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The idea for Canadian Immigrant Magazine came to publisher Naeem Noorani in a dream. Photo-Dan Toulgoet

### Dream magazine aimed at immigrants

By Cheryl Rossi-Staff writer

When Naeem "Nick" Noorani and his wife Sabrina immigrated to Vancouver in 1998 from Dubai, the transition wasn't easy, even for a highly skilled couple who had already lived in six cities in four countries.

"When we came here, it started getting dark at 4 o'clock. My wife went into a depression because 4 o'clock and it's dark? That's never happened. So [it] disrupted sleep patterns and changes, there's so many changes when you think about it, the changes are so huge."

The experience of being immigrants, and a dream Noorani had one night, led to the launch of Canadian Immigrant Magazine, which celebrated its first anniversary this month with a new distribution deal and expansion plans.

The magazine, initially available at transit hubs, is now sold at Lower Mainland 7-Elevens and will go online in Toronto in June and Calgary in July.

Based on their own experience, the Nooranis felt important information needed by immigrants was too scattered, so they wrote a handbook for new immigrants, Arrival Survival Canada, published in 2000.

In 2003, Noorani, whose background is in marketing and advertising, had a dream about a multi-ethnic magazine. When he woke up, he knew he had to make it come true.

The couple launched the magazine in April 2004, paying for it out of their own pockets. The articles are written in English because it's the

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"language of success" in most of Canada. Articles and columns provide advice on how to set up a small business, buy a car and get a mortgage and profile immigrants who have attained success, whether it's as a hairdresser or a CEO.

"Our basic three philosophies is inform, educate and motivate, and so that's what we try and do. The motivation part is by featuring successful immigrants," Noorani said. "I've studied immigrants and what happens is by week six, they fall into a depression because they've run against a wall and they don't know what to do. They start reading about immigrants driving cabs-here's a surgeon who's driving a cab or flipping a burger-and the depression just increases. When they read a publication like mine and they see that there are immigrants who are succeeding at different levels, they say, 'Hey, you know, this makes sense. Immigrants can do it.'"

The magazine has featured people from 37 countries and works closely with large immigrant settlement organizations like MOSAIC and SUCCESS. According to Noorani, 5,200 of the 20,000 copies published monthly are picked up by ESL teachers who use it as a reader with their advanced students. The magazine is also downloaded from its website 5,000 times a month.

The magazine is offering a \$20,000 scholarship with Ashton College to help four people who have immigrated to Canada in the last five years to upgrade their skills.

Noorani says immigrants are vital to Canada's future. "We have a declining birth rate and we have an aging population," he said. "If we don't help [immigrants] settle in faster, we are losing out because those people could be paying their taxes earlier, right? According to the Conference Board of Canada, a non-profit research organization, \$5 billion a year are lost due to not recognizing immigrant skills and the opportunities they bring to Canada."

The magazine can be viewed at [www.TheCanadianImmigrant.com](http://www.TheCanadianImmigrant.com).

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