

Miniwakan News



SPIRIT LAKE CONSULTING, INC.

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Spirit Lake Consulting Launches Leadership Project

"It's like watching someone you love drown and there's nothing you can do about it."

"Something has to change."

"I want to get some of that free money."

The first quote was from one of Dr. De Mars' daughters after watching her sister make some very bad decisions. The second is from our president, Dr. Erich Longie, after hearing that of the latest group of twenty tribal members hired by Sioux Manufacturing Corporation, only four were left after two weeks. The third is a little known statement by individuals applying for business licenses in the tribal administration building. Now, our president, Dr. Longie (shown to the right) is usually a pretty laid-back guy, but there is a reason he is president. When Erich says that something has to change, something usually does.

The motivation for our latest project, **Spirit Lake Leadership Training**, stemmed from our knowledge that the average leadership curriculum ignores the most important issues faced by Native American leaders on Indian reservations. **We were tired of seeing people we cared about fail due to poor decision-making and we set out to change things.** Both managers and employees on the reservation face obstacles that need to be addressed. We need to be leaders like Sitting Bull and lead with the traditional Indian values of courage, honesty, generosity, and perseverance. We should not look up to leaders who are more like Custer, leading with selfishness, only out for personal glory and recognition.



Erich Longie,
SLC President

Leadership Project continued

Data from our first two Leadership training sessions indicate that managers and employees are fearful to speak out against the injustices that go on in the reservation, such as nepotism, favoritism, and firing employees without due process. Our main goal through this Leadership project is to promote courage in tribal employees to voice their concerns, as well as the courage for tribal leaders to utilize their knowledge of business ethics instead of succumbing to the pressures of tribal politics. And most importantly, the courage to admit that sometimes, businesses on the reservation are not being conducted the way that they should be.

We want to provide our clients with not only the courage, but also the knowledge needed to reverse this cycle. Our training is not just problem-focused, but includes an emphasis on solutions, providing everything from management theory to successful reservation case studies, to the technical side of calculating a fair price for services.

We at Spirit Lake Consulting are very proud of our latest project. We have created a training module similar to that of our past workshops, equipped with free CD-ROMs for our participants and a website packed with information on business ethics, management skills, and other leadership related material. We included sample attendance policies, sample by-laws, even sample grant proposals and contracts. In the Sioux tradition of generosity, we gave away what had been useful to us in hopes that it would help the community.

We have included information for employees, managers, and people who wish to start their own business. In this workshop, clients will learn useful information, such as ways to become a successful leader, the differences between tribal leadership styles, ways to build work habits, and how to create a successful work environment.

Our first draft has been completed and we are in the process of piloting our training on the Spirit Lake Nation. If you are interested in being part of this test run, or interested in training at a future date, contact [Dr. Erich Longie at ericstev@spiritlakeconsulting.com](mailto:ericstev@spiritlakeconsulting.com) or (701) 351-2175. To see our website to date, please visit <http://www.spiritlakeconsulting.com/leaders/>.

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The Technical Side of Spirit Lake

If you went to our leadership site lately you might have found a number of errors and pages that did not work. Why is that? Are we a bunch of slackers at SLC? In fact, the Leadership site is under development. We normally will put up a draft version of the site a few weeks before our first official workshops. This gives our staff the opportunity to find any errors such as links that don't go anywhere, forms that don't work, etc. We should have everything up and working this week in preparation for our first official public workshop to be conducted December 27th at Lake Region State College. We have conducted a couple of earlier workshops to date, for a test group and a few organizations that requested training. Contact Dr. Longie at (701) 351-2175 if you are interested in attending this workshop.

Our other products, including Disability Access and Caring for Our People Training are also under development. We have released one module every few months and, to date, have available workshops with accompanying CDs and websites on the following topics:

- Introduction to Disability and Culture,
- Introduction to Disability Access,
- Special Education,
- Family Life & Disability and
- Preschool Special Education.



We have five other modules under development. We add to our website weekly, so, each time you visit, you may see new pages or fixes to problems you noticed on old pages. We made the decision to upload pages as completed for a couple of reasons. First, people in Indian country seldom get to be a part of software development. We wanted our community to see itself as the site for technology development. Second, in some areas resources for training on disability, chronic illness, management and small businesses are very limited. We saw a demand for services now. So, it was our decision to make available our Virtual Library, Business Briefs, Miniwakan News and other services as these became available, even though we knew there was still a lot of development to be done. We have added a lot to our community bulletin board and will have some community forums and blogs coming on line shortly. We are ALWAYS interested in your comments and suggestions. Please email Dr. AnnMaria DeMars annmaria@spiritleakeconsulting.com with any recommendations or questions you may have about the technical side of Spirit Lake Consulting, Inc.

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*An Indian-
owned
business*

Meet Our New Staff Member: *Kelly Reynolds*

New Employee!

"I moved to Los Angeles in 2000 from my hometown, Seattle, WA. I attended high school here and soon went off to college in 2004. I am currently attending Santa Monica College in Santa Monica, CA. I plan to transfer to a California State University in southern California. My current major is Apparel Design and Fashion Merchandising. I hope to enter the industry as a buyer, designer, or visual merchandiser. I was hired as a research and clerical assistant. I have about a year and a half of experience with clerical work at a well-known bankruptcy law firm. I'm hoping to learn a lot more about how a small business operates in doing this position, along with learning more about other programs that I am currently not familiar with."

Call for Personal Stories and Experiences

Do you sympathize with our articles on the experiences of a vocational rehabilitation counselor, or raising a child with a disability? Do you have a story you wish to share with the hundreds of tribal and disability care staff on our mailing list? If so, please write to us! We would like to hear what you have to say. In return, we will pay \$50 for each article we decide to put in our newsletter.

Email your attachment (no more than 2 pages) to jessica@spiritlakeconsulting.com, along with your name and contact information. We will let you know if we decide to use your article, and when. If you would like more information on articles we use in our newsletters, visit our archive at <http://www.spiritlakeconsulting.com/SpiritLakeConsulting/newsletters.html>.

Note: if you know anyone you feel can contribute a story; feel free to forward this newsletter to them. As with all of our newsletters, if you know anyone who would benefit from an electronic subscription to Miniwakan News, please send an email to jessica@spiritlakeconsulting.com with the intended person's email address.

Our mission is to be a resource to American Indian and other disadvantaged communities by providing training, evaluation, grant writing and planning services.