

Client Case Study



Paving the way for Indigenous employment with competencies

In a climate that is becoming increasingly aware of the unequal opportunities and challenges faced by Indigenous peoples seeking employment, ilinniapaa saw an opportunity to change lives for the better. By offering competency-based learning and development, and skill-mapping programs, ilinniapaa is making sure anyone who wants to learn and enter the workforce has the opportunity to do so.

ILINNIAPAA
Skills Development Centre



ABOUT ILINNIAPAA

ilinniapaa Skills Development Centre, located in Iqaluit, Nunavut, is a place where youth and adults of all abilities and aspirations can receive customized competency-based learning assessments, training, workplace preparation, and enhanced employment services for career success. ilinniapaa, pronounced [il-i-knee-a-pa] means “strive to learn” or “Hey! I’m learning!” in Inuktitut. In support of Inuit cultural values, ilinniapaa truly believes that everybody has a talent, role, and responsibility to use their strengths in the community. They are a learning, career, and employment matchmaker, sparking the individual's desire and capacity to learn and work, and linking them to gainful volunteer or casual placements, temporary, part-time, or full-time employment.

Challenge

ilinniapaa's focus is on improving indigenous communities within Canada through the delivery of a variety of work readiness and employment programs to help individuals with career and skills development. “There's definitely a community need to hire Indigenous peoples, for instance cultural and linguistic representation, meeting negotiated



Impact Benefit Agreement or land claim obligations for beneficiary employment, and improving economic opportunity. Unfortunately, organizations will often hire just for the sake of needing to hire, but having the competency to do the job is often challenging when the literacy and formal education rates just aren't there." says Helen Roos, owner and coordinator of ilinniapaa Skills Development Centre. ilinniapaa also delivers programming and services that support people with

disabilities; Helen's main goal is in giving individuals in these programs a better understanding of why they're experiencing barriers in entering the workforce. "It's important for them to understand what their challenges are, and for them to understand that they don't always need to do Monday to Friday full-time hours. We want to find them opportunities that suit their own needs, whether it is full-time, part-time, shift work, or even volunteer work," says Roos.



Helen Roos
President, Campus Coordinator
and Lead Facilitator

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Solution

Because many of the employment barriers facing ilinniapaa's target demographic are related to basic employment skills, Helen worked with the HRSG team to create a competency-based assessment focused around the nine essential skills required for workplace success. "If you're going to be in the Canadian modern workplace then you need to have your nine essential skills," says Roos. "The HRSG team

helped us develop the grid, and it's a great resource for young people coming into the workplace, new Canadians, or anyone who just needs to see where they are in terms of essential skills." ilinniapaa wanted to use their assessments to help reduce the current illiteracy rates that account for the largest skill gaps. In order to put these assessments into practice, ilinniapaa needed a tool focused specifically

around competency-based assessment, learning and training. ilinniapaa decided to use CompetencyCore, HRSG's competency-based assessment platform, which gives them the ability to create dynamic assessments aligned to specific job requirements. "The fact that CompetencyCore is adaptable is very useful – you can adapt the job profiles to reflect what your organization is specifically looking for," says Roos. ilinniapaa is also using CompetencyCore

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to work with one of their client organizations and build specific profiles and assessments for certain jobs.



Result

ilinniapaa is finding great success in using competencies as a way to level the playing field. "Some organizations have very intangible hiring and performance expectations that people will take very personally often because of feelings of shame or a lack of awareness or knowledge," says Roos. "I find that competency-based training, learning, and discussions are the levelling of the playing field."

Instead of focusing on what potential employees don't have, ilinniapaa is now able to give people clear job requirements and a learning pathway for each job across all career levels. "It's very relevant, practical, and tangible," says Roos. "To be able to have those conversations to say here's how we're going to build your knowledge, here's how you're going to focus your skills, here's what abilities you need to have, is very important."

Competencies take away the power imbalance that often happens between indigenous and non-indigenous people in the workforce. "Rather than it being perceived as 'you're not good enough', it's more tangible, for instance, 'this job requires level 2, and you're actually working at a level 1 competency, and here's how we're going to get you to that level,'" says Roos. Competencies are a way for ilinniapaa to take the people's side and have those difficult conversations that can be easily misinterpreted. It takes away the potential for bias, and instead focuses on what the industry or job specifically requires. "What's great about CompetencyCore is that it truly is

adaptable, and you are able to re-evaluate what competency levels are needed for certain jobs, and where people are performing on a consistent scale. It makes creating training paths and performance management so much easier."

Overall, ilinniappa found great success with CompetencyCore, and greatly appreciated the help of our competency experts in getting their system up and running. "It's a great system, I wouldn't be using it if I didn't believe in it, and the importance of investing in it," says Roos. "It's the core of what we do and what we believe in: competency-based learning and education."

Do you want to achieve excellence through competency-based talent management? To discuss your competency initiative call us at 1-866-574-7041 or email info@hrsg.ca.

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