



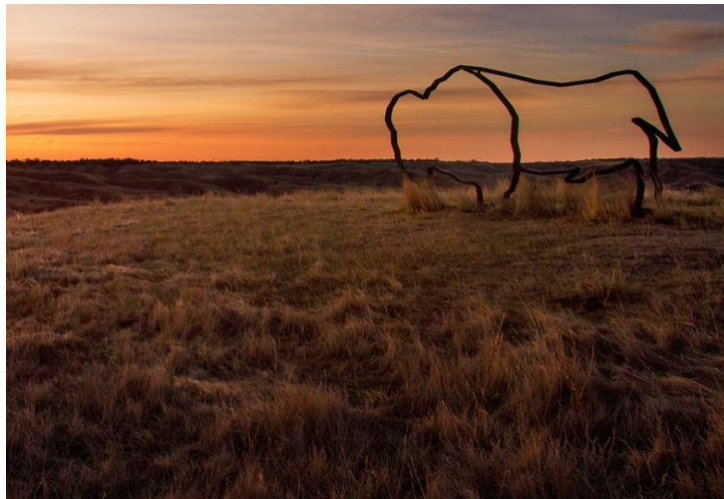
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Indigenous perspectives key to unlocking success in modern business landscape

Canadian businesses that have adapted to include Indigenous perspectives and ways of knowing are more than meeting the calls to action (CTA) of the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), they are realizing greater success. When it comes to the bottom line — it's just good business.

This comes as no surprise to Don McIntyre, a professor in the University of Lethbridge's Dhillon School of Business.

"We've been supporting Indigenous businesspeople since 1987," he says. "Long before the TRC, we recognized there was an essential need to fill the gaps of where business was and where it needed to be within an Indigenous context."



McIntyre, a member of the Wolf Clan from Lake Timiskaming First Nation, says the TRC's calls to action reflect the core philosophy of the Dhillon school's approach. Call to Action 92 calls on corporate Canada to adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a framework for reconciliation. In doing so, it identifies, among others, the need to: commit to meaningful consultation and informed consent with Indigenous peoples; ensure access to jobs, training and education underpinning sustainability of Aboriginal communities; and initiate programs to educate and inform corporate Canada of the issues and challenges that must be addressed to help realize reconciliation between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples of Canada.

"While previously you could get away without a certain level of mandatory knowledge in Indigenous business and governance," today, says McIntyre, that's not possible.

Businesses looking to operate near or on Indigenous land, such as mining operations or franchises seeking expanded markets, need to understand how to better and more appropriately engage in Indigenous conversations. They also need to understand the exceptions to traditional western business and government rules or practices to avoid undesired consequences.

“Because some businesses are unwilling to recognize a shift in the Indigenous business territory that they’re trying to grow roots in, their businesses fail,” says McIntyre.

Rhonda Crow (Mgt Cert '97, BMgt '99) is the Dhillon School of Business Indigenous Learning & Program Coordinator, as well as the Coordinator of the Indigenous Governance and Business Management (IGBM) program. A Blackfoot from the Blood Tribe (Canada’s largest reserve), she says students taking the IGBM courses are able to advise on Indigenous practices and protocols.

“Our Indigenous and non-Indigenous students know how to handle meaningful consultations in the Indigenous community, addressing barriers that others don’t even know are there,” she says. “Furthermore, students are taught by a diverse group of experienced Indigenous business and governance professionals from across Canada who are often currently working in the sectors they’re teaching about.”

The IGBM program, which is currently being offered online and is available to students and community members alike, informs individuals of the complexities of Indigenous exceptions. Courses include Canadian Indigenous Negotiations, Canadian Indigenous Project Management, Canadian Indigenous Tax Issues and Indigenous Leadership and Management, a course that teaches strategic planning through an Indigenous lens.

The future of business and reconciliation rests on the ability for those involved to be speaking a business language everyone can understand.

“This is why Reconciliation is so essential,” says McIntyre. “Whether you are part of an Aboriginal business, working in partnership with Indigenous nations or part of a governance structure, to work effectively in Canada you must know how to communicate and work both the rules and the exceptions to those rules. This is the key to reconciliation.”

To view online: <https://www.uleth.ca/unews/article/indigenous-perspectives-key-unlocking-success-modern-business-landscape>

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