



Critical Aboriginal Labour Market Strategies 2007... Diversity Leaders Call for Business Investment and Hope for Increased Aboriginal Employment in 2007

December 13, 2006
Ottawa

Business Investment

- Invest in Aboriginal people and their communities through education (essential skills/post secondary), health/social issues, understanding and involvement.
- Address relocation issues through assistance and innovative solutions that increase Aboriginal peoples' access to educational and workplace opportunities.
- Think about retaining vs. recruiting an Aboriginal workforce.

Efficient Access to the Aboriginal Workforce

- De-fragment the government/Aboriginal employment system to help employers tap into the Aboriginal workforce.
- Assemble thoughtful data that better aligns labour supply with demand.
- Increase health, wellness and education programs for Aboriginal people.
- Increase access to education (i.e., essential skills development, mentors, career awareness, post secondary opportunities).

Inclusive Schools and Workplaces

- Develop tools to help employers recruit, retain and advance an Aboriginal workforce.

Think Tank Participant Quotes

"Don't think about hiring Aboriginal people, think about retaining them. At Suncor we say... if you aren't job ready, we'll get you there... and when you arrive, we will provide you with a welcome environment."

Heather Kennedy, Vice President Human Resources, Suncor

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"We need to move these ideas and opportunities forward to ensure that the stakeholders (government, Aboriginal communities, business and other organizations) clearly see the opportunities. We need more business leaders to come forward. The time to act is now because the economy is strong. We need to build on the passion that currently exists."

Kirk Dudtschak, Regional President, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, NW Ontario, RBC Financial Group

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"Aboriginal students do not drop out of school so much because of the quality of the education, state of their books or the colour of their classrooms. They drop out because it is far too acceptable and common in our First Nations to do so. This is a grass root problem that only we, as a First Nations people can and must address."

John Bernard, President, Donna Cona Ltd.

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"There are so many parts to this issue, it is complex. Education is the key. If we all work on the little things that make a difference, it will all work out."

The Honourable Oscar Lathlin, Minister, Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, Government of Manitoba

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"Canadian employers should take on the challenge of attracting and retaining the aboriginal segment of our workforce with the same passion and competitive spirit we do when attracting and retaining every other diverse and emerging talent pipeline. Not only is it the right thing to do for the health and growth of our individual businesses, but also for a sense of national pride and giving back to our communities."

Angie Goldsmith, Divisional Staffing Manager, Retail, The Home Depot