

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce and Indigenous Works partner to help Canadian companies better engage with Indigenous businesses and communities

OTTAWA – September 23, 2018 – The Canadian Chamber of Commerce and Indigenous Works are partnering to assist businesses in responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Corporate Call- to-Action 92 and to address a corporate/Indigenous engagement gap identified in a national research study.

Indigenous Works and the Canadian Chamber will work together over the next three years to develop meaningful opportunities for Indigenous and non-Indigenous businesses to collaborate more effectively, and to learn from each other as they engage on profitable and growth-oriented ventures that will drive jobs and partnerships.

The partnership was announced during the Chamber’s Annual General Meeting and Convention, held this past weekend in Thunder Bay, Ontario.

“Advancing the economic participation of Indigenous business through respectful partnerships is in Canada’s economic interest, and this partnership is about moving this effort forward. While many Canadian companies enjoy productive and mutually-beneficial relationships with Indigenous businesses and peoples, we need to make them the norm, not the exception. As Canada’s most representative business association, the Canadian Chamber is uniquely placed to help improve the way that all businesses engage and grow together,” said the Honourable Perrin Beatty, President and CEO of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce.

“Indigenous Works is pleased to be working with the Canadian Chamber of Commerce”, said Kelly J. Lendsay, President and CEO for Indigenous Works. “Together, through our joint strategy we can increase opportunities for corporate/Indigenous engagements and partnerships right across the nation. The joint efforts of the Chamber, its members and Indigenous Works is timely. The business community and Indigenous communities are seeking ways of responding to the reconciliation imperative. Our shared goal is prosperity for businesses and Indigenous communities.”

The partnership will include the development of a national strategy to demonstrate to Canadian Chamber members the importance of informed engagement with Indigenous businesses and communities, with a view towards collectively enhancing our national competitiveness.

They will also work together to provide practical tools to Canadian Chamber members to help them engage more meaningfully with Indigenous businesses and their communities. The content and format of these tools will be developed in response to what Canadian Chamber members say would be most helpful to them.

The three-year partnership is intended to leverage Indigenous Works’ knowledge of the opportunities and obstacles facing Indigenous business and communities and the reach and influence of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, which represents a network of 450 chambers of commerce, boards of trade, associations and corporate members.

The catalyst for the partnership was a [2017 research](#) study conducted by Indigenous Works into corporate/Indigenous engagement with more than 500 companies. This research showed that 85% of Canadian businesses are disengaged when it comes to meaningful relationships with

Indigenous communities and only 28% of businesses aware of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call-to-Action to them.

These results highlight opportunities to increase awareness in the business community of the opportunities for meaningful engagement with Indigenous communities, promote ways and means of engagement, and measure the impacts of these initiatives.

The ultimate goal of the partnership is to improve Canadian competitiveness by finding avenues of shared growth and prosperity with corporate/indigenous partnerships.

Indigenous Works (formerly the Aboriginal Human Resource Council) is a national Indigenous organization that is ISO 9001 certified (quality management system). It was founded in 1998 as a recommendation from the 1996 Report on the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples with a mandate to improve the inclusion and engagement of Indigenous people in the Canadian economy.

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce is the vital connection between business and the federal government. It helps shape public policy and decision-making to the benefit of businesses, communities and families across Canada with a network of over 450 chambers of commerce and boards of trade, representing 200,000 businesses of all sizes in all sectors of the economy and in all regions. Follow us on Twitter [@CdnChamberofCom](https://twitter.com/CdnChamberofCom).

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