

**Sharing Insights**  
**Commercial Fishing Enterprises (CFE) Networking Event**  
Spirit Ridge Vineyard Resort  
Osoyoos, British Columbia  
November 28 – December 1, 2011

Key Points from the Presentations

**Day 1**

**Introduction: Brian Payer and Matt Vickers**

- The purpose of this conference was to review the “why”, the “how” and the “opportunity” available for Commercial Fishing Enterprises. To expand further:
  - Why key business principles add up to success – management, governance, internal capacity, marketing, other success variables
  - Why a strong business plan is the roadmap to success
  - How best practices and lessons learned from the Atlantic Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative provide insight
  - How key government programs and Aboriginal and commercial lending institutions provide access to capital
  - How to build on what you have – vertical integration
  - Why access to capital is important
  - The opportunity to build relationships and partnerships.
  - The opportunity to learn from each other’s challenges, mistakes and triumphs
  - How key tools can improve operational efficiency
  - Why and how business planning can evolve your business model

Richard Bussanich, Okanagan Nation Alliance

**Best Practices and Maximizing Value: Okanagan Nation Alliance Salmon Recovery: Program Overview**

- Richard’s presentation highlighted what potential business opportunities may exist even for small commercial operations. His presentation illustrated the importance of branding, developing local contacts, and the need to promote and integrate **responsible trade** into the business model.
- The *Interior B.C. Commercial Salmon Fishery Case Study* stressed the importance of the **ability to track fish from vessel through the supply chain to the plate, with validation throughout the process, which is accessible to the consumer**, as a quality control and value added process.

Stu Nelson, Nelson Brothers Fisheries

- Stu’s presentation examined issues associated with **the start-up company frame of mind**
- New business operators must both **accentuate the positives** in developing start-up business (such as: emphasizing assets that already exist, market opportunities, and the start-up mindset), while minimizing and addressing potential negatives.

- Keep in mind: Wild seafood is hot, prices are generally rising, aboriginal businesses are growing economic segment, and the PICFI program is providing opportunities that may be otherwise unaffordable.
- Recognize the most CFEs will face a dilemma **in balancing community benefits and CFE profitability**
- **Keys to success:** a solid corporate set-up, management, market orientation, competitive operations, on-going planning and financial management.

Matt Vickers, *Strong Governance and Management: Why is it Important?*

- **Governance systems must be both effective and have legitimacy**
- The **Nation building** model of economic development requires: jurisdiction; effective institutions for governance, are a cultural match, have a strategic orientation, and leadership willing to create a climate for development

Jack Woodward, *Strong Governance and Management: Why is it Important?*

- Jack’s presentation provided a preliminary discussion on the corporate models CFEs should explore
- Considerations may include: the business objectives, allocation of risks, how First Nations will set up the business, how to minimize risk and maximize profit.
- **Corporate documents must reflect discussions and be simple for all partners to understand.**

Diane Coulture, Transport Canada, *Transport Canada Marine Safety National Outreach Campaign – Fishing Masters and Officers Certification and Training*

- Diane reviewed the necessary training required for all CFE seafarers.
- Transport Canada will be setting up a mobile centre to inform fishermen of licensing requirements in the Pacific Region in January/February 2012.

Patrick Olsen, *Worksafe BC and the Business of Safety*

- Brian’s presentation reviewed the mandate of Worksafe BC, and the various programs associated with Worksafe BC’s marine strategy.
- Focus areas or Worksafe BC include: cold water emergence; PPE use; vessel characteristics –documentations and stability; emergency preparedness – Training and procedures, drills, and equipment

John Krgovich, *FishSAFE BC*

- *FishSAFE BC’s* programs are funded and run by the commercial fishing industry and include: the stability education program, Safe on the Wheel and the Safest Catch Program
- FishSafe BC also conducts special training drills days, mentoring programs, and acts as a regulatory liaison to Worksafe, Transportation Safety Board, DFO, and Transport Canada.

Allen Tobey, PICFI Technical, *Training and Mentoring for Your Commercial Fishing Enterprise*

- Allen reviewed the **purpose of a training plan**, and described it in the following manner: a go forward document; a succession document; a personnel summary document – provides a summary of the competencies of various employees; a living document – is always in draft and subject to revisions; the property of the fishing enterprise – explains the values of your business and how you grow over time.
- Also explored: why training plans are required, the types of training, a review of who is responsible for the training plan, and the responsibilities of training coordinators.
- **Longer term plans for training will factor in the availability of workers to keep the enterprise viable and provide opportunities for workers to diversify their skills**

## DAY 2

Paul Donald, *Aboriginal Capital Corporations (ACCs): Your Partners in Business*

- Paul reviewed the history of ACCs, and outlined the role of ACCs can play, including: developing business plans, providing pre/post loan care, providing access to loan capital as well as access to Aboriginal Business Development Program (ABDP) funds.
- **CFE may consider using ABDP funds to help offset the costs of their business startup costs.**

Mark Duiven, *AICFI, PICFI & National Aboriginal Fishery Forum 2*

- Mark’s presentation reviewed the differences between the AICFI and PICFI programs.
- The goal of NAFF2 will be to bring together regional and national issues on markets and products, access to capital, management and capacity retention. In addition, aquaculture will be added to the table. NAFF 2 will develop a series of framework documents to feed into the federal system to make the different programs more rational, with goal to house a “one-stop shop.”
- **It was suggested that each CFE put together a brief summary document of program successes in support of the program renewals.**

Steven Purvis, *Federal Framework for Aboriginal Economic Development: Aboriginal Economic Development and the Business of Fisheries*

- Steven reviewed the role of the AICFI program in Atlantic Canada. **The approach adopted by the Government of Canada to promote an opportunity-driven, business-minded, proponent-led, and partnership-based strategic partnerships.**

Vi Hall, *Native Fishing Association Products and Services*

- Vi’s **presentation reviewed the services the Native Fishing Association can provide CFEs**, including: providing financing the enterprise, or helping individual fishermen buy gear, vessels boats and licences.

Daniel Kimoto, *E & E Trading*

- Daniel's presentation reviewed the role E&E trading can play in wholesaling and marketing CFE product. CFEs need to carefully consider what they want to do with their new capacity: leasing, fishing the licence, or building new capacity
- Daniel emphasized quality **control and building strong relationships with the end users** as key to success.

Larry Greba, *Kitasoo Community Vision*

- Larry's presentation reviewed the history of Kitasoo Seafoods operations and historical expansion.
- His presentation **highlighted the following as the keys to building a successful CFE** over time: Diversified access (variety of licences), Proper infrastructure (vessels and plants), Need good cash flow product, Strong and stable management, Strong cash flow, Partnerships (in order to build capacity and reduce risk, Well developed human resources, Become risk adverse, and Seek out premium opportunities.

Michael Grant: *Fisheries Management System for Reporting and Asset Management*

- Michael's presentation reviewed the FMS software.
- **FMS** is a software solution design to meet the requirements of First Nations commercial fishing enterprises. **It is a web-based, database application that serves the following purposes:**
  - As a human resources tool: tracks contact information, completed and required training, document (training) retention tool.
  - Tracks information related to vessels such as maintenance records, size, and equipment
  - Tracks, fishing costs and profitability, and provides improved reporting to Chief and Council

Ken Fraser: *Getting it together: Project and Implementation Management*

- Ken's presentation provided a summary of learnings to date. His summary included the following:
  - CFEs need to ensure that the various pieces in the business are aligned in order to ensure success
    - 1) Understand the needs of the community: history, tradition, and capacity to implement decisions
    - 2) Review legal and tax options to minimize liability and taxes
    - 3) Assess the management structure, and what are the process that will knit the organization together
    - 4) Once the processes are defined, then you can define roles and responsibilities
    - 5) Select people
    - 6) Provide ongoing mentoring and training opportunities.

### DAY 3

#### Roger Sark, *AICFI – Abegweit First Nation Commercial Fishery*

- Roger's presentation highlighted the challenges and successes the Abegweit First Nations have experienced in developing their commercial fishing enterprise in Prince Edward Island.
  - o Challenges faced included a need to access additional training, particularly in the business aspects; and developing an economy of scale, in order to aggregate resources to get better prices
- Mr. Sark then explained how the Abegweit First Nation was able to capitalize on available funding provided through various programs such as AAROM, AICFI, ACFDI. It is important to note **by combining these funds, they were able to leverage these grants and loan programs that permitted greater diversification within the industry.**
- Be sure to learn the needs/cost centres of your CFE (gear and vessel maintenance; shipping and logistics, etc.) and seek options for lowering costs. Where appropriate, consider developing new businesses within the community to provide those needed services, if feasible.
- Be sure to seek out partnerships with other first nations to access new markets and develop new products.

#### Richard Bussanich, *Existing and Emerging Markets for the Okanagan Nation Alliance*

- Richard provided a case study in building and marketing a niche product. Key tasks to consider in marketing a CFEs product include:
  - o Know your market and consistently track the actions of your competitors, both domestically and internationally.
  - o Put time into relationship building and customer retention. Get to know your buyers needs and sensitivities, whether they are individuals, small businesses, or wholesalers.
  - o Establish boundaries and be firm with contracts: establish penalties for non-compliance within contracts, charge for special services such as rush orders.