



# Aboriginal Human Resource Council

connections – partnerships – solutions

**the path to inclusion**  
2008/09 annual performance report



## table of contents

- 1 Executive Overview
- 2 2008/2009 Highlights
- 5 Governance and Our Strategic Framework
- 6 Inclusion Works '09
- 8 The Inclusion Investment Partnership Program
- 9 Trades Development Projects
- 10 National Trades Symposium
- 11 National Human Resource Conference
- 12 Guiding Circles Program
- 13 Mastering Aboriginal Inclusion
- 14 Workforce Connex
- 15 Aboriginal Procurement Skills and Competencies Initiative
- 16 Communications, Marketing, Media and Event Management
- 18 Financial Stewardship
- 19 Council Staffing and HR Resources
- 20 Partnerships with Sector Councils, Representation and Advocacy
- 21 Footsteps Forward



## executive overview

The Aboriginal Human Resource Council is a not-for-profit organization with a national mandate to advance the full participation of Aboriginal people in Canada's labour market. Through its many public and private partnerships and its programs and projects, the council has earned a Canada-wide reputation for service excellence and human resource innovation.

Our goal is to increase Aboriginal employment through meaningful research, educational tools, training programs and other resources that help guide companies to address workplace needs with qualified and motivated Aboriginal people. Ultimately, we want to help companies create organizations of inclusion.


As the only national organization to facilitate workplace training, recruitment, retention and advancement solutions for Canada's Aboriginal Peoples, the council acts as a catalyst to bring together businesses, community organizations, professional associations, Aboriginal communities and all levels of government.

This performance report captures our milestones of the past year as well as shows the progress we have made as a council, within the framework of our national strategy.



**Aboriginal Human  
Resource Council**

connections – partnerships – solutions



## 2008/09 highlights

Throughout the past fiscal year, the implementation of our strategic plans accomplished many milestones specific to 22 different projects that we oversaw. These milestones include:

- The development and launch of the *Inclusion Investment Partnership Program* which was one of the council's most notable achievements of 2008/2009. The council's strategy to become a financially-diversified, not-for-profit organization, with funding support from both public and private sources, was the driving force behind the establishment of this program.
- In 2009, the council achieved its most ambitious event to date with the launch of *Inclusion Works '09* a combined national recruitment fair and learning event that directly connected top Aboriginal graduates with diversity employers and, through a series of workshops and panel discussions, HR practitioners with expertise and knowledge. The event brought together more than 545 participants including 100 post-secondary graduates. *Inclusion Works '09* raised the profile of the council to a whole new plateau by creating an attractive platform for future partnership and collaboration.
- Throughout 2008/2009, the council expanded its branding efforts to increase its national reach and recognition. The council filed more than 75 media stories and used social marketing tools such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube to broaden understanding of Aboriginal development issues in Canada.
- Despite the challenges presented by the economic downturn, the council achieved 98 per cent of its revenue goal for 2008/2009 – an increase of 60 per cent over the previous year. Revenues of \$1.442 million were realized. These funds are reinvested in the council's programs and projects. Six hundred and sixty-four business transactions and 27 business partnerships were completed in the past year. The number of transactions is an indication of the council's reach; serving corporations, Aboriginal organizations and education, government and labour groups with a growing menu of products and services that assist their efforts to adopt inclusionary strategies and workplace practices.
- The council continued to diversify revenue sources through increased sales and sponsorships and by securing government project funding from a mix of federal and provincial partners. Through project proposals, the council was able to secure public funding in the order of \$4.034 million, an increase of 19 per cent over the previous year.
- On total revenues of \$5.58 million the council realized an excess of revenue over expenditures in the amount of \$149,429.
- Using our value-creation model, the council was able to leverage investments and attract private sector engagement as evidenced by the financial commitments from corporate and other client groups that either purchased one of the council's products or services or who invested in the council. This does not include in-kind support valued at \$175,000.
- We continued building the council's client roster, moving towards our goal of engaging 100 of Canada's leading large organizations in a diversity dialogue. The council also approached these companies to seek their investment in the



### *Inclusion Investment Partnership Program.*

In the first year of the program, the council signed up 24 companies to the program.

- The council continued to grow its *Mastering Aboriginal Inclusion* program as a core competency and, through this platform, created proprietary assets and products. The MAI was delivered to 279 clients following a successful commercial launch of the product. An innovative partnership with the Mining Industry Human Resource Council resulted in the development of the niche product *MAI and Mining*.

- The council is leading exciting new research initiatives on employee engagement, workplace productivity and organizational development.

- The council's work in the trades continued, winding up its national trades project but continuing with the start-up of three new regional trades partnership projects. If carried to fruition, these regional trades projects will assist an estimated 1500 Aboriginal people to register for trades careers. In the successful Job Horizons project, the council provided 277 job placements and made 337 registrations in the past year.

- The council's *Guiding Circles* project had a very successful year achieving 104 per cent of its revenue targets and efforts to introduce *Guiding Circles* to new audiences and markets are on-going. Ties with Australia continue to grow as partners look for opportunities to introduce *Guiding Circles and Mastering Aboriginal Inclusion* to indigenous people and business organizations.

- Throughout the past year, we continued to fulfill the council's public mandate by initiating and completing projects in ways that maintain the council's exemplary status in the eyes of its public agency funding partners. Last year, the council's scorecard from Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) was among the top 5 per cent of sector councils.

- The council's growth has precipitated a growing interest and need for more sophisticated business systems that enable it to operate effectively and efficiently. The council continues to earn high marks from its funders. The implementation of new systems such as *Salesforce*, vertical marketing, e-commerce, certification under the federal government's Set Aside Program and efforts to achieve ISO accreditation are all indicative of the council's growing sophistication as a leading Aboriginal organization.

*"Thanks again to Aboriginal Human Resources Council for giving me further exposure to yet another potential employer. I was contacted by a representative from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada yesterday. I submitted my resume and profile within the following 3 regions for INAC: Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba."*

- Randy Natomagan



- In the same vein new positions were hired by the council to bring new areas of expertise and knowledge to the growing organization. The establishment of a corporate affairs division and the hiring of a human resource director as well as the hiring of a chief financial and business development officer are examples of this progress. Aboriginal people comprised more than 50% of its 33 staff positions and 65% of management positions.
- The council continues to be an exemplary organization providing a valuable service to the public on Aboriginal human resource development. In addition to this public dimension, the council continues to grow its enterprises as well as develop marketing acumen that helps to grow its market share. By working with Canada's leading corporations in ways that help these companies increase their productivity, the council continues to provide leadership, carving new paths of inclusion for Canadian workplaces.



*"What you're doing here today is like putting a pebble into a pond, the waves are going to go out from here."*

- The Honourable Steven L. Point, OBC, Lieutenant Governor, British Columbia, at Inclusion Works '09.

## governance and our strategic framework

The council is driven by its results-based management and accountability framework to create organizations of inclusion and increase aboriginal participation in Canadian labour markets.

We continue to evolve our governance structure to best enable the council to operate in the most effective and successful manner. At a December 2008 meeting, the council's directors debated the best options to ensure that its governance model continues to offer enabling support to the council's evolving strategic direction and its business realities.

The council continued to leverage our brand value, creating attractive opportunities for large corporations wanting to align with the council's cause. These organizations want to play a bigger role in the direction of the council. The development of more relevant workplace strategies is good for companies. Helping companies to work with Aboriginal talent and prepare them for future workplace opportunities is one of the goals of the council's work. In this effort, the council needs to work closely with Canada's corporate leadership.

This past year, Calgary played host to the Champions meeting, in December 2008, where companies were invited to network and to learn about the council's strategic plans as well as its efforts to work with companies under the *Inclusion Investment Partnership Program*. The event was a great success and brought together more than 100 guests who had an opportunity to listen to leaders such as Jim Carter, former chief operating officer of Syncrude and the Honourable Eric Robinson from the Manitoba government.



*"The work will not be easy. It will take a dogged effort to open doors and break down barriers."*

– Co-chair Council Champions and  
Past President and COO, Syncrude Canada Ltd  
at the Champions Event December, 2008.

## inclusion works '09

*"If one word had to sum it up 'WOW' is the only word to explain Inclusion Works 09. It is truly a life changing event. I learned so much and have so much more to learn and my eyes and heart have been opened up to the world."*

- Michael Stushnoff,  
Graduate working with RBC.

*"The organizers should be commended for a positive, energy-filled experience."*

- Carolyn Pada, Instructor,  
Mount Royal College



*"Inclusion works! And it makes sense."*

- Rick Mercer, Emcee of Inclusion Works' Gala evening.



Mezzo-Soprano Marion Newman sang with crystalline precision at the Inclusion Works Gala evening.

***Inclusion Works '09 was a first-of-its-kind event that fast tracked employer connections with Aboriginal workers, providing a one-stop-shop of solutions towards resolving Canada's skills shortages.***

Through the development of partnerships and solutions, *Inclusion Works '09* became a national catalyst for the creation of a more prosperous Aboriginal workforce and economy for First Nations, Métis and Inuit people across Canada. The event was an expansion of the council's successful national human resource conference and the products and programs it delivers as Canada's leading innovators in Aboriginal recruitment retention and advancement.

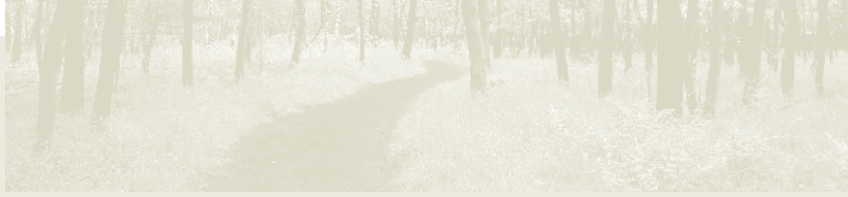
The expanded scope of this event incorporated a tradeshow, recruitment fair and gala evening, filled with celebrity entertainers, thought leaders as well as a

comprehensive and insightful workshop program that drew national media attention to our shared work of bridging the Aboriginal employment gap.

With participants from every corner of Canada in attendance, First Nations, Métis and Inuit elders and speakers such as Chief Shawn Atleo, Charles Coffey O.C., Alika Lafontaine, Tewanee Joseph, Lloyd Axworthy and Allan McLeod brought energy and inspiration to the event.

The strategy for *Inclusion Works '09* was to create an event that showcased the council's products and services. The event





Singing in both Inuktitut and English, Susan Aglukark charmed the audience at the Inclusion Works Gala evening.



A media interview conducted at *Inclusion Works '09*. More than 30 distinct newspaper and radio pieces emerged from Inclusion Works; several ran nationally.

## INCLUSION WORKS | 09

enabled a networking experience where companies could create relationships with the council and with other companies who shared like-minded views about the importance of Aboriginal inclusion.

*Inclusion Works '09* also played an important role in the council's on-going public relations and marketing efforts by acting as a draw for potential partners and introducing them to our many programs.

Through a direct marketing effort, companies were invited to invest in the council through the *Inclusion Investment Partnership Program* with specific benefits

provided to companies that invested in our tiered sponsorship program. The sponsorship program was intended to draw in funds that could, in turn, be re-invested into the council's programs and services.


To successfully create and deliver *Inclusion Works '09*, the council created new organizational capacities to plan and implement this centerpiece event. It also developed new systems and practices which helped it market *Inclusion Works '09* including a successful online registration system for the event.

*"I have never been so inspired by all of the smart, friendly, kind, beautiful people/peers/new friends that attended the inaugural Inclusion Works '09 conference! It was an incredible honour to be amongst such a great group of people! Messi Cho!"*

– Jeremy Belyea

*"It is with much pride and emotion, that I send this email to those responsible for this event. WOW!! Thank-you, thank-you, thank-you! Inclusion '09 was truly a first class event. Kelly, Victoria, and everyone on the planning committee I was fortunate enough to meet, you not only inspired me; you empowered me!"*

– Lizz Meloney



## the inclusion investment partnership program


The development and launch of the *Inclusion Investment Partnership Program* was one of the council's most notable achievements of 2008/2009. The council's strategy to become a financially-diversified, not-for-profit organization, with funding support from both public and private sources, was the driving force behind the establishment of this program.

With a three-year objective of signing up 100 major organizations to the program, a significant outreach program was initiated. Organizations were also invited to sign an Inclusion Charter that provided a set of soft principles which declared their intentions to ascend the inclusion continuum. The expectation is that these 100 committed organizations will be the early adopters of the council's products and services to help them successfully climb this continuum.

As part of this effort, the council advanced a proposal to HRSDC and was funded for a three-year \$1.086 million project to support the outreach efforts to these 100 organizations and to support the launching of *Inclusion Works '09*. Funding of \$250,000 was also generously provided by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) to support the event. Twenty-nine other partners also provided support to the council, through financial and in-kind assistance. TransCanada, Syncrude, Scotiabank Group, Higgins International, CanWest, MGM Communications and RBC are just a few examples.

As the year progressed, the marketing challenges of *Inclusion Works '09* and the effort to develop the cadre of 100 organizations proved to be a catalyst for the council. Tremendous gains were made in developing new marketing channels including networking to nearly 30,000 professional human resource managers that work in Canada's largest companies. These professionals are looking to the council for cutting edge information and research on Aboriginal human resource matters.

The hiring of a vice-president of corporate affairs (a new division), provided the council with the necessary capacity to meet potential "charter" companies on a one-to-one basis, create a relationship and, then, make the value offer to invest in the council through the *Inclusion Investment Partnership Program*.



## trades development projects

The trades and apprenticeship initiatives at the council vary in scope to meet the regional needs of Aboriginal people and our many partners. Designed to develop partnership and employment strategies, these project-based initiatives give employers and trainers improved access to Canada's largely untapped Aboriginal workforce who are eager to fill an expanding employment gap.

In 2008/2009, the council advanced work on seven trades projects in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Québec, Manitoba and Nova Scotia and Canada-wide. These projects were supported by federal and provincial funding and, during the past year, were at various stages of startup, depending on their circumstances and business cycle.

Broadly, the purpose of these projects is to encourage the coordination of resources that would ultimately lead to increased Aboriginal entry into trades and apprenticeship opportunities.

In British Columbia, the council continued to work with the Industry Training Authority on a variety of activities to encourage better understanding of the opportunities for Aboriginal people in the trades. For example, council funds were used to complete an Aboriginal trades and apprenticeship study with the purpose of compiling information about Aboriginal people in BC and their participation in the trades and apprenticeship system. The study has served as background information for an Industry Training

Authority Aboriginal trades and apprenticeship strategy.

In Alberta, the council neared completion of the Apprenticeship Preparation for Aboriginal People (APAP) essential skills pilot project which has proven out a new curriculum designed to help Aboriginal people pass the apprenticeship exam in that province. Sponsored by the Government of Alberta and the federal department of HRSDC, the results of this program have been highly encouraging. This year sixty four people who graduated from the Apprenticeship Preparation pilot project achieved high scores on the apprenticeship exam and were recipients of bursaries worth \$65,900 from the Oil and Gas Trades and Technology Bursary Program.

Projects in Nova Scotia, Québec and Manitoba received start-up approval and, as a result, these projects were staffed and project planning occurred. In the past year, the Nova Scotia project has encountered some challenges and, by year end, the council was engaged in a dialogue to determine the best way forward on this particular project.

In Manitoba, an innovative model is being pursued by the province to provide more supports for Aboriginal people wishing to follow careers in the trades. In Québec, funds have been provided so that stakeholders can continue roundtable discussions on trade development strategies. To assist, the council is completing a baseline information report for Quebec as well.

In Saskatchewan, the \$1.2 million Job Horizons project (with funding from Western Economic Diversification Canada, the Northern Development Agreement and HRSDC) produced tremendous results. As of March 31, 2009, job placements reached 277 in number or 70 per cent of the project's stated goal.

Approximately 42 apprenticeship candidates have been placed since the start of this program results that have helped to achieve an effective working relationship with northern partners. This project continues until fall 2009 at which time the council will be seeking funding to deliver a new iteration of the project into 2010 and beyond.



## national trades symposium

Formally, the council's national trades engagement project came to an end in September 2008 although funds were provided by HRSDC to January 2009 so that a skeleton staff could wind down the project. During the past year, notable events for this project included the holding of a National Trades Symposium which was scheduled in partnership with the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum (CAF). This joint event was held in Victoria during June 2008.

A featured speaker at the event was TV celebrity, Mike Holmes, who both animated and inspired the audience. Holmes believes in the council's vision and says he is committed to doing something in the future to encourage and increase Aboriginal entry to the trades. Holmes's signature phrase is "make it right." It's hoped that, by working together, the council and Mike Holmes can "make it right" for Aboriginal people who want a career in the trades industry. During this event, the council also presented a paper at the CAF conference on a proposed national framework for Aboriginal trades development.

The national committee on trades met for the last time September 2008 to receive the wrap-up report of accomplishments on this project. The committee had over 20 members present, representing educational institutes, AHRDAs, employers and labour organizations.



Mike Holmes was a keynote speaker at our National Trades Symposium held in Victoria BC in 2008.



In April 2008, the council delivered its second national human resource conference. This event was briefly reported on in last year's performance report. For this event, the council brought together 330 participants from across the country for two days of learning and networking in the heart of the metropolitan Montreal. A one-day pre-conference brought together 30 invited thought leaders to share their views on Aboriginal human resource issues and career planning.

Delegates to the conference represented a cross-section of human resource professionals, educators, career development practitioners and diversity leaders from the private, public and Aboriginal sectors of Canada's diverse workforce sectors.



*"It's been an opportunity for us as an employer to truly realize the value that these students bring. It's an untapped labour pool."*

- Victoria Sedgwick, TransCanada.



## guiding circles program

*Guiding Circles* is a vital, holistic career development program that combines contemporary career path coaching with traditional Aboriginal world views. In this reporting year, the Guiding Circles program delivered 29 workshops to 322 career counselors, coaches and practitioners throughout Canada, exceeding all forecasted delivery targets.

Funds were secured from Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), the national Inuit organization in Canada, to translate the *Guiding Circles* program and workbook into Inuktitut. The *Guiding Circles* program sold almost 5000 units this year. It continues to explore partnership opportunities that include indigenous organizations and major corporations in Australia.

*"It is because of this event that I have been able to achieve my dream of working in Corporate Calgary!! I obtained employment as a Business Analyst in the Internal Securities and Governance Department of Trans Canada Pipeline and start on June 1, 2009."*

- Wanda Good



## mastering aboriginal inclusion

*Mastering Aboriginal Inclusion* is the council's collected intelligence and expertise, researched from the successes and failures of Canada's top Aboriginal employers. This two-day workshop and five module self-study series opens any organization to the opportunities available to those who want to embrace inclusion as a business paradigm.

Five years in the making, *Mastering Aboriginal Inclusion* is the council's showpiece product and program platform. This past year was full of exciting milestones as the program's five module set was completed and its commercialization phase began with workshops offered throughout the country.

Uptake on the training offering met with mixed success due to the difficult economic climate. The roll-out of MAI will continue to be shaped in ways that respond to companies that are working in a slow economy and that may have to cut back on training and diversity priorities.

The council believes that many larger companies are deferring training or are seeking alternative ways of accessing training and this is impacting the early stages of commercializing MAI. Despite these circumstances, the forecasted sales of MAI for year one were achieved. The MAI was delivered to 279 clients who attended 20 separate sessions at various cities across Canada.

Over the past year, the council also worked with the Mining Industry Human Resource (MIHR) Council to develop a niche product called *Mastering Aboriginal Inclusion in Mining*. A partnership document was developed with this council and will serve as a model of cooperation to other organizations.

In addition, the council continues to work with HRSDC-Labour Branch to fulfill a \$500,000 contract to address racism in the workplace under the *Aboriginal Peoples Employment Initiative*. Under this initiative, the council delivers *Mastering Aboriginal Inclusion* training to federally-regulated companies.

An \$85,000 program was also approved by Western Economic Diversification to do "aftercare" workshops with companies that participated in the Job Horizons project. For this specific project, the council delivered MAI training programs focused on retention.

A partnership was formed with CCH, a Wolters Kluwers company. CCH specializes in the marketing of professional

publications and it currently markets the Canadian Human Resource Manual to more than 30,000 HR specialists across the country.

Under the terms of the agreement, CCH will digitize the council's MAI modules which will ultimately result in the delivery of MAI to more companies at less cost in a modality which is more accessible to businesses. A future business model will require companies to buy licenses to access the digital version of the MAI. This alliance with CCH will provide the council with a higher capacity to reach greater numbers of companies with its products in a more cost-effective way.

The council continues to develop the MAI platform by exploring the development of niche products for indigenous people in Australia as well as a Spanish language version for other indigenous markets. Closer to home, new MAI product applications are being considered by sector councils such as those in supply chain and environment sectors. The MAI platform continues to offer many opportunities for new product development, market segmentation and licensing arrangements.



## workforce connex

Launched in 2006 *Workforce Connex* is a series of forums designed to promote the development of new understandings, successful partnerships and HR strategies that help Aboriginal Canadians acquire the right skills and opportunities to enter new labour market sectors. Through these forums, strong Aboriginal and private sector partnerships are built. In 2008/2009, the council continued delivery of its well-received *Workforce Connex* initiative.

In April 2008, the council held a national *Workforce Connex* leadership meeting in Ottawa. Ten provincial *Workforce Connex* forums have been held in the last two and a half years across Canada. Each event was supported by a provincial advisory committee. The council brought together a total of 50 representatives to share the impact of the events and to discuss the potential for *Workforce Connex* future activities.

Almost 2000 participants and 500 commitments have been generated to date and some impressive outcomes have been reported. For example, Safeway has created 1400 jobs in Alberta. In addition, companies have continued to work with Aboriginal groups on career development, skill development and partnership initiatives, once the original connection is made through the *Workforce Connex* forum.

In March 2009, a very successful *Workforce Connex* forum was delivered in Iqaluit, Nunavut. This high profile event was attended by 80 people and focused on employment and retention issues within Nunavut. The event received very positive media attention from both local and territory-wide media outlets.

The council also worked with the government of Ontario to build a *Workforce Connex* agenda that would best meet its needs as well as the objectives of the Aboriginal affairs and training departments. The province of Ontario contributed \$100,000 to the council towards this event (to be held in the fall of 2009) with the intent of it becoming a strategic pillar in its work with Aboriginal people.





## aboriginal procurement skills and competencies initiative

The council's work with companies affirms our view that a broad approach to organizational development (OD) and transformation will offer value added solutions to Inclusion. Overall, companies seem equally interested in talking about recruitment opportunities as well as leadership, CSR and other activities and policies their companies can implement. Looking at procurement through this "OD" lense offers further opportunities for companies to transform themselves into an organization of inclusion.

In an effort to connect Aboriginal business owners with corporate Canada, the council introduced a new business line that focuses on the skills and competencies that large businesses need to be more effective in bringing procurement opportunities to Aboriginal businesses. As part of *Inclusion Works '09*, a specific event stream brought together Aboriginal business owners and participants to a roundtable discussion and workshop session that was designed to discuss procurement issues and impediments.

The council also produced a guidebook that talks about the seven steps of procurement and the activities that large companies can undertake to improve their strategies and make outsourcing opportunities more accessible.

At year end, the council had advanced another project to INAC on *Strengthening Corporate Engagement in Aboriginal Business Development, Procurement and Employment*. This project was approved for \$608,000 in March 2009 to delve deeper into large companies' efforts to engage Aboriginal people, businesses and communities. The project will result in templates which can be used to engage companies that are working in different sectors, business environments and regulatory regimes. A national engagement framework is also one of the outcomes anticipated. At the time of this report, the project was in early start-up mode with six companies short-listed to participate.



*"We need to transform inner city neighborhoods into models of growth that are wholly sustainable and environmentally sound."*

- The Honourable Dr. Lloyd Axworthy



Victoria LaBillois, prime organizer of the Inclusion Works 09.

*"We have all developed a greater sense of pride and a stronger sense of self."*

- Angela Wood



## communications, marketing, media and event management

The communications and marketing division grew in the past year, taking on new responsibilities in database management, event coordination and relationship/social marketing. Under the guidance of the director of communications and marketing, the division provides invaluable support, advice and direction to ensure the successful outcomes of many council efforts and to support its strategic objectives.

From encouraging national media attention to providing critical support for major events, the division maintains a highly valuable role in the overall success of a number of new initiatives as well as ongoing projects.

During the past fiscal year, it achieved a high degree of performance in the following activities:

- Initiated new marketing activities that reached more than 30,000 new HR contacts in the sectors of hospitality, government, education, wholesale, retail, health, manufacturing, businesses, non-profit, oil and gas, mining and finance.
- Maintained, amended and expanded the council's website and increased web traffic to [Aboriginalhr.ca](http://Aboriginalhr.ca) by 104 per cent between March 31, 2008 and March 31, 2009. Unique visitors (separate individuals) were up 90.56 per cent with 33,935 hits to the home page.

- Supported marketing, communication and event logistics for *Inclusion Works '09*, the Champions event, *Workforce Connex Ontario*, *Workforce Connex Nunavut* and various workshops and meetings.

- Incorporated social media/marketing initiatives into the council's communications and marketing strategies (i.e., Facebook, pod casts, Twitter).

- Used social media techniques and the arm of Canada's post-secondary institutions to recruit and communicate to Canada's post-secondary Aboriginal students and grads. The result of this effort produced applications from 434 top-ranking Aboriginal post-secondary grads and students (in their final year of study) to take part in the *Inclusion Works '09* recruitment fair.

- Worked proactively with local and international media using social media methods (Twitter and Facebook) along with traditional media relations outreach tools

*"I participated in MAI with a singular objective: to further develop and nurture my growing knowledge of Aboriginal labour market issues due to my new responsibilities at work. As an Aboriginal employee, I walked away from MAI with much more than I had expected. First of all, I realized what significant role I can play to strengthen and extend the linkages between labour force demand and supply. But most importantly, MAI validated and put into words the many reasons why I have changed employers 6 times in 9 years: tokenism, management and organizational insensitivity, and lack of a support system. I appreciate that MAI will help the demand side understand why Aboriginal people leave their jobs and perhaps over time more employers will endeavour to make the necessary changes in order to become work places of choice for Aboriginal people."*

– MAI Participant from Halifax



such as media releases, phone calls, public service announcements and print ads to help spread the word about *Inclusion Works '09*, the council's value and the positive contribution of Aboriginal people in post-secondary schools and in the workplace. This resulted in 75 media stories being filed on a national level.

- Rolled out a communications and marketing plan using traditional and social media communications and marketing tools to reach new clients (profiled as educated, aged 35-64, in the role of HR directors/managers, corporate executives, government administrators, Aboriginal employment organizations, and post-secondary administrators) to:

- Increase *Inclusion Works '09* and *Mastering Aboriginal Inclusion* registrations
- Generate brand awareness
- Position the council as the authority on Aboriginal workplace inclusion issues
- Attract new leads into *Salesforce*
- Spark media relations opportunities in advance of the Champions event (which resulted in double the delegation for the council's national 2008 event).

- Moved forward with an online registration system to support events and implemented e-commerce to support the sale of products online.

- Implemented a new customer relationship management program (*Salesforce*) to ensure that we can better serve our client base and reach target audiences strategically and effectively.

- Surveyed our stakeholder audience to determine communications needs which resulted in the development of a quarterly online newsletter (*Aboriginal HR Narrator*) in replacement of our bi-annual printed newsletter *National Report on Aboriginal Inclusion and Council Connections*.

- Developed a mass emailing system through Vertical Response to distribute email notices to various audiences.

- Supported the expansion and administration of marketing and promotional materials for the council at tradeshows (AFN, Human Resource Professional Association of Ontario and the BC HR Association).


- Supported efforts to roll out the public launch of *Mastering Aboriginal Inclusion* and marketed the *Guiding Circles* publications and workshops.



Crystal Kosa presents a workshop in *Mastering Aboriginal Inclusion*.

*"I just wanted to congratulate you and your amazing team on the absolute best conference I've ever attended! Once again, meegwetch to you and the whole team of trail breakers at the AHRC for dreaming big and believing that we (all aboriginal people) are truly worth something."*

- Tracey Metallic



## financial stewardship

**The financial division of the council continues to ensure the prudent and ethical use of its public and private financial resources.**

The council's financial statements provide real insight into the separation of public and private resources and how these resources are depicted in the accounting for the various product lines and program areas that the council has developed.

The council's asset base continues to grow thanks in part to its new headquarters building in Saskatoon which the council purchased in 2007. This building has appreciated substantially in the profitable real estate market of Saskatchewan's booming economy.

In 2008, the board approved Deloitte Touche as the council's new auditors. The council also created a new chief financial and business development officer (CFBDO) for the organization, replacing the former chief financial officer position. In addition, new systems have been introduced into the council's finance and administration areas. The council also initiated the steps to become ISO accredited which it hopes to achieve in the 2009/2010 fiscal year.



*"Finish your journey. It's time to be vulnerable to success."*

- Shawn Atleo, AFN British Columbia Regional Chief, Hereditary Chief of the Ahousaht First Nation, and Chancellor of Vancouver Island University.



## council staffing and hr resources

During the past fiscal year, a new director of human resources was hired, bringing a split internal/external focus. As part of this new HR role, the director provides assistance to companies that want to climb the inclusion continuum.

The council has a wonderful complement of staff that bring a unique understanding of the many audiences and networks we serve while the board and champions provide reach and expertise. However, like many organizations on a growth trajectory, the council faces challenges building capacity and workplace adaptations.


The council tracks its Aboriginal staff composition which has varied from 53 per cent to 68 per cent Aboriginal staff versus non-Aboriginal workers. The council is a diversified employer and values experts from many different backgrounds. In the past year our staff complement rose to 35 full time term and project staff. Additional staff were hired under contact service. Two thirds of the council's management is consistently staffed by aboriginal specialists.

In 2008/2009, the council met the certification requirements for the federal government's Set-Aside Program for Aboriginal Business. Passing these rigorous guidelines means that the council now qualifies for the federal government's set-aside program when it bids on government contracts.



*"There are two gifts we have from the Creator. The first is time. The second is choice."*

- Dr. Alika LaFontaine, winner of CBC's contest for Canada's Next Great Prime Minister



## partnerships with sector councils, representation and advocacy

The council is in the last year of a project that has established formal support for two sector councils ECO Canada and the Wood Manufacturing Council. To support these councils and their initiatives, the council provides technical support about the Aboriginal community.

Through the *Building Environmental Aboriginal Human Resource (BEAHR)* project, considerable progress has been made on the education side to introduce vocational-oriented training programs that enable Aboriginal people to gain entry into the environment sector.

In a large measure, this effort has succeeded with a number of colleges and universities across the country that now offer a curriculum which graduates Aboriginal people in occupations such as water monitoring technicians.

On the manufacturing side, the Wood Links program has also introduced information about the opportunities in the wood manufacturing sector into high schools across the country. As support for this effort, the council has provided insight and advice.

The council continues to work with other sector councils in a variety of ways as well. A research paper was developed for the trucking sector council to help conceptualize new ideas on how that sector could do more outreach to the Aboriginal community.

Aboriginal employment continues to be high on the project list of many sector councils and the council continues to look for new opportunities to help leverage resources, create new networks and develop new strategies.

The council's president/CEO continues to sit on the boards of the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum (CAF) as well as the Mining Industry Human Resource Council. As well, the council is represented at regular meetings of the Alliance of Sector Councils (TASC). It co-chairs a sub-table on Aboriginal human resource issues and, in the past year, it produced, with TASC, a survey of councils' plans to do work with the Aboriginal community.

Papers and a number of presentations were completed by the council to encourage other sector councils to work with Aboriginal communities. Without question, the council's efforts are gaining momentum and making an impact, encouraging many sectors of the economy to engage in Aboriginal employment strategies.

The advocacy work and representation conducted by the council goes well beyond the sector council community. In the past year, the council's CEO sat on the board of Corrections Canada (CORCAN) and made many presentations and keynotes at conferences, events and forums.

Through its charitable arm, the council is also networking and leveraging new interests from the philanthropic sector. Through these varied networks, it will continue to enrich its service portfolio of products and services to help employers recruit, retain and advance Aboriginal people in Canada's workplaces.



## footsteps forward

The 2008/2009 fiscal year was marked by expansion, diversification, national leadership, client and partner fulfillment and an increased profile.

The council's ability to attract new clients and partners reflects our success in developing a strong platform of programs and services that are relevant to the needs of the organizations we serve.

We measure our success by:

- The increasing numbers of employers that recruit, retain and promote Aboriginal people.
- The Aboriginal human resource strategies and templates implemented by supply and demand organizations across Canada.
- The increasing numbers of Aboriginal people with the skills and knowledge needed for successful employment.

Building on our momentum from this past year, in 2009/2010, the council looks forward to its continued efforts with the *Inclusion Investment Partnership Program*, seeking support from 100 organizations to deliver on its mission and mandate.

In addition, it anticipates continued growth with its *Mastering Aboriginal Inclusion* program, applying this methodology to a wider set of organizational development issues facing companies that want to become organizations of inclusion.

Nationally, the council will continue to strengthen and refine its messaging to appeal to an ever-widening range of companies reflecting on employers' organizational needs, their productivity drivers and on other factors such as social responsibility. We look forward to working with our partners, friends and clients on *Inclusion Works '10* to be held April 27-29, 2010 at the Westin Harbour Castle in Toronto.



*"People may forget what you say and people may forget what you do. But they will never forget how you made them feel."*

- Charlie Coffey, O.C., Chair, AHRC Charitable Division



**Aboriginal Human  
Resource Council**

connections – partnerships – solutions

780 – 2nd Avenue North  
Saskatoon, SK , S7K 2E1 Canada  
866.711.5091

Working with Canada's leading companies to create Organizations of Inclusion.

[aboriginalhr.ca](http://aboriginalhr.ca)



**Canada**

The council wishes to acknowledge the funding support from the Sector Council Program, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.