

Module One Tip Sheet

Questions to Help Guide Development of an Aboriginal Inclusion Strategy

STEP ONE: ALIGNING GOALS AND STRATEGIES

ENSURING A SEAMLESS FIT BETWEEN AN INCLUSION STRATEGY AND THE CORPORATE STRATEGY

An Aboriginal inclusion strategy will only be successful when it is aligned with corporate goals. This alignment is the most important factor in reaching inclusion goals successfully.

- What are the goals of your organization's inclusion strategy?
- What is your organization's diversity policy and its benefits?
- What are your organization's core economic goals (such as new business development, new customer growth, maintaining customer segments, partnerships and strategic alliances)?
- Are the economic goals of your inclusion strategy clearly aligned with these economic goals?
- What are your organization's core social goals (such as justice, health, community development)?
- Are the social goals of your inclusion strategy clearly aligned with these social goals?
- What are your organization's core environmental goals (such as sustainability, ensuring clean water and air, reclaiming environments from damage caused by operations)?
- Are the environmental goals of your inclusion strategy clearly aligned with these environmental goals?
- Does your organization's Aboriginal inclusion strategy support its efforts in corporate social responsibility and industry leadership?
- Are measurement methods in place to indicate whether progress in Aboriginal inclusion leads to progress in achieving corporate goals?
- What performance criteria are measured?
- In which areas has your organization set goals to indicate that it is meeting its inclusion goals?
 - Training and skills investment?
 - Recruiting channels and recruiting methods?
 - Turnover and retention rates?
 - Human resource community partnerships?
 - Internal inclusion leaders and change agents?
- In what specific ways are managers held accountable for meeting these inclusion goals?
- What progress has been made in the arena of perceptions and attitudes among employees and customers regarding Aboriginal inclusion?

STEP TWO: ASSESSMENT

TRANSLATING STRATEGIES AND GOALS INTO STEPS

The organization seeking to be an employer-of-choice for Aboriginal talent recognizes the importance of diversity, equity and inclusion.

Diversity: the state of a diverse workforce.

Equity: the goal of ensuring fair treatment of all employees.

Inclusion: the achievement of total equity, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, in the workplace.



The process begins with assessments of an organization's culture of diversity, employee engagement, employee development and sensitivity to Aboriginal inclusion.

Assess Diversity (Formally or Informally)

- Which diversity practices are in place in your organization?
- How long have those practices been in place in your organization?
- How carefully are these efforts tracked and measured?
- Which diversity practices are working and which are not?
- Which diversity practices can, or have been, adapted to the Aboriginal labour force?
- What new approaches to inclusion are indicated by the diversity assessment?

Assessing the Need for Change

- Have employees been surveyed about their attitudes toward Aboriginal employees and Aboriginal culture to determine the need for diversity/Aboriginal awareness training?
- Have Aboriginal employees been surveyed on the effect the corporate culture has had on them to determine the need for changes to the corporate culture?

Identify the Obstacles to Improved Inclusion, Recruitment and Retention

- Have managers and employees been surveyed to identify obstacles or what must improve in management and employee perceptions and attitudes to achieve Aboriginal inclusion?
- What has been learned from exit interviews with Aboriginal employees about the obstacles/what must improve in management and employee perceptions and attitudes to achieve Aboriginal inclusion?
- Have the barriers to improved Aboriginal participation in your workforce been assessed?
- Are there aspects of your organization's image and corporate identity that discourage Aboriginal people from applying?

Assess Your Aboriginal Labour Force

- Have you consulted your organization's Manpower Planning Forecast? If your organization has not made a forecast of skills and training that will be required, are you prepared to pursue and conduct such a forecast?
- Is there an employee support program, including a mentoring program, formal or informal, for Aboriginal employees?
- Are there job coaches for Aboriginal employees?
- Has your organization communicated with Aboriginal training centres in your area?
- If so, are the training centres providing training aligned with your corporate needs?

STEP THREE: COMMITMENT

WHY A SENIOR-LEVEL STRATEGY IS THE ONLY ROUTE TO SUCCESS

The organization committed to Aboriginal inclusion is guided by its highest leadership, with explicit policies, goals, targets and timetables vigorously supported by senior executives.

Strategic Commitment

- Does your organization have a business case for Aboriginal inclusion?
- Does your organization have a strategy for Aboriginal inclusion?
- Are all managers acquainted with this strategy or policy?
- Are all employees acquainted with this strategy or policy?

Leadership Commitment



- Has your organization’s executive leadership demonstrated serious commitment to Aboriginal inclusion goals?
- Has every level of your organization shown comparable commitment?
 - Vice presidents and senior managers?
 - Front-line management?
 - All employees?
- Who are the most important change agents in your organization?
- Are managers held accountable for improved inclusion practices?

Implementation

- Has a manager or department been assigned to champion Aboriginal relations in your organization?
- Is there an advisory or steering committee that oversees Aboriginal inclusion?
- How often does such a group meet?
- Does such a group reflect a wide representation of your organization?
- Does such a group have a written statement of purpose or mission statement?
- What levels of seniority are represented by the group?

Communication

- Are communications continually promoting and expanding your organization’s inclusion efforts?
- To what extent does your organization document and commit to its Aboriginal initiatives in its annual report and in other key communication with its stakeholders?

Workplace Inclusion Training for All Employees

- Is your organization providing training to improve understanding and communication among employees?
- What diversity training does your organization currently provide its employees?
- What emphasis is given to Aboriginal people’s culture and history and Aboriginal inclusion in that training?

Recognition of Diversity in the Workplace

- Does your organization take steps to recognize and celebrate the different cultures of its employee base?
- Are efforts made to include an appropriate Aboriginal presence in the workplace, as in the use of Aboriginal art, music, food or culture?
- Does your company celebrate special events such as Aboriginal Day - June 21?
- Does your company recognize and promote Aboriginal achievements?

STEP FOUR: EMPLOYMENT

PATHWAYS TO IMPROVED RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

The organization committed to inclusion engages in practices which encourage the recruitment, retention and advancement of Aboriginal people.

Taking Steps to Improve Aboriginal Recruitment

- What approaches and systems are in place to attract workplace talent?
- Have these systems proven effective in locating and hiring Aboriginal talent?
- Have these systems been modified or adapted to target Aboriginal talent pools?
- Does your organization have a distinctive recruiting strategy for Aboriginal talent?



- What human resource systems are in place to improve Aboriginal recruitment?
- Does your company conduct an Employment Systems Review?
- Has the Employment Systems Review identified barriers to Aboriginal recruitment?
- In those jobs where experience offers the equivalent value of credentials, has such experience (in the absence of credentials) been acknowledged and respected by recruiting officers at all stages of the recruiting process?
- Are current Aboriginal employees involved in the recruitment of more Aboriginal employees, whether formally or through informal networking?
- Does your organization promote jobs in Aboriginal publications?
- Does your organization investigate recruiting through Aboriginal Student Centres at colleges and universities?

Taking Steps to Improve Aboriginal Retention

- What are the retention rates of your organization?
- What are the distinctive challenges to retention in your organization?
- Is there a setting in your organization where Aboriginal people can meet one another?
- Is there a mentoring program, formal or informal, for new Aboriginal employees?
- Does your organization conduct exit interviews?
- Has your organization developed Performance Improvement Plans?
- Have Aboriginal employees who have been with your organization more than two years been offered training opportunities?
- Do Aboriginal employees recognize and understand the importance of career paths within your organization?
- What workplace readiness and support systems already in place at your organization can be adapted for newly hired Aboriginal employees?

Being an Employer-of-Choice

- Does your organization offer flex time?
- Does your organization offer day care?
- Are there options for telecommuting?
- Have you established if any of these systems have proven useful to Aboriginal employees?

Learning and Skills Development

- Does your organization have links to educational and training institutions?
- Have you established whether your organization has nurtured career development initiatives?
- Are these initiatives monitored?
- Are these initiatives effective?
- Has your organization identified its future need for essential skills?

STEP FIVE: ALLIANCES

COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

An organization increases market and profit share and its attraction as partner-of-choice through its ability to seek out, nurture and support new initiatives involving Aboriginal communities and institutions, partners and suppliers.

Relationships with Aboriginal Communities

- Have leaders from your organization met with leaders of neighbouring Aboriginal communities?
- In what areas have your managers consulted with the leaders of these communities?



- What developmental issues – such as literacy, work experience and youth leadership – have been identified as human resource opportunities?
- Has your organization been recognized formally by Aboriginal communities?
- What has been your organization's involvement in Aboriginal community development?
- Have managers from your organization participated in Aboriginal community events?

Recognition of the Aboriginal Market Segment

- Has your organization designated a special manager or team to manage the Aboriginal market?
- What is the unique Aboriginal market for your products/services?
- What is the exact demographic makeup of that Aboriginal market?
- What is your organization's experience in advertising or communicating through specific Aboriginal media such as Aboriginal newspapers, magazines, radio stations or the APTN television network?

Efforts to Reach Aboriginal Youth

- Has your organization participated in job fairs?
- Were they successful? Why / why not?
- Does your organization have a scholarship program for Aboriginal students?
- Is your organization involved with pre-employment training?
- Does your organization hire Aboriginal summer students?
- Does your organization hire Aboriginal interns?
- Does your organization sponsor Aboriginal events?
- Has your organization provided sponsorships to Aboriginal communities?
- Are these youth initiatives linked to corporate social responsibility?

Assistance in the Growth of Aboriginal Enterprises

- What amount does your organization spend annually in procurement from Aboriginal businesses?
- Is this year's procurement from Aboriginal suppliers higher than last year's?
- Does your organization tender for "set-asides" that give prominence to Aboriginal-owned businesses in the procurement process?
- Has your organization provided training or mentoring for procurement sources when they are Aboriginal businesses?
- Does your organization consult an inventory of Aboriginal-owned businesses? (Go to Industry Canada's site strategis.ic.gc.ca and follow the links: Company Directories, Canadian Company Capabilities, Search, Aboriginal Businesses).
- Has your organization ever entered into a joint venture with an Aboriginal partner?
- Does your organization encourage joint ventures and strategic alliances with Aboriginal partners?
- Have joint ventures and strategic alliances with Aboriginal partners been encouraged among your organization's contractors?
- What training and educational initiatives have been developed with Aboriginal partners?
- What opportunities for partnering exist currently?

STEP SIX: MEASUREMENT

ONLY WITH MEASUREMENT CAN THERE BE REAL IMPROVEMENT

The organization of inclusion skillfully monitors and measures its efforts in inclusion so as to foster continuous improvement and the simultaneous attainment of both corporate and inclusion goals.



Establishing Baselines and Setting Goals

- What are the performance criteria that have been established to measure progress toward your organization's inclusion goals?
- Has a Workforce Analysis been conducted to assess:
 - The demographic profile of your current workforce?
 - Turnover expectations?
 - Training and skills requirements?
 - Recruiting and retention rates?
- Has a human resources needs forecast been used to determine your organization's future labour force requirements?
- Has your organization conducted a Workforce Availability Study assessing the current available Aboriginal workforce in your market regions, including:
 - Demographic profile?
 - Education and training levels?
 - Recruiting and retention goals?
- What targets (in percentages and in gross numbers) can the available Aboriginal workforce meet in the short-term, medium-term and long-term?
- What Aboriginal workforce targets are projected for labour, skilled careers, management and senior management positions - also in short-term, medium-term and long-term?

Measuring Aboriginal Inclusion

- How is your organization measuring the core objectives of its Aboriginal inclusion strategy?
- Have baseline practices and benchmarks been established?
- Is Aboriginal recruitment measured?
- Is Aboriginal retention measured?
- Is Aboriginal advancement measured?
- What relevant benchmarking has been done in these areas, both within the organization and within its industry sector?
- Are your organization's efforts in corporate social responsibility measured annually?

Measure the Return on Training Investment (ROTI)

- Does your organization analyze its ROTI, or Return on Training Investment?
- Has your organization's resource allocation in training led to effective returns?
- Has your organization clearly improved its competitive advantage as a result of its training investment?

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