



Spirit of the Lake Native Boutique

Spirit of the Lake Native Boutique

*Thompson Rivers University A
Marketing Case Study*

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Introduction

The Spirit of the Lake Native Boutique (SOTL) case study explores marketing issues and challenges experienced by a gift store in West Kelowna, BC. Not only does it include discussions of the store's target market, experiences, and appropriate as well as affordable marketing channels, it also addresses challenges of Indigenous business ownership and has an Indigenous product emphasis.

Exploring and showcasing Indigenous local culture has been a focus for Thompson Rivers University (TRU) for years now. Accordingly, we strive to include Indigenous content into our business courses, which this case study supports by exploring issues experienced by Indigenous businesses. As a significant and important niche business in British Columbia and in Canada, Indigenous business ownership is growing and flourishing. The following case outlines the current situation for SOTL, setting the scene for students to assess marketing opportunities, justify marketing recommendations, and rationalize strategic marketing approaches.

Teachers Resources

Course Fit

By analyzing the information presented in this case, students are able to conduct research into topics such as Indigenous businesses, unique marketing challenges faced, approaches to create brand identities, product selection, pricing, marketing affiliates as well as marketing opportunities, and relationship building. Students will suggest marketing strategies that can overcome challenges from the past and keep SOTL successful. By analyzing this case, students will be exposed to the following marketing topics:

- Marketing Strategy
- Marketing Research
- Competitive Advantage
- Location Challenges
- Brand Identity
- Product, Price, Place, and Promotion
- Indigenous Business
- Strategic Alliances
- Affiliate Marketing
- Destination Marketing
- Retailing
- Positioning
- Consumer Behaviour
- Decision-Making Processes
- Marketing Communications

Analysis approaches based on the information provided in this case fit any advanced marketing course, whether graduate or undergraduate, assuming students have had exposure to basic

marketing courses as well as specific marketing topics such as marketing strategy, marketing research, retailing, and consumer behaviour.

Suggestions for Use

The information in this case is suitable for specific assignment questions in multiple marketing areas. Instructors using this case may provide students with their own questions, based on the topic of their courses and the content they have covered. Below are some suggestions on the topics that can be covered through an analysis of this case.

Consumer Behaviour:

- Apply decision-making concepts and steps to a typical purchase at SOTL
- Apply attitude models to this situation and target audience
- Apply concepts of cultural values and reference groups to this case
- Identify suitable subcultures to be targeted
- Identify cultural influences on the behaviour of SOTL's customers

E-Commerce:

- Investigate the benefits of spending time and money to start e-commerce operations
- Research the objectives and components of an improved website

- Research opportunities to tie into other e-commerce operations based on target market
- Assess how e-commerce operations would fit with the Indigenous focus of the store
- Identify competitors in a potential e-commerce setting

Advertising:

- Determine appropriate information to be included on highway signage
- Identify suitable print publications for advertising
- Evaluate research on the effectiveness of radio advertising for local businesses
- Design an advertising plan and budget for social media ads (e.g., Facebook, Google)
- Investigate additional directories that could be beneficial for SOTL

Tourism Marketing:

- Suggest ways to attract and reach visitors to the area
- Identify networks SOTL could enter to promote the store to tourists
- Determine appropriate channels for marketing to potential out-of-town customers
- Research inventory expansions with an Indigenous focus that attract tourists
- Compare SOTL's offerings with other attractions for tourists in the Okanagan
- Investigate current trends in tourism marketing

Teaching Notes

Below, please find some select marketing ideas that students can be prompted to identify and research, especially if the case is used in a classroom setting:

- Using the website to sell higher priced items, providing customers the opportunity to research before a visit
- Including references to popular products in ads, commercials, or other materials
- Working with tour companies, such as wine tours, cruises, or rail tours
- Connecting with the local ski area to offer tours to the store during the winter months
- Establishing ties with other tourism attractions in the area
- Working with other stores within the Westbank First Nation (e.g., museum, cafes, etc.)
- Participating in the Kelowna Farmers' Market after expanding the food selection
- Offering custom products by working closely with local artists

Sample Instructions for Students

Using the information in this case study as a basis, your task is to apply marketing concepts to recommend a marketing strategy and approach for Spirit of the Lake Native Boutique. Please note that the goal is not to find out what was actually done but to research options, explain your decisions, and elaborate on your chosen marketing approach. The emphasis is on justifying your choices by utilizing your knowledge of marketing theories and concepts, as well as supporting your choices with academic sources.

Time frame: 2 years

Budget: CA\$ 5,000 per year

Components: Marketing channels, messages, timing/schedule, brand personality, target audience

The goal is to increase sales, exposure, and brand recognition for SOTL by applying marketing concepts in various areas (e.g., consumer behaviour), keeping in mind the limited human resources available. Students should also focus on suggestions that create brand loyalty and form long-term relationships for SOTL with customers and suppliers.

All recommendations should be based on a detailed analysis of the target audience, including creating a persona. Key performance metrics should be recommended and justified. Benefits and challenges for any suggestions and recommendations need to be clearly stated. Students are expected to research marketing concepts, assess brand positioning, analyze competitors and supply options, and justify any product strategy modifications. Recommendations should integrate multiple marketing channels with a combination of mass communications—such as advertising, promotions, or events—as well as personal communications—such as direct marketing or word-of-mouth referrals.

1. Overview of the Business

History and Location

Tasha Mae Swite, the owner of SOTL, had the idea of starting her own business in 2017 while being employed locally in her hometown of West Kelowna.

I've always wanted to be an entrepreneur or own some kind of business, but I just didn't have or lacked the confidence to move forward into that.

She noticed that a local gallery—Turtle Island Native Gallery in downtown Kelowna—offered high-end art pieces but dealt with challenges such as parking and location. In this gallery, the prices ranged from \$50 to \$4,000 for carvings and other special items. After a robbery, they closed the store. Since then, there was a distinct demand for a gift store with authentic Native art, with only a limited selection offered at a local Native gas station.



Francis and Charlie

Picture taken in Kelowna, Leon Ave. known as China town at the time, 1938-40. They sold firewood here each winter. There was a chinese family that would invite the Swite family to there restaurant every New Years Day for a free meal to show there appreciation.

Figure 1 – Contributed. This image may be subject to copyright and doesn't fall under the CC licensing of this OER

Tasha envisioned a store that provides higher-end gifts that are still affordable, creating a place that combines culture and

support of Indigenous artists locally and nationwide. In opening her own store, Tasha, of Syilx-Okanagan and Assiniboine-Sioux heritage, is a fourth generation entrepreneur and the first female entrepreneur in the Swite family; her kids, already helping in her store, represent the fifth generation of entrepreneurs in the family. By including her children and bringing them to work, she is already instilling the vision in them that they can be whoever they want to be, that they can get involved in anything they want. Looking back into her family history, her grandfather and his brother operated a firewood business, cutting wood on the west side of the lake and hauling it via ferry to Chinatown in Kelowna, while her great-grandfather raised cattle and horses.

The current storefront used to be a fruit stand, which was going to be demolished. When she indicated to her father, who owns the property, that she was interested in using the space for her new business, he assisted her in applying for a grant which she received from [ANTCO](#) in the form of a [First Citizen's Fund and through the New Relationship Trust](#). Based on her age, she still qualified as youth, and after a difficult wait of many months, she was awarded grant money to start her business.

You gotta hustle to make your business work.

Ultimately, it was September of 2019 when Tasha got the “green light” to proceed towards her dream of entrepreneurship, and after giving notice to her employer at the time, she dove into her new role head-first. Having a good support system helped Tasha, who is also a wife and mother, and the store opened in November of 2019, just in time for the Christmas rush.

My vision was [...] start small and grow from there.



Figure 2 – Contributed. This image may be subject to copyright and doesn't fall under the CC licensing of this OER

Not expecting the repercussions and restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic, the business had a difficult start but managed to stay open through 2020. Given their products and location, it was a “grey zone” with regards to COVID rules. Their success continued through 2020, and the store did not even reduce business hours, instead adjusting processes to electronic transfers, local deliveries, and so on. Currently, the store is open 9am to 4pm from Tuesday to Friday, and 10am to 4pm on Saturday.

The name of the store—Spirit of the Lake Native

Boutique—honours Ogopogo, which is *n̓xaʔx̱ʔitkʷ* in *nsyilxcən*, the spirit in Lake Okanagan. Discouraging the spirit’s depiction as a cartoon character or monster, Tasha tries to bring back the name to its original meaning, being about the land and the water.

The logo she selected shows the Ogopogo pictograph in the centre, resembling an orange sun, with the water below. The Aztec triangle design in the back represents Tasha’s Assiniboine heritage.

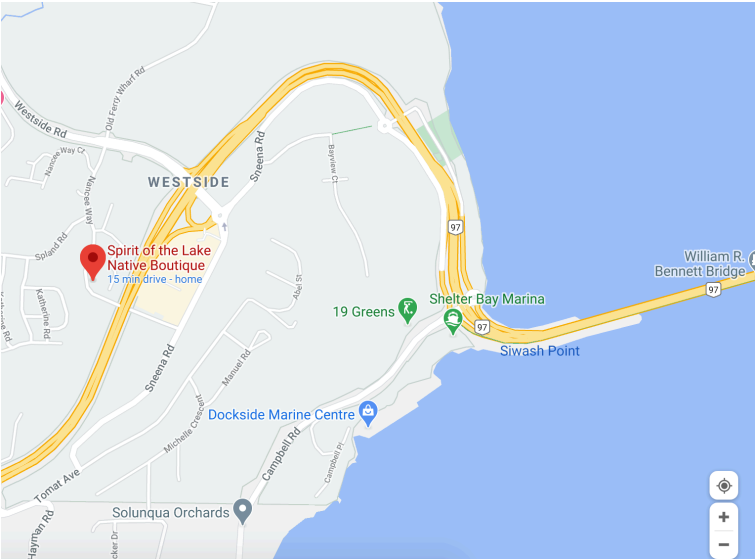


Figure 3 – Logo. Contributed. This image may be subject to copyright and doesn’t fall under the CC licensing of this OER

Tasha’s store is located at 1960A Nancee Way in West Kelowna. It takes about 7 minutes to drive from downtown Kelowna. Located in a residential area that is not easily accessible from the highway, with the shopping centre on the other side of the highway, the building is also used by Tasha’s father as office space for his businesses.

While not visible enough for foot traffic or spontaneous visits, Tasha enjoys the location, and customers have commented positively on it as well. Tasha mentioned that in the future, a

more visible location closer to Westside road could increase traffic. Depending on the future development in her area, a move towards downtown West Kelowna could also be considered. However, being in the area where her great-great grandfather started his entrepreneurial life by looking after horses that were left by people taking the ferry to Kelowna, has a special meaning for her and the store.



Source: Google Maps

Employees

Tasha is the sole proprietor of SOTL, which is a 100% Indigenous-owned store. Initially, she planned on running the store on her own, made possible by having help with her family commitments. The woman she originally hired to provide beadwork became an employee after offering to help out and getting the business going. Now, Janie has been working there

since the doors first opened and takes care of all the front-end operations, while Tasha manages the back-end.

In addition to Janie, Tasha hired two other employees. One started in March 2020, immediately before COVID became a concern, and Tasha felt strongly about giving her an opportunity and helping her get on her feet to gain some experience and confidence. In December 2020, because of uncertainty related to COVID, Tasha had to let this employee go but hopes to invite her back when sales pick up. Another employee was hired for a short time in December 2020 for social media work (see Marketing Approaches).

I almost see myself in her: timid, shy [...], lack of confidence. That's who I was back 10 years ago, where I [...] didn't want to talk, but I was willing to work and help.

2. Product Details

The product assortment includes jewelry, beadwork (e.g., on key chains), pottery, blankets, moccasins, scarves, and other clothing. SOTL features local artists, such as elders from West Kelowna, and sources beadwork, ribbon skirts, and Native design pillows from those artists. According to Tasha, these items “flew out the door,” especially when the local First Nations museum was closed and couldn’t show these art pieces anymore during 2020. Another example of a local artist from Kamloops that SOTL is featuring is Louise Alphonse; she crafts drumsticks, drum bags, and moccasins.



Figure 4 – Products at the store (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0)



Figure 5 – Products at the store (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0)

Tasha wanted to carry the Pendleton brand, offering blankets, baby blankets, towels, and so on. Ordering issues due to the pandemic meant that the inventory was greatly reduced, but what did come in sold very quickly. In the future, and when that brand's production resumes, a steady and organized supply of Pendleton products is anticipated.



Figure 6 – Products at the store (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0)

SOTL would like to carry Manitoba Mukluks, which are in high demand; so far, competitive restrictions prohibit Tasha selling the line. SOTL does stock moccasins from a vendor in Fort Nelson as well as the Oscardo brand and sterling silver from Vancouver Island by Reg Gladstone. Nu Trendz is another brand that Tasha has in stock. Based out of Edmonton, Nu Trendz sells Native-themed items; however, Tasha has plans to discontinue this line. She also sells Okanagan Select salmon products, both canned salmon and jerky, which have been popular as gifts and luxury food items.

My first round of salmon didn't go very well, but that was due to COVID. But this Christmas round, I had 48 cans. They're all gone. We just did a reorder of [...] salmon jerky and canned salmon, the traditional with the bone in and the bone out.

In the beginning, Tasha would do a lot of research, finding providers of Native arts and gifts by calling or emailing them directly. There was a learning curve in finding out what works for her unique supply chain.

Watch Video Clip 1 – Reg Gladstone ([Transcript Available](#))
(CC BY-NC-ND 4.0):



A video element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can watch it online here:

<https://spiritofthelake.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=34>



Figure 7 – Products at the store (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0)

Local vendors would stop at the store and offer their products for SOTL to purchase and sell, such as pine needle baskets, a baby bassinet, and so forth. Even if a sale wasn't guaranteed, Tasha considered these items to promote local culture and to

serve as a “conversation starter.” Even though some products offered at SOTL are made internationally, Tasha focuses on showcasing local Indigenous artists as much as she can. Well known local names and artists are featured and will continue to be a focal point for the store.

The SOTL store faces the issue that many of the more typical items and brands are available at Native gas stations. The plan is to get away from these “standard” products and be different, be distinct. So far, the store hasn’t been able to offer high-end pieces, but Tasha plans to start selling higher-end items in the future, once the uncertainty of business operations during COVID times has eased.

A trend that Tasha noticed is the demand for homemade items, such as moccasins or wood carvings. She also commented that often, by default and with no shortage of artists within the Okanagan Nation, she becomes the liaison, linking artists to customers looking for a special custom piece (e.g., drum work, teepees, beadwork, jewelry, etc.).

Watch Video Clip 2 – Custom Orders ([Transcript Available](#)) (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0):



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<https://spiritofthelake.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=34>

Considering the products and SOTL’s location, the owner is planning to host another outdoor market in the parking lot, inviting other vendors and showcasing artwork from First Nations or non-First Nations artists. The first attempt of this happened in April 2020, when COVID restrictions were vague, and it was a success. For instance, an artist creating bird houses

found exposure and customers. Tasha has a connection to a local Westbank First Nation (WFN) member who is also planning on starting a group to organize outdoor markets with vendors, artists, and possibly a food truck.

Overall, SOTL provides a great platform for local artists, and Tasha would like to expand her line of BC and Alberta Native art to covering Canadian Indigenous art from across the nation.

Watch Video Clip 3 – Expansion ([Transcript Available](#)) (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0):



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<https://spiritofthelake.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=34>



Figure 8 – Products at the store (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0)

All employees also make sure to welcome customers to the store and make them feel comfortable, showing that they care. They let them smell their smudging ingredients, which always provides a conversation piece.

Tasha is open to sharing her heritage and culture with her customers. The only exception she makes is for her own beadwork and medicine. In the traditional Native community, medicine is not sold for profit. So, when she did agree to stock some sage and sweetgrass due to requests, she was open to a trading arrangement with a local elder instead of selling the medicine.

3. Competitors

Identifying competitors is somewhat difficult, given the unique selection offered at SOTL. Tasha noted that a few other Indigenous businesses or customers to choose from are within 1000m of her store, that being Owl's Nest Smoke and Gift Shop, the Indigenous World Winery, and the [Sncəwips Heritage Museum](#). There is also the Canco gas station along the highway to downtown West Kelowna.

I go there regularly, so I know what they're selling. We've had conversations of what my vision is to a point. I don't tell them too much.



Figure 9 – Products at the store (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0)

Tasha visits these stores regularly to make sure that her

offerings of the “standard” items are different from what customers can find elsewhere in the West Kelowna area. In particular, multiple locations carry items from the Oscardo line, and Tasha prefers to carry unique items that cannot be found elsewhere in town.

Watch Video Clip 4 – Competitors ([Transcript Available](#)) (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0):



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<https://spiritofthelake.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=36>

Further north in the Okanagan, the Neehoot Grocery at Newport Beach is part of the Vernon Okanagan Indian Band and sells Pendleton, Manitoba Mukluks, and other brands. They offer blankets, mugs, Native Northwest items, and “a little selection of everything” in addition to being a convenience and tobacco store.

Going south down the Okanagan Valley, the Penticton Indian Band sells much of the same in their Silver Grizzly store, including Pendleton, Manitoba Mukluks, tobacco, and so forth. Throughout the valley, there are other souvenir shops, but SOTL does not consider them competitors, with each having a unique focus and brand. Even the name “Spirit of the Lake” encourages customers to visit.

Even my name of my business brings people: Spirit of the Lake. They want to know, you know, more of that.

4. Pricing

The prices at SOTL are competitive, influenced by Tasha's regular visits to other stores. She even offers to price-match if a customer sees the same item elsewhere for less. Feedback has been positive, and customers haven't commented on the store being too expensive, instead appreciating the authentic origins. In her experience, price is especially not a focus for higher-end items where customers are happy to find a unique gift and do not question the price.



Figure 10 – Products at the store (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0)

Tasha prefers not to negotiate the prices she pays to artists, instead accepting what they deem appropriate for their work and supporting them. She only adds a minor margin to the art work, staying close to the price that the artists set for their

work. Taking art on consignment has been a consideration, but insurance concerns have prevented it so far (e.g., who would be responsible for damage to the item while at the store?).

The store does offer discounts and specials, promoted through Facebook and on the website. In addition, Tasha sometimes includes discounts on her receipts for returning customers (e.g., 10–15% off the next purchase). Sometimes a draw for a mug or blanket can entice customers to return to the store as well.

5. Customers

By the store owner's estimate, the typical customers are 30 to 55 years of age. They are working adults living around Kelowna and the wider Okanagan, some are retired, and they love the First Nations culture. They are looking for unique gifts or indoor/outdoor home decorations. In particular, the customer group of 55+ is looking for special Native art pieces, made locally and with a "story." Customers looking for higher-end art pieces can hopefully be accommodated in the near future (see Pricing).

Members of other First Nations also come to West Kelowna to shop as it is central and has many shops for tax exemption shopping. They come from Kamloops, Merritt, and the surrounding area to stop by SOTL on their shopping trips. In addition, the 2020 pow wow season did not happen, and SOTL carries some of the items you would find at a typical pow wow.



Figure 11 – Gift bags for TRU event (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0)

Many of the First Nations organizations in the area have made a point of supporting the store during the COVID-19 pandemic by buying gift cards or raffle prizes in the store (e.g., Okanagan Nation Alliance, Westbank First Nation, Penticton Indian Band, Vernon, Okanagan Indian Band).

6. Finances

As discussed earlier (see Overview of the Business), grants have helped the setup of the store. The marketing budget is currently based on sales, with the hopes that a strong first half of 2021 will improve the bottom line and leave more money for marketing activities. During the fall of 2020, with slow sales, the expenditures had to be reduced.



Figure 12 – Products at the store (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0)

7. Marketing Approaches

Current and Past Marketing Activities

Social Media

Marketing activities are focused on a social media presence on Facebook and Instagram, which are the platforms that Tasha is used to and knows how to manage. SOTL's Facebook page currently has 2100 followers. A new hire in December 2020 was made with the goal to let her handle the social media activities; this was very successful, but the employee moved on for personal reasons in January 2021 and is now employed on an on-call basis, mainly for social media work.

Tasha uses Google reviews and Facebook reviews to get feedback from the customers. She also encourages followers on Facebook and Instagram to like, share, or comment on her posts.

Watch Video Clip 5 – Communication ([Transcript Available](#)) (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0):



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<https://spiritofthelake.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=47>

SOTL has not purchased Google ads but has uploaded pictures to the Google listing. It has worked well for people searching for Native art.

Email

SOTL collects emails from every customer and uses them for occasional email campaigns, like for New Year's or Aboriginal Appreciation Day/Month. As an example, an email "blast" might offer small discounts for returning customers (e.g., spend \$100, and get 10% off) or a prize draw for customers as an incentive to return.

Word of Mouth

Given the positive feedback received from customers, word-of-mouth referrals are an effective marketing tool to spread the word about the store.

Watch Video Clip 6 – Word of Mouth ([Transcript Available](#)) (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0):



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Print

Flyers have also been used in the past. They were small cards with the store's logo on one side and the location and store hours on the back. They were handed out at events or while shopping instead of business cards.

The store considered using newspaper ads in January but decided that they “don't really see people reading the newspaper very much.”

Billboards

When the store opened in 2019, Tasha made a connection with a local billboard advertising group that provided her, as a First Nations entrepreneurial business, free advertising on billboards in West Kelowna and Winfield. The actual effect of those billboards on sales is hard to measure.

Website

SOTL has a [website](#) that Tasha plans to convert into an e-commerce website.

TV



Figure 13 – Contributed. This image may be subject to copyright and doesn't fall under the CC licensing of this OER.

When SOTL was approved in 2020 for a COVID Stimulus Grant program by Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC), Tasha reached out to the local TV station—Global Okanagan—to do a commercial for the Christmas season. At a reasonable price of around \$3,000, the team from the TV station visited the store in October and created the ad, and the staff had fun getting “dolled up” for the shoot!

With an exposure of 1.2 million people from Revelstoke to

Oliver, this commercial had a wide reach and aired eight times a day while it ran. It brought a lot of customers into the store, triggering sales of at least \$1,500 per day. This channel seemed suitable to reach the typical customer, and it specifically increased demand for moccasins; the store's stock of 30 pairs sold in two weeks after the commercial aired, and there is still a waitlist of 50 customers interested in buying from the next delivery.

Watch Video Clip 7 – Commercial ([Transcript Available](#)) (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0):



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Community

SOTL is part of the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) and the Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association (TOTA). The West Kelowna Chamber of Commerce offered membership, but it was unclear whether there was value in it for the store. However, the mayor and representatives of the Westbank First Nation (WFN), as well as BC's Lieutenant Governor Janet Austin, visited the store after it opened and acknowledged Tasha's enterprise.



Figure 14 – Contributed. This image may be subject to copyright and doesn't fall under the CC licensing of this OER.

Watch Video Clip 8 – Exposure ([Transcript Available](#)) (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0):



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The store also sponsored a senior's slow-pitch softball team in 2020, with the store's name and logo appearing on the team's apparel. In addition, SOTL sponsors the West Kelowna Warriors ice hockey team by purchasing a board sign in the arena.

It was actually quite a good deal, so they're going to create my sign, put it up this month, and it's going to run for this season and next season of hockey. So, I get almost 13, 14 months of hockey. I'm a hockey mom, so I miss going to the rink.

The store also marketed their products at events in the Okanagan, such as an outdoor market in Kamloops where

Tasha attended for two Sundays. It helped spread the word about her store and location.



Figure 15 – Products in the store (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0)

Reaching out as a female Indigenous entrepreneur connected Tasha to knowledgeable coaches, such as the owner of the Kekuli Café and the Pattison group. Even before opening, Tasha attended workshops with presentations on Indigenous Women in Business and started networking with mentors and potential partners. The WFN also did a promotional video about her store and hosted it on their YouTube channel. Her dad has supported and encouraged her along the way, while other elders in her community mentored and supported her by distributing marketing materials and allowing her to use the name “Spirit of the Lake.”

Challenges

Marketing challenges include the location that is not visible from any major roads. Tasha also states that she lacks the technological knowledge and skills of marketing offline and online, which is one of the reasons she hasn't done any online advertising. She hopes that her newest employee will teach her how to use technology better for marketing as well as starting e-commerce capabilities on her website.

Marketing Opportunities

As for most small and/or new enterprises, budget restrictions and uncertainty over the return on investment in advertising and marketing cause hesitation to spend money in this area. However, consistent feedback indicates that many potential customers, with an interest in Indigenous gifts and arts, do not even know the store exists, so “putting it on the map” is essential for its future and growth.

Even though the tourism business is at this point a secondary market for SOTL, working with tour companies would open a large customer base. Early on in its existence, SOTL hosted a bus tour of participants from the Cannabis Conference when it happened in Kelowna. Okanagan Wine Tours is located next to the store, and preliminary discussions have occurred about putting the SOTL logo on their vans and making the store a stop on the wine tour.

A business that was interviewed for another one of TRU's Case Studies on Indigenous Business, Moccasin Trails, expressed interest in working with SOTL to include the store in their tours. SOTL was a tour stop when the WFN brought participants of a land developer workshop to the store.

One girl was from PEI, and she bought a scarf. She ended up phoning me back, and she said, “Can you mail me one again? My mom really liked my scarf, and I should have bought two.” So, I ended up mailing it to her, and I was like, “Oh. You’re my first mail sale.”



Figure 16 – Products in the store (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0)

SOTL is close to other attractions, not far off Highway 97, and has a large parking area that is suitable for buses and RVs. The store is wheelchair accessible, and modifications to the outside area could make it even more appropriate for stop overs and tourists.

Tasha has considered creating a brochure but hesitated due to the costs involved, both in terms of hiring help to create it and to publish/distribute it. The effectiveness would have to be established before such expenses are authorized. The local tourism association offered a listing on the foldable tourist map

for about \$450, but it is unclear whether the demographic that uses paper maps over online information would be suitable for the store.

Early on, Tasha did prepare a letter announcing her store and sent it to wineries in West Kelowna. She was offered space to place brochures but wants to avoid using a lot of paper for environmental reasons.

Online ads and a repeat of the TV commercial have been considered. Expanding the involvement in industry organizations could also be beneficial and could include the Kelowna Chamber of Commerce. Other ideas that Tasha had are events to meet the artist, showcasing local artists (e.g., wood carvers, metalsmiths, etc.) and facilitating connections with customers.

Joining outdoor markets in Kelowna, as long as the rules and regulations about the origin of products sold allows, is another option. The Downtown Association of Kelowna could be approached to host a table at one of their outdoor events.

**Just maybe going across the bridge a little bit more
and, you know, showcasing who I am, who my store is,
my brand.**

In addition to these opportunities, workshops for drum or rattle making, or potentially moccasin making, could also be offered as an experience at the store.

Tasha has grown confident through the experience of opening her own business. She is a role model for other female, Indigenous entrepreneurs locally and nationally. Having the support of her family and community is essential, and Tasha is committed and true to her Indigenous heritage and the authentic focus of her boutique.

**If I look at myself now, and I look at myself today [...]
Wow, like at the growth, and the confidence is there.**

Watch Video Clip 9 – Transformation ([Transcript Available](#))
(CC BY-NC-ND 4.0):



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version of the text. You can watch it online here:*

<https://spiritofthelake.pressbooks.tru.ca/?p=47>

8. Resources and Credits

Resources

Information included in this case study was collected via email and during a personal interview with Spirit of the Lake Native Boutique's owner, Tasha Mae Swite. All quotations listed in this case study are from the video interview with Tasha Mae Swite on February 4, 2021.

Credits

Tasha Mae Swite, Owner, Spirit of the Lake Native Boutique

Biggi Weischedel, PhD, Open Learning Faculty Member

Marie Bartlett, MA, Instructional Designer, Learning Design and Innovations

Justin Frudd, MA, Editor, Curriculum Services

Nicole Singular, BEd, Graphic Designer, Curriculum Development

Jonathon Fulton, BFA, Video Producer, Learning Technology and Innovations Group

Stephanie Gountas, BCS, Curriculum Multimedia Developer