



Discover ᑭᓄᑦ
saskatoon

2025

Good Relations Guide



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LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We acknowledge that we are on Treaty 6 Territory and the Homeland of the Métis people. We reaffirm our relations, which we are bound to by our ancestors through Treaty, to steward this land and seek mutual benefit on this land for as long as the grass grows, the sun shines, and the river flows. We pay our respect to the First Nation and Métis ancestors of this place and honour Elders and Survivors as we bring awareness to Indian Residential and Day Schools, The Sixties Scoop, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, and Two-Spirited people. To acknowledge this Territory and its keepers on their traditional terms is to act in reciprocity so that truth may be understood, and reconciliation is made possible.



It's with a profound sense of honour and purpose that we present Discover Saskatoon's "Guide to Good Relations." This guide is a testament to the willingness of Indigenous communities to forge pathways of understanding and collaboration. Our land acknowledgment begins with a heartfelt recognition that we are all treaty people: We stand on Treaty 6 Territory and the Homeland of the Métis, whose enduring

relationship with this land is the foundation upon which we strive to build bridges and foster genuine connections. We pay our respect to the First Nation and Métis ancestors of this place and honour Elders and Survivors as we bring awareness to Indian Residential Schools, Day Schools, The Sixties Scoop, and Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives. Thanks to the openness and guidance from Indigenous

partners, we've crafted this guide as a tool to share knowledge, to respect protocols, and to contribute to a journey towards truth and reconciliation. Let this be a resource for all who seek to approach relationships with intention, care, and respect, embodying the principles that lead us towards a future of unity and understanding.

Steph Clovechok,
CEO Discover Saskatoon

INTRODUCTION: COMING TOGETHER



Welcome to the Good Relations Guide. We created this resource to help people looking to visit and conduct business in the tourism sector in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan because we want to enable “good relations” – positive, respectful, mutually beneficial, and productive relationships. We want to welcome you in friendship, support your success, and maintain a commitment and standard of economic reconciliation in the destination we steward.

We would like to ensure business owners, organizational leaders, event planners, tour operators, and aspiring entrepreneurs have all the information they need to enter into good relations in our beautiful city. Whether you are from another province or territory, or another country entirely, this guide will anchor you in the spirit and intent of the Treaty while helping you as you plan your next event, initiative, or venture, while ensuring your guests have a memorable stay.

At Discover Saskatoon, we are committed to creating wealth and well-being in our community while creating compelling invitations for travellers to visit. We would love to see our tourism partners who come from afar make the most of the opportunities that are available in our territories, and we want to be exceptional hosts.

We believe part of being a good host is being a good neighbour and ally. As we welcome in more people, we want to do it in a way that is respectful of the people of the land, the Indigenous people who have called this territory home for generations. Thank you for taking the time to learn about our destination and the people who have taken care of these lands for so long.

Creating Common Language



We are going to cover some key terms that will be helpful as you learn about doing business in these territories.

Allyship is a word that describes how someone with more power or resources acts to help people who have been left out, have fewer resources, or face different challenges. It can look like volunteering, giving money or resources, sharing messages, and standing up for people who are being mistreated.

Indigenous is a term that means “original to the territory” and refers to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people in Canada. “Aboriginal” was used in the same way before but the Latin meaning of the word means the opposite, that the people are not original to the territory, so it isn’t used now. “Native” was also used in the past but in a negative way. “Indian” is a term still used in the Indian Act but is not generally considered polite otherwise.

First Nations people are Indigenous people who are not Inuit or Métis. Across Canada, there are over 600 different First Nations with a lot of diversity in cultures, beliefs, and traditions among them.



Métis are a group of people who originated in the Red River Valley of Manitoba, descended from French settlers and the First Nations people of the area. Métis is a distinct cultural identity and doesn’t just mean someone is of mixed ancestry.

The **Inuit** are Indigenous people of the North. “Inuit” means “the people” in Inuktitut. When referring to just one person, the term that’s used is “Inuk.” Many different Arctic countries are home to Inuit and, in Canada, they are culturally distinct from First Nations and Métis people.

Reconciliation is a process of making things right after injustice. Indigenous people have and still experience injustices through government, public institutions, and private companies. They face discrimination on a person-to-person level and within systems. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was an investigative group set up by the government to look at these injustices. They came up with a list of recommendations for making things right – 94 calls to action for all Canadians, industries, and governments.

Building Bridges



We all have a role to play in working toward Reconciliation and having strong relationships is important. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission shared specific ideas about how the business community can participate in Reconciliation in Call to Action 92.



Call to Action 92

In this call to action, the Commission asks businesses to respect the rights of Indigenous people and build respectful relationships with them. They call on businesses to consult with Indigenous people in a way that gives them all the information they need to decide if they agree with an economic development project before it starts and leaves room for them to say no. Indigenous people should have a fair chance of being hired, trained, and educated in the business sector; and Indigenous communities should benefit from economic development projects over the long term and in a sustainable way. Finally, businesses should educate their staff on Indigenous history, residential schools, treaties, and Indigenous rights. Employees should also get training on how to work with people from other cultures, solve conflicts, respect human rights, and prevent racism.

When implemented, this call to action will result in more Indigenous people working and learning, and ensure Indigenous communities are treated fairly, are represented authentically, and have equal access to the visitor economy. This action eliminates the risk of misappropriation, tokenism, and Indigenous people being taken advantage of. Employees with training and education are better able to be allies, and informed workplaces can be more respectful working environments. This call to action also creates a pathway to bridge gaps in education given the Canadian public education system has not been effective in sharing the true history of Indigenous people. People who were educated in other countries will be enabled to understand the true origins of Canada and the history that has contributed to where we are today.

Call to Action 87

In this call to action, the Commission urges all levels of government, in collaboration with Indigenous peoples and relevant organizations, to provide public education that highlights the significant contributions of Indigenous athletes throughout Canadian history. When implemented, this call to action will ensure a fuller, more accurate representation of Indigenous peoples' roles in sports, fostering pride and recognition.

Implementing Call to Action 92 within the Tourism Industry

When thinking about how to Call to Action 92, there are many avenues to pursue. It's important to recognize Calls to Action 87 and 89 here also, which emphasize increasing Indigenous representation in sports specifically. Following are practical steps to help you implement these Calls to Action within your organization, business event, sporting event, or cultural event.

Consult with Indigenous Leadership

Consult with local Indigenous leadership to implement territorial protocols at any business, sporting, or cultural event you are hosting. Involve elders and cultural advisors early in your planning to ensure to honour local customs and traditions.

Create Indigenous employment and volunteer opportunities

Consider hiring local Indigenous people to help you serve your guests. There is an abundance of talent that could be added to your team. Hospitality is a value that is deeply ingrained in the cultures of many First Nations communities, which is very compatible with business goals in the tourism industry . If you recruit volunteers, also consider including Indigenous people in your volunteer base.

Provide opportunities for Indigenous youth

Create growth and learning opportunities by sharing the skills needed in your business with local Indigenous youth or by providing them with internship opportunities. This can also help you with future hiring needs.

Call to Action 89

In this call to action, the Commission calls on the federal government to amend the Physical Activity and Sport Act to better support reconciliation. This includes promoting policies that reduce barriers to sports participation, encourage excellence, and build capacity in the sport system. When implemented, this call to action will ensure policies are inclusive of Indigenous people.



Building Bridges



Cultivate a safe and accommodating workplace

Acknowledge Indigenous lands and cultures:

Include land acknowledgments in your meetings and communications.

Practise Inclusive Recruitment:

Partner with Indigenous communities and educational programs to actively recruit Indigenous talent.

Train Staff to be Good Allies:

Offer training on Indigenous cultures, history, and inclusion for all staff. When people know better, they can do better, and training helps staff learn how to be good allies.

Offer Flexible Leave:

Provide flexible scheduling so your Indigenous team members can have time to attend cultural ceremonies and events.

Create a Safe Environment:

Implement clear anti-discrimination policies and a confidential system for reporting concerns of harassment, racism or exclusion.

Support Career Growth:

Ensure equal opportunities for learning, leadership training, and career progression.

Encourage Feedback:

Regularly collect staff feedback to address concerns and improve workplace practices.

These practices will help foster an inclusive and respectful environment for all team members at your events and throughout your organization, enabling them to engage more effectively with Indigenous customers, suppliers, and community members.

Support Indigenous-Owned Businesses

Source products and services from Indigenous-owned businesses for events and other business needs. This strengthens local economies and fosters positive relations.

Measure your impact

When reporting on your impact—of an event or year-round as an organization—include how many Indigenous people were involved as staff, volunteers, or gainfully employed elders. Additionally, track the number of Indigenous-owned businesses with whom you engaged. This showcases the involvement of Indigenous communities and helps measure progress in diversity, inclusion, and community support.

The Role of Tourism in Reconciliation

Members of the tourism industry have a tremendous opportunity to participate in truth telling and reconciliation. Travel provides opportunity for cultural exchange and for educating travellers about the customs and history of the land and the people of the land. When authentic stories, teachings, and knowledge is shared by Indigenous people from their perspectives, new bridges can be built with foundational knowledge of the truth and, greater understanding will leave travellers transformed.

Tourism operators can also help in welcoming home Indigenous people who have had to move away for work, school, or housing, or those who grew up in other places but want to reconnect with their community while they travel. For Indigenous people who aren't from the area, learning about the people of the land in a way that feels comfortable and respectful is a better guest experience. They will feel better about participating in experiences when they know local Indigenous people are being treated with care.



History of tourism in Canada and Indigenous people

Indigenous people have been purposefully excluded by the tourism industry and haven't always been able to travel the way they had the right to. When it came to working in tourism, permit systems and policies made it impossible for Indigenous people to run their own guiding business; they had to work for other people. As for enjoying destinations, most communities and people have been displaced from their traditional territories, making way for government-created parks these displaced individuals were not allowed to enter. Some hotels used to ban Indigenous people from staying as travellers too.

First Nations people had to get permission to travel from the government because of what was called "the pass system," and the government would tell them what route they had to take. They could be arrested if they didn't do as they were told. That same system kept them from seeing their children who were taken away to live at church-run schools known as Residential Schools. Dancing and sharing their culture off reserve was also not allowed, and the ceremonies they used to travel to attend became against the law.

While those laws have been repealed, there are still barriers between Indigenous people and tourism. The good news is that organizations like yours and people like you can be instrumental in improving access to the economy, the authentic sharing of knowledge, protocols, and traditions while welcoming Indigenous people to this destination in an open and safe way.

In examining ongoing and historical injustices Indigenous people have experienced, inquiries like the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls have looked at how the tourism industry and the government bodies regulating it can contribute to the well-being and safety of Indigenous people and their ways of life. As tourism businesses coming into the area to work, it's important to understand what has been asked of the industry to address these issues and move forward towards Reconciliation.

To contribute to the safety of Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit people, the tourism industry has been asked to improve access to safe transportation and to provide better training for their staff so they can recognize and report situations where people might be victims of human trafficking.

There have also been recommendations around returning control of heritage and cultural sites of Indigenous communities and the establishment of Métis-operated Métis cultural history centres. Working together to support recommendations that return control of cultural and historical narratives to the people they belong to is a way tourism operators can be allies of Indigenous people in moving these recommendations forward.



In learning from the past, we can create a better future in the tourism industry. We are going to talk more about learning from each other in the next section.



The Honourable Murray Sinclair (1951-2024)

Murray Sinclair (Mazina Giizhik) was a visionary lawyer, judge, and advocate for Indigenous rights. He became Manitoba's first Indigenous judge in 1988, was appointed to the Court of Queen's Bench in 2001 and later led the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, which exposed the truths of the Residential School System and produced the TRC's 94 Calls to Action. Sinclair also played a pivotal role in the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry, which resulted in 296 recommendations for reforming Canada's justice

system. A respected voice on land rights, criminal justice, and child welfare, he served as a Senator and was instrumental in passing legislation on Indigenous languages and rights. Throughout his career, Sinclair mentored Indigenous lawyers and received numerous accolades, including the Order of Canada, for his lifelong commitment to justice, reconciliation, and cultural revival. His legacy endures as a profound force for change and healing within Indigenous communities.

EDUCATION: LEARNING TOGETHER



The late Honourable Murray Sinclair, who led the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, famously said that “Education got us into this mess and education will get us out of it.” In that spirit of moving forward together in a good way while honouring the Spirit and intent of the Treaty that we are bound to by our ancestors, we are sharing some lessons to support better relationships. Learning to do things differently can be uncomfortable but it is here that we can grow and learn together.

Creating Common Language

Here are some key terms that will be helpful in your learning journey:

UNDRIP – The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is a United Nations declaration passed in 2007 setting out how Indigenous people should be treated by governments and the rights they should have.

Treaties are agreements made between First Nations and the Canadian government about how land and resources would be shared and how the groups would be in relationship together. Historic treaties were named with numbers (like Treaty 6, on which Saskatoon resides) and the treaties being negotiated now are called comprehensive land claim agreements.

Prior Consent is the act of making sure people are in agreement with something before you start. You should get consent ahead of starting a project that may impact a community.

Building Bridges



When you are looking to engage with an Indigenous community, the journey starts with you. Relationships are not a given; they are earned.

Take some time to read about the community, their history, their ceremonial, cultural, and artistic practices, and what has been happening in their area lately. Having that information can help guide your conversations and help you understand what matters most to the people you want to befriend.

In Indigenous communities, relationships are central to working together. While all Indigenous communities have different values and cultural beliefs, a common theme in best practices for Indigenous relations is the idea that we are all connected and that reciprocity matters. The idea of reciprocity is not just about taking but also giving – not giving just in a transactional way where you give money and receive something in exchange, but that in partnership people acknowledge

kinship ties, work to support one another in right relationship with the land and practise generosity.

Something that you want to avoid in your events or activities is tokenism. Inviting someone or hiring someone to open an event because it looks good but not including or celebrating them from the heart out of respect for their position is tokenism. Tokenization is including someone as a formality, to satisfy a requirement, or to save face without the intention of actually including them. Being genuine in embracing and welcoming people to your events and initiatives is key to building lasting relationships. Including someone in a meaningful way means creating space for and being willing to integrate their feedback and perspectives, instead of expecting them to fit into the space you have designated for them. It's about seeking someone's opinion with an open mind and letting them be part of the team with equal standing because their thoughts are equally valued. As you approach communities with an open heart, there are some things you need to understand about their structures and ways of doing things.



Indigenous Governance



Central to building a relationship with a community is understanding the roles of the people who live there and how things are decided. Historically, the Canadian government created The Indian Act, a law creating a new system of government for First Nations. This system includes elected Chief and Council members and a set frequency of elections. This established for the government the central points of contact and power and it also forced a disruptive new way of life on people without their consent.

Before the Indian Act, communities determined who would lead a community and the chain in which decisions were made. In some communities, leadership was passed down within families (hereditary Chiefs) or decisions were made by different groups or councils established by the community. How Chief and Council and other community leaders work together might be different from one community to the next. There might be formal processes a community undertakes to gather feedback about a proposal, or there might be an expectation that people who want to collaborate will host information sessions to address any concerns. There could also be a combination of the two.

Indigenous Governance and the Tourism Business Operator



When you require consent to enable an economic initiative within the visitor economy (business event, sporting event, cultural event, travel) or when you want to work and partner with a community, it's good to know how their governance is set up so you are asking and speaking to the right people. A community's leadership often extends beyond Chief and Council and might include hereditary chiefs, elders, matriarchs (women who guide their communities who may also be elders), or other people with important roles in their community based on their knowledge, skills, and cultural values and whose opinions carry a lot of weight. An elder isn't just a term that means an older person – it's a title given in recognition of leadership, skills, or gifts. Knowing who key partners are beyond the formal governance system and planning to include them ensures everyone feels respected and heard and shows respect for a community's structure.



Building Bridges

Protocols

Beyond who you invite to the table when working with an Indigenous community, how you conduct yourself when entering into a relationship greatly influences the likelihood of success. When engaging with communities, it is important to consider traditional practices or cultural ways of doing things, which are called “protocol.” These practices may differ between communities but there are many that are common to the Treaty 6 Territories. In addition to respecting and acting in keeping with the protocols, understanding what they mean is key.

Offerings

When you ask someone for assistance or to do something, it is common to make an offering or give something beyond the agreed upon payment. This might be medicine like tobacco, sage, or sweetgrass, or something else of spiritual or cultural value. The spirit in which something is given is as important as the gift. An offering should be something that shows a personal commitment or recognition, not given out of obligation but from a good heart to help care for the person you have asked to help you.

Land Acknowledgments

When you are gathering on the traditional territories of a community, it's important to acknowledge the people of the land. Land acknowledgements are a sign of respect and help you show that you understand you are a visitor. A land acknowledgment might follow a format like this:



“We are gathered today on the traditional territories and homelands of the _____, _____, and _____ people who have cared for these lands for generations. I am a visitor, and I am grateful for the opportunity to do this work here today.”

Acknowledging the land is more than just ticking a box and saying the words. Think about how to honour the people and what they care about and respect their lands as you do what you planned to do. Respecting the people of the land can look like taking good care of the land they love, and using environmentally sustainable practices to reduce environmental impact by ensuring there are recycling or composting bins available to control litter, reducing waste generated by single-use cutlery and dishware, and having a team pick up trash at the event's closing. It also includes making sure that whatever you're doing in their territories doesn't harm or make life more difficult for them.

In acknowledging the land, it's important to remember that there is a difference between land ownership (who literally owns a property or has rights to it) and connection to the land (who has been in relationship with an area and has a sense of responsibility to it).



Circles

One style of interaction between Indigenous people is through a circle. In a circle, feelings, ideas, and experiences are shared in an orderly way so everyone understands each other. An elder or facilitator will lead a circle and signal who can speak by passing an item of cultural importance. The direction the circle is run will depend on the territory – some people will go in a clockwise or counter-clockwise direction depending on their cultural beliefs.

Circles should not be interrupted by late arrivals and seats should generally not be left empty. In the circle, there is a belief that participants are joined by their ancestors. Ceremony, like smudging or cedar brushing, if an elder is from a territory that practices that, might be part of a circle. The elder or facilitator may have their own practices for guiding a circle that might differ from what has been described.

Land acknowledgements and introductions are often how circles start. From there, people share in turn what is in their hearts and how they feel using “I” statements, without criticism. Passing without sharing is permitted. One or more rounds of sharing and expressions of gratitude follow.

When someone is talking, everyone listens with an open heart and body language, undivided attention, with devices turned off, and without leaving the circle until it is over unless there is an emergency. You might be asked to remove your hat or hood during the circle.



Establishing strong relationships and following protocol is important for working together – something we will be talking about in the next section.

Time

Planning for meeting with Indigenous communities should be done in a way that respects their cultural beliefs around time. Identify a start time so people know when to arrive, but don't set times for each agenda item. Allowing for discussions to take as long as they need to in order to come to an agreement or understanding is recommended, and setting a limit on those discussions can look like an assumption on how participants will feel, their information needs, and their priorities.

Following cultural protocols in opening the gathering and setting an intention around what is to be accomplished is a best practice for successful engagement. The community may come with their own items to discuss and it's best to leave space for that. Leaving room for conversation to evolve naturally allows and demonstrates respect for participants and their priorities. This is a practice in humility, openness, and respect.

Building Relationships

Engaging with communities is a step towards building relationships but there is so much more that goes into establishing deep, meaningful connection. It is not a given and should not be taken for granted that just because you engage with or consult with a community that you have or will in the future have a relationship with them.

Discover Saskatoon can support the establishment of relationships that are mutually beneficial and respectful by enabling awareness of protocols and processes to establish relationships. Connect with us to learn more about how we can work together so you can build authentic relationships with Indigenous communities in Treaty 6 Territory.



IMPLEMENTATION: WORKING TOGETHER



Creating Indigenous inclusion in your tourism industry is an important step on the path towards Reconciliation. There are many ways to welcome more people into your business and to integrate more Indigenous traditions into your events and initiatives. There is no one-size-fits-all solution, and it doesn't have to happen all at once.



Creating Common Language

Cultural Awareness is being conscious of cultural differences between people and how differences might impact communication and interactions.

Indigenous Inclusion is welcoming Indigenous people into your business, programs, and initiatives, taking their needs into account so they can participate.

Cultural Safety is a way of interacting with people that considers differences in power based on social, political, and historical factors.

Building Bridges



If you are looking to integrate Indigenous culture in your business or event, there are a variety of options that might be appropriate depending on your situation.



Smudge

Smudging is a cleansing ceremony typically led by an elder where medicines like sweetgrass, tobacco, sage, or cedar are burned and the smoke is wafted over the participants. Participants are invited to cleanse their head, eyes, ears, mouth, hearts, and bodies, allowing them to participate in whatever comes next with openness. This ceremony is a very meaningful spiritual experience that creates connection with the spirit world.



Sweat lodge

Sweat lodge ceremonies happen in domes built with branches covered with canvas tarps or blankets, representing the earth's womb. Heated rocks are brought inside the lodge and, in some ceremonies, water is poured on them. The elder leading the sweat will decide how many rocks are needed based on their teachings and the ceremony. The rocks are called grandmothers or grandfathers. These ceremonies are for healing, cleansing, or purification. Participants make an offering, and the ceremony includes songs, prayers, and drumming.



Open Stage Event

With enough notice, an open stage event could be planned for your gathering where your participants can experience a range of cultural practices and entertainment. Experiencing authentic cultural presentations allows your guests to learn more about the people of the land and celebrate the beauty of another culture. It also provides Indigenous communities an opportunity to share their culture proudly with guests in a way that is comfortable for them.



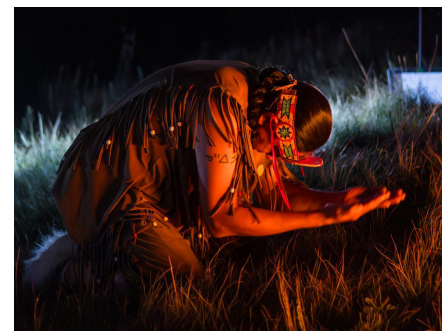
Musicians

Indigenous musicians perform either traditional cultural music of their territories or their own creative expressions for the enjoyment of your guests. Spend time listening to songs that have been passed down for generations and learn what they mean as part of your next gathering.



Dancers

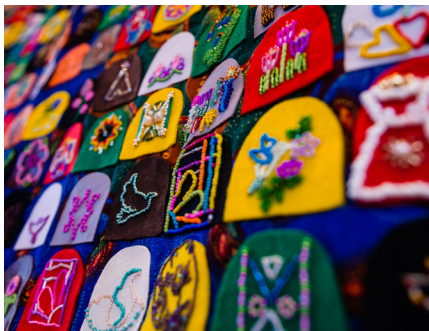
From jigging to First Nations dancing, integrating traditional Indigenous dance into your event creates a memorable experience. The traditional clothing dancers wear is typically referred to as regalia or an outfit, but not a costume.



Storytellers

Indigenous culture and history have been passed down from one generation to the next through storytelling. Sharing stories helps people remember the teachings and learn more about cultural beliefs. Educational and entertaining, your guests will be immersed in the words of local Indigenous storytellers.

Building Bridges



Workshops

Indigenous facilitators can provide workshop learning experiences for your group based on your needs. Learn about cultural practices, history, and traditions in these engaging and educational opportunities to grow together.

Basket making

Baskets have been used by Indigenous communities for centuries to gather and store food and other items. Techniques to create these baskets are passed down within families. Basket-making workshops teach about traditional ways of living and give participants a chance to create something from materials found in the local area.

Beading

Beadwork is a beautiful cultural activity that Indigenous people have practised for hundreds of years. What artists create with beads shares about who they are, where they are from, and reflect the traditions of families and communities. This therapeutic art form is an engaging group activity and could provide your participants with something they can take home that they made themselves.

We would be pleased to help you include some of the experiences we listed in your events and connect you with people who can help make your event a success by sharing these enriching practices.



Inclusive procurement – Inclusion beyond Human Resources



You can practise Indigenous inclusion in your business even if you don't have a team or if your business is fully staffed or family-based.

Procuring goods and services from Indigenous businesses, people, and communities increases your supplier diversity and creates opportunities. In a hotel, for example, that might look like purchasing Indigenous art for guest rooms, toiletries for guest amenities, handicrafts for the gift shop, and hiring local guides for excursions.

Ways Tourism businesses can partner to create inclusion

By partnering with local Indigenous businesses or communities and working together as part of a joint-venture, you have an opportunity to include Indigenous people in your business in new ways. There are so many experiences you can co-create by working together or creating referral partnerships.

If you have an event venue or hotel, consider partnering with a local Indigenous caterer as a preferred supplier for events held at your facility or providing information about Indigenous-owned restaurants in the area as part of your in-room guidebook. Consider providing opportunities for guests to book in-room spa services from a local Indigenous-owned spa through your front desk.

Another way tourism businesses can partner with local communities is through sponsorships. Find out what local Indigenous initiatives, events, and organizations are seeking sponsors to deliver programming and opportunities that align with your organization's values. Donating funds can build capacity, create opportunity, and contribute to the wellness of the people of the land. Sponsorships that include advertising can also help get the word out about your business and show that you care at the same time.

Tourism is about people and places and bringing them together in the best way. We hope you take some of these ideas and find ways to create opportunities for your guests to experience something new; and also ways for your business, Indigenous businesses, and Indigenous communities to thrive together.

CASE STUDIES

Saskatchewan Rattlers Indigenous Inclusion Efforts are a Slam Dunk

Integrating Indigenous Culture

One of the team's first players signed was Michael Linklater, a Cree player from Thunderchild First Nation. The team hosted an Indigenous Heritage Night in 2019 which included Linklater's children and both Indigenous players on the team were blanketed. Since that first event, Indigenous cultural representation at games has increased, including powwow dancing, drumming, and singing. The team has also participated in listening and learning experiences to learn more about the local Indigenous community.

In 2021, the Saskatoon Tribal Council hosted immunization clinics at SaskTel Center, providing many opportunities for relationship building with daily interactions between groups. Starting in 2022, the Saskatchewan Rattlers integrated a ceremony where coaches were wrapped in Cree-made star blankets to wish them well as part of the land protocol at the beginning of the game. The next season, they gifted Métis-made beaded medallions.

In 2023, the team created starblanket jerseys in consultation with Saskatoon Tribal chief Mark Arcand and Awasis Boutique owner Christine Marie, designed by Tristan Amyotte. Beyond this collaboration, Marie has been the anthem singer at Indigenous Heritage night since the beginning, singing O Canada in Cree. The game-worn jerseys were sold to raise money for the Saskatoon Survivors Circle.

The starblanket design has since been integrated into a range of products called the TRC Collection. Each item sold from the collection translates to a ticket for an Indigenous youth to attend a game or a coaching clinic, honouring the TRC's call to action around creating access to sport. The team works with local organizations and communities to create opportunities to attend games or improve skills.

At the end of the season, the Rattlers sent out star blankets to each team in the league to explain their cultural significance and share about their journey. Since then, other teams have expressed interest in learning more about how they can engage with local Indigenous people in a meaningful way.

A member of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation's Survivor Circle, Eugene Arcand, brought the Survivor's Flag that flew at Parliament Hill to fly at a Rattler's game in 2023, a great honour for the team. The Rattlers released Orange shirts designed by Jonas Thomson of Carry The Kettle First Nation, another initiative to raise money for local survivors. The shirts sold out and had to be reordered.

The team has participated in community events like powwow grand entries and they are working to create opportunities for local Indigenous people to sell their creations through merchandise booths in the future as well. Every season, the Rattlers are looking for new ways to include more Indigenous people and build stronger relationships, not from a place of obligation but from a desire to be part of their community and connect in a meaningful way. It's part of how they do business as a basketball team and how they learn and grow as individuals too.

Background

The Saskatchewan Rattlers are a Saskatoon-based team that plays at SaskTel Centre and is part of the Canadian Elite Basketball League. Since their start in 2019, they have been working hard to win on the basketball court and to build relationships with local Indigenous communities.



Lessons Learned

Over their time working on Indigenous inclusion, Vice President Brad Kraft and Director, Brand & Communications Brennan Elliot have learned a lot. They are sharing their lessons:

Authenticity is key

- You can't fake it when it comes to connecting with Indigenous communities.
- Engagement needs to come from a genuine place to build a relationship based on trust and with purpose.
- Relationships aren't built overnight and learning takes time – a lot longer than you might expect.

Sharing is caring

- When other organizations see what you do works, they may reach out and ask for advice on how to do something similar themselves.
- Supporting other organizations in their journey creates more opportunities for local Indigenous people and is well worth the time spent to share lessons learned.

Truth and Reconciliation isn't just a one day observance

- Working towards Reconciliation is a practice that happens year round.
- Supporting Orange Shirt Day is important but that energy needs to continue.

Be prepared

- From taking the time to educate players so they learn to better engage with community to ordering enough merchandise for a promotion, setting yourself up for success is important.
- One of the things the team was most delighted by was how open people were to being in relationship with them and working together. Planning ahead for challenges is valuable, but so is being ready to be embraced warmly by community ready to reciprocate.



CASE STUDIES

International Conference on Isotopes



Integrating Indigenous Culture

Bidding to host the conference started in 2019 and the video the organization submitted for the bid included imagery highlighting First Nations culture and traditions. At the event itself, Knowledge Keeper Lyndon Linklater offered a blessing and delivered welcoming remarks. Linklater was also part of the welcoming committee during the international delegation's site visit. He performed a smudge ceremony, which was very well received. Participants got to learn about Indigenous culture. Guests were presented with dream catchers made in Saskatoon and received teachings about their traditional use.

As part of the conference programming, MC Jocelyn Peltier-Huntley, a Vanier scholar with the University of Saskatchewan, presented about the link between science and tradition. A speaker from the City of Saskatoon presented about the history of the city. The Gala dinner integrated performances from the Buffalo Boys and everyone joined in a round dance. The cultural entertainment was interesting and interactive for the guests. Feedback from guests indicated they enjoyed it a great deal and loved having an opportunity to participate, with plenty of positive comments after the event.



With growing interest in nuclear power, Indigenous communities need to be involved in discussions and engagement around deployment and development of this critical commodity by working together.

Background

The International Conference on Isotopes was held July 23-27, 2023, bringing together 300 scientists, politicians, decision makers, government, and regulatory agency staff to discuss isotopes and the nuclear industry. Organized by the University of Saskatchewan in partnership with Sylvia Fedoruk Canadian Centre for Nuclear Innovation and Discover Saskatoon, delegates came from Korea, Europe, United States, all across Canada, Japan, India, and China, to name a few.

Lessons Learned

Corporate Business Officer, Dr. Lidia Matei, learned a lot from the experience.

- Education is the first step
- Connect with local Indigenous communities.
- Attend local Indigenous events to learn about local cultural practices and what could be integrated into the event.
- Integrate Indigenous suppliers when possible
- Source professional conference organizers or event technical suppliers from the local Indigenous community.
- Low uptake resulting in limited bids in competitive processes can make supplier diversity harder to achieve.

How We Help

Discover Saskatoon took care of coordinating the cultural components of the event so conference staff could focus on science. The result was a valuable experience for participants coming from outside of Saskatoon who didn't have a strong understanding of Indigenous peoples and cultures.

Powered by people, partnerships, and nuclear power, everyone had an opportunity to learn and grow together. With the help of Discover Saskatoon, the International Conference on Isotopes became a site for discussion of not just nuclear energy but also the energy of the local Indigenous people who call what is now known as Saskatoon home.

About the Centre

The Sylvia Fedoruk Canadian Centre for Nuclear Innovation is a not-for-profit organization, which was established in 2011 with a mandate to place Saskatchewan among the global leaders in the nuclear industry. They do this through training, investing research, developing relationships, and providing support within the nuclear industry. They welcome people who want to get involved or who would like to learn about their experience to reach out to them.



CONCLUSION: GOOD RELATIONS, DISCOVER SASKATOON TOGETHER



We are excited to invite you to join us in stewarding this destination and the relationships that we are bound to by the Treaty. At Discover Saskatoon, we are committed to Indigenous inclusion because tourism creates opportunities for Indigenous communities, businesses, and community members to prosper. As Treaty partners, we want to uphold the commitment to share the land and be in good relationship with each other by acting as a bridge between tourism businesses and local communities who want to get involved.

Wealth and well-being belong to all of us, as long as the sun shines, the grass grows, and the rivers flow. Economic reconciliation is key to making things right and creating opportunities is consistent with that goal.

Ultimately, including Indigenous people benefits Indigenous communities, your business, your guests, and you as an individual, providing more opportunities to learn, grow, and connect with the special people who have cared for this place for so long.

Join us in working towards truth telling so that Reconciliation is possible one day. Reconciliation is our destination and we hope you will come alongside in partnership with the Indigenous people of Treaty 6 Territory and the Homeland of the Métis.





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