

10 TIPS TO SUPPORT ABORIGINAL INCLUSION IN THE WORKPLACE



~ Contributed by Krista Maydew

- 1. Build a business case.** Outline the business case for Aboriginal inclusion in your workplace. According to [Indigenous Works](#), the Aboriginal population in Canada is growing at a rate six times greater than the non-Aboriginal population. Given the current demand for workers across many sectors in Canada, developing a business case for inclusion is not particularly challenging.
- 2. Identify champions.** Identify key influencers or champions within the workplace to support Aboriginal inclusion initiatives including recruitment and retention. Champions should come from all levels of the organization to be most effective.
- 3. Locate supports.** Partner or network with organizations that support Aboriginal inclusion in the workplace such as [Indigenous Works](#), the [Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business](#), or [Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy](#) (ASETS) Agreement Holders.
- 4. Take the time to learn.** Inclusion often begins with understanding. Offering new and existing employees the opportunity to learn about the history of Aboriginal peoples in Canada and Aboriginal culture and tradition enriches the lives of all Canadians and can provide a foundation for understanding and inclusion.
- 5. Communicate opportunities.** Use a variety of recruitment channels to communicate opportunities within your organization. This could include word of mouth, Aboriginal media, Aboriginal recruitment services, Aboriginal post-secondary student support centres, and Aboriginal community administration offices. There are a number of websites focused on connecting Aboriginal peoples with work (e.g., Inclusion Network, Aboriginal Canada Portal Aboriginal Job Centre).
- 6. Review application processes.** Are your current application processes inclusive or do they need to be refined to ensure that they are not biased against applicants? Confirm that current application processes do not unnecessarily screen out applicants who may be qualified.
- 7. Review interview practices.** Ensure that all interviewers are familiar with cross-cultural communication differences. Where possible and practical, include Aboriginal employees in the interview process.
- 8. Provide mentorship.** All new employees can benefit from having a workplace mentor who can show them around, help them learn to navigate their way through the organization and act as a sounding board for questions. Mentorship is a cornerstone of Aboriginal culture and demonstrates a commitment to inclusion and retention.
- 9. Practice zero tolerance.** Workplaces should be supportive and nurturing environments, free from harassment, insensitivity and racism.
- 10. Determine what success “looks like”.** How will you know if your efforts to create an inclusive workplace are successful? Measures of success may be quantitative (e.g., number of Aboriginal employees) or qualitative (e.g., employees’ sense of inclusion).

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