

PANEL QUESTIONS BUILDING BRIDGES CONFERENCE

1. If someone wants to visit one of the First Nation (FN) communities to start building relationships where should they stay if there are no hotels?

First Nations close to urban area, so not a problem – sometimes you may get an invitation to stay with a community member.

2. What is appropriate business dress for meetings in First Nation communities or with First Nation partners?

Casual – depending on environment / setting.

3. Can you explain which communities are part of Wabun Tribal Council and which part of Mushkegowuk Council -how were they divided and why are there two different groups in our area?

- Wabun First Nations: Matachewan, Mattagami, Wahgoshig, Brunswick House, Chapleau Ojibwe and Beaverhouse First Nation
- Tribal Council policy circa 1985 minimum 5 First Nations or specific population.
- NAN – split First Nations into Tribal Council groups based on geo and cultural/tribal lines Cree.Ojibway.

4. What is the role of Nishnawbe Aski Nation and how do they work with Wabun and Mushkegowuk communities?

- Political advocacy, some service delivery, larger regional issues.
- Involved as much or little as we want them to be
- Access certain services ie. forestry not health

5. People tell me that they have flown or traveled to First Nation communities for scheduled meetings but when they arrive no one attends. Can you explain why this might happen sometimes?

- Depending on time – evening seems to be better for community meetings. Chief and Council have many responsibilities.
- Due to tight knit community; get called on for many things
- Always best to reconfirm the day prior

6. If I am interested in finding entrepreneurs in FN communities that are interested in partnering -who do I speak with? Do communities have lists of entrepreneurs who want to find partners?

Chief and Councils – Economic Development Officers (EDO) – maybe not lists but EDO generally knows.

7. If someone wants to start a business or look for partners’ -who is the best person or group to contact in the community -the Chief or the Economic Development Office?

Depends on size and nature of business, but generally EDO is a good start.

8. What are some key cultural issues people should be cognizant about when working with or trying to develop relationships with First Nations –(Do you shake hands, look people in the eye –what may be considered rude in a FN community versus a business meeting in Timmins, should women wear skirts)?

- Just like anyone else you want to do business with
- Major thing – silence does not mean consent
- Many times you will find you are doing all the talking

- Trust issue so may take longer to foster relationship than accustomed to

9. What is the best place or method for people in Timmins to find out about Ojibway and Cree customs and traditions?

Ojibway & Cree Cultural Centre.

10. Should I bring a gift to meetings? If so what is appropriate?

Not unless it's some sort of ceremony or event – maybe something unique to your culture.

11. What is the best time of year for visits to your communities? What is the worst and why?

For business summer is probably the worst.

- A few of our First Nations also close for spring and fall hunts
- Other than that any time

12. What is the most important thing I should know about developing a partnership with someone who is Aboriginal?

In my view – most will prefer even demand 51% ownership to take advantage of various programs that exist as well as any potential tax breaks and incentives.

13. What is the proper term we should use - Indian, Aboriginal, Native, First Nation person?

Ojibway / Cree / Metis If you know. If not and you are dealing with First Nations, then First Nation person.

14. How do I find out what types of services and/or products the communities may be looking to buy?

EDO / Band Manager

15. Why are many of the FN consumers avoiding Timmins and going to other Cities for their shopping?

- Wabun Tribal Council First Nations deal with nearest “urban centre”
- Sudbury is also fairly close
- No Aboriginal presence at business
- Status cards welcomed / hassle free
 - smaller businesses need to do this better

16. Is there something that my business can do to let FN consumers know they are welcome?

Hire Aboriginal people.

17. What is the best place or persons, Timmins people should talk to find out about Treaty #9, or the significance of powwows?

Ojibway & Cree Cultural Centre.

18. Do situations like Caledonia hurt our chances of bringing our communities together?

- Certainly heightens awareness that there is ignorance re: treaty, Aboriginal rights issues among mainstream society
- Overall I think people in the north have a better understanding of the issues, but there is room for improvement

- Education, maybe have some curriculum specific to First Nation history in our area
- Adams Mine was a good example of people working together

19. What is the role of women in FN communities and or businesses?

- Much like mainstream society re: family, nurturing, etc.
- More emerging role in leadership. Wabun Tribal Council has had many female Chiefs. Mattagami First Nation had first in Canada I believe.

20. My business received a call from someone on the Coast wanting to partner but they were not in business nor did they know what business they wanted to start. Is there an entrepreneurship support service on the first nations that non-Aboriginal businesses could work with?

NADF, Venture Centre, CFDCs, Tribal Council small roll.

21. What are the top three critical issues or barriers to development in Wabun and Mushkegowuk communities that we might be able to play a role in to help you overcome?

- Equity #1 – resource development partners need to recognize the resource itself as First Nation equity
- Economies of scale
- Experience / education

22. What kinds of businesses are you trying to attract in your communities (retail -dept stores, natural resources)? What about tourism opportunities?

Some businesses that are regional in nature and don't rely on the local economy.

23. Does spirituality play a role in business? If so, how?

- Think it depends on the individual(s)

24. What barriers exist in your communities in terms of telecommunications and/or transportation? Are there opportunities that exist to overcome challenges if they exist?

Broadband not available in some, but getting there. Price.

25. What does community consultations mean in a First Nation community? Why are they different and how are critical community decisions made in FN communities?

- Community consultation key in resource development initiatives and can make or break a project.
- Different because of First Nation relationship to the land and our interpretation of Treaty rights (Mikisew confirms)

26. Do the majority of FN people feel that they are welcomed in Timmins? If not why? What are some suggestions to improve things?

Think so, again more Aboriginal people on the front line.

27. Are there people in your communities that may want to set-up businesses in Timmins (maybe a second store or new business division?) If so how do we connect with them?

Yes, through EDO. They will contact you.

28. Because our communities are dispersed and travel is costly what do you suggest is the best way for us all to meet on a fairly regular basis to start moving opportunities forward? (Maybe we could schedule a meeting when the Chiefs meet and add an extra day?)

Tribal Council meetings – could provide opportunity for presentations.

29. Do you prefer to have meetings in Timmins or in your communities?

Timmins – meet in First Nations for AGM

30. Is there merit for us to organize a trade mission with business people to visit your communities and business people?

Possibly, but First Nations in Wabun Tribal Council area do business close to their First Nations.

31. What is the best place to vet potential business opportunities and/or partners to ensure that everything being proposed is legitimate in terms of FN regular business practices?

Chief and Council can contact Tribal Council, EDO, Chief and Council.

32. Within the next six months what two things would each of you would like to see happen to show that we are moving forward and building better relationships.

- Maybe a public statement from City of Timmins, TEDC, Chamber of Commerce along the lines welcoming Aboriginal / First Nation people to shop and do business in Timmins. Hiring First Nation people.

- Perhaps begin developing / discussing tax incentive to businesses that partner with First Nations

OTHER ISSUES:

Many First Nation people are offended when a business offers “No Tax Events”, which technically are a 14% discount to the general public, and then do not allow the First Nation customer to use their status card towards the reduction of the 8% PST. Essentially you have taken away that person’s right. There are some businesses that do allow the 8% reduction, but not all.