

Real Narratives:
The Culture Connection between Native American Culture and Travel Marketing

by

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Chapter 1

Introduction: Connectedness, Disconnect, and Reconnect

Look at the ground on which you stand. What do you see? Some would describe the way the dirt feels against their boot...the kiss of the sand beneath the base of their feet. Others may go into detail about the formations of rocks, the flora of the surroundings, or even how the energy of the earth feels as it rises through our chest and reveals itself in the growing smile upon our face. Yet there is something even more powerful that remains.

There is more to the world than what it means to us as individuals. Nations have risen and fallen that have sought to conquer ground, devour mountains, and tame oceans. The land on which we stand, however, is nothing that can ever be claimed, for it is not some dead thing to be controlled. The strength of our soil is very much alive, and it lives on because it holds the stories of the people who have left their mark upon it. The legacies of thousands of generations are carved into the landscape, and they live on today through a connectedness of locations, human effort, and collective creativity. This connection defines who we are. When we realize the unbridled potential of working with one another to cherish the legacy that has yet to be written, barriers will be broken, and uncertainties will crumble and fade. By telling real narratives, true and honest stories, we can not only take hold of today, but we can step forward into our future with full confidence. As you continue to stand upon this righteous ground, listen. Can you hear the heartbeat of the earth rising up like the drums of our ancestors as it calls to you?

This thesis explores the connection we, as Americans, have with the Native peoples of North America. Their traditions and visions have kept their culture alive for thousands of years, a culture that is constantly evolving, and it is something that must be shared. Native Americans, however, are not the only ones who will benefit from their shared stories. The true, human, authentic narratives of Native American peoples have great potential to create a sustainable, respectful enterprise of tourism, for both Americans and international visitors, that can benefit Native peoples and their economies as well as the U.S. tourism industry. These narratives can be a positive “culture connection” between Native American cultures and travel marketing. By exploring the interconnectedness and beauty of Native Americans, their cultures, and their places, it is essential to demonstrate the potential of a partnership between Native America and the United States tourism industry that can give the U.S. a competitive advantage in the global tourism industry as well as increase domestic travel within the country. Benefits to Native communities will likely include increased revenue opportunities while providing a larger platform to preserve and share true Native American cultures. To begin this process, the origin of this “connection” must be unearthed. In the northwestern corner of the now United States, the story of a mighty people was born out of a bridge of ice. Beringia, located between the Lena River in Russia and the Mackenzie River in Canada, gave way to a strip of land connecting Russia and Alaska during the end of the Ice Age (“Beringia” 2019). The bottom of the Bering Strait was revealed as glaciers trapped the surrounding water, and plant life emerged on the exposed soil. With this new vegetation, animals migrated to the land bridge, and with them came the people who hunted them. Once glaciers melted and ocean levels returned to normal, these individuals found themselves fully

surrounded by a new land rich in possibility. Over the next many thousands of years, these people migrated to every corner of North America and beyond. From the mighty Iroquois Confederacy (which would inspire America's Founding Fathers in the design of the United States government) in America's northeast to the ancient Anasazi people of the southwest, individual cultures emerged into what is now known as Native America (Hansen 2018). The Native American tribes of North America are all diverse, yet there are certain traits that exist amongst all Native peoples. Dedication to communities, preserving stories, and protecting the Native way of life has always been a driving factor behind Native culture.

Everyone has heard of a famous tourist who ended up in the wrong half of the world in 1492 A.D.; however, Christopher Columbus was by no means the first person from the old world to come into contact with Native Americans. Viking artifacts and carvings have been found dotting the landscape of the northeastern United States, New Brunswick, and Canada. For example, the Mi'kmaq (pronounced mick-maw) Native Americans' artwork resembles aspects of ancient Egypt and early Christian markings.

Over the three centuries after Christopher Columbus, Europeans became increasingly involved with Native Americans. The "Columbian Exchange" shared foods, animals, ideas, and diseases between the old and new worlds (Crosby 1972, 25-32). French fur traders in Canada intermingled with Native Americans and established trading partnerships, Spanish conquistadors and settlers introduced horses to the southwest (which would later prove to be essential for the survival of the Native Americans of the Great Plains), and English settlers began to push Natives out of their homeland in Virginia and the eventual Thirteen Colonies. In the 18th and 19th centuries, Native peoples fought on

both sides during the French and Indian War, the American Revolution, and the War of 1812. As mixed loyalties continued, violence and tension began to rise between Natives and Americans. With the need for additional land and resources, Americans began pushing Native peoples further westward, eventually leading to the Indian Removal Act of 1830, signed by President Andrew Jackson from Tennessee. In his final presidential message, James Monroe wished to “address the issue of tribal lands that had become attractive to white settlers,” stating, “[to remove the Indians] by force, even with a view to their own security and happiness would be revolting to humanity and utterly unjustified” (Langguth 2011, 59). Despite this view, using force is exactly what Jackson did after becoming president. Native Americans were marched through cold and harsh terrain without being allowed enough time to stop and bury those who died along the way. A nation once ruled by powerful tribes was now reduced to refugees being marched to reservations in a land not adequately suited for farming.

Conflicts continued throughout the second half of the 19th century, as governmental officials and self-described reformers attempted to erase Native populations and culture. Ancestral land was seen as a new frontier to be conquered. Historian Patricia N. Limerick writes,

The fuzzy and forgiving term “frontier” had drawn our attention from what westward expansion had meant to native people, as well as citizens of the Mexican North, and to the natural environment. But a quick dose of honesty could cure this problem: accept the applicability of the sharp and honest term “conquest” to the United States’s westward expansion, and national self-understanding would be beneficially enhanced (Limerick in Lewinnek 2010).

Native American leaders such as Geronimo, Sitting Bull, and Chief Joseph sought to protect their people by any means necessary from the conquest of white Americans. Sand became stained red with blood, and green fields were littered with the bodies of a broken

people. The reservation system grew, and Native American children were taken from their parents and forced to give up their Native languages and be taught American principles and education systems. Throughout this decline in the prominence of Native Americans, white Americans, secure in their faith in their cultural and racial superiority, ignored the values that Native culture had, and has, to offer. In the last hundred years, Native peoples have once again started gaining recognition, and the beauty of their culture has begun to be expressed on a large scale.

Screams are muffled against the embrace of gas masks and the sound of machine-gun fire echoing like the pouring rain. As men dive for cover in their trenches, Tartarus rises to greet the living and unleash suffering upon the world. The Great War (World War I) brought forth destruction and mass chaos such as the world had never seen. By the time the war ended toward the close of 1918, Americans were ready to look to the future. With a rising economy and a desire to live life to the fullest, the Roaring 20s swept across the nation.

Airplane tennis, pole sitting, and drunken parties are all scenes from this wild era; however, an ancient image was also on the rise. Perhaps the most famous photographs from the early 1920s are of women known as flappers. These carefree ladies wore headbands with feathers and dresses with flowing fringe and beads (items traditionally worn by certain Native American tribes). At the end of the 19th century, “Buffalo” Bill Cody created a “Wild West Show” that presented Native American peoples to the world stage. However, the 1920s went a step further by integrating aspects of Native culture into the emerging popular culture.

Vaudeville is a venue that helped put Native Americans in a growing spotlight. While some Native peoples were merely set up in tents for people to stare at, others achieved fame for themselves and recognition for their people. According to Christine Bold, a professor of English at the University of Guelph in Canada, “The full efflorescence of Indianness came in 1928 with *Whoopie!* and its mass of parodically oversized head-dresses, skimpily clad chorus girls on horseback, Jewish Eddie Cantor in red-face, and Chief Caupolican in powerful opera voice” (Bold 2016). Acclaimed Native Vaudevillians such as the Mohawk Princes White Deer and the Cherokee Will Rogers delivered aspects of Native culture to audiences from far and wide. As Christine Bold concludes, versions of Native cultures “run through the history of vaudeville, an unacknowledged undercurrent of desire, display, and skill, always, ultimately, undergirded by Native power” (Bold 2016).

After the days of Vaudeville, Native American peoples continued to stay in the public eye. Through John Collier’s Indian Reorganization act of 1934, Native Americans were given a chance to receive their own part in President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s “New Deal” (Lee 2014). The Act allowed tribes the power to manage their own assets, prohibited lands from being confiscated from tribes against their wishes, recognized tribal governments, and ended the allotment of tribal lands (Lee 2014). During World War II, the U.S. military enlisted the help of Native American “code talkers.” While Native American languages were used to code messages in World War I, officers in World War II adopted this process on a larger scale (particularly in the Pacific theatre). Using the languages of the Choctaw, Navajo, Hopi, and Comanche peoples, a system of secret words

and phrases were used to create a code that was never broken ("Code Talking | Intelligence and Bravery" 2019). For example, the Navajo word "atsá" (meaning "eagle") represented "transport plane" in code. The use of Native language and culture in World War II helped save countless American lives and keep vital information from falling into enemy hands.

Native American culture continued to grow into American popular culture throughout the rest of the twentieth century. Television shows, such as *Bonanza* and *Daniel Boone*, highlighted Native Americans; however, the culture was muddied by the distorted visions of television producers. Following the earlier model, "Hollywood Indian," created by movie makers in the 1930s and 1940s, began to emerge. Instead of representing diverse, true cultures, an overgeneralized "Indian" image began being broadcast throughout the U.S. While most shows used Italian actors with dark skin and black wigs, some programs maintained some threads of Native culture. In *The Lone Ranger*, the main character's sidekick, Tonto, was played by a Mohawk actor named Jay Silverheels. While Silverheels was a true Native American, his role in the show seemed to perpetuate stereotypical attitudes toward Native peoples (he spoke in short sentences and did not seem to do much thinking). Although it was rare to see authentic Native culture on the big screen, Native culture endured, protected and nurtured by families whether on the nations' reservations or in big cities. That reality persisted and strengthened even as advertising campaigns, sports mascots, and made-in-China "Indian" outfits continued to exploit Native culture as nothing more than a marketing strategy.

With the rise of the hippie movement in the 1960s-1970s, Native culture became engrained in pop culture. The ideas of wearing fringe (not horribly different from the

flappers of the Roaring 20s), getting back to nature, and building a community of peace are all reminiscent of Native American culture. The movie *Little Big Man* (1970) not only gave a startlingly different view of western history, it produced a sympathetic view of Indians and what they had experienced. Twenty years later, a movie came out that took the portrayal of Native peoples to a new level. *Dances with Wolves* tells the story of a Civil War soldier who requested to be sent westward so that he could see America's wild country. While there, he encountered and befriended a group of Lakota Native Americans. Not only did the film use Native actors, such as Graham Greene and Wes Studi, but it incorporated true Native culture. This film highlights something that America lost for several hundred years. Later films would attempt to "capitalize" on the success of *Dances with Wolves* (Rollins and O'Connor 2011, 3).

There has to be a connection between the true story of Native American peoples and our modern nation. When we demonstrate that we can work alongside one another, there is so much more to gain than the temporary financial increases of exploitation.

America stands at a point of untapped potential in the tourism industry. While there are numerous "Indian" attractions and parks that preserve authentic Native legacies, the concept of a "culture connection" is under explored. The key strategy is to allow Native American communities to lead—it is their culture, their past. By creating reciprocal partnerships with local Native communities, we can not only share the true Native American way of life, but we can work together to develop new tourism platforms that have yet to be utilized.

In order to prepare this argument for a “culture connection,” a different approach to my research was needed than simply analyzing existing texts. To truly express the Native American voice, it is necessary to connect with those who have something meaningful to say. For my research methodology, much of the information I gathered was through personal interviews with elders and leaders within the Native American community. Additionally, I conducted interviews with park managers and directors of key locations around the United States. Some of my interviews were conducted in person, while others were done through email, social media, and over the phone (which I later transcribed). Firsthand information from those who live and work within the communities mentioned in this study has proved invaluable. Once we throw away stereotypes and start to build something new, we will be able to reach audiences around the world who will flock to the true story of America’s Native peoples through music, film, physical locations, art, and education.

Chapter 2

The Five Aspects of Native American Culture

Native American culture is a collection of diverse traditions from a rich array of distinct and varied tribes across North America. Native America is a broad cultural region, and it would be impossible to cover every aspect of it in this work. Therefore, for the purposes of this thesis, I use the following definition of Native American culture that I developed in the context of tourism marketing:

Native American culture is a collection of tribal traditions including songs, storytelling, customs, architecture, art, and dance that displays the uniqueness of diverse tribes while celebrating the interconnectedness of America's first peoples as a whole.

This definition will serve as a guide for the direction of this research project. My definition also comes from the need to show the intricacy of Native culture within the broader American culture (Huhndorf 2001, 27). Specifically, this study highlights five aspects of Native American culture: film, music, physical locations, art, and education. Each aspect covers Native American influences relating to each topic. Additionally, all of the five aspects will include potential plans for marketing strategies and partnerships that can benefit Native communities and the tourism industry. Examples of current successful partnerships are also illustrated for each aspect.

Native American culture is much like a forest. While every tree is different, interconnected roots form relationships, even though they may not be visible at first. To understand the future of the evolving cultural opportunities for Natives and travel marketers, we must look at our roots. Once we understand the foundation, we may grow

strong together and spread our mutual potentials far and wide. In the words of Salish Native American writer Mourning Dove (in *Living Life Fully* 2019), “Everything on the earth has a purpose, every disease an herb to cure it, and every person a mission. This is the Indian theory of existence.”

Film, Music, and Art in Native American Culture

If you were asked to think of an image of Native American culture, what would it look like? Take a moment, close your eyes, and form a mental picture. What did you see? People are very visual learners. We understand what exists in the world by the images we see.

Film: Destroying the “Hollywood” Image and Starting Again

It is likely that some (or all) of the aspects of your mental depiction of Native American culture has come from observing Native peoples on television or in films. Film has a powerful influence on our mind since it presents us with images that our brain becomes to accept. There is absolutely nothing wrong with depicting cultures from around the world on the big screen. However, it is of the utmost importance that cultures be presented in their true form.

There is a distinct difference between the “Hollywood Indian” and true Native American culture. Movies like *The Outlaw Josey Wales* and television shows like *Bonanza* depicted Natives as wild, feather-wearing, warring peoples. Other films continued to emphasize war paint, feathered headdresses, teepees, and buckskin. Thus the “Hollywood Indian” image emerged. Worse still, Native Americans were rarely used when

casting “Indian” roles. Americans with Italian backgrounds (because of their dark skin and hair) often played Native parts. In the show *Daniel Boone*, starring Fess Parker, Daniel Boone’s Cherokee sidekick was played by Ed Ames who was of Russian Jewish descent (“Ed Ames, Biography” 2019). While at first, it may seem harmless to showcase the previously mentioned images in regard to Natives in film, it is incredibly harmful to preserving the integrity and legacies of individual tribes. According to author Angela Aleiss, “Unlike Black Americans, the distinction between Indians and whites in the American mind is not so much a question of skin color as that of culture. In the motion picture business, many non-Indians can easily pass as Indians by dressing up to fit the current image of what an Indian should be” (Aleiss 2005, 164). Note the words, “what an Indian should be.” Aleiss goes on to write how young Native Americans are changing their image to fit what they believe they should look like. Some young Native women are trying to keep the “Pocahontas” image with long hair, a thin body, and little clothing, while others maintain a more historically accurate approach (more like Sacagawea). Young men are also wearing beaded chokers and ribbon shirts to look the part.

As a Mi’kmaq/Cree Native American, I have heard many stories about the way Native American culture has been falsely portrayed, and I share one of these stories with you now. There was a Cherokee Native American who would stand beside the road and charge a few dollars to have people take his picture. When he wore his traditional turban and leggings, no one paid him attention; however, when he put on a feather warbonnet (something not associated with the Cherokee), people would flock to take a picture of the Indian. “Most knowledge that people have of the Native is what they have seen on television and the movies,” says Cherokee artist Tony Francis. “Nearly all of that is ‘White

Man Indians.’ Even today some people think Native people still live in tents or huts” (Francis 2019). Film and images teach so much, and they are a powerful tool if used in the right way. So how can we step forward and use film in a positive direction?

Film and Telling the Real Story

The first move to correcting the misrepresentation of America’s first peoples is to recognize the regional and cultural diversity among the tribes. Think about the United States of America for a moment. Everyone living in each state is an American, yet we are also a part of the different cultures from each state. It would be wrong, however, to make hasty generalizations about people from each state. Despite popular belief, not everyone in Kentucky plays the banjo, and not all people from Maine enjoy eating lobster. Not only is it incorrect to make such assumptions, but it is also offensive to the people in each state. This is much like Native America. Different tribes have unique customs and beliefs, so we must take the time to do research.

For example, if someone is making a film that features a Native American character, one must look at the region where the film is located. If the film takes place in Florida, for example, directors should take into account the traditions of the Seminole and neighboring tribes. It is not a radical idea to research cultural geography when making a film, yet it can be overlooked. There are ways that videography can accurately depict Native culture, and these ways are much more beneficial than using the Native American image as a brand. Neil Diamond, a Cree, created the movie *Reel Injun* (2009) which is a good example of how Hollywood has distorted both the places and pasts of Native Americans.

In 1990, the three following movies debuted in the box office: *Dances with Wolves*, *Pretty Woman*, and *Kindergarten Cop*. Compared to the other movies that year, *Dances with Wolves* brought something completely unique to the table—a true depiction of Native American culture. Initially, the film’s ticket sales were less than half of those of the competitors’. However, the total lifetime grosses of *Dances with Wolves* would reach \$424,208,848 worldwide and \$184,208,848 domestically ("Dances with Wolves" 2019). Of the three movies mentioned, *Dances with Wolves* went on to have the highest domestic total lifetime grosses. While the initial success of the movie did not match that of its competitors, it did, however, light a spark of interest in Native culture that would gain momentum in the coming years.

In 1998 came the truly revolutionary film, not distributed to mass markets unfortunately: *Smoke Signals* from the Cheyenne-Arapaho director Chris Eyre. This haunting film is set in the Northwest and tells the story of brothers coming to grips with their father’s death in modern times. Eyre ignores stereotypes in favor of reality.

In the twenty-first century, however, film has evolved into so much more than what we see on the big screen. Marketers use videography to advertise brands and promote ideals though social media, internet streaming services, and even augmented reality. To best communicate the value of Native American culture, our means of visual presentations must evolve with the times.

In 2018, an international destination marketing organization called Brand USA launched an innovative program featuring Native American peoples from all across the United States. Brand USA’s mission statement is as follows:

As the destination marketing organization for the United States, Brand USA's mission is to increase incremental international visitation, spend, and market share

to fuel the nation's economy and enhance the image of the USA worldwide (Brand USA 2019).

Brand USA is well known for sponsoring IMAX films showing tourist destinations (particularly national parks) through partnerships with travel companies (such as Expedia). The goal is simple—use film to show the true beauty of America in such a way as to inspire tourists to visit the United States. “According to studies by Oxford Economics, over the past five years Brand USA’s marketing initiatives have helped welcome 6.6 million incremental visitors to the USA, benefiting the U.S. economy with \$21.8 billion in total economic impact, and supporting, on average, 52,000 incremental jobs a year” (Brand USA 2018).

Tom Garzilli, the Chief Marketing Officer with Brand USA, had long wanted to tell the story of America’s first peoples. In 2018, he reached out to me, the author, to partner with Brand USA through a project called “Spirit Song.” Spirit song is based on a music album I recorded with George Lucas’s Skywalker symphony, Emmy Award winning producer Lance Bendiksen, and Oscar winning Native American Actor Wes Studi. The album, “Voices of the Guardians,” fuses traditional Native American music with modern symphonic style that features the words of famous Native elders brought to life through Wes’ narration.

When we initiated the “Spirit Song” project, we wanted to create something unique. In addition to working with camera crews, I was asked to coordinate interviews by establishing contacts with local Native elders from around the United States. Instead of branding the Native American image, “Spirit Song” took into account the diverse landscapes and peoples of Native America. Local Native communities enjoyed work opportunities along with the chance to share the true stories of their people. By respectfully

working with Native American communities, everyone involved in the project felt satisfied and enjoyed benefits. Brand USA president and CEO Chris Thompson says, “As we looked for ways to tell our international guests the unique stories of the towns and cities across the United States, we found music resonates across all languages....Native American culture has a large influence across our country, all the way from Maine to Alaska, and ‘Spirit Song’ helps us share that with the world” (“‘Spirit Song’ Now” 2019). The film also launched the new GoUSA app, and it has been viewed by international and domestic tourists since its release.

Film: What the Future Looks Like

What is it about film that makes it one of the most powerful marketing tools? On one hand, film combines the powerful influencers of art and music, which engages multiple sensations at once. However, there is something even more truly profound about the use of film. Film is personal.

There is a film producer who truly embodies what it means to use film to tell powerful, engaging stories. Neta Rhyne is a Cherokee filmmaker whose ancestors were forced out of their home during the Trail of Tears, following the Indian Removal Act of 1830. Rhyne works as producer, director, writer, animal activist, and land protector. Living in Texas, Neta tirelessly strives to preserve natural water sources from being compromised due to excessive fracking in the oil industry. One of the causes closest to her heart is protecting the American horse through her non-profit organization, Thundering Hooves (Thundering Hooves 2019).

Each year, thousands of horses are sent into Canada and Mexico to be slaughtered for human consumption. Horses that are sent to be slaughtered include former race-horses, pregnant mares, aging farm horses, mustangs, and horses used for riding lessons. Thundering Hooves has dedicated itself to giving these horses a voice through several film, music, and art projects. The Thundering Hooves mission statement is “to operate exclusively for educational and charitable purposes, providing a platform to promote the arts, culture, and educate the public on subjects useful to the individual and beneficial to the equestrian community and the environment, through dance, film, music, photography, healing arts, and cultural events” (Thundering Hooves 2019).

In a conversation with Neta Rhyne, she described why the use of film is so essential to her cause:

When I began this journey I soon learned people cannot handle the unaltered truth. I learned that if Thundering Hooves were to be successful, in this important cause for the horses, I was going to have to think outside the box and take a different approach to address the difficult subject. Through film and music, people can stay within themselves, in their private space, and either watch, learn and be inspired to help, or simply turn away without being judged. It is easier to inspire people when they are relaxed and comfortable in their environment whether that be in a theater, a concert hall or in their home. Film and music provide that private, safe place to visit the truth (Rhyne 2019).

Neta’s Native American heritage is shown in her projects through traditional music, art-work, and dance. It is this Native American element that has helped set her work apart from other filmmakers, and she has received several national and international awards for her documentary, *Their Last Ride*. Film captures the world that we wish to demonstrate, and it is easily accessible by audiences around the world.

If modern marketers in the tourism industry successfully utilize the power of film, an increased tourist interest will result. According to Leonie Berning, a member of the KwaZulu-Natal Film Commission Executive Board of Directors, film tourism (the effects film has on travel decisions) is growing worldwide with the increase of international travel and the entertainment industry (Berning 2019). Berning observed: “Britain has been a destination for over a hundred international film and television productions over the past decade. The filming of ‘Harry Potter’ and ‘Sherlock Holmes’ had a surge of tourists as a result. Films such as ‘Braveheart’ resulted in a 300% increase of tourism a year after its release in cinemas and the release of the film ‘Troy’ resulted in a 72% increase for tourism in Turkey” (Berning 2019). This information clearly shows that tourists are motivated by the images they see. If there is something that appears to be beautiful and unique, people will be more willing to travel great distances. Consider the following scenario. There are two famous national parks in Colorado—Mesa Verde National Park and Rocky Mountain National Park. Mesa Verde is well known for its historic Anasazi Native American cliff dwellings, while Rocky Mountain National Park is noted for its picturesque mountain views and hiking trails. Imagine a group of tourists who have decided they want to go on vacation somewhere in Colorado. Before selecting a destination, one of the tourists in the group comes across a short film about Mesa Verde. In the film, Native American song and dance are used to help tell the story of how the Anasazi vanished for reasons still debated and unknown today. The film features powerful images and emphasizes the uniqueness of this park. While the tourists have already seen pictures of how awe-inspiring Rocky Mountain National Park is, this video of Mesa Verde National Park has peaked their interest.

Marketers are taught to distinguish their products and services from every other competitor in the marketplace, and film has that potential. Integrating Native culture into such films creates a distinctive edge in the international tourism industry. While there are indigenous peoples all around the world, the Native American image stands out. If we continue to work with Native communities and tell their true, distinctive stories through film, these stories will take the tourism industry into a better future.

Music: A Changing Dynamic

There is a sound in Native culture that has existed since before the time of our births. A resonating pulsation that rises and falls breathes life into our bodies and fuels our souls. Many Native American peoples view the sound of a mother's heartbeat as the first sound we hear. This sound also represents a connection between people and Mother Earth. The drum is one of the oldest instruments in Native American culture, and it is the most sacred.

Music is so much more than entertainment in Native culture—it is a way to preserve life. For generations, drums have been used to pound out powerful rhythms while singers share stories through songs. There are songs for war and songs for peace; songs for life and songs for death; songs for hunting and songs for gathering corn. No matter what stories the songs tell, this one thing remains the same: songs preserve heritage and allow the people of today to continue to learn from the people who walked before them. The drumbeats of Native culture would go on to influence rock n' roll through a number of artists with Native heritage, such as Jimi Hendrix, Mark Lindsay of Paul Revere and the Raiders, Jim Pepper, and the more contemporary Derek Miller (Perea 2014, 192).

While some artists paid tribute to Native culture in a respectful way, some songs, such as Tim McGraw's "Indian Outlaw," were demeaning and presented Native American ways of life in disrespectful tones (Troutman 2012, 8-10). Maintaining culturally responsible elements in music is pivotal.

The flute is another essential instrument in Native American culture. The oldest Native American flutes date back to about three thousand years ago. These flutes, known today as the Anasazi flute, were rim-blown, hollow flutes that carried haunting melodies of the mesas of the West. Different versions of the flute, such as the Penobscot elder-berry flute and the Kiowa love flute, emerged throughout North America. Many flutes were used as courtship instruments. In these cases, a young man would sit outside the home of a woman and play flute for her at night. If she came out to see who was playing the flute, then the two would be married. After the wedding, the man would wrap up the flute and hide it somewhere. Because of this, archeologists are uncovering perfectly intact flutes dating back to the 1800s. Modern flute makers have been able to create a standardized Native American flute based on these old designs. In the mid-1900s, flute players like R.C. Nakai and Coyote Oldman came out with recordings of the flute and began to bring Native flute music into the emerging New Age market. Since then, hundreds of makers and artists have emerged to breathe new life into the flute. There are lists online of some of these individuals, however the lists only account for a drop in the ocean of music makers that exist (World Flute Society 2019).

The Native America flute, like much of Native culture, has evolved with the changing times. Flute makers are coming out with new designs, and recording artists are

pushing the limits of the flute while incorporating it with a variety of musical styles. Native flutes can also be seen on the big screen. In *Aquaman* (2018) the lead female character, Mera, can be seen playing a Native American style flute while sitting on a boat. Today, Native American musicians are changing the world through their music.

Shelley Morningsong, a Northern Cheyenne, embodies much of what is going on in the world of Native music. As a Native American musician/performer myself, I had the opportunity to meet Morningsong at Musical Echoes, a music festival in Fort Walton Beach, Florida, that highlights Native American music. Through her truly captivating singing, drumming, and flute playing (along with the amazing dance artistry of her husband, Fabian Fontenelle), she does more than keep her culture alive—she shares it with the world. “The music that I write is contemporary Native music,” she told me. “I love to write songs that touch people’s hearts, that bring people together, that promote unity, that promote goodness in the world, and show the commonalities that we all have—how we are all related. That message is very important to me” (Morningsong 2019). Her music has been featured around the world, and she has won multiple awards, including a Native American Music Award from the NAMMYs (Native America’s equivalent to the GRAMMY awards).

Shelley truly grasps the importance of telling real stories through music. She says, “My husband Fabian and I, it is important to both of us, as we travel and do our shows to not only entertain people with our music, but through that music and through the message we give, we want to educate people. We realize that there are so many people in our country that don’t understand or even know the true history of Native Ameri-

can people” (Morningsong 2019). In addition to her shows, she holds question and answer sessions to allow people to learn from her performances. She remains an outstanding voice in the Native American community and is helping to break down barriers. Shelley now reaches an even larger audience through her new radio program. “I had wanted to do radio work forever, and I’ve even looked up online how to become a radio DJ,” she says. “I do the Deer Tracks radio show on KGLP in Gallup, New Mexico, every other Monday. Hopefully it will lead to my own podcast.” Shelley Morningsong is a perfect example of someone who recognizes the power that music can bring in telling stories and influencing the world.

Music: Looking to the Future

Music is so much more than something people can listen to, but it is a driving force behind innovation. In the words of Cherokee flute maker Tony Francis, “Music has a language of its own. No matter where you go there is music” (Francis 2019). It does not matter where you come from or what language you speak, music transcends barriers, and everyone can take away personal meanings from it. Music is emotion, plain and simple, raw emotion.

In the marketing profession, it is absolutely essential to use strategies that engage target audiences. Music is not only a way to appeal to a large amount of people, but it gives consumers a chance to find personal meaning and differentiation through the messages the music carries. Think, for a moment, about the Olympics. When an athlete wins a gold medal, the athlete’s country’s national anthem is blared across loudspeakers as the

person is draped in the country's flag. The music speaks of nationalism, sacrifice, dedication, and courage, though not one word is uttered. The power of that music resonates. In churches around the world, music has filled great halls and tiny chapels for thousands of years. When slaves were forced to work under a merciless sun, shackled and in pain, they sang songs of freedom. Music is an ancient, predominant aspect of human culture, and there is tremendous potential in incorporating it in the tourism industry.

As an example, consider this scenario. There are two tourism companies that are promoting weekend trips to East Tennessee. Company A comes up with a short video commercial to promote Chattanooga, Tennessee, through social media. The commercial has a narration detailing the Chattanooga Aquarium, the Chattanooga Choo Choo hotel, and nearby Raccoon Mountain. Images are shown of these different locations, and basic background music is playing. This strategy, while perfectly fine on the outside, is lacking something crucial—it describes what you will hope to find in Chattanooga, but it does not show you what parts of East Tennessee will truly stay with you. There is a difference in attracting people and moving them.

Company B decides to take a deeper approach in its video promotion through social media and decides to focus more on Cleveland, Tennessee, instead of Chattanooga. The sound of a young girl's voice can be heard singing the Cherokee "Coming to Water" song, with her standing in traditional regalia. As her song is heard, the images of a stained-glass depiction of the Trail of Tears from Red Clay State Historic Park. As she sings, the drumbeat turns the stained glass into images of the eternal flame of the Cherokee that still burns in the park. As the song continues, the little girl is seen in modern clothing visiting the Chattanooga Aquarium and placing her hand against the glass. Then

she is shown looking out from on top of the Smoky Mountains. As the song continues, she is last shown at Red Clay State Historic Park, where she puts her hand against the stained glass that now reflects an image of her in regalia. Finally, the words are heard, “Come to East Tennessee and discover who you are.” Which one of the two videos do you think you will remember?

This is just one example of the countless ways that music can be implemented to convey impactful images. When partnering with local Native communities in these marketing efforts, it is imperative that permission be granted for the use of songs and stories. It is beautiful when culture can be shared with the world, but there is no success to be found through exploitation. Respectful, sustainable tourism is of the utmost importance. Once that mutual benefit is worked out, creativity will be allowed to shine.

Finally, for music to be meaningful, it must be human. Canned music, prerecorded loops, and stock music will never capture the audience’s attention. The most effective strategy is to use live musicians and working with composers. Music should not be an afterthought but an instrumental part of the marketing strategy. Let music excite audiences and tell powerful stories.

Art and Culture

As defined by the Oxford Dictionary, “[Art is] the expression or application of human creative skill and imagination, typically in a visual form such as painting or sculpture, producing works to be appreciated primarily for their beauty or emotional power” (“Art: Definition” 2019). Art, however, goes far beyond this description. Art is personal,

and it holds significant meanings to different individuals and cultures. In Native American culture particularly, art does not just represent culture, it *is* the culture.

Art has been used in Native culture for thousands of years to keep stories and traditions alive. Written languages in many early Native cultures were not based on sound but were largely pictographs. Tribes had symbols that represented different words, stories, and activities. In the 1820s, a Cherokee man named Sequoyah became one of the first to formulate a written language for his tribe that used symbols to represent sounds (Bender 2002). As the story goes, when searching with the U.S. Army, Sequoyah watched American soldiers writing letters home to their families, and he was inspired to create something so that his people could do this as well. Art evolved into modernized written languages for certain Native tribes, but art has another important purpose in Native culture.

Art captures the beauty and emotion of artists in the moment that artwork is formed. Paintings on animal skins record the intensity of buffalo hunts for the Lakota people, bone carvings of animals pay homage to the animals the Inuit people hunted, and images of corn depict the fruitfulness of the earth that the Zuni Natives depended upon. This artwork is not just a thing of the past, but it is alive in today's Native cultures. Native artisans create paintings, clothing, sculptures, flutes, drums, and many other items that they sell on reservations, at cultural gatherings, in domestic and international stores, and at festivals across the United States.

Art is something deeply meaningful to the artists, and it is important to recognize the connection they feel to their work. Dana Ross is a Chickasaw artist and flute maker who currently has a workshop in Georgia. Ross told me: "What I do is I make Native

American-style flutes, the hardwood style, what has come to be called today the woodland style.” Today, Ross is one of the most respected flute makers in the Native American community, and his flutes continue to be used by award-winning musicians around the world. Ross’s work goes beyond that of just making flutes—he infuses art in a deep and meaningful way into the instruments he creates. His flutes feature stone-inlaid nature scenes, intricately carved animal heads, paintings, and unique wood burning designs.

I’ve always wanted to be an artist. I have worked every kind of media I could my whole life until it came to the flute. It was back about 1990 or so I heard a song coming out of a shop and it stirred my spirit, it stirred my soul. So I asked the proprietor “what is that instrument that I am hearing?” I went for another seven years trying to figure it out. In about 1996 or 1997, I was up in Cherokee, North Carolina, up on the reservation, I heard the same sound, and it stirred me up inside. I looked around the corner and saw a Native man playing flute (Ross 2019).

Ross then went into a local shop that sold flutes. “After 30 minutes of standing there looking at them, without ever touching them, this little voice in the back of my mind said ‘make your own.’ That was the start of my journey” (Ross 2019).

Like many Native artists, the act of creating and using one’s gifts for a purpose is important to Dana Ross, a flute maker. His instruments are fine examples of contemporary Native American decorative arts. Ross told me: “Amongst most Native tribes, there is no word for ‘I,’ it’s all ‘us.’ And that is how they lived this life. If you had something, it was everybody’s. We would all be better off if we just would reach out and lend a hand to somebody else that needs it. The payback is far greater than I put out.” Looking toward the future of a “culture connection” through art, there are two important factors to consider. First, why is art such a valuable marketing tool? Second, how can the integrity of true Native art be maintained when moving forward?

Marketing is most effective when it captures the attention and heart of an audience, and art provides such a platform. As mentioned earlier, artwork is personal, and individuals can find different interests and meanings behind images. Speaking again of Neta Rhyne with *Thundering Hooves*, she has found a way to use art to reach people in a deeper way than anything else ever could.

I believe art speaks to everyone, no matter their age, race, or religion. During the first *Thundering Hooves Childrens' Art* event, I learned how easy it was to communicate the beauty of a horse to the children simply by placing a crayon in their hand with instruction to draw a horse. Every child was excited to participate and immediately began to draw a horse using their imagination. That speaks to the power of art as simply a thought (Rhyne 2019).

Rhyne also uses sculptures of horses as a teaching and healing tool. When she visits children's cancer centers and the children see these sculptures, they are filled with joy, and Neta speaks about infants starting to smile for the first time in weeks upon seeing the horse. When seeking a "culture connection," marketers have a responsibility to initiate projects that will not only be profitable but have the potential to be meaningful to individuals as well.

Jaune "Quick-to-See" Smith is a contemporary artist from the Flathead nation who uses her artwork to showcase Native culture while carrying emotional power (Tremblay 1). Her paintings, such as *Flathead Vest*, show Native Americans in photographs mixed with paintings of Native symbols and regalia while using colors that are meaningful to Native culture (Tremblay n.d., 2). It is these images that she paints that make a true connection between cultures—a connection shown through art. As Tremblay states, "By doing this, she [Smith] creates complex juxtapositions that decontextualize the way viewers understand not only relationships between Euro-American and indigenous American

culture, but how she, as an artist of Flathead decent, views issues in both these cultures” (Tremblay n.d., 2).

Art is a profoundly powerful expression of self and culture. As Jaune “Quick-to-See” Smith’s artwork shows, art can take on many forms to carry either specific messages, or messages that make individuals open up their minds. Her work can be viewed at the Missoula Art Museum in Missoula, Montana. Artwork in museums can stay in visitors’ minds after they leave the location that holds the art. Art is never truly confined within four walls—it is fluid and travels with those it touches. Likewise, artwork should (and does) exist where people are.

There is a location in Alaska where artwork has existed for generations, and it is housed under the open sky. Totem Bight State Historical Park is located in Ketchikan, Alaska, and it is home to intricately carved artwork that tells the stories of those who lived before this generation (Alaska Department of Natural Resources 2019). The site is comprised of a clan house (featuring dozens of painted wood carvings) and fourteen totem poles. The area surrounding the park is teeming with wildlife (orcas, wolves, bears, salmon, and eagles), and the totems use the images of these animals to capture the spirit of the landscape and tell its stories (Alaska Department of Natural Resources 2019). The totem poles also display myths and legends of Alaska’s Native peoples. Visitors to Totem Bight State Historical Park, because of the totem poles, can see the landscape through the eyes of the Native artisans. This is a place where artwork, landscape, and culture connect.

To strengthen the possibility of a “culture connection” through artwork, the following are two guidelines that must be followed:

1. The Native American image must never be exploited through marketing efforts. This prohibition includes, but is not limited to, the use of Native names or images that perpetuate overgeneralized stereotypes of the “Hollywood Indian.” Falsely using Native images or names will prevent a “culture connection” from taking place. Example(s): The image of a Native American man in a headdress as the mascot for a hotel chain. Words such as “Indian” or “Redskin.” Using “Cherokee” to refer to images that are not reflected in Cherokee culture.
2. The integrity of authentic Native American art must never be compromised. The Indian Arts and Craft Act of 1990 prevents the false labeling of Native American products. As such, only members of federally recognized tribes may be able to create goods that can be called “Native American Made.” Not only does this protect Native income and cultural integrity, but it displays why a “culture connection” could be mutually beneficial. For example, “products advertised as ‘Navajo Jewelry’ would be in violation of the Act if they were produced by someone who is not a member, or certified Indian artisan, of the Navajo tribe” (“Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990” 2019).

If marketers follow these two rules, they will be more likely to gain the cooperation of Native American communities and form partnerships. Native Americans have been exploited for centuries, and there is a general feeling of mistrust when it comes to

business dealings. By displaying a desire to preserve authentic Native culture and accurately tell its stories without exploitation, marketers will be able to open doors that had previously been locked.

Physical Location: A Connection to the Earth and Each Other

Imagine a time when you went on a road trip. After traveling the country and shaking hands with the steering wheel for days, you are finally on your way back home. In the moment where you no longer need a GPS as all roads become familiar, and you realize that you will soon pull into your driveway, can you feel something change in your body? Do you feel a sense of peace and release? What you are feeling is a connection to a physical location that has deeper meaning than just a heap of bricks and nails. This feeling is personal—you would not feel it if you pulled up to a random stranger's house.

Where you come from helps define who you are. Ever since the first weapon was raised, soldiers on the battlefield have been talking about returning to their homes. Battlefields throughout history have been filled with songs that remind soldiers of what they are fighting for. If warriors can be filled with a sense of connection to their homes, even when confronted by the fiery hell that is war, how much more can we draw strength from our roots when we are standing where the seed was first planted.

In Native American culture, landscape has always been a sacred and interconnected part of daily life, and it is something that must be protected. In the famous words of Chief Seattle, "We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children" (Antarctica Journal 2019). It is necessary to maintain sustainable tourism

within the tourism industry's connection with Native American communities on two different fronts. First, the landscape must be physically preserved and not negatively impacted by tourist presence. Second, the culture itself must retain authentic integrity and not be exploited for gimmicks or simple advertising campaigns. As author Diane Barthel-Bouchier writes, "Heritage professionals would prefer that we see cultural heritage embedded not simply in old objects and practices but rather as living history incorporating social processes of both continuity and change" (Barthel-Bouchier 2016, 9).

To establish what future "culture connections" with physical locations should look like, this study examines the following four locations and the effects behind each one: Mesa Verde National Park, Zuni Pueblo, Red Clay State Historic Park, and the Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area.

Mesa Verde National Park

Located in southwestern Colorado, Mesa Verde National Park is home to over 5,000 archeological sites and houses the ruins of the ancestral Pueblo people ("Mesa Verde National Park" 2019). Tourists can travel over 40 miles of roads in addition to miles of historic trails that weave through the landscape. Ancient structures, referred to as cliff dwellings, can be seen on guided tours by park rangers. Cliff Palace, one of the park's best known sites, is accessible through hiking trails and wooden ladders.

In addition to guest lodging in the park, tourists can also experience local culture through the visitor center. The visitor center is filled with products and artwork made by

Native Americans in the surrounding community, and guests are presented with a vast array of information on the people that once called Mesa Verde home. As described by the National Park Service,

Mesa Verde National Park was designated a World Heritage Site in 1978—one of the first World Heritage locations in the United States. The exceptional archeological sites of the Mesa Verde landscape provide eloquent testimony to the ancient cultural traditions of Native American tribes. They represent a graphic link between the past and present ways of life of the Pueblo Peoples of the American Southwest ("Mesa Verde National Park—A National and Worldwide Treasure" 2017).

Officials at Mesa Verde also are committed to sustainable tourism. Upon visiting the cliff dwellings, rangers instruct visitors that there are certain places they should not walk and certain structures that should not be touched. This policy ensures the physical preservation of the architecture itself. Additionally, certain activities, such as playing a flute, are reserved for only members of tribes associated with the park. Some Native Americans are also employed by the park and can share their stories to keep their culture alive. At Mesa Verde, not only is the park world renowned, but it is managed in such a way as to protect the park and the people whose ancestors once lived there. Today, individuals may travel to Mesa Verde National Park on their own or through independent tour groups (Gibson 2007, 22-46).

Zuni Pueblo

Zuni Pueblo is both an active Native American community as well as a cultural base that attracts visitors from around the world to its location in western New Mexico. The pueblo itself is filled with adobe structures that have existed for generations, and many Zuni Natives call the reservation home. Zuni, however, is much more than just a

reservation—it is a living tribute to preserving and sharing culture. To quote author William A. Dodge, “Although a place is certainly a corporeal object—physically located in both time and space—it is so much more than that” (Dodge 2013, 3).

Through the reservation’s website, tribal members can obtain a deeper connection with their community while tourists are provided information on the story of the Zuni people. *A:shiwí A:wan Messenger* newsletter informs of tribal affairs, a career page on the website lists employment opportunities, and the A:shiwí A:wan Museum and Heritage Center allows individuals to research Zuni culture (Pueblo of Zuni 2016).

The Zuni Pueblo Department of Tourism is dedicated to education and preservation of culture at Zuni. Through the organization’s interactive website, tourists are provided information on everything from cultural history and traditional artwork to event dates and suggested places to eat (“Experience Zuni” 2019). There are two things that Zuni Pueblo does exceptionally well in regard to tourism. One, tourists are presented with in-depth information that will help them make educated decisions on how to best experience local culture respectfully. Visitors are presented with information on how to be respectful at Zuni, such as the following statement from the Zuni Pueblo Department of Tourism: “Please be aware that there are restrictions in place for non-Zuni’s wishing to witness our religious activities. We ask that visitors respect our cultural privacy by following the appropriate etiquette and guidelines. Our ceremonial activities are what make the Zuni people unique” (“Experience Zuni” 2019). Additionally, visitors will be instructed to ask permission before taking photos and to avoid entering certain areas that are reserved for members of the tribal community.

Musicians Shelley Morningsong and her husband Fabian Fontenelle call the Zuni Pueblo home, and they are involved with the tourism side of Zuni. Morningsong was able to turn something she was passionate about into an interactive experience for visitors.

At home, we live on the Zuni Pueblo, and I love to cook and bake and feed everybody—it has a lot to do with family and bonding. Family and friends come to our home, and I cook for everybody, and then I wanted to open up a cafe. We are running a little cafe out of our kitchen—we have a real big kitchen. I have an espresso machine and put out my daily menus on Facebook. Everyone sits around a table and tells stories. My dream and my vision is to open up an actual restaurant (Morningsong 2019).

Her love of cooking and preserving music and culture turned into something more, a meaningful experience for resident and visitor alike:

We are part of a group of people that are hooked up to the tourism center. There were six ladies that were traveling and wanted to experience a traditional dinner, and so they called me up and asked me if I had time, so I cooked huge traditional foods—not modern foods like frybread, but healthy, organic, historic foods (roasted corn, squash stew, blue corn bread, blue corn pinion tamales). Fabian sang some drum songs and talked about Zuni (Morningsong 2019).

Art is something meaningful to the Zuni Pueblo, and Morningsong describes how the reservation is using art to both educate and establish a cultural connectedness with visitors.

Zuni has an art walk once a month, tourists can come and are given a map. Certain stations are set up in peoples' homes, and colored rocks show the way. They can go into people's homes and observe them making jewelry while the artists explain what they are doing. I wish some of the other villages would do something like that (Morningsong 2019).

The art walks at Zuni have a “four star” rating on TripAdvisor, with guests talking about the meaningful cultural interactions they experienced (TripAdvisor 2019). The following are some quotes from TripAdvisor:

This is such a great experience if you're into art and culture. The Zuni Artists open up their studios, tell the stories of their work as well as their culture. I had the opportunity to hear how the Artists create pottery from rock to a finished piece. – Jamie R

Really enjoyed having the opportunity to meet master Zuni artists at their home studios. – kingwolf

Zuni Pueblo is a perfect example of a “culture connection” that exists at a physical location beneficial to both the host culture and the visitors, providing cultural education and fostering mutually beneficial relationships.

Red Clay State Historic Park

Red Clay State Historic Park, located near Cleveland, Tennessee, is known as the last meeting place of the Cherokee before they were forced to walk on the Trail of Tears after the Indian Removal Act of 1830. Unlike Zuni Pueblo, Red Clay State Park is not a reservation. It is, however, a cultural center that still plays a part in Cherokee culture.



Eternal Flame at Red Clay State Park

The park is home to several unique features. The Eternal Flame of the Cherokee burns at the park and a pavilion representing the final council meeting continues to be used in cultural gatherings. The park also hosts the annual Red Clay pow wow. A cultural center also provides visitors with information on the Cherokee people and the land they called home. One of the park's most distinct features is a stained-glass depiction of the Trail of Tears. "Through high quality exhibits and interpretation, visitors will have the opportunity to experience a deep sense of the Cherokee People and how they were forever changed by their removal and the Trail of Tears on the land where these events occurred. Through education and interpretation of this Nationally Registered historic site, we hope to produce future stewards of the land," says Park Manager Erin Medley (Medley 2019). This park is rich in culture and hiking trails; however, there is also a more mysterious, sacred side to the park.



The Blue Hole at Red Clay State Park

The Blue Hole, while deceptively unassuming, holds powerful secrets. For generations, Cherokee people have washed themselves in the Blue Hole for the “coming to water” ceremony. Today, only Cherokee tribal members and their special guests may enter the water. The Blue Hole is bright blue in color, and it appears to be around three feet deep; however, the water is actually between 12-15 feet deep and channels thousands of gallons of water into the stream which flows from it. Not only is the water deeper than it appears, but it connects to an underwater labyrinth of cave systems. Little is known about the underwater environment, and over a decade ago, two divers were sent into the system to explore it. When they surfaced, they never spoke of what they found; however, they refused to ever dive there again (Cherokee Elder 2017). There is truly something special about Red Clay State Historic Park.

This physical location presents an opportunity for mutual growth among Native and non-Native communities. At Red Clay State Historic Park, Native Americans are still able to gather together on their ancestral homeland and share their stories, music, and culture. The park represents the strength of the Native community and reminds visitors of a people who are still here. Park Manager Erin Medley remarked:

After working here for several years, I learned a lot more about the Cherokee culture and their history. This knowledge has changed my perspective on life and the world. As so many that visit Red Clay, I am deeply saddened by this horrible and tragic history. However, I am honored to work in such a beautiful and sacred place. The Cherokee People are thriving today despite what they have endured. This is the story I want our visitors to know and remember (Medley 2019).

This story is kept alive through the efforts of the partners of Red Clay State Historic Park.

The Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area

The Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area is hosted by the University of North Alabama and encompasses the six counties of north Alabama's Tennessee River water basin, focusing on the preservation of music, Native American heritage, and the Tennessee River (Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area 2019). The region of Muscle Shoals is most famously known for its connection to the music world. Bands such as Lynyrd Skynyrd and the Rolling Stones are just two examples of the multitudes of world-famous musicians who recorded music in this region. There are thousands of stories to be told about the legendary music that was born near the Singing River. However, this project will focus on the Native American aspect of the Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area.

Much like the other locations mentioned, the Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area works alongside the Native American community while raising awareness of the true culture of the Native peoples of the region. This program is accomplished through the Florence Indian Mound Museum, the Oakville Indian Mounds Education Center, Tom's Wall, and the Oka Kapassa festival ("Native Heritage" 2019).

The Florence Indian Mound Museum and the Oakville Indian Mounds Education Center are two important physical locations within the Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area. Both locations are home to ancient (10,000-plus year old) Native American mounds. Dr. Carolyn M. Barske Crawford, the Director of the Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area, explains why physical location is so crucial to cultural preservation.

I think the actual physical site is very important in all three of those cases [the Florence Indian Mound Museum, The Oakville Indian Mounds Education Center, and Tom's Wall]. I think the ability to actually stand there and contemplate what it actually took to build the mounds is really important for visitors. It is one thing to look at pictures and say, "Oh, well, that's a big

mound,” but to actually stand on the landscape and then have people explain to you that the landscape has changed dramatically since those mounds were built. That at one time there would have been multiple other mounds and village sites so that you can build a more complete picture in your mind, and I think that without somewhere to start, that’s a little bit harder to do (Crawford 2019).

Physical locations can also inspire deep emotion within visitors. Tom Hendrix built Tom’s Wall (or Te-lah-nay’s Wall) to honor his great-great-grandmother who was forced out of her home during the Trail of Tears but was courageous enough to walk back home. Thousands of stones line the landscape that is a living tribute to those who sacrificed so much. Dr. Crawford describes the emotional power behind this place.

Tom’s Wall is one of those places where people feel a lot. I have taken a lot of people there and most of the time someone’s crying, and sometimes it’s me. It’s a peaceful place, a place where I like to go sit and think a lot, and you’re just in the midst of something that meant something so much that this person and their story meant so much to a member of their family that they put all of this time and love and energy into creating something so magnificent and beautiful and that’s a very special thing to me (Crawford 2019).

The connection that we feel to a place can inspire us to learn. Crawford adds:

In a way, it is similar to the mounds. People made these efforts, which required great physical sacrifice, to create these places of importance, whether in modern times or in previous periods, and I think that that creation of something monumental is important to view in person, so preserving these sites and interpreting these sites, and also being frank when we don’t know all the pieces of the story. Getting them to the place then helps them to start to ask those questions and to think a little bit more and to think about the physical aspect of all of it as well and what kind of importance that says about the place or the person (Crawford 2019).

Oka Kapassa (“return to cold water”) links ancient culture to the modern Native community. The festival incorporates artists and musicians from federally recognized tribes and allows Native communes to gather together while teaching their living history

to visitors who are eager to learn. Through this festival, as well as other educational programs in local schools, the Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area has accomplished a working “culture connection” with local communities and visitors to the area.

Physical location has the ability to deeply impact visitors by allowing them to stand in the footprints of those who have walked the land so many years before. If tourism marketers can research the landscape and culture of a place, they will be able to work alongside stories and cultures that have existed for generations. By tapping into the resource sustainably, both marketers and local communities may be able to flourish together.

Education: The Necessity of Truth

Several years ago, I was performing at a Native American pow wow near Nashville, Tennessee. The event takes place from Friday through Sunday evening, and Fridays are reserved so that different schools can bring young students to experience Native culture. While there, a student looked at me, and because of my long hair, asked her teacher if I was a boy or a girl. The teacher gruffly responded, “It’s a boy—all Indians have long hair.” While it is unfortunate that stereotypes exist, the true tragedy comes when stereotypes prevent new knowledge from taking place. Regrettably, stereotypical attitudes toward Native Americans are sometimes perpetuated within education systems. In order for a positive connection between cultures to exist, however, it is necessary to pursue the truth.

There is a world wide web of information that exists today; however, it is so crucial to distinguish cultural accuracy from what pop-culture views as norms. While accurate information is always important, when dealing with the Native American community, it is vital.

There is a culture shock (resulting from the changing dynamic of Native American culture within American culture) that still exists within the Native American community, and understanding this reality allows us to work with Native American peoples in a respectful way. “I know my great grandma, her brother was in one of the boarding schools and I’ve actually seen a few pictures of this where he had all his hair chopped off—he was forced to be ‘Americanized,’” says Seneca member Kurrinn Abrams. “She [my grandmother] was one of the last individuals in our community, and my family specifically, to speak the language fluently. I don’t know my language because of this trauma we’ve been through” (Abrams 2019). Abrams is an education specialist with an organization in Washington, D.C., called the National Indian Education Association (NIEA). NIEA’s purpose is “1) to bring Native educators together to explore ways to improve schools and the schooling of Native children; 2) to promote the maintenance and continued development of Native languages and cultures; and 3) to develop and implement strategies for influencing local, state, and federal policy and policymakers” (NIEA 2019). There is still much to be done in the way of using education to elevate Native communities. Kurrinn Abrams works with NIEA to develop curriculum and provide professional learning services to students and educators. “A lot of the work that we’re doing is to create curriculum that is culturally relevant and culturally sustaining for our students,” she says.

We also do curriculum development for trauma. We do trauma training in different communities. It is a three-day training with a blanket exercise and training students on how to overcome their trauma and how to heal from their past traumas that they have been through—intergenerational trauma (Abrams 2019).

Recognizing that Native American peoples have been subjected to government interference ever since the beginnings of the United States is crucial for moving forward with relationships between marketers and the Native American community. For many Natives today, there is an element of pain and mistrust that exists from all the “intergenerational trauma” Native Americans have experienced, and some live it every day. Understanding this true history allows non-Natives to be respectful of the culture that they wish to work alongside as part of a “culture connection.”

Abrams explained that many non-Native educators simply have no idea of many elements of Native culture, and once they know the truth, it is life-changing. In addition to this, Native American communities are working to maintain their own cultural education so that they can keep their traditions and languages alive. As David Treuer writes in the article “Resistance Training in Indian Country”:

Speakers of Ojibwe and Choctaw and a host of other Native languages are using Facebook and YouTube and Twitter to speak and promote and communicate in the languages of the First People. And increasingly, Indians are founding, controlling, and populating tribal and community colleges on reservations—at least thirty-five of them in more than a dozen states at last count—to study Native languages alongside computer science, math, English, history, and business administration. Transforming education into something that we do for ourselves, rather than something that is done to us, goes a long way toward healing the deep rift between Indians and the educational system (Treuer 2018, 157).

Understanding the past is the best way to move forward. In the context of tourism marketing, professionals should use a connection with Native communities, knowing Na-

tive history guides interactions in the present. For example, studying Native culture reveals how to get the best results for proposing a new campaign or launching a new program when speaking with Native peoples. Abrams states,

Just based on our communities, and me as a Native person personally, I think that our communities value face-to-face interaction a lot more. I think that it is a lot more affirming and better to go in person and have that face-to-face communication. I know our communities value that a lot more because of who we are as people (Abrams 2019).

Think of it this way: if you had a job interview for a major corporation, would you rather go into the interview not knowing what to expect, or already have an understanding of what the interviewer's interests, expectations, and needs are? This research paper, for example, includes interviews with respected members of the Native community, including several elders. Some Native people feel uncomfortable having their voice recorded or picture taken, and many are guarded about certain aspects of their culture. However, when individuals demonstrate their respect for Native culture, people within the Native community are happy to share their knowledge.

For Native Americans and travel marketers to truly benefit from education, existing stereotypes must not only be broken—they must be shattered. Tammera Hicks is a Cherokee who heads up Native American Services near Chattanooga, Tennessee. At Native American Services, Hicks creates children's educational programs and sponsors Native American cultural events, such as pow wows. When asked how to confront stereotypes, she said,

This is top on the list when doing the programs. I most always point out my looks—blonde, blue eyed and olive skin. I tell them of the red headed Cherokee's [sic] in Oklahoma like myself. I explain that the movies are not real people but entertainment to make us laugh. I discuss how the many cultures were part of the Trail of Tears history as well—Scottish, Irish,

Dutch, Black, and missionaries (all were on this trail because they made up the families as a whole) (Hicks 2019).

Hicks remains an outspoken advocate for Native peoples in Tennessee, Alabama, and Georgia. For her, the Native story is not just something on paper, but it is something she and her family lives. She elaborates:

We must continue to do programs in schools, have plays and have written information that tells the truth of our people's history and explain that we should not repeat these things but learn positive things from its history. And give the hands on and visual experience no matter what it may be. We learn by doing (Hicks 2019).

When analyzing the five aspects of Native American culture (within the context of this research project), education is the most pivotal. Without Native youth being educated about their true culture, a culture that was almost completely stolen from their parents and grandparents, real Native stories and customs would not exist today. If non-Natives are not properly informed of the authentic Native culture, then there will be no way to grow in this "culture connection" that can richly benefit both communities. Just as a vehicle runs on gasoline, we can have all the right tools to succeed; however, if we are not fueled by education, we can never move forward.

Chapter 3

The Human Element

Mountains of concrete and steel resolutely stand upon an even ground. Tar paths navigate between shapes of every possible proportion. There is no sound in this place, and there is no life that calls it home. There can exist thousands of buildings together in one place, but that does not create a city—a city’s people make it what it is. Therefore, it is absolutely essential to recognize this “human element” that connects us and reminds us of the purposes we have for everything we do.

How do we begin to understand this “human element,” and how can we define it? Think, for a moment, of a time in your life when you felt truly happy. It could be time spent with loved ones, a milestone in your career, or even a moment of peace when walking through the woods. What is that memory worth to you? The emotion that is brought up from whatever experiences we have had is something that can help us survive difficult times and step forward despite of potential obstacles or fears. That memory has left its own legacy within you. If you have ever talked about that moment in your life, then you are spreading that legacy. When we realize the true value our memories and experiences have to us, and that each person holds a unique self-history, we become connected to something greater than ourselves. There could be thousands of definitions of what it means to be human, but there is always a consistency—we are involved. We are not human because we simply live, but we are human because we continue to build lives worth living for.

When understanding the “human element,” we must have a wide scope of vision. The greatest architect in the world cannot create a building without someone to pound in the nails. Every person plays a unique and equally important part in the growth of our humanity. As we build our future, to really make something worthwhile, we have to study the blueprints that already exist. Those plans come from the blood and sweat of those who have walked before us. By continuing the legacies of the past and respectfully carrying on traditions, our growth will be substantial and something that will last forever.

Native American culture is full of stories and wisdom that will lead us into the future; it is something we cannot ignore. By understanding the words of Native American leaders and the lives of those who carry on ancient traditions, marketers in the tourism industry will learn how to best work alongside their Native American brothers and sisters to design lasting, deeply meaningful partnerships that will be mutually rewarding. In order to start this process, we must first look through Native American eyes.

Through the Eyes of Native Peoples

“No matter where we come from, it is important to be proud of who we are.” These words were spoken to me by a Northern Cheyenne woman named Shelley Morningsong (2019). In addition to being a world-renowned Native American musician/recording artist, Morningsong is a business owner, radio DJ, educator, and cultural advocate for Native peoples. There an old saying in Native culture that when you are talking, you cannot listen. When we hear stories from the heart, we must take time to let the words sink in lest they be lost forever. Morningsong has commented:

Taking pride in your culture is important, teaching our children is important, but also never forgetting how closely connected all of us are and how if we could just

really look into each other's hearts and see that, it would make the world a better place. It is a very important truth—especially now in this time. We need peace, we need more love, we need more peace, and we can get there, but we have to make the right choices to get there. We have to stop fighting and judging and see our commonalities and just love one another. Forgiveness goes hand in hand with that too. The Indian people, there are still a lot of people who are really hurt with what happened to us, our families, and our relatives. It's a new day—we can move forward in a good way, but we have to choose it. We have to take those actions to make that action (Morningsong 2019).

There are many people who have yet to discover what it is like to experience authentic Native American culture; therefore, much of this section is devoted to the words of elders and the stories of those who have lived the lives most people will only read about in an inaccurate textbook. “The Elders have a responsibility to teach the young tribal members all they know about the past, to keep that ‘Real History Alive,’” says Cherokee Native Tony Francis (2019). “Knowing both sides of the story will allow people to find the real truth somewhere in the middle of both versions of history” (Morningsong 2019).

Preserving Native culture and history is doubly important because, like their land, the dominant culture attempted to destroy Native heritage. No wonder some Native Americans are hesitant to share stories out of fear of exploitation or protectiveness of their culture. Only about a hundred years ago, Native children were being beaten and dismembered by American schoolteachers for simply speaking their tribal languages.

Today, the tourism industry has the opportunity to breathe new life into Native American cultural awareness. The lifeblood of Native American culture is stories. Stories have united tribes, connected generations to one another, and provided education to tribal members for thousands of years. By telling these stories and promoting Native

American heritage sites and historical locations, people can become exposed to the legacies that are still crying to be heard. “If in my life I teach someone something of my culture and they apply it in theirs[,] I have accomplished my objective,” says Tammera Hicks, descendent of Cherokee Chief Charles Hicks. “Understanding another person’s culture causes unity and respect. When I am gone, I hope I have left some traditions to others to be carried on and shared to other generations, including respect and kindness and a better understanding of Native people” (Hicks 2019).

Through having their stories told by tourist industry marketers, Native Americans can enjoy benefits from increased respectful interaction. Stories have the ability to capture attention and inspire action. In the context of the tourism industry, that action is attracting visitors to Native American sites. Whether it is a festival, heritage area, or reservation, increased visitors lead to additional opportunities for local craftsmen to sell traditional goods while educating visitors (similar to the art walks on the Zuni Pueblo—see page 34). As Tony Francis says, “Native history being told by an elder takes on a different meaning than history told by the teachers in history class. It is a very different perspective and starts people to really think about what they have been taught. You could build a business around just Native history and crafts” (Francis 2019).

So what is it exactly that tourist industry marketers should share in a modern light? Marketing students are taught that it is important to distinguish a product and show how it is better than that of its competitors. With nearly six-hundred different tribes across the United States, there are many unique characteristics that can be shared in marketing efforts (“Indian Tribes and Resources for Native Americans” 2019). For example, say that the state of Maine is interested in attracting more visitors to Baxter State Park

(the beginning of the Appalachian Trail in Maine). Traditionally, Mt. Katahdin (located in the center of the park) has been a sacred site for the Penobscot people of Maine. Each year, dozens of tribal members walk, run, and canoe to the park as part of a sacred journey.

Tourism marketers might design a small film highlighting the voyage of one Penobscot journeyer. By educating the public about this sacred event, more people could become interested in seeing the park for themselves. At the same time, traditional stories will be kept alive. Regardless of what advertising campaign strategies are utilized, by researching the Native history of locations, marketers can develop unique approaches to attracting attention to a place, product, or service. If these a heritage storytelling is done ethically, it is an outstanding opportunity for Native communities and marketers.

A New Era of Connectedness

A new wave of connectedness between Native American communities and the tourist industry will establish a strong foundation for future initiatives. There is an old saying that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. This analogy could not be more wrong when speaking of this “culture connection.” Instead, think of the connection like a climbing rope. In order to rise higher, we depend on the strength of millions of fibers interlocked with each other to support us in our ascent. Alone, the fibers cannot withstand much weight; however, it is the interconnectedness of the internal community of the rope that gives it the power to withstand great force. If a single fiber breaks, the rope does not fail. The rope snaps only when too much pressure causes the fibers to twist apart and

eventually burst. So how should we use our efforts to preserve that which we will depend upon for the journey ahead of us?

In 2005, the National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (NATHPO) released a very valuable study of Native American cultural tourism. According to the study, “The increased national interest in cultural tourism is seen by many tribes as a timely opportunity to provide non-Natives the unique stories of Native life, history, arts, and cultures” (Jarvis, et al. 2005, 1). This study also states that over 96 million acres of land in the United States are considered a part of “Indian country” (Jarvis, et al. 2005, 1). With all of this land, it is highly likely that there are many places that would be of interest to tourists. The study mentions that the National Association for State Arts Agencies made a statement that said, “...a growing number of visitors are becoming special interest travelers who rank the arts, heritage, and/or other cultural activities as one of the top five reasons for travel” (Jarvis, et al. 2005, 1). So what can does this growing interest really tell us?

Individuals crave authenticity. The study states, “Most important to cultural heritage tourism, both currently and in the future, is the growing national, state, and local commitment to the preservation and promotion of authentic places and traditions—a clear advantage that tribal tourism offers” (Jarvis, et al. 2005, 2). NATHPO goes on to say that in 2004, 81% of “all travelers” participated in “cultural heritage tourism” a minimum of once per year, according to the Travel Industry Association of America (Jarvis, et al. 2005, 2). Since there is clearly an interest in cultural tourism, not just casino tourism or

roadside “Indian” attractions, we must set a strong foundation to allow for mutually-beneficial growth in this industry. What would be the best practices defining the effort to encourage and enhance cultural tourism?

First, we must focus on the very thing that we hope to achieve. Much like music and artwork, goals are personal. While individuals can share goals, each person has a different willingness to achieve them, abilities to accomplish them, and perspective to see how to make things happen in different ways. If we focus on small-term goals, we begin to put extra tension on the rope. Our different motivators will slowly pull the fibers apart. Instead, we must focus on what the ultimate goal of reaching the top of the mountain will be. That top-of-the-mountain goal is much simpler than it is made out to be—the goal is peace. We work jobs to provide for ourselves and our families. Why? We want to keep our loved ones safe and give them a good foundation. Why? They will lead productive lives and find happiness. Why is that important? Ask yourselves these questions, and ultimately they will all come to the same answer: peace.

It may appear that this concept of motivation for peace is too basic; however, we must look beyond the surface of the waves to see the beauty in the depth that is before us. Realizing that peace is a motivator does so much more than allow us to see things from the perspectives of others. For peace to exist, harmony must be present. Creating harmony allows us to see beyond the scope of our own perspective and envisions a goal that everyone can share. Now, what does this mean in the context of the tourist industry?

The tourism industry will benefit from mutual goals between cultures. If a representative for a new travel campaign for Florida vacations wanted to work with local Seminole tribal members, the mindset should be the following:

- Establish the goals of the company.
- Reach out to tribal leaders to see what their goals are; create a reciprocal, open, trusting relationship that is from the tribe’s perspective.
- Research through the tribal website to find information on culture, current programs, and facilities that currently cater to the tourist market (“Seminole Tribe of Florida Attractions” 2019).
- Identify current strategies that are in place and find ways to boost interest in those areas while creating an opening for one’s own company (such as approaching the Aviation Department to see about using its runway for select tour groups in exchange for partnering with its casino where visitors would be staying upon arrival).

When we find a harmony between mutual goals, the value of our efforts is maximized. If two different people open up two separate doors to a building, people will enter at each; however, visitors will be divided. Instead, through teamwork, one larger door is opened, and not only will more people enter, but there will be minimal division. When working with local Native communities, there is much we can offer each other; furthermore, there is still much to be learned.

Etiquette and Suggested Rules of Engagement

Whether setting up a business meeting with tribal leaders or visiting a Native American reservation, it is necessary to have relevant cultural understanding beforehand.

This understanding goes deeper than a historical context; it applies to the practical application of two cultures connecting in the here and now. As such, there are certain rules of etiquette and engagement that will assist in establishing positive initial interactions. The following is a suggested guide of how to respectfully engage between cultures:

Disclaimer — There is no set guide that will work for every situation. Every tribe has different policies, and therefore different cultural expectations. Marketers should research the specific tribe with which they hope to establish a relationship. This guide is intended to serve as an introduction into proper interaction within the Native community. The information presented here was gathered through personal experience, speaking with several tribal members and elders, and external research.

For Business

1. Keep a Proper Mindset — No matter what culture we come from, we are all just people. Avoid stereotypes and preconceived notions about Native culture.
2. Embrace Generosity — It is customary to give gifts in Native culture. Tobacco or sage wrapped in a red cloth is often given as a respectful gift. Whatever the gift may be, choose something that has personal meaning.
3. Listen More and Speak Less — Words have power, and it is essential to choose them wisely. Empty flattery or lengthy descriptions fall short of well-thought-out, clearly defined ideas. Listen without interruption, and if you are unsure how to answer a question, sit back a moment and think. Be eager to learn.

4. Avoid Demeaning Language — One would think that this would go without saying; however, working in the Native community for the past seven years, I have heard the terms “Indian” and “Redskin” used frequently. Some Natives prefer to be called “American Indian” while others prefer “Native American” or “Indigenous.” When meeting with someone, see what term they use to refer to themselves, and use that.

5. Express Gratitude — Always take the time to send a follow up “thank you” note and be more interested in developing a relationship than closing a deal.

For Visiting a Native Reservation or Sacred Site

1. Ask Permission — You are not on a field trip, you are visiting someone’s home. It is of the utmost importance to follow signs, ask permission before taking a photograph, and do not walk anywhere you were not invited to go.

2. Leave Nothing Behind — We are nearly a quarter of the way through the 21st century; one would think we would have figured out by now to not throw our trash on the ground. Still, it needs to be said to leave absolutely no waste behind when visiting a Native reservation or sacred site. The earth is especially holy to Native peoples, and their ancestors are likely buried beneath that empty Twinkie wrapper you just dropped—pick it up!

3. Take Nothing with You — Remember this: you are not Indiana Jones. If you find an arrowhead or piece of pottery, leave it there. As Kristal Markowitz says, in her paper “Cultural Tourism: Exploration or Exploitation of American Indians?” “Sometimes, the tourist only wants a souvenir, but this ‘souvenir’ might be

a funerary object” (Markowitz 2002, 244). Objects can have powerful meanings in Native culture, so unless given permission, do not pick anything up or take anything with you that you did not come in with.

4. Be Sound Sensitive — Again, you are entering someone’s home. Avoid shouting, loud conversations, playing loud music, and/or excessive cellphone use. Ceremonies go on all the time on reservations, particularly in America’s Southwest, and discourteous noise could interrupt such ceremonies.

5. Avoid Being in a Hurry — Some Natives are still very guarded about their culture, so if you have the opportunity to hear traditional stories or witness traditional songs and dances, patiently take in the experience. Realize that some people need to share.

Observing these guidelines will help establish a healthy connection between cultures. It is important to follow the principles outlined in the previous ten rules of etiquette; however, they can all be summed up with the following phrase: show respect and you will be respected as well.

Chapter 4

The Business Element: Making Sense (and Cents) of the Native Past

Having examined the rich history that defines Native America while exploring the different ways Native culture can be respectfully shared, defining future business plans can now be explored. Within these marketing strategies, however, maintaining culturally sustainable tourism must be at the forefront of every effort. Telling the Native American story is not something to be manipulated for financial gain, and it will never pay off in the long run. Instead, it is important to identify mutual benefits at each of the following steps of the marketing plan: situation analysis, marketing strategy, financials, and controls. This section explores what future connections should look like in the four areas of a marketing plan while providing examples that further illustrate the opportunities that now exist.

Situation Analysis

In a world that is constantly growing and changing, global tourism is also on the rise. In 2018, the global tourism industry accounted for just over 10% of global GDP, accounting for 122,891,000 jobs (3.8% of total employment) worldwide (World Travel and Tourism Council 2019). The sector GDP growth in travel and tourism in 2018 was reported at 3.9%, second only to global manufacturing growth. Of that travel, 78.5% was for leisure. In North America, global tourism accounted for \$1.9 trillion of GDP contribution (in U.S. dollars) with a growth rate of 2.3%. While these numbers are substantial, the growth rate for North America falls behind that of Africa, Asia, South America,

Oceania, and Europe. Current projections by the World Travel and Tourism Council indicate that by the year 2029, travel and tourism will account for 11.5% of global GDP as well as 154,060,000 jobs (4.3% of total employment). International tourism is currently on the rise; however, the United States, due to lower growth rates in travel than competitors, will need to increase efforts to grab a piece of the global tourist market in the days ahead.

The United States has been a leader in attracting worldwide visitors in recent years; however, the U.S. will have to seek new opportunities for growth. According to the U.S. Travel Association, “The United States remains the single largest destination for global long-haul travel [travel between countries in separate geographic regions] and the third-largest destination, but our market share has declined considerably since 2015” (U.S. Travel Association 2018). The largest number of visitors to the United States comes from overseas (accounting for roughly half of total visitors to the U.S.). Of these overseas visitors, the largest percentages come from the United Kingdom (11.7%), Japan (8.8%), China (7.5%), South Korea (5.5%), and Germany (5.2%). The U.S. Travel Association states, “Visitations from Japan (-2.8%), China (-5.7%), and South Korea (-5.3%) declined strongly in 2018. This is particularly worrisome since these are our three largest Asian markets and our three largest overseas markets after the U.K.” (U.S. Travel Association 2018). In addition to this, visitations from Germany also declined by slightly less than one percentage point. There is something, however, that could reignite new interest from these major contributors to United States travel.

International interest in Native American culture comes from the countries from which the United States should seek proactively to attract more visitors. Since Japan,

China, South Korea, and Germany have been providing fewer visitors to the United States, and because they make up some of the largest numbers of visitors to this nation, it is important to maintain the interest of people from these countries.

In 2018, the American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association (AIANTA) produced an annual report with a list of the top ten countries with the largest number of international visitors who visit Indian Country. Countries on that list include the United Kingdom (1), Germany (2), China (3), South Korea (6), and Japan (10) (AIANTA 2018). Visitors to Indian Country have quadrupled since 2002 and now come to 1.95 million visitors, bringing in \$8.5 billion in direct spending by international visitors. Visitors are projected to reach 2.4 million by 2021. International travel to Indian Country has also created over 41,000 jobs, and counting (AIANTA 2018).

When looking at the potential in this market, we must analyze the strengths and weaknesses that will come from a “culture connection” between tourist industry marketers and members of the Native American community. Rather than looking at the potential for business development as a single enterprise, the following SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis offers a picture of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that such a “culture connection” might face:

INTERNAL

Strengths

- Differentiation in the marketplace
- Diverse marketing angles
- Large experience pool

- Thousands of years of stories, songs, and artwork
- Mutually beneficial relationships

Weaknesses

- Communication over long distances and across cultures
- Time-consuming
- Harder to define business models

EXTERNAL

Opportunities

- Untapped resource
- Rising amount of global travelers
- Demand for Native culture in countries important to U.S. tourist industry

Threats

- Competition from other nations
- Political changes decrease ability or desire to travel
- Unforeseen circumstances (such as natural disasters) that limit tourist ability
- Change in global economy potentially limiting ability to travel

There is definite opportunity through establishing a “culture connection”; however, there are some obstacles to overcome as well. For example, if a tribe does not wish to form a partnership, and there are no other Native American groups in the desired destination area, then a connection cannot exist. If Native communities in certain places do

not want a connection, then it would be exploitation to continue efforts without their cooperation. Competition from other global tourism leaders, such as France and the United Kingdom, is inevitable; therefore, the success of this proposal is dependent upon utilizing cultural connections with Native Americans to have differentiation that will generate results. If the right marketing strategies are implemented, the mutual efforts of Native communities and travel marketers will likely be successful.

Marketing Strategy

In the process of developing “culture connection” marketing strategies, there are several overarching factors that should be implemented. As shown in the situation analysis, the international consumers from which the U.S. tourism industry gains the most traffic are the United Kingdom, Japan, China, South Korea, and Germany. These countries have traditionally shown a large interest in Native American culture; therefore, it would be wise to target said countries in marketing efforts that partner with Native communities.

To gain an understanding of what level of interest other nations have in Native American culture, it is helpful to hear from members of the Native community who have worked with international consumers. James Neptune, a Penobscot elder and former curator of the Indian Island Museum, speaks of the diversity of those whom he encountered: “...too many countries to put down in this small space, it might be easier to put down those that never came, of which I can't think of many, but the most visited visitors were the Germans, they have a rich history of trying to emulate the Native Americans, in novels, movies, villages, music (drum groups, flute players), etc.” (Neptune 2019).

Once again, the voice of Shelley Morningsong helps further describe Germany's interest in Native lifestyle. "They [the Germans] are very knowledgeable. A lot of them are doing beadwork and living the Native way—some are living in teepees and hunting" (Morningsong 2019). Not only does German interest in Native America show an opportunity for the tourist industry, but it also shows Germans' desire for true Native culture.

"The backstage of a tourist destination is where the authentic life of the Natives happens and the front stage is what is shown to tourists....The 'backstage,' where the real life of the visited peoples takes place[,] thus becomes an important destination" (Berthier-Foglar 2016, 135-36). Rather than perpetuating the "Hollywood Indian," international consumers want what is true and historically accurate.

Taking this desire for authentic Native culture into consideration, we can now create marketing strategies that cater to this part of the international tourist market. For example, say, the state of Maine is trying to attract more visitors in the spring (peak seasons are usually in the summer and fall). In the article "Native Ways of Maine," a different side of Maine culture is presented:

Maine is famous for its lobsters, its taciturn New Englanders and its dense forests. But it is also home to a substantial—and often overlooked—community of Native Americans, the *Wabanaki* (People of the Dawn), consisting of the Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, Maliseet and Micmac [Mi'kmaq] tribes. Visitors traveling the Wabanaki Trail can follow the ancient routes of birch-bark canoes down pristine rivers, use pack baskets to hike the sacred mountain *Katahdin* (The Great One) or gather with Traditional basket-makers who showcase and sell their famed brown-ash and sweet-grass baskets at annual events (Hoffman and Mundell 2001, 48).

This article shows international visitors that there is a different side to Maine, a side that may be more appealing to those interested in Native culture. As a result, international

visits would not be limited to easily recognizable “Maine” locations alone, but a vast new frontier of cultural tourism would be possible as well.

There is an extremely wide scope of possibility for locations to promote that have an attachment with Native American culture. Some of these places, like Maine, are not typically thought of as having a rich Native history (which provides the opportunity to promote something that has never been fully utilized), while others, such as Mesa Verde National Park, attract visitors to specific Native locations. One of the best resources for determining Native presence in specific regions can be found through Native America Travel, sponsored by the American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association (NativeAmerica.Travel 2019). The website provides information on specific tribes, experiences, trips, and cultures while giving access to an interactive map detailing the reach of Native culture. Additionally, Native magazines, such as *Native Peoples Magazine*, detail Native shops and destinations through travel guides ("Travel Guide" 2003).

After deciding on target audiences and developing the vision to showcase true Native American culture, we may begin to construct marketing strategies using the following four features:

1. Identify Areas to Market

- Decide on locations and research Native background
- Speak with members of native communities and search for stories and events that are based in the desired area
- Decide on stories to share and from what tribes

2. Form a “Culture Connection”

- Speak with tribal leaders and establish mutual goals and open and trusting communication

- Maintain policies for appropriate tourist conduct and controls

- Form plans that will include coordination with community members that promote sustainability

3. Select Media and Delivery

- Select which of the five aspects of Native culture will be utilized (film, music, physical locations, art, and education) to tell stories

- Initiate overseas campaigns in person (such as sending Native American musicians to Germany or hosting a film screening in Japan)

- Create personal experiences that show authenticity (this may require smaller-sized trip packages)

4. Never Stop Growing

- Embrace diversity of experiences

- Avoid getting stuck in patterns—break the mold

- Continue to work on relationship-oriented business practices while promoting the sharing of ideas and cultural education

There are countless ways that a “culture connection” may be employed to generate marketing campaigns that are different from anything else in the market. To have this differentiation requires the active pursuit of growing alongside Native communities

through these efforts. When two different cultures can work together for a mutual benefit, a strength is formed that creates a wave of opportunity that will have the momentum to sweep across the globe.

Financials

Determining the financials for potential “culture connections” will be largely based upon each individual venture; however, there are some factors that can be assumed. First, we will look at potential financial projections. Next, we will establish financial conduct as it applies to a mutual benefit for Native communities and tourism marketers.

The potential for economic growth is on the rise. As stated in the situation analysis, 1.95 million visitors accounted for roughly \$8.5 billion in direct spending in 2016. Dividing the direct spending by number of visitors shows us that, on average, each visitor spend roughly \$43.59 per person. Multiplying that number by the projected 2.4 million visitors expected for year 2021 would mean \$10,461,600,000 in direct spending (not including inflation or changes in the market). This equates to an increase in direct spending by just over 23% within the next few years. The increase leads to more opportunity for tourism marketers to tap into, and it leads to a greater ethical responsibility.

While keeping an eye on profits, maintaining culturally sustainable tourism must also be on the forefront of business partnerships. As author and anthropologist Dr. Noel B. Salazar writes,

Because of the communicative power of tourism, representations of destinations have direct and potentially significant influences on the people who are being presented, represented and misrepresented, as well as on those (sub)groups who are absent from such representations. It is still common for ethnic minority groups to be depicted as the ‘exotic Other’ in exhibitions, postcards or tourist literature (Salazar 2012, 9).

Marketers should never exploit others for financial gain—and especially not make people out to be exhibits. Dr. Salazar goes on to list the following four points that allow for sustainability to be established:

(1) CBT [community based tourism] should be economically viable: the revenue should exceed the costs; (2) CBT should be ecologically sustainable: the environment should not decrease in value; (3) there should be an equitable distribution of costs and benefits among all participants in the activity; and (4) institutional consolidation should be ensured: a transparent [organization], [recognized] by all stakeholders, should be established to represent the interests of all community members and to reflect true ownership (Salazar 2012, 11).

As we grow in financial returns, we must always be sure to grow into deeper relationships with communities as well. Stronger community relationships will yield higher quality tourism experiences for visitors.

Controls

In most scenarios, controls are put in place to monitor progress and create contingency planning; however, in this context, controls are also needed to prevent cultural damage. Cultural damage is where interactions do not foster growth between cultures, but rather hinder further development. This behavior includes disrespectfulness, theft of tribal items, and lack of understanding of Native customs. In order to ensure that Native Americans and tourist industry marketers are maintaining a relationship that is mutually beneficial, the following three steps should be set in place:

1. Observe Proper Etiquette — While this may seem simple, individuals can often interpret something entirely different than what was meant by the other person.

Establish a code of conduct (such as the proposed guide on pages 62-63) and have

training with employees to ensure that everyone is on the same page from the beginning. As stated before, Native Americans are not an exhibit, and we fail as a society when preconceived notions exist for different people groups. This training would in no way isolate Native communities as something foreign; however, it would provide relevant information for individuals who have had no experience with Native culture.

2. Request Feedback from Communities — It is vital that marketers reach out to Native communities that they have been working with to see how operations are working. Are visitors being respectful? What are areas that need to be improved? Are there any suggestions that would help both parties? This can be done through e-mail, surveys, etc.; however, a simple conversation is often best.

3. Send Marketers into the Field — The best way to gain experience at something is by doing it. If marketers are expected to work alongside Native communities and market different angles for the tourism industry, then they should have experiences themselves. For example, say you want to go out to eat at a restaurant with some friends. One friend simply shows you a photo of a restaurant and says that she has heard it was good. The other friend goes into a story about an amazing time he had at a restaurant and describes the atmosphere and service in detail. Which sounds more appealing? In the same way, marketers will be able to find a personal approach to their strategies and take more ownership over their work. As a result, Native community members will meet the people they will be working with while marketers can experience what they will be marketing.

4. Know When to Walk Away — Set in place a checklist, that if completely checked, will indicate that it is time to pull the plug. For example:

- Have there been repeated negative incidents between Native community members and tourists?
- Are communications remaining open and cooperative?
- Has the environment been in any way damaged?

5. Keep Finances Fair — Regularly check finances to ensure that the distribution between Native communities and company profits is fairly divided. If profits are divided 90% for the company and 10% for the community, then there is clearly something wrong. Cooperation must never become exploitation.

The controls listed above assist toward continuing positive connections once they have been established. When other communities see fairness and mutual benefits, then future relationships will be easier to develop. Controls will vary depending on local communities and company policies, but they must always preserve a positive connection between visitor and host cultures.

Chapter 5

Conclusions

The story of Native America is much like a phoenix. For thousands of years, culture soared, but it was eventually plucked out of the sky. For several hundred years the culture was stuck on the ground, and eventually appeared dead. In the last century, just like a phoenix is reborn from the ashes, Native American culture has, once again, started to fly. As we continue to foster the growth of a “culture connection” between Native communities and tourist industry marketers, there is great potential to reach new heights together.

The next chapters of this story should not be dedicated to reaching into people’s wallets, but it must be dedicated to capturing hearts. Native America has tens of thousands of stories to tell, and there is so much that is to be learned from the true, authentic legacies that many individuals have yet to hear. As we examine Native America through film, music, physical locations, art, and education, we may incorporate different forms of media to share stories with the world.

Keeping a human element in mind as we push forward is essential. Native American culture must never be exploited—it must be treated with respect. The elders and storytellers have priceless insight into their own culture, which, in turn, will help us widen our views to all the cultures around us. Native America is alive today. It lives on through songs, stories, artwork, dances, foods, festivals, and everything that proceeds out of the human spirit. We are duty-bound to protect this culture that we hope to work with, and we must always seek relationships first. Marketing plans will be diverse and strong,

doors will be opened that had previously been locked, and the uniqueness of this approach will gain new attention on the global stage. In the words of Penobscot elder, James Neptune, “It only takes one drop of water in a pond to create a ripple that carries across the entire pond” (Neptune 2019). The choices we make right now have the potential to spread far and wide. As we look toward the future with open eyes, there is nothing that cannot be accomplished through cultural collaboration.

This study, as it is, remains just the beginning of a lifetime of efforts that we may undertake together. As cultures learn about (and from) one another, growth toward a more united future will continue. Through further research, interaction with tribal leaders, and working with members of the international tourism industry, it is possible to develop the “culture connection” that has been introduced in this study. Without information, we cannot have knowledge, and without knowledge, wisdom can never result. This study combines wisdom from leaders within the Native American community with information that can be further developed into actionable knowledge. With this foundation set firmly beneath our feet, we can dig in our heels and take the steps needed to walk into the future that is ahead of us.

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