



January 31, 2007

CRTC
Ottawa ON
K1A 0N2

Dear Secretary General:

Re: VisionTV Cultural Diversity Corporate Plan (the “Plan”) – Annual Report 2006

On behalf of VisionTV, we are pleased to provide the following report with respect to our Plan and VisionTV’s reflection of Canada’s cultural diversity since last reporting to the Commission in 2006. All of the initiatives outlined in VisionTV’s Plan have or continue to be fulfilled. After highlighting some of our success in celebrating Canada’s multi-cultural heritage during the 2006 calendar year, this report responds to the questions in the evaluation grid previously provided by the CRTC.

Highlights

VisionTV continued its tradition of excellence and industry leadership with respect to cultural diversity over the past twelve months. Highlights of our success and ongoing commitment to diversity include:

- Projects in production or on-the-air in 2006, such as: *Medicine Woman* a Canadian Aboriginal doctor’s quest to discover the wellness secrets of the world’s indigenous cultures, produced by Four Square Productions of Regina; and *Gospel Challenge* with producer Riddle Films bringing together aspiring vocalists from Halifax, Montreal, and Toronto in a celebration of music and gospel heritage; are stories predominantly by and about people of visible minority background.
- VisionTV and the National Screen Institute completed scriptwriting program for persons of visible minority or Aboriginal background. The **DiverseTV** initiative provided training and mentorship to emerging talent, offering writers the chance to create a dramatic television series or movie-of-the-week for national broadcast.
- Approximately 15% of the average broadcast week on VisionTV is comprised of Mosaic programs from Sikh, Hindu, and Muslim faith communities that feature visible minorities in leading roles. This outstanding diversity in the Mosaic area enhances the diversity of programming we offer in our Cornerstone schedule.

- VisionTV supported and participated in a variety of industry and cultural events such as the Innoversity Creative Summit, Reel World Film Festival, and the National Aboriginal Festival.
- We were active participants in the industry organization SABAR exploring ways to improve the representation of Aboriginal persons on-air and behind-the-scenes in Canadian broadcasting.
- Our Cultural Diversity Advisory Committee met regularly with the Chief Operating Officer, the senior executive responsible for implementation of the Plan, to ensure continued achievement of the goals set out in the Plan and identify opportunities to enhance VisionTV's diversity objectives. As diversity is a core value at VisionTV, management also reported to the Board of Directors on a quarterly basis regarding attainment of the principles and targets enunciated in the Plan.
- Our survey data confirmed that 94% of Canadians are proud to live in a country of so many diverse faiths and cultures, and 93% agree diversity is an important part of Canadian identity.
- VisionTV was one of the first broadcasters to establish a web component dedicated to diversity. Our diversity website uses the Internet to promote programming that reflects Canada's cultural mosaic and provides access to information about opportunities and industry initiatives of particular interest to people of visible minority backgrounds.

Corporate Accountability

(i) senior executive in charge of diversity

(A) Has a senior executive been identified in the corporate plan?

The Chief Operating Officer continues as the senior executive responsible for implementation of the VisionTV Corporate Plan for Cultural Diversity.

(B) What specific responsibilities have been identified in the corporate plan?

Ultimately, the COO has the authority to hire and fire to ensure the goals in the plan are being achieved. Specific responsibilities include:

- Setting the tone and direction of the company's diversity plan
- Making recommendations to further the success of the plan
- Leading in the implementation of corporate diversity initiatives
- Monitoring progress
- Chairing the management and staff advisory committee on cultural diversity

The HR Manager supplements the efforts of the COO representing VisionTV in external activities such as SABAR and providing additional oversight of internal functions. Through the Human Resources department, the COO initiates the annual performance reviews for all management and staff and arranges any required training or other professional development activities.

(C) What has the senior executive responsible for diversity accomplished in this reporting year, particularly with respect to ensuring that management becomes more reflective of Canada's multi-cultural reality?

VisionTV continues to engage in positive measures hiring to sustain and enhance the diversity of our work force.

(D) If applicable, please describe any new initiatives, including those that might have resulted from work in this area.

In relocating our head office and operations in 2006, the COO ensured that the new facility through its design and construction would be accessible to persons with disabilities. Inspirational quotes from a diversity of individuals are prominently displayed throughout the office space serving as a daily reminder to all staff that cultural diversity continues to be a core value of the organization.

(ii) clear goals for station managers

(A) What goals for station managers have been identified in the corporate plan?

Although VisionTV, as a specialty service, does not have specific "station managers" in many respects the COO fulfills a similar role with respect to internal management.

The work of the COO is supported by the Manager of Human Resources and the Cultural Diversity Advisory Committee ("CDAO"), a group of senior managers responsible for advising the COO on diversity issues.

Specific goals for these individuals include:

- Evaluation on progress with respect to diversity included in annual performance reviews
- Regular meetings to discuss diversity initiatives
- Implementation of training for employees
- Annual report to the Board of Directors on diversity
- Maintain policy of positive measures in hiring; maintain or increase overall numerical representation from designated groups
- Continue support of Innoversity and other industry initiatives on diversity

(B) In this reporting year, which initiatives to meet those goals have been implemented?

Each of the objectives noted above was achieved in 2006.

(C) What are the outcomes of those initiatives?

Performance reviews for all staff were completed; the CDAO met on a quarterly basis and reviewed the new office design providing recommendations to the COO and executive management on accessibility issues; training sessions were conducted for all managers and supervisors; reporting to the Board was done on a quarterly basis; policy measures were implemented and numerical representation of visible minorities was maintained and in some categories increased; we continued to support Innoversity, as well as numerous other initiatives including in particular SABAR, Reel World Film Festival, the National Aboriginal Festival, and the early efforts of the Media Access and Participation Initiative.

(D) Please identify the timelines for those initiatives that have not yet been implemented.

All of the initiatives identified in our original Cultural Diversity Corporate Plan have been implemented. VisionTV has a long tradition of reflecting diversity in its work force and on-air presentation. We intend to maintain that standard of excellence.

(iii) diversity training for management

(A) What specific training initiatives have been identified in the corporate plan?

Annual anti-harassment and employment equity training have been identified in the plan. Supplementary training in English is available to employees on an as needed basis.

(B) In this reporting year, what training initiatives have been implemented?

Training sessions on “Barriers to Communication”, including a specific focus on overcoming the challenges of cross cultural communication, were provided for all managers and supervisors.

(C) For those training initiatives that have been implemented, please answer the following questions:

i. What kind of training has been received?

Expert instruction in an interactive seminar format was provided onsite. Each session was conducted during an afternoon dedicated exclusively to the training activity.

ii. Please indicate which levels of management have participated in this training and what proportion of management that this represents.

Training was offered to all levels of management. 80% of managers and supervisors participated.

iii. What have been the benefits of this training?

VisionTV's workforce grew by approximately 30% in 2006 as we brought technical services in-house for the first time in company history. With a larger number and greater diversity of employees, improving communication skills on the part management will enable us to embrace our cultural differences and deal with any interpersonal issues that may arise more effectively.

(D) Please identify timelines for those training initiatives that have not yet been implemented.

Supplementary training in English will be provided at the request of an employee.

(iv) staff involvement in plan's progress

(A) What specific initiatives have been identified in the corporate plan?

As diversity is a core value at VisionTV, staff have been involved in all aspects of our successful achievement of diversity goals. The corporate plan references specifically:

- Annual performance reviews
- Distribution of multi-faith calendar
- Maintenance of Equity and Diversity policies
- CDAO to advise COO
- Training opportunities

All policies that impact diversity initiatives are available on the corporate intranet which serves as the homepage for staff internet access. Each new employee is provided with the relevant policies and the importance of equity and diversity is explained and emphasized at the time of hiring.

(B) In this reporting year which initiatives have been implemented.

All of these initiatives were pursued this year.

(C) For those initiatives that have been implemented, please answer the following questions:

- i. In this reporting year describe the opportunities provided for staff assessment of progress in the area of cultural diversity?**

Each staff member provided written commentary and then met with their direct supervisor as part of the annual performance review. The discussions included an opportunity to review diversity initiatives. The members of the CDAO consulted with staff on a regular basis and were available as a resource to all employees as part of the CDAO's mandate as an advisory body. In addition there were quarterly staff and senior management meetings when diversity and equity initiatives could be discussed. Employees of VisionTV are now represented by the Canadian

Media Guild as bargaining agent; the bargaining unit and the Guild offer another mechanism for staff to provide feedback regarding diversity initiatives. Negotiation of a first collective agreement continued during 2006 and the importance of diversity to the organization has been an important component of those discussions.

ii. *How many staff participated in this assessment?*

All staff participated in these assessments through the performance review process.

iii. *Through staff assessment have future challenges been identified?*

Staff have identified the ongoing challenge of maintaining and expanding the representation of Aboriginal persons in our workforce, communicating diversity initiatives and opportunities to the public, and the importance of maintaining a work environment that is fully accessible.

(D) Please identify the timelines for those initiatives that have not yet been implemented.

All of the initiatives identified in VisionTV's Cultural Diversity Corporate Plan with respect to staff involvement have been implemented.

(E) If applicable, please describe any new initiatives, including those that might have resulted from work in this area.

VisionTV's Manager of Human Resources will continue to explore ways to expand our recruitment and positive measures hiring to improve achievement of our objectives. We are also working with other broadcasters to specifically address how to better reflect and involve people from Canada's First Nations and persons with disabilities in the broadcast system.

The construction of VisionTV's new head office was completed and a review of the site with respect to accessibility was completed. Staff offered suggestions on possible improvements, including automatic lights in bathrooms and better identification of accessible entries into the building that have been implemented.

(v) improving employment practices re visible minorities

Hiring

(A) What specific hiring initiatives have been identified in the corporate plan?

Two specific initiatives have been identified in VisionTV's plan:

- Maintain positive measures hiring to feature Aboriginal peoples and visible minorities
- Maintain or increase current overall representation from the four designated groups

(B) In this reporting year, which hiring initiatives have been implemented?

Both of these initiatives have been pursued.

(C) For those initiatives that have been implemented please describe what has been accomplished.

We have engaged in positive measures hiring in a number of areas in order to enhance the diversity of our work force. However, maintaining overall representation from the four designated groups proved to be a challenge in hiring technical positions and retaining Aboriginal staff.

The overwhelming majority of applicants responding to technical postings were male. As such, our hiring skewed more male than has traditionally been the case at VisionTV and the percentage of women on staff suffered a related decline. Historically, VisionTV outsourced technical services to third parties. While specific data was not maintained, it was our experience that the majority of those services were provided by men. If those positions had been included in our diversity calculations, it is quite likely that performance in terms of female representation did not drop by as much as our current statistics show. Indeed, we were successful in recruiting a number of outstanding female candidates into roles that would previously have been filled by male employees at the third party service providers.

And the Aboriginal member of staff in our administrative group was recruited away by a larger media company. We were disappointed to see the First Nations representation in our workforce decrease as a result.

(D) Please identify the timelines for those initiatives that have not yet been implemented.

All of the initiatives have been implemented.

(E) If applicable please describe any new initiatives including those that might have resulted from work in this area.

Having increased staff size so dramatically in 2006, we determined that it would be appropriate to establish a new baseline for our diversity statistics. As a result, our HR Manager will be initiating a survey in 2007 to measure, through self-identification, all aspects of diversity applicable to VisionTV staff. We will then be able to measure our future progress against these new benchmarks.

Retention / training

(A) What specific initiatives including training have been set out to address retention of culturally diverse employees in the corporate plan?

In addition to the training initiatives discussed previously, VisionTV engages in the following practices that encourage the retention of culturally diverse employees:

- Annual distribution of the multi-faith calendar to all employees
- Maintain availability of multi-purpose rooms for meditation or prayer
- Policy allowing substitution of statutory holidays for alternate days
- Regular meetings of CDAO
- Strong representation of visible minorities and women among senior and executive management
- Reflection of diversity in on-air presentation
- Cultural diversity identified as a core value of the organization

(B) In this reporting year, which initiatives have been implemented?

Diversity is an ongoing commitment at VisionTV. All of these initiatives have been actively pursued this year.

(C) For those initiatives that have been implemented please describe what has been accomplished?

Because cultural diversity is a core value of the organization it is reflected in all aspects of our day-to-day operations. It is our goal to ensure people of all backgrounds feel welcome at VisionTV. We strive to achieve that objective, and believe we are highly successful, on a daily basis. As noted above, however, retention of staff at a small broadcaster is always a challenge as we do not have the same resources available to reward talent as the larger broadcast groups. An example of this ongoing challenge for us was the decision by an Aboriginal member of staff to join a larger company at substantially higher compensation.

(D) Please identify the timelines for those initiatives that have not yet been implemented.

All of the initiatives identified in the corporate plan have been implemented.

Reflection of Diversity in Programming

News

VisionTV does not engage in the production or broadcast of news programs, and as such these sections do not specifically apply to our circumstances. Our in-house current affairs show focusing on faith, spirituality, and moral and ethical issues related to religion, is the closest equivalent to news programming at VisionTV. Our Executive Producer of In-house Production, a position that has always been held by a woman from a visible minority group, is responsible for enforcement of our editorial policy that requires balance and diversity in the program content.

Non-News

(i) Diversifying casts; and (iii) Diversifying Acquisitions

(A) What specific initiatives have been identified in the corporate plan?

The Senior VP Programming makes the final determination on all matters related to VisionTV's program offering, including acquisition, licensing, and scheduling decisions, to ensure a fair and accurate reflection of cultural diversity on-screen. Specific responsibilities identified in the plan include:

- Supervising the Executive Producer for In-House Production, Directors of Independent Production, and Mosaic programming
- Leading the implementation of on-air diversity initiatives
- Monitoring progress
- Enforcing VisionTV's *Code of Ethics*
- Using the Canadian Multi-Faith Calendar as a programming tool
- Reviewing and hiring on-air personalities
- Adhering to VisionTV's Guidelines for Independent Productions
- Liaising with the Mosaic Program Management Group

The Senior VP Programming is therefore ultimately responsible for the diversity of our on-air presentation. The senior manager responsible for each area of our programming schedule (Executive Producer of In-house; Directors of Independent Production; Manager of Acquisitions; Manager of Mosaic Programs) reports to the Senior VP Programming. Each manager has cultural diversity identified as a performance goal and is responsible for ensuring diversity policies are followed in their area of programming. The managers have regular group meetings and individual meetings with the Senior VP. The Senior VP then reports to the President & CEO and the Board of Directors on a regular basis regarding diversity in the program schedule.

The Directors of Independent Production (Documentary and Lifestyle) have specific responsibility for the implementation of VisionTV's Guidelines for Independent Producers which includes a statement emphasizing the importance of cultural diversity and the fair and accurate reflection of visible minorities.

In seeking out programs for our Mosaic schedule, we focus efforts on identifying shows from under represented groups and ensuring that all programs meet the standards set out in VisionTV's Code of Ethics, including the references to diversity.

(B) In this reporting year, which initiatives have been implemented?

All of the initiatives in the corporate plan have been pursued this year.

(C) For those initiatives that have been implemented please describe how each initiative has contributed to diversifying casts / acquisitions.

VisionTV's long history of success in reflecting Canada's cultural diversity continued in 2006. Descriptions of a few of our notable achievements in diversifying casts this year are set out below.

Many Mosaic programs on VisionTV from Sikh, Hindu, and Muslim faith communities feature visible minorities in leading roles. This outstanding diversity in the Mosaic area is enhanced by the diversity of programming we offer in our Cornerstone schedule.

Projects in production or on-the-air in 2006, such as: *Medicine Woman* a Canadian Aboriginal doctor's quest to discover the wellness secrets of the world's indigenous cultures, produced by Four Square Productions of Regina; and *Gospel Challenge* with producer Riddle Films bringing together aspiring vocalists from Halifax, Montreal, and Toronto in a celebration of music and gospel heritage; are stories predominantly by and about people of visible minority background.

More than 30% of the independent productions commissioned by VisionTV are by and about people of visible minority backgrounds. Many others feature visible minorities in leading or prominent roles.

VisionTV's current affairs programs consistently seek out and invite experts from visible minority groups to participate in panel discussions and share their opinions on matters relating to faith and spirituality.

(D) Please identify the timelines for those initiatives that have not yet been implemented.

All of the initiatives are currently being implemented on a day-to-day basis.

(ii) Diversifying scripts

(A) What specific initiatives have been identified in the corporate plan?

As VisionTV did not historically invest in script development, no initiatives were identified in the original corporate plan. However, through our Cultural Diversity Drama Competition, we identified a need for enhanced training of scriptwriters of culturally diverse backgrounds. As a result, in 2005 VisionTV initiated the **DiverseTV** with the National Screen Institute. This groundbreaking program offered for the first time in 2006 provided visible minority and Aboriginal writers the chance to create a dramatic television series or movie of the week for national broadcast. The six participants in the first program included two First Nations writers, two Asian Canadians, and two Canadians of Caribbean descent.

(B), (C) & (D)

N/A

(E) If applicable, please describe any new initiatives including those that might have resulted from work in this area.

The *DiverseTV* project in conjunction with the National Screen Institute, training screenwriters from culturally diverse backgrounds in the art of writing drama scripts, received extremely positive feedback from the participants. Great television and especially great drama starts with great writing. Funding for this project was made possible by the increase in VisionTV's

wholesale rate for carriage on the basic service authorized by the CRTC in 2004. As a development and training opportunity, *DiverseTV* is specifically designed to serve an “incubator function” for young talent of culturally diverse backgrounds. The participants, by improving their skills, will be in a better position to move on to bigger and better projects within the Canadian production and broadcast industries. Having identified a gap in the system in this area, VisionTV is taking a leadership role working with communities, individuals, industry partners and other stakeholders to fill this void.

Community Involvement

(i) Community input and feedback

(A) What specific initiatives have been identified in the corporate plan?

The following specific initiatives for community input and feedback have been identified:

- Regular meetings of Mosaic Program Management Group (“MPMG”)
- Website posting seeking suggestions and feedback
- Maintain diversity of volunteer Board of Directors and consult on a regular basis
- Annual review of in-house production by industry and community representatives
- Urge CAB Joint Societal Issues Committee to examine how to best measure audience trends of visible minority and Aboriginal viewers

(B) In this reporting year, which initiatives have been implemented?

Each of the ongoing initiatives was pursued this year.

(C) For those initiatives that have been implemented, please answer the following questions.

i. What kind of input and feedback has been solicited?

From the MPMG we have sought feedback:

- a. to address the needs of the various faith broadcasters.
- b. to ensure diversity and balance between the Mosaic and Cornerstone schedules.
- c. on implementation of VisionTV Code of Ethics in specific situations and on general matters of policy.
- d. on matters pertaining to programming.
- e. on matters of pricing of air time and accessibility.
- f. regarding the creation and broadcast of on-air promotions for Mosaic programs.
- h. about faith and cultural events advertised by VisionTV and attended by VisionTV representatives.

Our website solicits feedback from viewers on all aspects of our programming. We receive a wide range of correspondence from viewers in reply, by letter, email, and telephone. From time to time we ask for commentary on specific issues, including feedback on the diversity of our

program schedule, either through online questions, polls, or the use of surveys. Visitors to our website are able to respond online providing immediate feedback to us.

The Board of Directors has representation from at least five different faith communities. We consult with the Board on a regular basis regarding diversity initiatives by: reviewing the program schedule; showing video clips; viewing excerpts from specific shows; and reporting on employment and corporate challenges and achievements.

The annual review of in-house production focuses on ensuring that a balanced presentation of issues is being achieved, both within each episode and across the season. Specific commentary on achievement with respect to cultural diversity in the on-air presentation is also requested.

ii. Please indicate the communities and/or groups from whom input and feedback has been received.

Lists of VisionTV's Board of Directors and the active members of the MPMG are on file with the Commission.

We receive comments from thousands of viewers each year, from coast-to-coast, representing a diversity of faith communities and cultural backgrounds.

We liaise with a diversity of Canadian faith institutions on a regular basis.

iii. Who within the organization reviews this input and feedback.

The Senior VP Programming and the COO attend MPMG meetings to receive and review feedback. They also attend meetings of the Board of Directors, along with the President & CEO.

Feedback from viewers is received and sorted by our Audience Relations Coordinator. The Vice-President of Communications is then responsible for reviewing and sharing comments with other members of the executive management team as appropriate. Survey data is also managed by the VP of Communications who meets regularly with the Senior VP Programming to review and discuss the results.

The President & CEO received feedback from Canadian faith leaders directly.

iv. How is the input and feedback being used?

The input is used to shape our program schedule and make adjustments to ensure we are achieving appropriate levels of balance and diversity. Ultimately, we hope the feedback will confirm VisionTV's success in achieving our cultural diversity objectives.

(D) Please identify the timelines for those initiatives that have not yet been implemented.

The initiatives identified in VisionTV's Cultural Diversity Corporate Plan have all been implemented. We continue to examine opportunities to improve our performance with respect to

diversity on an ongoing basis and implement new or improved practices as resources permit such enhancements to our diversity practices.

(E) If applicable please describe any new initiatives including those that might have resulted from work in this area.

Website

A component of the VisionTV website dedicated to cultural diversity was established in 2005. In addition to enhancing the promotion of programs that celebrate cultural diversity, this web portal (www.visiontv.ca/Diversity/index.htm) continues to offer information about VisionTV policies and industry opportunities relevant to people of diverse backgrounds.

In 2006, through an on-air and internet campaign, we invited Canadians to share their individual stories and to reflect on their cultural heritage through text and video submissions to our website. As we begin to explore how to better leverage multi-media applications in celebrating Canada's diversity, we are pleased to have the opportunity to engage citizens directly and to encourage dialogue among and between Canadians of different backgrounds.

Survey Data

VisionTV retained Goldfarb Marketing Intelligence to conduct survey research on our behalf in 2006, with particular attention to the importance of cultural diversity in the lives of Canadians and its reflection in the broadcasting system. 94% of Canadians are proud to live in a country of so many diverse faiths and cultures, and 93% agree diversity is an important part of Canadian identity.

ONE: the Body, Mind and Spirit channel

As VisionTV has adopted cultural diversity as a core value, and VisionTV provides all management services for the operation of ONE, all aspects of VisionTV's corporate plan apply to ONE with the following exceptions:

- a. Board of Directors for ONE is not required to have multifaith representation
- b. VisionTV's Code of Ethics does not apply directly to ONE (cultural diversity is, however, an important element of the Guidelines for Independent Producers which does apply to ONE)
- c. Any reference to initiatives arising from or related to in-house production do not apply to ONE as it is not presently engaged in any in-house production
- d. The Mosaic Program Management Group does not presently have a role in advising on ONE programming, although it is available as a possible resource

e. Increasing faith group representation is not an initiative for ONE

ONE has achieved remarkable success in developing a program offering that enhances the diversity of the broadcast system. We will continue to look for new and innovative ways to expand VisionTV's leadership in reflecting the cultural diversity of Canada through the management of our affiliated channels and undertakings.

We trust you will find this report helpful in evaluating VisionTV's success in achieving the diversity objectives set out in our corporate plan. Please contact the undersigned if you require any further information.

Yours truly,

VisionTV: Canada's Faith Network

Per:



Brant Kostandoff
General Counsel

cc. Raj Shoan, Senior Policy Analyst, English Pay, Specialty and Social Policy