

Civil Engineering Newcomer Coordinates His Career Pathway

Some people say being successful means having lots of choices. If that's the case, then Rui (Roy) Alves is definitely successful.

Part of his success is choosing an alternative career.

Welcome to British Columbia!

Alves arrived on July 1, 2015, Canada Day, from Brazil with his fiancée. The highly-educated newcomer had been working in Brazil after departing from his home country of Portugal in 2010.

Since 2007, he has worked in the construction field. He has a Bachelor and Master's Degree in Civil Engineering, specialized in Construction Management. He also has MBA in Foreign Trade Management. In his job in Brazil, he was a Project Manager, involved in six projects, apartment and retail skyscrapers.



Rui's Linked In photo shows his friendly, relaxed approach to life.



Rui and his fiancée, Maria, took this photo in August of 2015, just after arriving in Vancouver.

Arriving in Canada, he faced a choice: getting a credential in a regulated engineering occupation or pursuing management in an unregulated job. He chose management. That led him to the Toronto Construction Trade Company where he now works as a Project Coordinator for a building development in Vancouver's city centre.

Getting Certification

When asked about leaving engineering, he says he hasn't. He is still deeply involved in skills related to work he learned in his engineering degrees, but his approach is from a management point of view. He is not drawing schematics or providing classic engineering work. However, he is using

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such engineering management skills as scheduling. For that purpose, he is pursuing one more educational credential: the PMP, the Project Management Professional designation from the Project Management Institute, an internationally-recognized credential valued by large companies. The program is offered by the organization's West Coast Chapter.

"You have to know terminology," he said in an interview, "The certificate guarantees you have the knowledge."

The path from Canada Day to working as a Project Coordinator took him only a little more than three months. "The construction market is hot right now," Alves explains.



In this 2016 selfie, Rui and Maria capture a skiing experience on Seymour.

Getting Job Search Help

Along the way, he got help from ISSofBC's language classes and Skills Connect for Immigrants program, where an employment counsellor offered tips and suggestions. Alves also worked briefly at a coffee shop to gain some Canadian experience. Through this unrelated work, he gained important understanding of the Canadian workplace. That helped, he says, with adjusting to his current job.

Alves feels comfortable with his position for now. He is strengthening his English communication ability, working on his PMP and trying to enjoy Vancouver life in his free time. One of his first purchases since arriving was a bicycle; he'd like to use it more.

The Future

Alves is also catching up after all the early days of studying English and participating in workshops when he first arrived. The first three months after immigrating are normally physically and mentally exhausting, he says. But he's now in a stable position in which he is building experience, improving his language skill and learning about the Canadian construction sector.

"My Project Manager is Canadian," he said, "I feel very fortunate to be able to work with someone from the locals as it's a great opportunity to provide leverage to my career in Canada."

His choice now? To continue what he's doing and coordinate the next chance that comes his way, which he hopes will be in the same company.

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