



Kelly Lendsay,
president and CEO
of the Aboriginal
Human Resource
Council

Champions of Diversity



Employment Opportunities Unlimited at Annual Event

Tell me and I'll forget. Show me, and I may not remember. Involve me, and I'll understand. This North American Native proverb is at the heart of inclusion. And inclusion is at the top of the agenda of the Aboriginal Human Resource Council (AHRC).

The council works toward indigenous inclusion in Canada's workforce so everyone can reap the benefits of equality and diversity. "We still struggle in Canada with employment equity for Aboriginal candidates," says Kelly Lendsay, AHRC president and CEO. "What we need are more partners that are willing to take a leadership role in making a true effort to hire Aboriginal talent and work with Aboriginal businesses. And we learn a lot as an organization by listening to our partners to try and understand any potential barriers and understand how those obstacles can be overcome. The members of our Leadership Circle, such as Syncrude, provide a kind of inclusion laboratory, which gives us inside knowledge we can use to further inclusion."

The AHRC, which launched the Leadership Circle in 2008/09 with fewer than 30 partners, has set a goal of 100 companies this year.

In response to feedback from its partners, the council is developing and expanding its online learning programs. "We have been providing in-house training, but now we're hearing that online training is going to be in demand, so we've launched an online Aboriginal procurement training program, and Syncrude actually helped us develop that tool," says Kelly.

As one of Canada's largest employers of Aboriginal people, Syncrude is more than willing to share what it has learned about successfully recruiting Aboriginal people, says Dan Brown, manager of process control and automation at Syncrude, an AHRC board member and member of the York Factory First Nation in Manitoba. "This is a resource pool with a lot of talent, and it brings value to our company to actively recruit and seek to retain Aboriginal employees."

The AHRC intends to continue developing tools, resources and programs to assist employers in their efforts toward inclusion. "We all benefit from inclusion," says Kelly. "Just talk to the members of our Leadership Circle, and they will tell you. They will show you it works."

For more information, visit www.aboriginalhr.ca.

Inclusion Works is Canada's largest Aboriginal HR and employment event, bringing together top First Nation, Métis and Inuit post-secondary graduates with leading-edge employers. During the two-day event, business, Aboriginal, education and government leaders speak on workplace diversity, inclusion and economic opportunity.

"The event exceeded every expectation I could have possibly had," says Jaxon Deautels, a post-secondary graduate who participated in the 2010 conference in Toronto. "Inclusion Works left me feeling motivated and empowered to find the perfect job for me. I have always been proud of my Métis roots, and this event strengthened my pride."

This year at the conference, the Aboriginal Human Resource Council, which hosts the event, signed a landmark international good faith human resources agreement with the National Native American Human Resources Association, which represents more than 150 US-based tribes. The signing marked the first step in international cooperation to advance human resource development in indigenous partnerships, recruitment, retention, advancement, procurement and career development.