



The Business Case for Aboriginal Inclusion

The Demographic Business Case

In 2006, the first of the baby-boomers turned 60, opening a yawning divide in Canada's workforce between current needs and available skills. Canada's present birth rates, the lowest in history, cannot begin to address this gap. Canada's Aboriginal population is growing six times faster than the non-Aboriginal population — a homemade solution to current and future socio-economic issues.

The divide between Canada's mainstream and Aboriginal communities is narrowing with regard to economic and human resource development. Increasingly, companies are looking to build business opportunities with Aboriginal communities; knowing how to maximize these opportunities and recruit and retain an Aboriginal workforce to support business partnership agreements is a business imperative.

The Diversity Business Case

Over the last two decades, many companies have learned to regard the diversity of managers and employees as one of their greatest assets. These companies have fine-tuned their recruitment methods to seek out diversity and adapted their policies of advancement and training to exploit that diversity. To the extent that companies have mastered diversity, and its business case, they are poised to take full advantage of the Aboriginal labour pool.

The Corporate Social Responsibility Business Case

Leading-edge companies regard Aboriginal inclusion as a means to grow new markets and improved relationships with employees and customers. These companies believe that a commitment to their workplace, community and our society at large is a powerful business driver for their own growth.

Many consumers today are basing their buying decisions on how they view the company's ability to give back to the community. Consumers want to know that their dollars are contributing to good — not just the company's bottom line.

Corporate social responsibility or social cause marketing goes beyond the usual practices of maximizing profits for shareholders who have invested in organizations. Striving for social responsibility considers the organizations' stakeholders in its decision-making and actions. It also means that organizations, while seeking profits, balance the values to be gained against the costs of achieving the benefits.

The Skills Shortage Business Case

The scope and scale of unemployment amongst Canada's Aboriginal people is staggering and matched only by the skilled labour shortage within some Canadian businesses. In many cases, these businesses aren't able to take advantage of the opportunities that are being presented.

Innovation is critical for businesses struggling with a labour shortage to improve its productivity advantage. Many employers, searching for solutions, are taking aggressive action to recruit workers from beyond the Canadian borders. Others are awakening to the competitive advantage of workplace diversity, inclusive of Aboriginal people.