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## An Uplifting Memento

Alexander Modonese

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Equality and dignity: issues and controversies

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Résumé de l'article

Le texte suivant explorera les défis professionnels rencontrés par M. Davood Salimi, un immigrant iranien, qui souffre de problèmes auditifs, de mémoire et de coordination. À la demande de M. Salimi, le nom de sa condition médicale ne sera pas dévoilé. Cet article fournira aux lecteurs et lectrices un sommaire des informations biographiques de M. Salimi, telles que ses compétences professionnelles, en plus d'expliquer les circonstances tragiques qui ont causé sa condition médicale. Les précieux conseils professionnels que l'Association Internationale des Machinistes, Centre de réadaptation d'orientation d'intégration au travail (AIM CROIT) a prodigués à M. Salimi seront aussi brièvement expliqués. De plus, quelques informations sur l'organisme AIM CROIT et ses réalisations seront présentées. Enfin, l'article mettra en lumière les futurs objectifs de carrière de M. Salimi ainsi que ses conseils pour d'autres personnes qui ont des limitations.

## An Uplifting Memento

ALEXANDER MODONESE

AIM CROIT Centre de réadaptation, d'orientation et d'intégration au travail, Montréal, Canada

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### Échos de la communauté • Echoes of the Community

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#### **Abstract**

The following short text will explore the professional challenges faced by Mr. Davood Salimi, an Iranian immigrant who suffers from hearing, memory, and coordination issues. At Salimi's request, the name of his medical condition will not be disclosed. The article will provide readers with a basic summary of Salimi's biographical information, such as his professional qualifications, and explain the tragic circumstances which led to the development of his medical condition. The invaluable career assistance which AIM CROIT provided for Salimi will also be briefly discussed. In addition, the founding of this organisation and its many accomplishments will be succinctly explained. Finally, the article will conclude with a summary of Salimi's future career goals and his advice for other individuals who suffer from disabilities.

**Keywords :** sensory, physical, neurological, accident, employment services

#### **Résumé**

Le texte suivant explorera les défis professionnels rencontrés par M. Davood Salimi, un immigrant iranien, qui souffre de problèmes auditifs, de mémoire et de coordination. À la demande de M. Salimi, le nom de sa condition médicale ne sera pas dévoilé. Cet article fournira aux lecteurs et lectrices un sommaire des informations biographiques de M. Salimi, telles que ses compétences professionnelles, en plus d'expliquer les circonstances tragiques qui ont causé sa condition médicale. Les précieux conseils professionnels que l'Association Internationale des Machinistes, Centre de réadaptation d'orientation d'intégration au travail (AIM CROIT) a prodigués à M. Salimi seront aussi brièvement expliqués. De plus, quelques informations sur l'organisme AIM CROIT et ses réalisations seront présentées. Enfin, l'article mettra en lumière les futurs objectifs de carrière de M. Salimi ainsi que ses conseils pour d'autres personnes qui ont des limitations.

**Mots-clés :** sensorielle, physique, neurologique, accident, service d'employabilité

**O**n Tuesday June 18<sup>th</sup>, I had the distinct pleasure of sitting with Mr. Davood Salimi, a highly intelligent Iranian immigrant with two technical degrees from CEGEP St. Laurent in CAO *Conception Assisté par Ordinateur-CATIA V5*, and Dessin *Assisté par Ordinateur-AutoCAD, SolidWorks*. In addition to these diplomas, Salimi also received a Bachelor's and Master's degree in mechanical engineering in Iran. Unfortunately, Salimi suffers from a medical condition which causes hearing, coordination, and memory issues. At Salimi's request, his official diagnosis will not be disclosed in this article. The medical condition he is afflicted with arose 10 years ago in Iran, due to a tragic bus accident, which killed and injured at least 24 passengers. Despite being initially dismissed by doctors as benign, Salimi's condition has gradually deteriorated since the accident. Due to his condition, Salimi has been forced to give up many hobbies which he previously enjoyed such as sports, dancing, and attending social gatherings. The purpose of this article is to explore the professional challenges which Salimi must deal with due to his condition.

Despite, being articulate and having extremely impressive professional qualifications, Salimi says that the primary obstacles he has faced while searching for employment were due to his speech impediment, which arose shortly after his hearing began to deteriorate. He asserted that, "because of my communication problems, it can be difficult to fully integrate into the [corporate] culture." Although most of Salimi's work as a computer engineer is solitary, he feels that his speech impediment often prevents him from participating in many work related social functions and networking events. He explained that "from [their] point of view of ...they rightfully think I am not suited for the work culture." According to Salimi, even the most well-intended corporations are primarily motivated by profit, rather than a socially conscientious ethos. He sympathetically explained that "I can understand their attitude... corporations are not social workers, they are responsible for the [company] not helping people."

Due to these ongoing challenges, for nearly three years, Salimi has sought the services of AIM CROIT, a non-profit organisation, subsidized by SERVICE QUEBEC, which specializes in providing employment assistance to individuals with physical, sensory, and neurological disabilities. He enthusiastically asserted that "the [staff] at AIM CROIT are very kind, gentle, and helpful. They have given me a helping hand with my job search." Due to his hearing impairment, effectively communicating with prospective employers over the phone is often a difficult, if not impossible task for Salimi. In order to resolve this issue, his employment counsellor, Maria Kyles, often acts a mediator between Salimi and his prospective employers. This ensures that he does not have to forego any career opportunities due to his condition.

One of the most important factors which distinguishes AIM CROIT from other employment counselling organisations, is the ongoing support its staff provides for clients through every step of the job search process. Even after the terms of employment have been finalized, counsellors regularly perform follow-ups with clients to verify their overall satisfaction and, if necessary, the quality of their workplace accommodations. The many accolades which AIM CROIT has received, such as the Diamond Jubilee medal, which was given to the organisation by Queen Elizabeth II in 2013, can largely be attributed to the passion and dedication of their staff. Rest assured that if you require these services, AIM CROIT's employment counsellors will relentlessly advocate for your rights, until you are placed in a safe and respectful work environment. Salimi gratefully asserted that "Everyone [at] [AIMCROIT] has been really helpful."

When asked about what advice he would offer to individuals with disabilities who are actively seeking employment, Salimi explained that "It is important for people with medical conditions to develop good interpersonal communication and basic computer skills." Despite the health challenges he faces, Salimi has not yet experienced any type of discrimination due to his condition. He asserted that "...people in Montreal are very, very kind to people with disabili-



ties and they have a culture that accepts disabilities.” Although he has been living in Quebec for over two years, he regretfully explained that his condition has made it somewhat difficult to acquire the necessary French skills to remain in the province. He asserted that “Because of my condition I cannot manage two languages... so I decided [I] [will] leave Montreal and go to Toronto.” Salimi is also hopeful that the generous grant programs for immigrants, provided by the province of Ontario, will allow him access to the necessary networking opportunities to achieve all of his professional goals.

Despite the challenges Salimi has been confronted with, his optimism and tenacity are truly inspiring. When asked about his future plans, he enthusiastically stated “I am hoping to find an engineering internship in Toronto and eventually a [full] [time] job.” It was truly a remarkable experience to sit with Salimi as he recounted the many strides he has made, despite his medical condition. I am confident that Salimi’s story will inspire readers to pursue all of their professional goals, regardless of what health or personal obstacles they may face.

To offer your support to individuals like Mr. Salimi, please like AIMCROIT’s Facebook and LinkedIn pages.

For more information about our mission and organisation, please refer to the following link:  
<http://www.aimcroitqc.org/en/>