



ABORIGINAL HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL OF CANADA
CONSEIL POUR LE DEVELOPPEMENT DES RESSOURCES HUMAINES AUTOCHTONES DU CANADA

Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council of Canada

Fourth Annual Champions Meeting ~

Inclusion Solutions - Creating Employment

December 13, 2002

Introduction

Since November 2001, when the Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council of Canada's Champions last met, the Council has developed a highly *focused Strategic and Operational Plan*. It has developed *inclusion solutions* by partnering on a number of innovative projects that create employment and training and identify effective Aboriginal human resource practices. At the upcoming Champions meeting, Champions will learn more about the Council's strategy and workplan activities. They will be asked to identify the ways that they can engage other organizations and leaders in the Council's strategy and workplan.

Questions for Champions

1. *In what way(s) are you and your organization currently aligned, or would like to be better aligned, with the Council's medium term objectives?*
2. *If you were to identify three new "Champions" from your list of contacts who would they be, how would they fit with the Council's medium term objectives, and what would be the impact of their involvement?*

A Lazer-like Plan

Last year Champion Tim Penner, President, Procter and Gamble Canada Inc. challenged the Council to focus its planning and activities with "lazer-like" accuracy. In 2002, the Honourable Ethel Blondin-Andrew encouraged the Council to further develop its role as a pillar in the *Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agreement (AHRDA) Strategy* - HRDC's \$1.6 Billion dollar community-based strategy. One of the main accomplishments of the Council's Board of Directors this year was the completion of a *Strategic and Operational Plan*. The Board, using a rigorous planning process called a Results-based Management Framework (RMAF) completed this plan. Central to the Council's RMAF is a logic model with short, medium and long term objectives. For the period 2002 - 2004 the Council's medium-term objectives are:

- *Increased number of employers that recruit, retain and promote Aboriginal people;*
- *Aboriginal HR strategies and templates implemented by demand and supply organizations across Canada;*
- *Aboriginal people with the skills and learning needed for employment.*

The rigour with which this plan was undertaken by the Board of Directors means that the Council is now very focused in its direction. Activities have focused on three main areas: (Component 1000) *Education and Advocacy*, (Component 2000) *HRD Knowledge Development and Transfer* and (Component 3000) *Innovative Partnership Clusters* with AHRDA Holders. Of these three, the majority of the Council's level of effort and resources has been spent on the AHRDA component of the plan.

The Council's management is undertaking a variety of projects and activities that meet the objectives of the new plan. Four of these activities and projects are described in this next section. One example has been selected from each of the three strategic areas with the exception of the AHRDA component where two examples are provided.

Activities and Results

As part of its workplan for component 1000 - *Education and Awareness*, the Council has developed a diagnostic tool to help employers to determine the degree to which they are organizations of inclusion. The Council has developed an inclusion model that tracks the efforts being taken by employers to achieve its commitment to inclusion. It is an easy to use diagnostic tool that HR managers can use to establish an inclusion baseline. The tool has been used successfully by a number of employers with excellent results. The development of this tool is part of a larger exercise, described in the Council's strategy and workplan to provide HR practitioners within medium/large companies with the necessary tools to understand, commit to and to implement inclusion strategies in order to more effectively recruit, hire, promote and retain Aboriginal people. The Council uses the language of inclusion as a framework for these tools.

For component 2000, *Knowledge Development and Transfer*, the Council has launched its *Inclusion Network* also in response to requests from HR Managers and AHRDA Holders for effective ways that Aboriginal talent can connect with employers in order to increase Aboriginal employment or training opportunities. The Inclusion Network consists of a suite of web-based tools that practitioners can use to exchange specialized HR information as well as to broadcast jobs and training opportunities. The Council's database contains a definitive list of 400+ AHRDA's and a map showing the location of Aboriginal employment centres across Canada. The broadcast features of the network are very powerful offering the ability to describe the opportunity and to broadcast in either direction, i.e. supply and demand.

This network was focus tested extensively with employers and with AHRDA Holders. In November, the Inclusion Network was "soft-launched" at the Montreal AHRDA Conference and over 600 jobs opportunities were broadcast directly to AHRDA Holders during one of the conference sessions. And this is just the beginning! Over a period of time, the *Inclusion Network* will bring together a community of practitioners, create employment and bring labourmarket supply and demand together. It will provide a vehicle for employers and AHRDA's to document their most promising HR practices. Most importantly, the network offers a way for AHRDA Holders to tap directly into Canada's labourmarkets and for employers to source Aboriginal talent and to become affiliate members of the Council. This is a win/win/win value proposition for AHRDA Holders for employers and for the Council.

As part of Component 3000, *Innovative Partnership Clusters*, the Council has been working in a partnership with the Alberta Aboriginal Apprenticeship Committee, a steering group made up of employers, AHRDA Holders, education facilities and government in a multi-party project in the trades area. Recently, the Alberta Aboriginal Apprenticeship Project (AAP) did its official launch of this five-year project that will provide classroom and workplace training for apprentices resulting in a trades certificate for up to 180 Aboriginal people. With three pilot locations located in Edmonton, High Level and Ft McMurray, project managers are now at the project implementation phase with Aboriginal people currently enrolled in the system. Unique to the project is an innovative "*ThinkTrades*" career awareness campaign that will increase understanding of the apprenticeship system and trades-related employment opportunities. The project is a collaboration of Alberta AHRDA's and industry with the support of federal and provincial governments and an important foundation in the Council's national trades agenda. The

AAAP provides a template to encourage other Aboriginal groups in Canada to enter trades labourmarkets. Since June 2002, the Council has been working very closely with two AHRDA's in the Vancouver area on a co-ordinated trades strategy. Other groups in Canada have been encouraged by the AAAP launch and have been asking the Council how they can start a similar kind of project.

A second example of the Council's component 3000 work with AHRDA Holders is that of its work in career awareness. Specifically, the Council has partnered with some leading experts on career counselling to introduce *Guiding Circles* as one product in the effort to address Aboriginal skills and learning in life-long career planning. *Guiding Circles* is a self-exploration package that combines traditional teachings with sound contemporary self-investigation to arrive at personal interests, skill potential, values, personal connections, patterns and balance. Individuals move along their journey by reaching their outcomes set forth in the guide to gain better understanding of themselves and their skills potential that will help determine career direction. Authors Dr. Rod McCormick, Dr. Norm Amundson and Gray Poehnell developed *Guiding Circles* as an easy to use first step in career development and have partnered with the Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council for its publication and delivery. The *Guiding Circles* pilot is also an important piece in the Council's efforts to encourage a life-long approach to learning. A goal for 2003/4 is to facilitate for AHRDA's the availability of more career information from sector councils and from other organizations that purvey career information. The Council believes that the provision of a wider range of career information at an early age will help Aboriginal youth to set career goals and acquire the skills and learning they need to fulfill those goals.

These are just four examples of the Council's workplan activities as they address its strategic plan and short/medium term objectives. At their upcoming meeting, Champions will receive a more thorough overview of the many activities that currently make up the Council's workplan. Among some of the other projects and activities that the Champions will learn about are these.

- The *Saskatchewan INROADS Project* ~ the first ever INROADS internship project aimed at providing internship opportunities for talented Aboriginal graduates.
- Development of the *Aboriginal Inclusion Model* as a planning tool for supply and demand organizations
- *TekNoWave* ~ A comprehensive national program to develop world class information technology professionals within Canada's Aboriginal community;
- *ROI: Return on Inclusion Workshops - introducing Aboriginal inclusion principles*
- *Aboriginal Employment Initiative: Phase II* ~ a Winnipeg-based Aboriginal employment initiative a project to target employment and training opportunities for Aboriginal people in small business.
- Vancouver/British Columbia *Aboriginal Co-ordinated Trades Strategy*
- *Forestry Communications Project*
- *Lessons Learned # 1* - Lessons about Project design and implementation
- *Speakers Corner* - communications initiative to promote the council by experts and opinion leaders.
- *Project with the Canadian Trucking Human Resource Sector Council*

These projects and activities are all examples of the Council's inclusion solutions. They are establishing the Council's reputation as a serious HR player - an organization that is identifying and implementing inclusion solutions to the most difficult and complex issues underlying Aboriginal employment.

The Council recently received approval in July 2002 for infrastructure funding in the amount of \$1.748 million over twenty-one months ending March 2004. The Council's infrastructure funding provides support for staff salaries, office and other administration costs. In addition, the Council received and expended project funding from HRDC for a variety of projects in which it partners. Using these funds it also leverages project resources from various provincial and federal departments, private sector partners and from AHRDAS. Among the client group networks in which the council works, there continues to be some misconceptions about the level of funding resources available to the Council. Clients are sometimes of the perception that the Council has far more resources than it actually does or, they may have unrealistic expectations about the Council's ability to be responsive to individual client requests across Canada. Other clients have the mistaken notion that the Council is a funding agency. These misconceptions can be corrected through better communications.

Champions and their Support to the Council

The Council needs the support of its Champions both for its strategic directions and for its workplan activities. To date, support by Champions has been repeatedly expressed in terms of their moral and financial support, advice, technical expertise and by representing the Council's interests at speaking engagements, meetings and in other ways. In some cases Champions have put their full support behind a specific project. For example, among the corporate members, Syncrude has been a vital player in the Alberta Aboriginal Apprenticeship Project. Procter and Gamble has brokered the first ever Aboriginal INROADS project. RBC Royal Bank has provided support to the Council's ROI: Inclusion Workshop. Weyerhaeuser has been instrumental in the development of the Saskatchewan-based multi party training strategy and the follow-up communications and career awareness project aimed at youth. Donna Cona has provided leadership and "backing" to the TekNoWave project that will be showcased at the Champions reception this year. These are just a few of the ways that corporate Champions are providing direct support to the Council's strategic plan and to its workplan activities. Government and Aboriginal groups are also providing significant support in the form of financial assistance, expertise and in other ways.

HRDC has provided financial support for the Council's infrastructure. Various government departments have played an important role helping the Council to network, partner and collaborate. The private sector has provided investments in the Council's projects, product and service developments and it has carefully guided the organization in developing its strategy and workplan for demand side organizations. The five Aboriginal AHRDA Accords are also playing a positive role with the Council collaborating on specific projects and activities where there is a direct fit and they are providing direction to the Council in the development of products and services that meet Aboriginal client needs.

The Council's management and Board of Directors would like to acknowledge the support of its Champions and would like to build on this support in ways that leverage the resources of the organization still further. One of the key challenges is to seek the engagement of other organizations and leaders that are prepared to join the Council's mission *to increase participation of Aboriginal people in Canadian labourmarkets*. Who should be engaged and how would this engagement be demonstrated? This is the subject of the Champions meeting on December 13, 2002.

Champions Meeting Worksheet: “Collaboration and Engagement”

To facilitate plenary and group discussion at the champions meeting a worksheet has been prepared with a list of questions and recommendations to stimulate thinking and to frame the discussion around the themes of collaboration and engagement.

Medium Term Objective:

Champions will engage other organizations and leaders in the Council's medium term objectives.

- (1) Increased numbers of employers that recruit, retain and promote Aboriginal people;
- (2) Aboriginal HR strategies and templates implemented by supply and demand organizations; and,
- (3) Aboriginal people with the skills and learning needed for employment.

The Council's Strategic Orientation

1. Applied research plays an important role in the design of the Council's products and services
2. The Council's strategy seeks engagements that result in increased connections between employers and AHRDA Holders.
3. A focus of the Council's strategy is to connect the work of other sector councils with the network of AHRDA Holders.
4. The Council's projects and activities are innovative in their design because they are making effort to address some complex HR challenges.
5. Aboriginal participation in trades labourmarkets represents one of the Council's main agendas.
6. Monitoring and evaluation is regularly undertaken in all aspects of the Council's work.

Questions

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