

Aboriginal Peoples

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The challenge of attracting, retaining and advancing Aboriginal people is a growing priority for Canada's mining industry. Already, mining and minerals constitutes the largest industrial employer of Aboriginal talent in Canada and it is sure to expand. As mining executives have learned, one of the greatest challenges to activating a new mine is to attract skilled workers to remote areas. According to Statistics Canada, 1300 communities in Canada have a population with more than 20% Aboriginal makeup. Of these, 1100 are within 200 km. of an operating mine. And these communities are the site of Canada's only real baby boom, making the youth of these remote communities the best source of a growing workforce in mining.

Profile

Labour force

- Internationally, Canada's Aboriginal population, at almost 4% of the Canadian population, represents one of the highest ratios of indigenous people to a nation's total population.
- Aboriginal Canadians are in the midst of Canada's only current baby boom: half of the Aboriginal population (48%) is 24 or younger. The median age for Aboriginal people in Canada is 27, whereas the median age for Canadians is 41.
- In 2006 the employment rate for Aboriginal peoples of core working age (25-54) was 65.8%, up from 61.2% in 2001. This figure compares to 81.6% for non-Aboriginal peoples in 2006, up from 80.3% in 2001.

Education and training

- In publishing the 2006 census results, StatsCan estimated 44% of the Aboriginal population has graduated from high school. Other estimates:
 - 14% hold trade credentials
 - 19% have a college diploma
 - 8% have a university degree
- In 2006, 42,900 Aboriginal people (8%) held a university degree, compared with 26,300, or 6%, in 2001. Yet these numbers fall far short of the national average of 48% of Canadian adults 25-64 who have completed a college or university education (in this area Canada tops the OECD countries).



Target sheet contributed to Mining for Diversity by the Aboriginal Human Resources Council.

NOTE: Mining for Diversity: An Employer's Guide to Attract, Recruit and Retain a Diverse Workforce, does not include specific information on Aboriginal peoples and innovative human resource practices. For information on the inclusion of Aboriginal people in your workforce, see Mastering Aboriginal Inclusion in Mining, product of MiHR and the Aboriginal Human Resource Council.

In mining

- Canada's mining sector is the largest industrial employer of Aboriginal people in Canada.
- Aboriginal peoples make up approximately 4.8% of the minerals and metals industry workforce. This is well above the nearly 4% Aboriginal presence in the Canadian population, and higher than other industries.
- At Cameco Corporation's uranium mines in northern Saskatchewan 51% of mine site employees are of Aboriginal background.
- At the Diavik mine in the Northwest Territories – jointly owned between Rio Tinto and Harry Winston Diamond Mines Ltd. – about a third of the northern workforce is Aboriginal-born.
- In Northern Ontario, at the De Beers Victor Mine, more than 30% of 905 new jobs have gone to Aboriginal people.
- When INCO (now Vale INCO) opened its mine at Voisey's Bay in 2003, more than half of its workforce was Inuit and Innu.
- Mining companies have vigorously promoted the growth of Aboriginal-owned companies. Diavik, for example, has spent more than \$1 billion on Aboriginal procurement.

Challenges identified by the mining industry

- The HR needs of mining company are becoming ever more sophisticated, demanding a more educated and well-trained workforce.
- Aboriginal people do not often identify mining as a career area of choice, partially from misunderstanding of the industry, and partially from intercultural conflicts that need to be addressed sensitively and in a spirit of consultation (e.g. the belief of some that the underground is the place of their ancestors).

Top hints for recruiting Aboriginal people in mining

- Contact the HR counselor or Economic Development Officer (EDO) of nearby Aboriginal communities to discuss ways of accelerating employment opportunities.
- Send job announcements to band offices, HR offices, and chiefs of neighboring Aboriginal communities.
- Publish job announcements in Aboriginal media, or on Aboriginal radio.
- Contact and consult with the Aboriginal liaison or Aboriginal student counselor at regional colleges, regarding Aboriginal talent soon to graduate.
- Promote your company and careers in mining among high schools and adult training centres in nearby Aboriginal communities.
- When interviewing Aboriginal candidates for jobs, include an Aboriginal manager on the panel.
- Consult with Mastering Aboriginal Inclusion in Mining, a five-module series with much guidance on expanding recruitment and retention practices with Aboriginal employees.

Top hints for retaining and advancing Aboriginal people in mining

- Ensure that new employees are given a thorough welcome, answering all questions;
- Ensure that the new employees' spouses are welcomed and informed as well;
- Install a mentoring system, it will give new Aboriginal employees internal support;
- Acknowledge Aboriginal culture and Aboriginal thinking in the workplace, for example, by celebrating Aboriginal Day on June 21st;
- Make available training programs for advancement;

Top resources related to Aboriginal human resources

Mastering Aboriginal Inclusion in Mining

A customized five-part self-study module series; *Mastering Aboriginal Inclusion in Mining* module, has been developed by MIHR in partnership with the Aboriginal Human Resource Council. The series complements the council's flagship *Mastering Aboriginal Inclusion* program, and delivers employers in the mining sector with the tools and knowledge they need to create workplaces-of-choice for Aboriginal people.

The Aboriginal Human Resource Council www.aboriginalhr.ca

An Aboriginal human resource organization recognized as Canada's leading innovators in Aboriginal recruitment, retention and advancement. The council has several products and services that help employers create workplaces of inclusion for Aboriginal people.