



Seventh Annual Champions' Event

Mastering Aboriginal Inclusion - Leadership and Engagement

Discussion Paper

December 5-6, 2005

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



Leaders in Mastering Aboriginal Inclusion

Networks of Change

Networks of Change is a unique partnership between the Council and a group of select companies and organizations who are leaders in Aboriginal Inclusion. These companies have joined with the Council to design, build and test tools for advancing inclusion in the workplace. The commitment and dedication of these companies and organizations will lead to new insights and will provide the formative framework for launching the Mastering Aboriginal Inclusion initiative nationally.

We gratefully acknowledge the growing number of Networks of Change members:

Diavik
NorTerra Inc.
PLATO Learning (Canada) Inc.
RBC Financial
Government of Saskatchewan
Seabase Limited
SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute for Applied Science and Technology)
Suncor Energy Inc.
Syncrude Canada Limited
TransCanada Pipelines Limited
Weyerhaeuser Company Limited

What is Aboriginal inclusion? It is the ensemble of workplace strategies and practices that lead to:

***Accelerated recruitment, retention and advancement of Aboriginal people;
A workplace culture of equity, respect, and cross-cultural sensitivity;
A rich and consultative relationship with Aboriginal communities;
A reliance on Aboriginal suppliers and service providers;
A commitment to improve on all of the above.***

Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council of Canada



Mastering Aboriginal Inclusion - Leadership and Engagement

“We’ve got to be willing to stick our necks out and be activists for Aboriginal inclusion. All of us here have great networks of influence and we need to engage in some gentle arm-twisting to bring people along to our way of thinking.”

*Jim Carter,
President and COO
Syncrude Canada Ltd.
speaking at the
Sixth Annual
Champions Meeting,
Dec. 2004*

As we approach the end of the fifth year of the new millennium, Canada is enjoying a level of prosperity rarely experienced before. Fueled by high commodity prices, the sharp increase in our “petro-dollar”, expanding international trade and modest levels of inflation, Canadians continue to enjoy a standard of living that is the envy of the world. In stark contrast to this glowing impression however, are pockets of persistent poverty, illiteracy, shocking health statistics, chronically high unemployment levels and other indicators of life that are more consistent with third world conditions than with one of the richest countries in the world. This is the situation too many of Canada’s First Nation, Métis and Inuit find themselves in. Whether due to historical reasons, socio-economic policies, evolving local governance structures, racism or a myriad of other complex causes, the effect is obvious – drastically different standards of living for one of Canada’s most vulnerable minorities.

It will become increasingly critical for the continuation of Canada’s prosperity, and for the maintenance of its international reputation and pride, that fundamental changes be made to our social and economic fabric in order to develop a more inclusive, tolerant and just society. This is not only a moral necessity but an economic one as well. This, in effect, is the mission of the Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council of Canada – to work with Canadian business leaders to encourage and facilitate the establishment of a more inclusive workplace for Aboriginal people. The socio-economic challenges are legion – but when compounded with dire issues such as prejudice, negative attitudes and lack of trust, the benefits of full participation in Canada’s economy remain elusive for too many. The Council firmly believes that we, as a nation, need to solve these social ills and develop healthy and productive workplaces for all Canadians. We must expand the support for our mission and capitalize on the largely untapped human capital resources of our Aboriginal communities for the benefit of not only the Aboriginal people themselves, but for the benefit of the Canadian economy and all of its citizens.

The Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council of Canada (the Council) was established in 1998 as a public-private partnership with the mission to increase Aboriginal Peoples’ participation in the Canadian labour market. As part of its two-tiered governance structure, the Champions provide the Council with broad strategic direction and access to an extensive range of expertise and knowledge to facilitate the achievement of its mission. The Champions are comprised of leaders from government, Aboriginal organizations, business, education, and labour organizations across Canada.



Mastering Aboriginal Inclusion - Leadership and Engagement

The Champions

The Council's Champions are nationally recognized leaders from Aboriginal communities, from the upper tiers of Governments, Labour & Education and from the highest ranks of pivotal Canadian industries. These men and women are equally compelled by the Council's mission to improve Aboriginal peoples' participation in the Canadian economy.

The Champions' annual events provide an opportunity for members to respond to critical skills, learning and employment related policy issues which in turn informs the Council's strategic direction and roles in the national agenda. In 2003, the Champions expressed a strong interest in bringing the issues of Aboriginal inclusion to the national stage. As a result, the 2004 Champions' Event focused upon the importance of mastering Aboriginal inclusion in the workforce. The Champions enthusiastically embraced this challenge and directed the Board and senior management to develop a full program strategy. For this reason, in 2005, the focus of the discussion will be upon the Mastering Aboriginal Inclusion program strategy.

Mastering Aboriginal Inclusion in the Workplace

The Council's Mastering Aboriginal Inclusion program is designed to encourage employers to embrace the principles of inclusion and adopt changes within the workplace that are more accommodating of Aboriginal people. The membership-based program helps companies learn how to recruit and retain Aboriginal employees. Through its Board members, the Champions and its many partners, the Council has accumulated specialized expertise and knowledge on Aboriginal inclusion. It offers a fresh perspective and innovative mindset to employment and human resource issues. For its Mastering Aboriginal Inclusion program, the Council is enlisting some of our nation's best experts to discover ways of creating solutions to Canada's skill gaps and matching work place needs with Aboriginal talent. The goal is nothing short of creating a healthy, productive and inclusive workplace for Aboriginal people.

A key element of the Mastering Aboriginal Inclusion program is a unique seven-stage model that assesses organizations' capabilities and capacities for Aboriginal inclusion. The cornerstone of the program is an assessment tool that is used to place companies on a seven-stage Inclusion continuum. Introductory modules provide the context and information necessary for companies to get started on improved recruitment and retention strategies for Aboriginal people. Practical "how to" modules ensure that managers and HR staff have the necessary skills and information. This will be available on-line and through other formats which are compatible with organizations' needs. The first two drafts of these modules have been completed and were reviewed by focus groups in Toronto, Calgary and Winnipeg during 2005. The remaining modules will be completed and tested in 2006.



Champions and the Networks of Change Partners are the Catalysts

“As Co-Chairs of the Council’s Board, we are very pleased with the positive response we have received regarding the Mastering Aboriginal Inclusion program. The number of new companies joining this is growing rapidly as this exciting initiative takes root.”

*Anne Noonan,
Rob G. Johnston,
Co-Chairs
of the Council’s
Board of Directors*

“We must build bridges to advance Networks of Change and Aboriginal Inclusion. After all, this is a room of Champions... a room which understands that trust, courage and leadership will help pave the way – a room that gets it. Let’s make the connections!”

*Charles Coffey,
Co-Chair of the
Board of Champions*

This membership-based program is seeking increased investment from 50 employers across the country from all sectors. Members will be instrumental in providing input and feedback into the program to ensure it evolves to meet their changing needs. The program will be designed by the private sector, for the private sector. Once finalized, by the partners and investors, Mastering Aboriginal Inclusion will be ready for the extension of the program to a national audience to create wholesale changes in employers’ abilities to recruit and retain Aboriginal people. As the Mastering Aboriginal Inclusion program advances, new sectors of the economy will be embraced in turn enriching the program and making it even more responsive to private sector needs. The end result sought by the Council and the program will be increased and accelerated Aboriginal employment in a broader range of sectors, as well as improved retention and representation of Aboriginal peoples through all levels of organizations.

Connectors and The Tipping Point

The 2004 Champions’ event proved to be a substantial success on a number of fronts. Participants from across the country met in Ottawa with a single purpose – to increase the participation of Aboriginal people in the workplace. The journey to aboriginal inclusion will be a long journey, but the energy and enthusiasm apparent at last year’s event gives reason to believe support for inclusion has taken root and is beginning to grow. The Champions and the Networks of Change Partners continue to make important progress towards instituting inclusion within their own organizations and encouraging others to embrace it.

The momentum for change is building and we are heading inexorably towards a “tipping point” and the establishment of inclusion as a primary basis for doing the nation’s business. Malcolm Gladwell’s book *The Tipping Point*, describes how trends in society are created, influenced and sustained. Key to the creation and growth of trends are “connectors” – those people who have extensive networks of connections in all facets of life. This theory dovetails with the increasingly held opinion that the only true form of marketing is by word of mouth and the power of personal persuasion. The Council’s Champions and Partners are such connectors, using their social, economic and political networks, through the Networks of Change, to facilitate the development of a new trend towards a more inclusive workplace for Aboriginal people. The key has been turned and the engine has started. Now we need our Council’s leadership to engage more partners and friends in order to expand the Networks of Change. The companies and leaders who join the Networks of Change will play an important role in providing direction and advice to the program’s design. Together we will build the Mastering Aboriginal Inclusion program and in this way offer a pragmatic and substantive approach to achieving Aboriginal Inclusion in Canada.



Obstacles to Inclusion

Informal Survey on Retention

The Council recently completed an informal survey of 222 Aboriginal employees regarding their experiences with their last employment.

The informative survey points out a number of important barriers affecting the retention of Aboriginal employees.

Overall low job satisfaction levels were the crux of the work place issues uncovered in the survey. Among the respondents in the survey approximately half indicated they were not satisfied with their previous job.

More importantly, a majority of respondents reported that, in fact, their former manager could have done something to improve their job satisfaction.

Along with concerns about management, fair pay and the potential for advancement were important factors in creating a higher level of job satisfaction. On both accounts respondents to the survey negatively reflected on their experiences. Half of the respondents felt they were not being compensated fairly and two-thirds reported there were no opportunities for advancement in their previous job.

The full results of the survey can be found at www.ahrdcc.com/retentionsurvey

What will we encounter on our journey towards Aboriginal inclusion in Canada? Establishing the principles of inclusion as a fundamental model of doing business will continue to encounter challenges. A key challenge to encouraging the development of an inclusive culture will be addressing the ugly reality of racism and prejudice. Canadians often pride themselves on the fact that our nation stands head and shoulders above other countries in terms of its equitable treatment of its citizens and the very fundamentals of multiculturalism.

While ours is beyond doubt a great nation, the equitable treatment of all Canadians has been an ironic catch phrase for too many of its citizens including our Aboriginal People. Aboriginal people, among other groups, have consistently been short changed in regards to accessing the many benefits and privileges that most Canadians take for granted. According to a 2003 Ekos survey, 46 percent of Aboriginal people living off-reserve reported being a victim of racism or discrimination at least once over the preceding two years. Earlier research by Ipsos-Reid (2002) suggested that more than six-out-of-ten Canadians (61%) think that racism separates Aboriginal people from the rest of Canadian society. The specter of prejudice and racism continues to rear its ugly head and lies at the basis of many of the unfortunate statistics that tragically define the lives of too many of our Aboriginal citizens.

A Call to Action

The scourge of prejudice is often subtly applied, often even unknowingly applied on the part of the perpetrator. Again citing Mr. Gladwell in his book *Blink*, the author suggests that people's perceptions of others are often formalized within nanoseconds of seeing a person. This perception is ripe with preconceived notions based on stereotypes, individual experiences and contextual elements many of which may only appear at the subconscious level. Prejudice and racism blinds people and renders them incapable of engaging the world beyond their self-imposed narrow perceptions.

Within the workplace culture, subtle stereotypes can impede an organization from capitalizing from the many benefits that a diverse and inclusive workplace culture can bring. Besides the enormous potential moral, social and legal consequences of discriminatory actions, they often bear an under-appreciated cost of doing business. By focusing recruitment efforts on only certain groups, employers are excluding the enormous benefits that an inclusive workplace produces. With the supply of skilled labour poised to become a major constraint on Canadian businesses in the next decade, exclusionary practices simply don't make good business sense. The fact your chief financial officer may have an accent, doesn't affect his/her financial acuity.

The growing recognition of the need to address the issue of racism has resulted in several new initiatives being launched in Canada including an important development in Winnipeg and a major announcement from the Government of Canada.



Obstacles to Inclusion

“Aboriginal inclusion is a human resource imperative for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal firms in Canada”

*Sophie Pierre,
Co-Chair of the
Board of Champions*

It is fortuitous that the Chairperson of the Councils' Champions, Charlie Coffey (Officer of Canada, Executive Vice-President, Government Affairs and Business Development, RBC Financial Group) is also Chair, National Advisory Council, Canadian Museum for Human Rights. The National Advisory Council provides advice and support to the Museum. Mr. Coffey will be particularly well placed to assist the Museum with his unique perspective on both Aboriginal affairs and human rights.

It is no coincidence that this year's Champions' Event is being held in Winnipeg. There is an exciting and important event unfolding in the city – the development of the new Canadian Museum for Human Rights. This world class project is important not only for providing a beacon of hope for education and awareness for human rights in the world, but it challenges our nationalist pride and encourages serious introspection in regards to our own human rights performance. The museum will also serve to stimulate discussion and the exchange of ideas concerning the impact of human rights abuses and how these abuses can be stopped. A central focus of the museum will be an interactive display where visitors can see a map of the world with lit markers illustrating countries where human rights are not being respected. Global in perspective, interested parties will not help but wonder what a similar map of Canada would reveal.

In the October 2004 Speech from the Throne, the Government of Canada reaffirmed its vision of the country including vowing to: “take measures to strengthen Canada’s ability to combat racism, hate speech and hate crimes, both here at home and around the world.” Through programs, initiatives and legislation, the government has demonstrated a strong commitment to combating racism and discrimination. Working with other stakeholders, the goal of the action plan is ambitious, nothing short of eliminating racism entirely.

This is a strong call to action. Our clientele face multiple challenges and many barriers to finding and retaining employment. In addition to racism and prejudice, critical issues such as housing, clean water, poor health care, limited education, and above all, chronic poverty, have collectively undermined efforts to improve employment levels among First Nation, Métis and Inuit.

Solutions will require a sustained effort in terms of both financial and ongoing support in many but perhaps most importantly in the areas of training and education. Is the investment worth it? From a purely economic perspective, there is a school of thought that suggests a dollar invested in finding, and keeping, employment for an Aboriginal person can have a greater overall return for the Canadian economy. As well, the maintenance of the status quo is high – the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples found that maintaining the status quo for Aboriginal people resulted in an annual cost of \$7.5 billion annually, nearly 1 per cent of GDP in direct fiscal costs and in loss of net income. These costs are anticipated to increase to \$11 billion by 2016.



The Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg

The proposed location of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg has particularly appropriate symbolism for this year's Champions' Event. Winnipeg itself is a city of diversity with historical and multi-ethnic cultural resonance, and a strong history of advancing the rights of women, Métis, First Nations and labour.

The Museum is to be constructed on the west bank of the Red River at an area known as "the Forks".

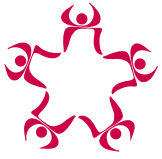
The site has been used for thousands of years by Aboriginal nations as a common meeting area for commerce, to exchange ideas and ensure peace in the region. All in all, the selection of Winnipeg for the 7th Annual Champions' Event seems particularly appropriate.

How will we respond to the challenge? The Council, its Champions and members, have worked hard to build a basis from which we, as stakeholders, can begin to do our part to develop a more inclusive and just society for Aboriginal people. An important program, "*Mastering Aboriginal Inclusion*" will prove to be very successful in stimulating new levels of inclusion in the workplace. This year's Seventh Annual Champions' Event provides us all with the opportunity to review the progress we have made, to brainstorm on how we can keep the momentum going and how we, as individuals, can use our leadership to expand our own networks of change to facilitate the adoption of a national inclusive workplace ethic.

In answering this strong call to action, we have come together at this meeting to become agents of change. Let us build our investment in mastering inclusion and help transform the way business is conducted in Canada. As agents of change, we have such tremendous potential. Let's use it to build a better Canada.

Questions for discussion:

1. Name a leader and their organization who you feel should be initiated to the benefits of Aboriginal Inclusion?
2. What ideas do you have for the development of the Mastering Aboriginal Inclusion program? What suggestions do you have to roll the program out nationally once it is fully developed?



The Inclusion Continuum

Seven Stages

Inclusion as Final Destination Integration

Inclusion as a Catalyst of Growth

Incubation

Inclusion Nurtured as a Core Competency

Intimidation

Inclusion as a Business Imperative

Image

Inclusion as Public Relations

Initiation

Inclusion as Fear and Forced Compliance

Indifference

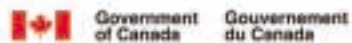
Inclusion is not on the Radar Screen



820-606 Spadina Crescent East
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
S7K 3H1

Telephone: 306-956-5360
Email: contact.us@ahrdcc.com

www.ahrdcc.com



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