



HOW TO RECRUIT AND RETAIN INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS

Creating the Strategy

A successful Indigenous employment program starts with the creation of an Indigenous Employment Strategy. Developing and implementing an appropriate Indigenous employment strategy will provide the focus and direction to assist your company to achieve its Indigenous employment objectives.

ISA consultants have considerable experience in developing culturally appropriate Indigenous employment strategies designed to ensure that the work place culture is attractive to Indigenous Australians. The strategy should recognise that Indigenous Australians may have:

- limited experience in mainstream employment
- limited access to appropriate role models
- limited education and vocational experience
- differing family/community structures and responsibilities, and
- less awareness of the benefits to be derived from mainstream employment

ISA consultants are experienced in developing recruitment and career development strategies that ease the pressure of living and working cross culturally. To achieve a successful strategy a dialogue is necessary between the company and the local Indigenous community. We will arrange and facilitate meetings to explain and gain community support for your employment strategy. It may be possible to gain funding through the Commonwealth Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) to develop your employment strategy.

Attracting the Right People

It has been our experience that traditional/mainstream recruitment strategies alone may not achieve desired Indigenous recruitment outcomes. Mainstream newspaper advertisements and recruitment agencies often do not attract suitable Indigenous employees.

It is much more effective to communicate directly with the Indigenous community and relevant Indigenous agencies. This is best achieved by targeting the most appropriate Indigenous community organisations and other known community contacts, and by use of national and local Indigenous media outlets. Identifying and using these contacts ensures both community

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and individual understanding and leads to active community support and successful Indigenous employment outcomes for your company.

Our experience base and networks provide us with the capability to access Indigenous Australian applicant pools and the credibility to earn their trust. ISA recruit from a range of sources, including directly from the Indigenous community.

Cultural awareness within your existing workforce

Cultural Awareness training plays an important role in retaining Indigenous employees. Improving your staff's awareness of cross cultural employment issues affecting Indigenous Australians will better facilitate the integration of Indigenous employees into your company, thereby improving Indigenous employee retention. Your employees will gain an understanding of Indigenous employee thinking on both contemporary and traditional issues and will learn how these views relate to Indigenous people entering and maintaining mainstream employment.

Workplace Culture

Your new Indigenous employees will likely have experience in living cross culturally, but it may be necessary to provide them with training on, and the expectations of, your company's workplace culture. ISA can provide highly effective and challenging pre-employment training, designed to your specific requirements.

Recruitment and Vocational skills/knowledge training

The ISA Indigenous recruitment program ensures that companies can attract and recruit suitable Indigenous employees. ISA act as an Indigenous recruitment specialist allowing you to get on with your core business while we source Indigenous staff that will meet your recruitment criteria.

Indigenous employees may require introductory vocational skills training on entry to your company. We have consultants with many years' vocational training and human resource management experience who can assist you to develop and deliver company specific or relevant accredited modules.

ISA is also a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) and can organise accredited entry level training in most localities.

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Retention programs - Mentoring

It has been our experience that entry level Indigenous employees benefit from independent mentor support for a period of time. ISA provides mentor support that allows new Indigenous employees to:

- gain an understanding of workplace culture and company requirements
- balance family/community and work commitments, and
- gain the confidence and skills to communicate effectively with their work peers and supervisors.

In addition, ISA consultants have the HRM and cultural sensitivity and experience to ensure successful relations are established between the community, Indigenous employees and company representatives.

Indigenous Community Engagement

It is important to engage the local Indigenous community when recruiting Indigenous staff. The level of engagement will depend on the employer's location and the size and nature of their business. ISA works with employers to build genuine relationships and trust between them and relevant Indigenous communities. ISA will project the company to the Indigenous community as a trustworthy and committed employer and in doing so will establish avenues for recruitment and further engagement.

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