Top 10 Application Barriers
Encountered by Foreign Born Professionals in Maine
(with explanations and recommendations)

1. Use of American idioms. (There are often equally effective, more accessible ways to communicate the same idea.)
2. Use of pre-employment questionnaires that unintentionally favor American born applicants. (Have you considered how "common sense" may actually be "cultural sense"? How cultural frameworks such as collectivism and individualism may influence what the "right" answer is? How may cultural communication styles such as direct and indirect influence an applicant's answer?)
3. Using "first name" and "last name" as fields on an application. (Consider adopting the international standard of "first/given name" and "last/family name".)
4. Using formats for dates that are not explicit regarding placement of day and month. (Many other countries use the order of month/day/year. Is 3/4/75 March 4th or April 3rd?)
5. Inclusion of a "timed" section of the application. (This may not accommodate those applicants for whom English is not a first language.)
6. Use of formats or drop down menus that allow only for schools, phone numbers, addresses, qualifications, or work experience in the United States. (For example, by requiring a 5 digit zip code or 10 digit phone number.)
7. Use of a format that requires ".com" in an email address. (French speakers will often have a personal email address that ends ".fr")
8. Use of password retrieval questions that do not have enough options for foreign born applicants. (Mother's maiden name, name of street you grew up on, your first/favorite pet, for example, may be problematic for some foreign born applicants.)
9. Asking for "high school diploma" or "college degree". (Consider: "high school diploma/completion of secondary education" and "college/university". Many countries use "college" to mean "high school".)
10. Having no contact person to reach out to when cultural or linguistic challenges arise in the application process. (Consider including a phone number or email address somewhere on the application of a culturally competent individual in your organization who can field these inquiries. Without this, otherwise qualified candidates may be unable to complete the application.)

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