Working with Aboriginal People:  
“It just makes sense!”  

Methods for Recruiting, Training, and Employing Manitoba Aboriginal People
“Methods for Recruiting, Training, and Employing Manitoba Aboriginal People” is available without charge in PDF format on the Interprovincial Association on Native Employment Westman Chapter website: www.ianewestman.com

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Methods for Recruiting, Training, and Employing Manitoba Aboriginal People

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Working with Aboriginal People:

Why it makes sense.

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Introduction and Dedication

This Booklet has taken a form over several months of coordinating and efforts from members of the IANE Westman working committee. This premier version has been designed to grow and evolve. Over time we would like to see this documents become the most sought after work on working with aboriginal people in the Province and possibly the country.

We would like to extend special Thanks to Ken Sanderson for his assistance in providing feedback and guidance on the contents of the booklet.
INTERPROVINCIAL ASSOCIATION ON NATIVE EMPLOYMENT – WESTMAN CHAPTER INC. (IANE-WC)

BACKGROUND: IANE-WC is a charitable, non-profit, non-political, non-partisan association consisting of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal volunteers from governments, industries, agencies, businesses, unions and Aboriginal organizations and communities. Since its corporation in 1977, IANE’s purpose is to have these volunteers network and share information together on best employment practices and promote the employment of Aboriginal people.

The objectives of IANE-WC are:

1. Promoting and supporting information sharing and networking among members;

2. Providing a forum where Aboriginal people and organizations, governments, industries and business and unions learn about best practices on recruitment, retention and advancement of Aboriginal people through employment opportunities and training initiatives;

3. Providing a forum for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people to increase awareness and understanding of Aboriginal relations and where Aboriginal people learn about training and employment initiatives; and

4. Recognizing employers and individuals who demonstrate successful employment initiatives that support the hiring, training, retention and advancement of Aboriginal peoples.

I would like to thank Mr. Trent Zazalak for the time and effort he put in to put information in this booklet that will be useful to employers interested in providing greater access to employment opportunities for Aboriginal people.
The booklet provides some background on the three distinct peoples that are defined as Aboriginal Peoples. It provides cultural background information and the steps to succeeding in creating a workplace that is ready to accept Aboriginal Peoples. The booklet covers the benefits of hiring Aboriginal People, how to prepare to build a strategic plan and the setting of objectives. It explains that all of this is not just about hiring Aboriginal Peoples but it is good policy for all employees.

There is information on recruitment, training, employ development and retention. The end of the booklet provides some resources that can be used to implement some of the ideas presented here.

This booklet is a living document and will be reviewed regularly and updated as needed. If you have anything you think should be added to this booklet please contact me.

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Implications for Employers

The term “Business Case” has been used for many years to promote the employment of Aboriginal people throughout the country and though this phrase is still relevant, the concept of trying to “sell” Aboriginal people is inappropriate. The Aboriginal community has seen enormous progression, socially, politically, and economically, in the past thirty years. Though there is still a ways to go to ensure balance and equality with the non Aboriginal population, Aboriginal peoples have not been handed but have earned their current position in Canadian society and will continue to earn their position as the balance in equality evens out.

As previous “business cases” point out the Aboriginal population is one of the fastest growing in the country and that the average age of the Aboriginal population is nearly 15 years younger than that of the average Canadian. With such a young and vibrant population it would be a significant lost opportunity for any business to not consider working with the Aboriginal community. As baby boomers grow in age into retirement, the ability for organizations to replace these key resources become increasingly challenging.

A challenge facing the Aboriginal community is the severe stereotypes that exist in our society. These attitudes are so entrenched in our society that discrimination is often systemic and totally undetected. A prime example is one of our most trusted and often quoted think tanks, the Conference board of Canada. One report glorifies “the Contributions of Visible Minorities to Canadian Economic Growth” while showcasing immigration and its effects on the economy and how Canada is becoming a kaleidoscope of colour (while not including the visible Aboriginal minorities) then in the next article espouses “Employment Prospects for Aboriginal People.” Where is the glorifying of the Aboriginal contribution? These systemically, yet seemingly oblivious, racial issues affect the attitudes towards aboriginal employment.
Though the benefits of the Aboriginal community’s contribution to the economy are lost on even our top academics the opportunity for the Aboriginal community to alleviate the brunt of the aging demographic is significant. There are a number of organizations that are specific to supporting and promoting the Aboriginal population through education and training who can help achieve this opportunity by finding, funding, and training competent employees (for a complete list of organizations please see the resources section). In the grand scheme of things it just makes sense for employers to adopt an Aboriginal employment policy and partner with organizations that will help them to accomplish their business goals.

Finally, changing your organizational culture so that it will more readily accept Aboriginal employees can have a positive effect on all employees. There is no need for an employer to host Powwows or to continually play fiddle music in the background. Though it is nice to have these cultural celebrations it is not expected. Aboriginal people of all backgrounds hold two values in very high esteem; Respect and Family. By adopting these two values into your corporate culture you invite the Aboriginal community in and these values will be appreciated by all of your employees. By providing an environment that encourages respect and family you open the door to success in all avenues of your business.
Understanding the Market

One of the many frustrations all Aboriginal people perceive from the non-Aboriginal community is basic lack of the desire to understand who the Aboriginal people of Canada are. The following sections provide some basic information on Aboriginal people. There are many items contributing to this problem from the systemic issues mentioned in the first section of this booklet to the disregard and intentional omission of aboriginal history in our school curriculums. The entire subject of Aboriginal alienation it too complicated to get into in this booklet but some basic yet vital information on identifying the unique aboriginal peoples of the Province is provided.

Three Distinct Peoples

The Constitution Act, 1982 states:

PART II
RIGHTS OF THE ABORIGINAL PEOPLES OF CANADA
35. (1) The existing Aboriginal and treaty rights of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed.

(2) In this Act, "Aboriginal peoples of Canada" includes the Indian, Inuit, and Métis peoples of Canada.

This small but important section of the constitution act is often misunderstood by non-Aboriginal people, yet this reality has very important implications to employers. Understanding that the umbrella term “aboriginal” includes three distinct, diverse, and very different cultures is the first step in establishing a working relationship with Aboriginal people.

First Nations are the indigenous people inhabiting the continent when Europeans first arrived; this group of people is also referred to as North American Indians. Often this group is also referred to as Status Indian, meaning that they have an affiliation with a First Nations community and are recognized as First Nations by the federal government.
The term *Métis* is broadly used in Canada to designate people who comprise both European and First Nations ancestors. There are many Métis communities throughout western Canada and the Northern United States. Each western province from Ontario to BC has an organization that represents the Métis people. Métis can join these organizations as members but Métis in general hold no regulated Status provided by the federal government.

*Inuit* are the Indigenous people of the North.

There is a fourth group that is identified as *Non-Status*, meaning that they could fall under any of the other three groups. Typically a non-status individual has some form of Aboriginal ancestry but hold no affiliation with any of the other groups.

**Aboriginal Population of Manitoba**

Understanding the demographics of population is essential for implanting any strategy and this applies equality as well to the employment of Aboriginal people. This booklet will provide an overview of the Aboriginal population in Manitoba, but as it is designed for the Westman chapter of IANE, it will be focused specifically on Southwestern Manitoba and the resources available within this area.

The most difficult aspect of quantifying anything is the quality of the data available. The most recent census data readily available is already 10 years old and considerably out of date. However, a baseline needs to be established and so we will use this census data to forecast and approximate current population trends.
For the purpose of this employment booklet we are adopting the information gathered from Statistic Canada 2006 census of population. In this case the Aboriginal population is estimated as:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Aboriginal Population 2010*</th>
<th>175,395</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Nation (both status and non-status)</td>
<td>100,640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Métis</td>
<td>71,805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inuit</td>
<td>565</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Stats Canada (2006 Census)

North/South Split

For statistical and political reasons Manitoba is often divided in half at the 53rd Parallel. This Latitudinal Parallel travels across the province just south of Easterville and Grand Rapids.

Forty two percent of the total Aboriginal population of Manitoba lives north of this parallel. These people make up the majority (nearly 60%) of the total northern population. This information is of considerable value to those businesses that operate in the North.

Of the 58% of Aboriginal people living in Southern Manitoba nearly 67% reside in the urban area of Winnipeg. The remaining 19% of the Aboriginal population lives within the rural areas of Southern Manitoba.

Culture

Though each Aboriginal group has a distinct and unique culture in the way they live, the way they interact, and the way they pursue their goals. They are not so unlike every other cultural group in the world. Beyond the overarching distinct cultural ways, each group has a number of sub groups. Those in the north have particular way of life, as those in the south have a particular way of life. Those residing in urban areas live differently than those in rural areas. So beyond general culture there are regional differences that need to be considered as well.

Another important consideration is that of religion. General cultural considerations can be coupled with both the traditional First Nation religions, as well as Christian religions. For example, the cultural norm of
pointing with the bottom lip is used by traditionalists and Christians alike. Additionally, some generally perceived cultural traditions may not be recognized by members of the same community equally. For example assuming that all Aboriginal people smudge is incorrect. In MB, there are easily as many First Nation Christians as there are traditionalists. Offering tobacco to a Christian elder would be offensive. And so, there are practical implications to being mindful.

Also, many Métis communities have been more closely connected to the Catholic Church and have even less tolerance to many First Nations rites and traditions.

However, to reemphasize the similarities rather than the differences, two of the key values that are generally accepted by all Aboriginal people are; Respect and Family.
Seven Grandfathers

There is an Anishnabe legend of seven spirits, known as the Grandfathers, who each gave a young boy a gift. As the young boy traveled from the spirit world back to earth he shared these seven gifts with his people. These gifts became the guiding principles for ethical behavior amongst the Anishnabe. They are:

- To cherish knowledge is to know wisdom;
- To know love is to know peace;
- To honour all of Creation is to have respect;
- Bravery is to face the foe with integrity;
- Honesty is to face a situation is to be brave;
- Humility is to know your self as a sacred part of Creation;
- Truth is to know all of these things.

Though this legend is well known among First Nations not all Aboriginal groups respect this particular teaching. However, I will be bold enough to suggest that the traits depicted in the story are held in high esteem with all Aboriginal groups. These traits are ingrained in the culture and though non reserve Aboriginal people (including most Metis) are slowly moving away from these teachings toward main stream philosophies, these values are still very strong elements of the greater Aboriginal consciousness.

Ironically enough, these principles are not monopolized solely by Aboriginal peoples. Many of these traits are shared with historical European and Asian teaching for example Chivalry and Bushido. However, as Japanese and Aboriginal cultures still hold their values close to their hearts; in the west these doctrines are no longer dominant in society.

Each of these teachings is significant but one of the most important is the idea of respect. Aboriginal people believe that you must give respect if you wish to be respected following the principles of referent power through admiration, one of the reasons Elders are held in such high esteem. Although this concept is pure logic westerners hold onto the idea of respect, especially in business and government, being automatically applied through position of authority, often referred to as legitimate power.
Westerners have been living under this system since the feudal era so accepting this as truth becomes quite easily. Western beliefs and processes are not geared for the integration cultural differences.

Historically, businesses have been run very autocratically which is one of the reasons why I believe that Aboriginal people have not been successful in working for non aboriginal organizations. Although business academics have been identifying this autocratic method of operation as generally ineffective in the modern world, the Canadian business community is slow to change. It is quite possible that by adopting a more Aboriginal attitude in business will see the business succeed in greater leaps and bounds that sticking to the traditional heretical systems, producing more employee satisfaction and better overall productivity.

**Respect and Family**

With the negative reporting of Aboriginal behavior in today’s media, and the higher than representative population of our prison systems, it is difficult for non-Aboriginal people to believe that respect is a part of Aboriginal culture. The values of respect, pride, dignity, sharing, hospitality and mutual aid are at the root of Aboriginal culture. (Creating wealth and Employment in Aboriginal Communities, Conference board of Canada, 2005)

By creating a working environment that supports and maintains these traditional traits within the workplace both employee and employer will see more productive progress, and employers will have more successes with their Aboriginal employees as well as see more success with all of your non-Aboriginal employees.

The notion of Family is also very strong within all of the Aboriginal communities. Often Aboriginal people are reluctant to leave their communities to pursue employment opportunities for doing so will detach them from the families that they love and respect. Employers can benefit from this value in two ways. First, by understanding this reality, employers can plan ways of implementing work strategies that keep Aboriginal employees close to home. Secondly, by again creating a corporate culture that embraces employees as family an organization can
take on this vital role and make Aboriginal people feel more at home in the environment. And like respect, adopting the value of family will not only enhance the desire and abilities of your Aboriginal work force but your entire work force.
Workplace Readiness

Organizational Commitment

Organizational Support

In any work environment very few initiatives go very far without the support of management. Aboriginal initiatives are no different. Too often initiatives have been implemented but not supported by management of various levels and the initiative becomes a “self prophesying” failure.

Support needs to come from the top, be accepted at every level down to the ground and back up again. Any weak link in the chain and success turns to failure. Employees, supervisors, low level managers, mid level managers, senior managers, and executives all need to be on the same page. The initiative must be seen as providing value to the organization not just a politically motivated affirmative action program where policy demands that there be a set number (often a percentage) of “representative” people from certain cultures.

A true and successful employment equity program engages in proactive employment practices that increase the representation of designated groups through incorporating measures in order to accommodate the differences in cultures in order to attract employees from those cultural backgrounds. As you can see one is a “forced” program which can lead to hiring unskilled employees and earn the resentment of your current employees while the other encourages organizational change and acceptance on a holistic level.

In many cases in order to attain this ideal organizational change must occur. As discussed earlier the current organizational values may not harmonize with the expectations of Aboriginal employees. Despite the obvious benefits to adopting such a program many organizations will show a resistance to change. So before implementing a new employment equity policy there are several steps that leadership needs to perform in order to overcome this resistance if the policy stands a chance of success.
Making Changes

Creating a shared “Vision” through explicit and vivid description is the best place to start. By showing the members of the organization how change will benefit them, the willingness to change is opened up. Several academics make the argument that your employees are your most important stakeholder. Showing them the benefits of change and ensuring that they have a part in influencing the change process will encourage buy-in and minimize resistance.

The next step is to develop the new “values” that will guide the development of the new corporate culture. Involving the employees in this step will not only allow for a sense of ownership but lay the groundwork for greater acceptance by the members. Again involving your internal stakeholders will alleviate resistance while partnering with external stakeholders, like Aboriginal communities and special interest groups, can help to enhance the process and help all of the stakeholders to better understand each others views.

The adoption of a new culture and values by the organization isn’t a simple process, but if done well the acceptance of the Aboriginal employment policy should be met with the highest possibility of success.

The Inclusion Continuum Presented by the Aboriginal Human resources Council is a great tool to help organizational leaders understand many of the issues that an organization faces when adopting an employment equity program.

The path to making changes may be a bumpy one but once an organization has reached the Inclusion phase everyone is going to wonder why this process didn’t happen long before.

Public Announcement

The final step to commitment is making the policy public. An organization needs to be proud of what it does and should stand behind the decision one hundred percent. This may open the organization to criticism but if the previous steps were taken then rebutting criticisms will be simple enough.
Public announcement also serves as an avenue for advertising, thus attracting the very employees and community supports that you intend on targeting.

**Strategic Planning**

The goal of strategic planning is to lay out a map so that your organization is able to follow the right paths in order to achieve the organizations objectives. Strategic planning consists of all elements of the business but we will only consider HR implications in this booklet.

**Setting Objectives**

What are the strategic implications on your Human Resources? That will depend upon what strategies your organization develops. In order to set objectives, targets, and/or goals you need to consider HR within the entire structure of strategic planning. Typically, HR objectives consist of lowering turnover. This objective will include increasing job satisfaction through providing your employees with the ability for Achievement and Recognition, by ensuring that the Work itself is challenging and rewarding, allowing employees the opportunity to take Responsibility, and by providing Advancement, and Growth.

**Benefits of Aboriginal Policy and hiring Aboriginal people**

Despite the practical and common sense approach of addressing the reality in which we live there are still many barriers to non aboriginal people accepting the truth that the Aboriginal population will be essential in the success of the future operations of any organization. By working together and building an inclusive organization Aboriginal workers and Aboriginal polices can benefit the entire organization.

Many of the current trends and theories in organizational HR are built on long standing psychological theories. The interesting thing about psychology is that time and time again studies prove that despite the differences in culture the very core of humanity is very similar. Things that motivate both Aboriginal people and non Aboriginal people are the same. Where the difference comes in, for the most part, does have to do with culture. Nine times out of ten the non-motivated Aboriginal person
will simply leave their employment without a word otherwise. This is not to say that they are poor employees or that they provide no value to the organization. From a purely cultural standpoint, Aboriginal people have a much smaller tolerance for putting up with thoughtlessness and disrespect. Thoughtlessness can include; lack of guidance and leadership, poor communications, ridiculous policies, and generally doing things that do not make common sense. Oddly enough these are elements that we see all too often in our bureaucracies and businesses; which may explain the lack of Aboriginal representation amongst the workforce.

This in itself can be a valuable benchmark for an organization. Culturally, Aboriginal people will rarely complain about inadequacies in their jobs, nor will they push ahead despite job specific inadequacies. If an organization that employs a number of Aboriginal people suddenly has a mass exodus then this is a strong message that something is wrong inside of the organization. An event like this should send a clear signal to management that there is a failure with their ability to achieve Inclusion within their organization.

**Developing Policy**

Now that we have seen the general components of creating an environment where employees will be self-motivated to work towards the goals of the organization and the unarguably benefits of hiring Aboriginal people, how does an organization combine these together?

To begin with we need to revisit the concept of corporate culture. Setting the foundations of a corporate culture are much more difficult than one would think. Setting up a new corporate culture does not mean adopting a total aboriginal culture but balancing the fusion of the cultures. For example certain expectations may need to be maintained despite the ethnic background of any employee. Punctuality and shift work is non negotiable in areas like health care where the very welfare of the client is at stake, but other corporate traditions can be flexible.

The organization needs to maintain congruency and walk the talk. Too often have I seen a wonderfully worded set of corporate values displayed in writing, on advertising, the web site, and some organizations go as far as
using these virtues to evaluate staff. At the very root of building corporate culture this is fantastic and necessary, until what happens in the organization is constantly different than what is written. When there is no parallel between what is said and what is done then there is no value. The espoused cultural values are simply a Public Relations fiasco waiting to happen, poor organizational culture pollutes retention rates and overall morale. (Steve Simpson HR Summit 2007)

When creating policy it needs to become a part of the culture. It needs to be reinforced by management, supervisors and employees through action and commitment. Utilizing the highly respected values of respect and family as the core fundamentals will not only attract the Aboriginal employee but it will provide a fundamental strength for all of your employees.

Policy, especially Aboriginal policy, needs to be beneficial to the organization. It needs to be fair and equitable for all staff including management and front line staff. Treating Aboriginal people differently will only cause strife within the organization. It is better to create a holistic culture that embraces Aboriginal virtues and demonstrate them through policy.

**Overcoming Stereotypes**

One of the major issues relating to Aboriginal people is the stereotypes that exist within the community. Lazy, uneducated, disrespectful, and criminal are just some of the stereotypes we see; Aboriginal unemployment rates are much higher than non Aboriginal people, so they must be lazy. Aboriginal completion rates for high schools are much lower than non Aboriginal people so they must be uneducated. Aboriginal people disrespect societal norms and commit crimes; of course this is proven by the unrepresentatively high numbers of Aboriginal people in jail. How can one argue with these statistically backed up stereotypes? Though the statistics are accurate the stereotype rational is not. Aboriginal people have a higher rate of unemployment because they are lazy. This statement is incorrect. In fact the unemployment rate of Metis is equal to that of the non Aboriginal community. The reality is that nearly 30% of the First Nations
population lives on reserves which are notoriously weak in economic strength. It isn’t a case of not wanting to work but a case of having little to no employment in the communities where they live that creates this statistic. There are similar explanations for each stereotype:

If we look at the two values that we introduce in this booklet it sheds some light on how these stereotypes come to be. Let’s begin with Family. Aboriginal people are very family oriented. Aboriginal people are also very rural. While rural non-Aboriginal youth flow out of their small communities to larger centers for education and employment Aboriginal people are much less likely to abandon family in this manner. Looking at any rural area in Manitoba we see economic challenges. High Aboriginal unemployment rates are directly related to their commitment to family. Staying in their home community and lacking economic development becomes a sentence to unemployment. Compounding this, youth realize that there are no jobs; they don’t want to leave their families, so the value of education is not well understood. Often those Aboriginal people who do go on to higher education often return to their home communities to find themselves underemployed or not employed.

When we look at the value of respect we must realize that in Aboriginal culture respect is earned not given by position. This is where we see a number of law breaking and criminal behavior. An Aboriginal person may not respect a law especially when the law does not respect them. Where the non Aboriginal community may be held in place by threat of fines or jail time; this is not always the case with Aboriginal people. Imagine how many times you have been frustrated by bureaucratic rules and regulation that make no sense just to bow to the powers to be and compromise by living with the multitude of foolish restrictions in order to come close to attaining what you need.

There are valid reasons why Aboriginal people are tainted with these stereotypes but it is advantageous to both understand and embrace the values that create this discrepancy for by doing this society in general benefits. Maybe, if we all started behaving more like Aboriginal people our world would be a better place to live.
Affirmative Action vs. Organizational Improvement

Nothing accomplishes less than instituting an affirmative action plan. Forcing employment targets and goals to meet a specific number of a particular race is at best ridiculous, at worst an organizational nightmare. Undertaking this type of program can alienate your current employees force management to hire unqualified individuals in order to meet their goals and generally wreak havoc with employee moral and productivity.

Going back to respect and family, hiring 15 Aboriginal people in order to meet some representative work force target will eliminate the impact of these values. Non Aboriginal people will resent the fact that only Aboriginal people are being hired, they will presume that the Aboriginal people being hired are unqualified, whether truthful or not, and those hired will not become a part of the family.

Affirmative action for the sake of affirmative action does not work. For one thing, affirmative action does not send more minorities to college, nor does it motivate individuals to improve their skill set in order to become competitive. (Marie Gryphon, The Affirmative Action Myth CATO institute) Some argue that affirmative action programs are an attempt to justify preferential programs based on past inequities and that ethnic majorities are being punished because of their ethnic background despite holding employable credentials, thus touting the reverse discrimination card. (David V. Ward Affirmative Action.) Neither of these arguments supports a sustaining relationship under affirmative action.

Organizational improvement through strategic planning, on the other hand, creates a more holistic approach to solving the inequity problems through working with the communities to develop both a respectful internal culture, and through finding the right Aboriginal workforce by hiring qualified Aboriginal employees and working with community partners to ensure that Aboriginal people are educated and training so that they become competitive in the workforce.
Understanding Your Target Market

Who do you hire? We have provided a lot of food for thought but how do you proceed from here:

**Step one: Solidify these teachings**
By including these two values into your culture and opening the doorway to an inclusive organization that will benefit from this initiative.

**Step two: Identify who, what, when, where, why, and how many.**

Identifying the positions that you need to fill both immediately and by projecting future demand you can lay the plan, set aside the resources and begin a campaign to meet the needs of the organization. This doesn’t mean setting aside 15% of jobs for only Aboriginal people but realizing that if you need 25 employees his coming year and that you would like a representative work force, then you will have to do some extra work to attract that demographic. This can be accomplished by maintaining ties with Aboriginal communities and organizations that specialize in training the aboriginal workforce. By creating and maintaining these relationships you can achieve a representative workforce, save money in recruiting, and ensure that your employees are qualified for the job.

**Step three: Partner**

There are a multitude of organizations whose mandate it is to assist organizations to find train and employ Aboriginal workers. These resources are fantastic for organizations both as indirect support supplying ideas to direct support finding and funding the training for Aboriginal employees. Please see the resource section for community resources and potential partners.
Recruiting

How to find the right employee is a difficult task, especially in today’s environment of aging baby boomers and the general lack of businesses and organizations to find qualified replacements with the limited resources available to them and their Human Resource Departments.

Networking

Networking is a key aspect to finding the best candidates. Networking can help an organization by; saving money, creating outside sources for ideas and resources, find good candidates in a small amount of time, and provide other community links that may be an asset to the organization.

Regular networking can provide a solution for a multitude of issues. For example IANE itself is a fantastic networking opportunity for employers. At any given time several community and government support agencies, educational institutes, unions, and businesses sit at the table, discussing issues and coming up with solutions.

Applicant Pool

By utilizing these networks you instantly increase your applicant pool. Either through connecting with an organization that has clients or are able to connect through referrals of friends or family, you are able to find dozens of new applicants beyond your organizations typical media outlets.
Training

Partnering

As mentioned earlier there are a number of organizations with funding available for training employees. Whether your demand is one or two employees or finding dozens these organizations can provide candidate referrals, training, and advice.

Design

Designing training to meet the unique needs of Aboriginal people is also important. Though much less cumbersome than one would believe it is important to consider the information shared in this booklet to ensure that the values of both the organization and the training are consistent and geared toward candidate success.

Execution

The goal is to create the best candidate for the job. You have already changed your corporate culture to meet the needs of Aboriginal people and at the same time provided a better environment for your non Aboriginal employees, you have designed the training to be as inclusive as possible now is the opportunity to find the best candidates.

Training and evaluation needs to be challenging to ensure that the employee can perform the job at hand. No one should get a free ride. Those that do not show the aptitude should not be considered for the position. Training and evaluation whether funded internally or externally is a screening tool to ensure that an organizational fit happens between employers and employees. If you have done what is needed in order to provide an equal opportunity through organizational redesign, training, and support, then there is no failure in hiring only those who are qualified. Remember this is not affirmative action; this is about finding a solution that works for everyone.
Follow-up and Transition

Once the client candidates are chosen there is still a lot of work to do. Follow-up to ensure training was adequate and that the individuals are fitting within the organizational culture (and vice versa) is essential. In order to become an employer of choice the strategic plan must be followed and records made of what works and what doesn’t. Remember, having a significant number of Aboriginal people employed can become a valuable sounding board for general satisfaction within the organization.

Further more those who are employed are often eager to grow and help the organization grow. Career development and performance feedback is as critical for Aboriginal employees as it is for non Aboriginal employees, maybe even more. It is impossible to find your way from point a to point b without directions. This is the same for employees. If they are to excel in their jobs they need direction so that they know they are traveling on the right path.
Employment; Development and Retention

It is our belief that any advice that will assist you with employing Aboriginal people will be equally beneficial to your non-Aboriginal employees. Development and retention is no exception.

**Mentoring**

Utilizing the experience of those skilled employees is very important. A lot of tacit knowledge is possessed by these individuals that an employee would not receive from direct training. Implementing a mentoring system where experienced employees work with new recruits goes a long way to achieving long term success.

Of course an organization needs to choose these mentors carefully. Ensuring they have both the technical ability and social ability to work with Aboriginal employees fairly and equitably in order to develop them into a valuable resource for the organization.

**Performance Management Systems**

The keystone of any reputable organization is the ability to utilize a first class PMS in order to set goals, monitor performance and develop careers within an organization. The development of this system should fall under organizational reengineering and setting policy. But its ability to retain, develop, and grow employees is an operational concern. A first class PMS is not necessarily a difficult or expensive undertaking, there is a cost in both resources and man hours but a first rate PMS is well worth ten times the cost.

Providing clear goals to employees, continual and effective communications, and an opportunity for non-subjugate measurement is not only good for all employees it allows the Aboriginal qualities of Respect becoming a two way street. If someone is not performing, it obvious to them in clearly defined and measurable concepts, if they are doing well they can see this as well. And the final component of PMS is that
development, be it overcoming a shortfall or being prepared for a job that entails more responsibility.

A PMS ensures that an organization is doing the best they can in retaining and developing employees.

**Career Development**

No one likes a dead end job. Individuals will work at one for a time but when there is no hope of growth or advancement this is usually where employees get off the train. This is even more prevalent with Aboriginal people. As with the example of not seeing the value of an education and quitting, so does this apply to employment. If there is no joy or no motivation to excel then more often than not an Aboriginal will just quit and search elsewhere.

In order to retain Aboriginal employees an organization needs to have the possibly of making a career of it. Again as with all of the suggestions in this booklet making career development a priority will enhance your ability for retaining all of your employees.
Resources

Organization with Training Directives

Manitoba Metis Federation
Human Resource Development and Training
Local Management Board
656 6th street
Brandon, MB
R7A 3P1
1.888.627.9663
204.725.7520

First Peoples Development, Inc.
Long Plain First Nation
P.O. Box 430
Portage la Prairie, MB
R1N 3B7
1.866.987.9570
204.987.9570
Employment Manitoba
Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade
**Brandon Centre (bilingual service available)**
127-340 Ninth Street
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Working with Aboriginal People: “It just makes sense!” is a booklet that provides employers with a template for creating an organization that will be inviting to Aboriginal people, provide a safe environment for all employees, and maximize organizational effectiveness over all. Spending a few minutes with this short manual could mean the difference between mediocre organizational performance and great performance. Stifling diversity creates a lethargic and cumbersome environment whereas utilizing the strength of diversity in the workplace often proves to be a great strategy for overall organizational success.