. Most hiring tools are trained on past decisions – and those decisions often reflect bias, because they’re rooted in human experiences and judgments. That can show up as international experience being undervalued, résumé gaps common for newcomers being flagged, or candidates being filtered out because their names or career paths don’t fit a narrow norm. Without intention, AI can quietly scale exclusion while still appearing objective.

**With recent and upcoming ESA-related considerations, what risks should employers be mindful of when using AI in recruitment, particularly in screening, interviewing, or shortlisting candidates?**



**Ogho Ikaho(She/Her)**



One of the biggest risks is assuming AI somehow removes employer responsibility— it doesn't. If a tool is screening or ranking candidates in ways you can't easily explain, that's a red flag. From an Employment Standard Act (ESA) and human rights lens, automated decisions that disproportionately exclude certain groups can create real legal risk. AI can support recruitment, but employers are still responsible for fair and consistent decisions.

**What are some inclusive design principles employers should consider when setting up or using an ATS?**

An inclusive Applicant Tracking System (ATS) needs to recognize that great candidates don't all look the same on paper. Many newcomers bring non-linear career paths, international education, or experience that doesn't fit neatly

into keyword searches. That's why it's important to balance automated screening with human review and to build accessibility in from the start. Regular check-ins and audits can help ensure your system is opening doors – not quietly closing them.

**Tools like ChatGPT are increasingly being used to draft job postings and interview questions. What guardrails should employers put in place to ensure these tools don't reinforce bias or create compliance issues?**

Tools like ChatGPT are useful starting points – but they shouldn't be the final word. Clear guidelines matter. Employers should always review AI-generated job postings and interview questions for bias, accuracy, and compliance with employment standards and human rights law. It's also important to support teams with basic training, so they know when AI can save time – and when human judgment is still essential.

**For small and medium-sized employers who don't have in-house HR or legal teams, what are a few simple steps they can take to use AI responsibly while supporting fair access and immigrant integration?**

You don't need a large human resource or legal team to use AI responsibly. The key is to keep it simple. Use AI to support your recruitment process – not to automatically screen people out. Keep humans involved in decisions, take the time to write clear and inclusive job postings, and be upfront with candidates about how these tools are being used. If something feels high-risk or unclear, that's your cue to pause and get advice. Fair access should never be automated away



## UPCOMING NETWORKING EVENT

### **Fin Connect: Let's get Fiscal (Guelph-Wellington)**

A networking event on February 18th, 2026, designed to foster meaningful connections between employers in the finance sector and highly skilled talent.

**Manu Connect (Waterloo Region):** A networking event on March 12th, 2026, designed to foster meaningful connections between employers in the manufacturing sector and highly skilled talent.

Interested organizations, please contact:

daniel@workforceplanningboard.com or fadhwa@workforceplanningboard.com


**Looking for what's next?**

**All upcoming events are posted on our [website!](#)**



## WHAT WE CAN DO FOR YOU

- ✓ Align your business vision with your talent needs
- ✓ Review HR practices and policies
- ✓ Co-create practical solutions to fill the potential challenges and gaps

 **Don't hesitate to connect with us to discuss options for free in-house workshops tailored to your business's unique needs.**


### Additional Resources

[New Research on AI and Fairness in Hiring](#)

[AI in Job Postings: What Employers in Canada Need to Know](#)

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