

## Name change

Should you adjust your name to fit your new environment?

By Lisa Evans

**W**hile a common name in her native France, Fanny Riguidel has found herself the "butt" of many jokes in English-speaking Canada. "I thought about changing my name, since almost every time I introduced myself, I had to repeat my name a few times, I had to spell it, or I heard the same bad jokes," she says. While she considered using her middle name, Maria, she decided to remain true to her French roots.

If your name is commonly mispronounced, misspelled or misunderstood, the decision to adopt a more English or Western name may have crossed your mind. Not long ago, a University of British Columbia study demonstrated that the practice may even increase your chance of suc-

cess in the labour market.

The study revealed that job applicants with easy-to-pronounce names experienced 40 per cent greater success at getting interview call backs than those with distinct Chinese, Indian or Pakistani names.

Isin Can is aware of the study, but says she wouldn't change her name to get ahead in the job market. Her Turkish name, which means "ray of the sun," is written and pronounced differently in English. The letter "i" is pronounced roughly as the letter "e" in roses, and the "s," written in Turkish with a small tail, is pronounced "sh." "So my name already lost a tail and got an 'i' in English," she laughs.

Mispronunciations are a common occurrence. "When I meet



people for the first time, I have to repeat my name several times," says Can. Most people end up calling her Ocean, which is as close as they can get to the Turkish pronunciation.

While Can won't toy with the idea of English-izing her name, Abdullah Ghori confesses to using Anglo aliases, although he never went through with the legal name change.

"My first job here was in a telemarketing call centre. Since we were dealing with businesses in the United States, I hesitated using my name as it would some-

times cause confusion and rejection. I started using the alias Bob Willis, which seemed to work well," he says.


In addition to that workplace name, Ghori sometimes adopts a pseudonym, Eddie, when making reservations, to avoid the common questions "How do you spell that?" and "Can you repeat that?"

How you choose to identify yourself in your new country is a personal decision. For Riguidel, she has decided to be proud of the name her parents chose for her, "even though it's ridiculous in English," she laughs. 🍁

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