



NATIVE GOVERNANCE CENTER

Questions, Considerations, and Tips for Indigenizing Communications

Based on the following Indigenous values, here are some questions to ask yourself to help strengthen your communications.

Self-Determination: The ability to identify, define, and implement solutions that are appropriate for your people.

- How are our communications protecting, supporting, and uplifting tribal sovereignty and self-determination?

Indigenized Thinking: We apply an Indigenous lens to everything we do.

- Is our messaging reflective of the way we think and/or communicate?

Sustainability: Our decisions honor the seven generations and ensure a vibrant future for our nations.

- How can we include the youth and seven generations in our messaging?

Wellness: We work to avoid burnout, care for ourselves, and take a healthy approach to leadership.

- Does our messaging reflect the importance of taking care of ourselves in order to do what we've been called to do?

Engagement: All community members have access to information and feel good about joining the conversation.

- How clear is our messaging in welcoming all community members?

General considerations when Indigenizing your communication strategy

- Work with a team of people either within your organization, department, or community to generate ideas and approaches. Having thought partners in the process is helpful, plus it increases engagement and buy-in to better support your communications.
- Find ways to inspire and bring hope to your constituents because we could all use that right now! One suggestion is to focus on the opportunity we have to rebuild our Native nations and communities and to reimagine an Indigenized future.
- Following various Native organizations or accounts on social media can be helpful in identifying quotes, words of wisdom, or gaining inspiration from them to

integrate in your messaging. Just make sure to get permission, give them credit and a shoutout!

Tips for working with Native artists

- There is a lot of talent within our Tribal nations regarding communications. Seek out Native artists, writers, photographers, videographers, etc. to engage in Indigenizing your communications.
- If you'd like to use a piece of an artist's existing work, reach out to them and ask how much they'd charge you to do so.
- If you'd like to commission a piece of new work, create a budget that values an artist's work fairly. If you're not sure what a fair price is, reach out to the artist and ask!
- Good art takes time to produce; never undervalue an artist's work.
- Sample email text for contacting Native artists:

Hi [artist name]--

My name is [insert name], and I work for [insert Tribe or organization name].
[Explain how you know the artist or have a relationship with them, if applicable].

Right now, we're working on [explain the project for which you'd like to use their artwork]. We saw your work and thought it'd be a great fit with our [project name].
For an artist with existing work: Do you by chance ever sell digital files of your pieces to organizations that are interested in using them? If so, how much would one file cost? Let us know what you think!

For an artist from whom you'd like to commission work: We're looking to commission an original piece from a Native artist to use in our project. Is this something that you'd consider doing? If so, how much would you charge for something like this?