Give Work

PLATO Testing
Software Testing That Makes a Difference
For Consideration

• Opportunities / New Thinking for Creating Careers in ITC for Indigenous Canadians

• Challenges / Barriers

• Software Testing as a gateway into ICT for Indigenous Canadians

• PLATO Testing Experience in building a business and building career opportunities for Indigenous Canadians and in ICT

• Lessons Learning
Call to Action #92: We call upon the corporate sector in Canada to adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a reconciliation framework and to apply its principles, norms, and standards to corporate policy and core operational activities involving Indigenous peoples and their lands and resources. This would include, but not be limited to, the following:

i. Commit to meaningful consultation, building respectful relationships, and obtaining the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous peoples before proceeding with economic development projects.

ii. Ensure that Aboriginal peoples have equitable access to jobs, training, and education opportunities in the corporate sector, and that Aboriginal communities gain long-term sustainable benefits from economic development projects.

iii. Provide education for management and staff on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.
Transforming Conventional Thinking

• Convention has it that: “If you give someone a fish, he or she will eat for a day. But if you teach someone to fish he will eat forever.”

• Paramouncy of Proximity – must be close to the lake, river, or ocean to capitalize on skill or knowledge.

• But what if someone is not close to a lake, river or ocean?
  • Must leave home to use skill/knowledge

• What if the lake, river or ocean can be brought to the person?
  • Can build a life close to home and family

• Technology and the Knowledge Economy offer us the opportunity to fish where there is no lake, river or ocean!
218K New ICT Jobs in Canada by 2020

Talent Harder and Harder to Find
Risk with Conventional Thinking

• Conventional Thinking and Status Quo are our greatest risks.

• Knowledge Economy is different from all previous economies.

• We have opportunities for success that we don’t yet understand.

• As Indigenous Canadians, we must find a way to benefit from Growth of ICT in Canada!
Knowledge Economy = Opportunity

• Job Demand continues to outstrip available Labour Supply

• ITC is borderless – Geographic Location, Ethnicity, don’t matter (or they matter less)

• Competence, Responsiveness, Quality of Work, and Cost-Competitiveness are main success factors

• How do we get meaningful numbers into ITC?
Barriers: Real and Perceived

• Education Barrier – Perception that Computer Science Degree/Diploma is Always Required to get a job

• STEM Subjects are non-traditional areas of study—How do we change this?

• Community of Indigenous IT Professionals is small to non-existent-- ICT is a Non-traditional career consideration.
CEO and Founder
PQA Testing
PLATO Testing

President and COO
PLATO Testing
Pasqua FN Member
What is Software Testing?

• “the process of validating and verifying that a software program or application or product meets the business and technical requirements that guided its design and development.”

• It is verifying the degree to which programs do what they are supposed to do (e.g. function, usability, compatibility, speed, security, etc).
The Software Testing Industry

• $6+ Billion Industry Worldwide

• Testing is normally done off-shore from North America.

• Tens of Thousands of Testing Jobs are sent off-shore each year.

• Canadian Testing companies unable to find trained labour to compete with off-shore testing organizations.

• Canadian Testing companies focus mainly on test automation and consulting (higher education/skill requirements)
Why Not Build an Indigenous Software Testing Company?

• Software Testing – ITC Work that does not necessarily require a Degree / Diploma in ITC Program to become employed and to pursue a career

• Unique GATEWAY into IT – Get trained, Get Working, Get Experience, Build Careers.
Great Idea, What Next?

• PQA Testing partnered with Joint Economic Development Initiative (JEDI) and Collège Communautaire du Nouveau Brunswick (CCNB)

• Introductory Course – 6 Months (4 months in-class; 2 month paid internship)
  • College-level Credit – Courses Certified by CCNB

• Building Diploma Program in Software Testing
Results to Date:

• 80+% completion rate for Course and Internship
  • No Tuition – Partners help secure funding;
  • So far - full-time, permanent employment to all successful trainees
  • Training courses held in BC, NB (and now AB).

• Created Test Automation Course and Testing in an AGILE Environment Course

• 51 Testers situated in Fredericton and Miramichi, New Brunswick, and Vancouver, British Columbia
Knowledge Economy Requires Knowledge

- Could not just create a company and start providing services
  - someone else's turf
  - existing business relationships
  - belief/perceptions.

- Need Experience, Network, and Industry Knowledge to compete from a business perspective.

- Training/Mentoring Support – Testing is competitive and the competitors are world-wide.

- On-Shore Advantage = time-zones, language, social impacts
PLATO Testing

• 100% On-Shore Canadian Outsource software testing services company with 100% Indigenous Canadian Testing Team


• Testers supported and mentored by experience Subject Matter Specialists – PQA Testing helps to ensure success

• Competitive Rates with Social Impact
What can the Indigenous Organizations do to promote ITC Careers?

• Remember that in the Knowledge Economy, the main success criterion is competence.
  • We can be who we are, we just need to deliver.

• Reliable High Speed Internet is a foundational pillar for job and career creation.
  • High Speed Internet is the new paved road

• Promote and Make IT careers a preferred job goal for kids
  • Coding is the New Blue Collar Skill
What is needed from Corporations and Governments in Canada?

• Continued Investment in training and training initiatives.
  • Make these more responsive to our realities

• Give Work Means:
  • Investing beyond training
  • Carve off a piece of work and provide to companies like PLATO

• Give Work = Providing a Chance to Succeed!
Programmatic Barriers

Governments Can Help by:

• Providing Funding support for job creation without as many strings:
  • Technology funding often requires a degree as a starting point
  • Training funding often targeted at EI eligibility (or not)
  • Removing per company funding quotas

• Base funding decisions more on employment outcomes

• Understanding that not every student/trainee will succeed
How can you help PLATO Testing?

• Provide office space and infrastructure for PLATO Testing.

• Encourage your best and brightest to take and complete our training course.

• Remind governments and businesses to consider keeping Testing jobs on-shore for the benefit of our people.
A year ago I was unemployed but I signed up for this course and completed the internship. I had no idea I would have a career I always wanted.

Rene Keshane
Saulteaux First Nation
PLATO Vancouver
Give Work
Partner
With Us
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