



Conversations w/Tino

Guest	Francis Sijohn
	CEO
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Airdate	Thursday, March 14, 2019
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Tino Magnatta: Welcome to another episode of GT Radio. This is Tino Magnatta. We're gonna have an amazing guest on our show this evening, Francis SiJohn, the CEO of Coeur d'Alene. You're known as Frenchie, right?

Francis SiJohn: Yes, Tito. How you doing this evening?

Tino Magnatta: Good, good, good. Thanks for coming on the show. We were talking a little bit about your name and how that came about. I heard that it was your grandfather, right?

Francis SiJohn: Yeah, yeah. My grandfather gave me that nickname. My real name's Francis. I was named after him, but we have a lot of Francis's so all the cool names like Frank and whatever other nicknames go with Francis but I ended up with Francois and Frenchie.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah.

Francis SiJohn: Can't you see I think Frenchie's tough.

Tino Magnatta: Frenchie sounds a little bit better than Francois.

Francis SiJohn: Yeah. Right?

Tino Magnatta: That would be a tough one.

Francis SiJohn: Yeah exactly. I'm not even French!

Tino Magnatta: Oh, man. By the way, we were just talking and then we were talking with Laura too, you guys have just completed an entertainment center and a whole thing there. It looks absolutely fantastic. Congratulations on all that.

Francis SiJohn: Yeah. Thanks.

Tino Magnatta: It's a really exciting times for you guys, right?

Francis SiJohn: Yes. Yes it was. Thank you very much. It was my second year here being the CEO. I've worked here at the casino for roughly almost going on 11 years and 30 years altogether with the Coeur d'Alene Tribe. One of the things with this remodel and when your heart of the operation is the gaming floor, it was a tough decision. We have a real good executive team here, we weighed all the pros and cons, and once we decided to pull the trigger and still be able to remodel the gaming floor and flipping the floor and moving the machines around, we actually did really good. We still [inaudible 00:02:05] profit, and we made some money while we were doing it which was great.

Tino Magnatta: Congratulations and congratulations to you, I know you have a great team up there. I know it takes hard work and dedication to these projects are pretty big and massive. Hats off to you guys.

Francis SiJohn: Thank you very much. We have a great team up here. Good people.

Tino Magnatta: Yup. Yup. Tell me a little bit about where you were born, your family, what you did growing up. Tell me a little bit about that.

Francis SiJohn: Actually, I was born in Tacoma, Washington back in 1967. My dad was just coming out of the Vietnam War and he was stationed at Fort Lewis. He finished his last part of his tour there and I was born in '67 and he was honorably discharged from the military, from the Army. He was a specialist and he went into being a police officer, first Native American police officer in the Tacoma Police Department. He was a patrol officer.

Tino Magnatta: Wow.

Francis SiJohn: Yeah. That was back in the 60s right?

Tino Magnatta: Yeah.

Francis SiJohn: He was a patrol officer and he ended up being from a patrol officer he was a narcotics detective, homicide detective, and then ended up working on-

Tino Magnatta: Wow.

Francis SiJohn: He moved right up the ranks. He's a very disciplined person, very structured. He did that until 1974 I think is when we moved to the Spokane Indian Reservation. My sister and I, we moved from Hilltop in Tacoma there up into the Spokane Indian Reservation where my grandmother was a Spokane enrolled tribal member, my grandfather's Coeur d'Alene so we lived up in Wellpinit at their cattle ranch. Going from an urban setting to a reservation setting to a cattle operation to a ranch, we had almost 300 head of cattle and about 40 head of horses that were on our ranch.

Tino Magnatta: Wow.

Francis SiJohn: It was really good. My young life, up in Wellpinit on the Spokane Indian Reservation, a lot of family up there. In between there, I would travel to the Coeur D'Alene Reservation with my grandfather who had family over here. We would come over for powwows and traditional event ceremonies, and also come over just to stay with my aunts and my uncles and then spend some of the summer over here working for my grandpa's farm or his renter that was farming his land. Had two very good homes. Being up here in the Pacific Northwest, there's no other place like being on the Coeur d'Alene Reservation in summertime as well as the Spokane Reservation. The winters are pretty hard

here, but the landscape is beautiful and had some really good people around me.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah. You st rattled two reses right? And I know your grandfather was in the ranching business and I know there was also a lot of timber and logging and stuff right?

Francis SiJohn: Yeah. Up on the Spokane Reservation there were mostly-

Tino Magnatta: Mining.

Francis SiJohn: Mining, yeah they have the Dawn Mining up there, they had timber, agricultural resource, ranching, cattle ranching. Tribes back in that time, I don't know if you remember the Indian man power and the economic development sustainability and some of the Nixon Administration was going on. A lot of federal dollars were getting siphoned over to tribes for economic development, economic sustainability. I came about during that era so I got to see a lot of good development going on up there.

Tino Magnatta: Now, was this before gaming? When you grew up?

Francis SiJohn: Yeah. This was actually before gaming. When I grew up here, even on the Coeur d'Alene Reservation, I actually graduated in high school over here almost a year after Laura did.

Laura: Hey.

Francis SiJohn: Growing up over here, it was always tough. Just like any other reservation, the jobs were seasonal, here on the Coeur D'Alene Reservation was all timber and agricultural jobs, seasonal jobs, firefighting jobs. Jobs were pretty scarce so you had to get in the loop early. Growing up as a young person, it was pretty tough to get any summer youth employment whether you pull green chain or clean up at the mill or work for a farm producer picking up rocks and sticks in the field or driving a wheat truck. It was pretty limited. There was a high per capita of people on the reservation and very limited jobs.

When the Coeur D'Alene Tribe decided to go into the gaming business, that was something that started out as a bingo hall and I think, of course you know how gaming contracts are with the state of Idaho, I think they thought we were just supposed to be a bingo hall. We grew into a mass destination resort that we are today. We've been in business this month for 26 years.

Tino Magnatta: It's amazing.

Francis SiJohn: Yeah, thanks. We've had a lot of great leadership during that time and long vision and Laura and I are part of the executive team on the leadership here at the Coeur d'Alene Casino as well as some other tribal members. Our past

leaders that have been here have really been able to get us to sustainable economy, sustainable business with a strong foundation to build from. We're trying to figure out right now where we're going to go for the next 26 years from here. It's really been a very fortunate, [crosstalk 00:07:54]. We're very lucky.

Tino Magnatta: That's fantastic.

Francis SiJohn: I was just thinking about some of the tribal members here and some of the tribal people and it's really, really humbling and it's very good experience to come into work every day. You ask about yourself, and I do this often with myself, assessing myself and where I'm at, where I've been in my life, where I'm at, and where I'm going to be going. It's really, really satisfying to come to work to see the success is really on the face of our people and our employees here, our young employees, tribal employees, and the success on the face of our children, grandchildren to be able to have something here for the next 26 years. Very satisfying job running a business of this sort, being in gaming. You've got your good days and your bad days. You can only get those Atta boys once in a while, but you got to keep moving. You gotta change with the business and you gotta keep moving.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah. It all starts with leadership and you guys have had amazing chairman, Stensgar, Laura, your father who was extraordinary. In all my travels in Native nations, I've only met a couple of tribal leaders who have had that kind of tenure. Stan Jones from the Toledo Tribe being another one who was in tribal politics and chairman for over 40 years. Talk to me a little bit about Chairman Stensgar and his mentorship and influence.

Francis SiJohn: He was a very big influence in my life. When I first came back here to the Coeur d'Alene Reservation and I had my three years in down at [inaudible 00:09:53] Kansas at college, came back and was able to see his leadership in action. He held that seat as a chairman and as a counsel person for almost 30, how many years is it now Laura?

Laura: About 30, yeah.

Francis SiJohn: For 30 years.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah.

Francis SiJohn: He's a former marine, he's a combat veteran, Purple Heart recipient, and he has some great leadership skills. Being able as a young person myself to look up to a man like that, to be able to watch his transitional leadership and how he's a real diplomatic and he's a really representative of the Coeur d'Alene Tribe. Seeing him in action was really amazing to me and I used him as an example. When I was able to get into tribal politics and I really was able to follow him and learn from him as a mentor and show you the ropes. As you know, in tribal politics or anybody who's been in that arena or has thrown their hat in or has been a tribal

leader, it doesn't come with a book. It doesn't come with a book, you have to really-

Tino Magnatta: Yeah.

Francis SiJohn: You really have to be on your toes and you really got to be a transitional leader, but one that that Ernie has always told me as a young tribal leader, as a tribal member, if you make all your decisions what's best for the tribe and take all the personalities out of it, make all your decisions on what's best for the tribe and throughout the year, he says you'll never go wrong. You can always walk away and walk with clean hands and that matter. That's what I've always done. I'm very fortunate to be a part of. He was a chairman, I was a young counsel man, came up and learned a lot from him.

Tino Magnatta: Can you tell me a little bit about what the key elements that you learned from him to be in a leadership position and also what example he showed the rest of the tribe? What were some of the three or four things that you think are at the core of those values?

Francis SiJohn: I think, he would never waver away. How do I say it? He wouldn't compromise or make concessions based on his values as a Coeur d'Alene Indian man or Coeur d'Alene Indian. Whatever decision it was, he would never compromise his traditions, his cultures, his upbringings. To see that, if we were going up against the state or the federal government, he always held the line and he'd never waver from it, he never would bend. When it came to the sovereignty of the tribe, and the true sovereignty, he always held that line. I think that was one of his core values that I really admired in seeing that with my leadership with Ernie.

Tino Magnatta: Some of the things that you told me about Chairman was that he kept us together, it was okay to disagree, at the end of the day we're still family, and great leaders always stay calm.

Francis SiJohn: Yeah. That's the truth. He hasn't changed from that. One of the things that he would keep everybody, you could have all your different opinions and that's what tribal counsel is about. Have your different opinions, agree to disagree, and again, at the end of the day, be able to shake hands, give each other a hug and still move forward as a tribe. He really understood tribal leadership. What true tribal leadership was. Tribal politics, then there's politics, then theirs tribal leadership. I've always seen him in his best as a tribal leader. He was more of a tribal leader than a tribal politician.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah.

Francis SiJohn: I really admire that. In this day and age, I feel very fortunate. I studied leadership all the time in school and the guys that really stayed to the line, stayed true to themselves, stayed true to their culture, stayed true to their

traditions, and stayed true to their people are the ones that last a long time in this game. In this lifetime, that's their legacy that they leave behind.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah. You almost got to be able to remove yourself from the noise and make the right decisions. I think that's the key and we're seeing more of that in tribal politics than we did 10, 15 years ago.

Francis SiJohn: You're absolutely correct. That's why I feel very fortunate to have been around leaders like Chairman Stensgar, Henry SiJohn, Laurence Serepa. Those guys were two to three generations, four generations away from the hunters and gatherers and they still had that they still came up when the tribe didn't have gaming, but they still held true to their convictions as Coeur d'Alene men, Coeur d'Alene warriors, and true to their culture and their people. I feel very fortunate to be a part of that and been able to see that and witness that with my own eyes. I still try to keep myself balanced that way to be able to walk in two worlds, in the business world of gaming as well as the traditional tribal world of being a Coeur d'Alene tribal member. You've got to be able to balance in those two worlds. I'm very fortunate to have great leaders around me at that time.

Tino Magnatta: Now you were on the counsel, but then you went back to school right?

Francis SiJohn: Yeah. I was on counsel, I was a Vice Chairman and I always thought I was getting into my either late 20s early 30s, and I thought "I need to go get an education." It's always good to have enthusiasm, be motivated to be a leader, but you still need in this day and age I could see that with all my trips back to Washington D.C. and Congress and talking to different congress people, congressmen, you have to have those academic credentials in that type of world and that type of setting.

I really took it upon myself to really bite the bullet and go to school full time while I was still a Vice Chairman. It was tough. I was a single dad, I was in a master's program at Eastern Washington University and I wanted to get done with it so I was carrying 25 credit hours. A single dad, a Vice Chairman, and playing director for the tribe, but it's one of those things that if you really set your mind to it and you're really hungry and a starving man is going to be able to survive and if you're motivated enough, you'll get it done which I did. It took me two years to get it done and I ended up with my masters.

It's really opened up a lot of doors for me. I've worked for the federal government for the Department for Energy for a little bit. After I left tribal counsel I worked at the Hanford Nuclear Reservation in cleanup and I was on the executive team with the site manager as well as some of the tribal liaisons for the Yakama Nation, Umatilla Nation, Nez Perce Tribe and the Wanapum People that had treaty rights right there on the site. It opened so many doors for me. I'm very fortunate to have done that and being able to do that with gaming dollars that was able to get me a scholarship to go back to school to get that done. I was in a time of an era I was very lucky.

Tino Magnatta: Now, education is so important. I really respect that you were in a position of power but then went and got your education. Can you explain to our audience a little bit about what the education did for you that changed you and make you better than what you were as a leader?

Francis SiJohn: Education, any time you really dedicate yourself and you really go after education, what it really did for me was really opened up my mind to the different things that go happen in this world and different personalities. It really helped me with transitional leadership, how to deal with different people in one sitting and be able to snap a finger and be able to transition into another. It really taught me and it buckled me down about being disciplined and about getting the work done. You want good things to come to you, you really have to work hard for it. I think those work ethics in my job, work ethics if it's education, or even the work ethics of being a good father if you have those things available to you, you got to take those opportunities and run with them and make the best you can out of it. Like I said, a lot of these things that we do in the tribal world, doesn't come with an owners manual. You have to be on top of your game.

Tino Magnatta: Street smart.

Francis SiJohn: Right. Right.

Tino Magnatta: You got to know the street and you got to know the academic and you had both, right?

Francis SiJohn: That's right. I was very lucky. I was very lucky to know that to be able to grow up in a urban neighborhood as a young person and transition into a ranch, transition to a reservation lifestyle then coming back out. You got to have an arsenal. You've got to have a lot of arrows in your quiver to be able to survive in this world. I was very fortunate enough to be able to go after and see it and take opportunities and use it.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah. You bring up an interesting point, Frenchie. My father taught me to be a chameleon so you should be able to have a conversation with a homeless person and the President of the United States. I think that's really the quality that a great leader has, right? That's where you straddle all of those stratas and social different in your leadership correct?

Francis SiJohn: Oh yeah. Exactly. Again, all of our experiences of life, we're young people up until today, and I'm still learning. I'm 52 years old and I learn every day. I learn from my staff, I learn from my colleagues, I've learned from my elders every day. You never stop learning until the last day you're on this earth. We're very fortunate. You got to be able to recognize those opportunities and be able to capture those.

Tino Magnatta: How did you transition from board council member to CEO? How did that occur?

Francis SiJohn: Well, when I was on the first gaming board, I was on the game board and I was also tribal counsel member, all those experiences that I have had working here for the Coeur d'Alene Tribe for 30 years, from working for Land Services, working in administration, working with the farmers and planning director, all of those things, like I said again, those are just other arrows of my quiver that I've been able to put in there and use. I've had so many great opportunities working for the tribe, working for the federal government, and then coming here with the casino, you're dealing with the general public every day. We're also dealing with tribal members. What a great job to have to come in here and make a difference. People come out here to game and have entertainment and spend some money, have a good meal, watch a concert, or just come in to socialize with other people. What a great job to come in here and put smiles on people's faces and try to make their day better. This is the best job I've had in probably 30 years other than being on a tribal counsel.

Tino Magnatta: What are the kind of things that are important skills to keep you on track? How do you maintain your level of expertise and leadership for long periods of time? You can fall off the wagon, so to speak, in terms of your goals and the things that you know. How do you keep on track?

Francis SiJohn: Over the 30 years, I've learned so much about managing people. I look back again, what I talked about earlier about assessing yourself. Where you've been, where you're at, and where you're going to go. One of the things, the best advice if I could give even some young tribe members coming up in the administration or the gaming, whatever career you're in, you've got to be able to communicate. You've got to be able to communicate effectively and efficiently. Communication is a big one. The other one is having people around you, building yourself a team around you that you can trust. If you can communicate and you can trust and you can keep people motivated, I believe that's the secret ingredient to get proposals forward, or whatever, have a common goal and interest. All those things.

It's like making a pot of stew. You've got to have the right meat, the right potatoes, the right carrots, the right onions. That's what it is. At the end of the day when you sit down and you have some of that stew, it's the best tasting stew, but if you have a great team around you that has a very specific skill set or maybe they have multiple skill sets, those kind of people are really good assets on your team. I've dealt with people that have been assets on my team and also become liabilities. Then you have to deal with that. Then you have to deal with the fall out from that. Again, that's all transitional leadership. You being a leader of an organization, you have to be three or four ridges ahead of everybody in planning in regards to what's happening with your business and then come back get [inaudible 00:23:53] to where the best hunting's at or where the best buffalo are at or maybe where the best huckleberries or best [inaudible 00:24:01]

Tino Magnatta: Yeah.

Francis SiJohn: We got to [inaudible 00:24:04] front of everybody to make sure that we survive these next generations. The same concepts and methods that our ancestors are three or four generations away from hunters and gatherers is the same thing. It's all about survival. It's always about survival.

Tino Magnatta: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Francis SiJohn: So we go back, we go through life, we get our life experiences, we go get our education, we were able to deal in a non tribal world and the gaming world and the tribal world. Those are all good assets for us to have. Again, we're three or four ridges over and we're sending our best guys, our best hunters out there to find new spots. The same concepts and methods of survival from back in the time before [inaudible 00:24:46] is the same in our business sets here at the Coeur d'Alene Casino. As Coeur d'Alene tribal members, myself and Laura, a lot of our executive team members who have gotten their education and came back, we embrace that and we all get together and we put everything up on the board and we use our concepts and methods that we learned in school for education. Whether it's business, whether it's marketing, whether it's law and get everything done. Then we move on. When you get people around you that know what they're doing, it makes it very easy transition to make your goals and make your milestones.

Tino Magnatta: That's fantastic.

Francis SiJohn: To me in that sense, things haven't really changed. We're still the Coeur d'Alene Tribe and we're still Coeur d'Alene Tribal People. We have our culture, our traditions, and our ceremonial values. Then on the other side, we have our business degrees, we have our law degrees, we have our marketing degrees.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah.

Francis SiJohn: Get that sustainability and we're trying to do what's right for the tribe for the next 26 years from here on so we can have another 26 years so my children, my grandchildren, Laura's children, her grandchildren have something to come back to and something to work for. That's our responsibility. Again, at the end of the day, in the business world it's what you put at the bottom line. That's how you measure your success. With myself, and I'm sure Laura's the same way, is we measure our success by the faces of our children and our grandchildren that they have sustainability, they have education, they have housing, they have jobs to come to. That's where you really measure the success. That's how I feel in my own heart.

Tino Magnatta: Great way and in our culture and my heritage, I'm Italian so it's basically exactly what you said. Tell me a little bit about where the business is now and where we're going.

Francis SiJohn: Well, we're actually working on a master plan. We just finished the remodel. We're pretty much in a gaming corridor right now. For the last 26 years we've had the Kalipsel Tribe who's just to the west of us on the plains, probably about 45, 50 miles away. The Spokane Tribe is next to their casino on the Airway Heights up there. To the north of us we have the Kootenai Tribe that's just north of Coeur d'Alene here in Idaho, they have a casino. To the south of us is the Nez Perce Tribe down in the Clearwater, down around Lewiston-Clarkston area. We are in a competitive market, and we all respect each other's tribes and what we do, but when it comes to business we're in a competitive market. There's some places where we can still share our resources and really strengthen ourselves, but when it comes to our gaming, you can see it's a very competitive market. Tribes, whether you're playing basketball, softball, or stick game, you're always competitive.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah.

Francis SiJohn: We're the same way with business. What we're going to do, what we're doing is we're located right on our homelands and we're located next to Coeur d'Alene Lake. We have a beautiful lake, we have beautiful mountains, beautiful hiking, we're right in the middle of a big tourist area. What we're doing now is we're developing a five to 10 year master plan at the direction of Chairman Stensgar. When I came into this job, the first day he pulled me aside and he was "We need to have a master plan. We need to know where we're going to go for the next five or 10 years." He goes, "When I'm not here and you're not here, Laura's not here, or some other tribes like Margret, tribe members aren't here. The next generation will have a road map to the success. We have the dollars now, let's get it done and let's get this road map to where it's going to take us five, 10, 15 years."

That's what we've been working on. It's been very good experience. We've been having retreats with our executive team, we're going to have a retreat with the tribal counsel to bring them up to speed what we're doing, but we're going to be doing some great things. We've been putting together a master plan for this property and some other properties that we have. Once we unveil that to the tribal counsel and get their blessing on it, we're going to be going 100 miles an hour. We have to stay competitive in this market. In gaming, if you just stay status quo, you're going to get passed up. It doesn't take long to get five or 10 years behind your competitor. We want to be there with them, we want to be there to share that market, but we're going to recapture our market share. I guarantee you that.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah. Some really, really great concepts. Should we take some calls? We've got a lot of people waiting here.

Francis SiJohn: Sure. Let's do it.

Tino Magnatta: Great conversation.

Francis SiJohn: Thanks, Tino.

Tino Magnatta: This is Tino Magnatta, do you have a question or questions for Frenchie?

Phil: Yeah. Hi.

Tino Magnatta: How are you doing?

Phil: Real good, real good. My name is Phil Tyler.

Francis SiJohn: Hey Phil, how you doing?

Phil: Excellent. I'm calling from Spokane. I just wanted to add my commentary for Frenchie or should I say CEO, Mr. Saigon. As a leader, I've known Frenchie for some time now. I've coached his son in youth football for years and I knew Frenchie when he was in charge of guest services at the casino.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah. Unbelievable.

Phil: I've coached and worked from executives from Seattle to Chicago. One of the things that I've seen in Frenchie that's made him so successful since his election in 2016, is that he has commitment and passion. Not only for his people, and what I mean by people is tribe, but his employees and their success not simply here. He's a great communicator. Frenchie's able to listen and this skill is not one that all leaders possess. He has a unique skill to share stories, his experiences, and authentic and [inaudible 00:31:09] fashion, thus making him easy to connect with. His communication style I would list is as relational not transactional.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah. That's a very important thing.

Phil: Huge for leadership. That's where he inspires others whether to be better or just give a little more. His own trajectory to the top in effect has been inspiration for others like myself. Seeing a person of color succeed truly inspires others to do those things. The things that he does on every day basis during every interaction inspires others who witness it. I'll end with this, his respect. He respects others and he has self respect. He knows we are not perfect nor is he and nor does he expect perfection or let a singular mistake or misstep define a person. He treats us with dignity and he treats his family, his employees out there with dignity, thus earning the respect of them. That's what a humble leader does. That's a rare quality in a lot of chief lead executives today.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah. That's amazing. Thank you.

Phil: You're very welcome.

Tino Magnatta: Thank you, Phil.

Francis SiJohn: Thank you, Phil.

Phil: Just speaking the truth, brother. I would ask though, Frenchie. What's been your proudest moment since you were appointed to CEO?

Francis SiJohn: Well, that's a good question, Phil. Thank you for tuning in and listening. I appreciate those good words that say and what you put out there. I really appreciate you very much, Phil. Thank you for those kind words.

I guess my best moment was probably taking on this remodel job, taking on this remodel project just because number one it's the heart of the operation. We've never had any kind of remodel or any construction going on during our gaming hours. We're a 24 hour operation and we don't close our doors. We are open 24/7 365. It was very nerveracking to be able to have to shut part of the gaming floor down and move machines and set them up somewhere else and make sure that we're still making the profits.

It was so nerveracking because this is the main revenue stream into the tribe, and if I have one slip up or have one bad day, or we can't get the machines up and running, that means no revenue for the tribe. They all bought in after I made the presentation to them for almost over six to eight months. The executive team bought into it, the employees bought into it, and I went to them and said "Do you think we are ready to make this move? I'm not ready to make this move until you guys are." When they gave me confirmation on that, I said "We're either all in or we're all out." Everybody was like "We're all in." We did that and how we had custodial, we had executives, we had everybody help moving these machines. It was like you'd imagine an ant pile of ants just working and moving machines. We had people from different departments that would work eight hours here, get off and come in and help moving a lot of these machines. It was very stressful, very stressful, but they all came together.

We all came together for the common good of the casino. We had our video gaming manager, Oscar Flores, we had facility director, Rod Black, and outside an owner's rep by the name of Ray Brown who was from the Vegas area who does this for a living and has flipped floors at MGM, staging casinos down in Las Vegas. I got networked in with him and without him and the great team that we had here that everybody was on the floor, it wouldn't have never happened. I would say that was my best moment here and probably being CEO being in this capacity, that was the one that just stands out so much for me.

Phil: Wow. I appreciate that and I'll let you guys go. Both of you know, coaching starts from the top. Keep soaring, Frenchie. Keep soaring.

Francis SiJohn: I appreciate that, Phil. Thank you for calling in.

Phil: Yes, brother.

Tino Magnatta: Thanks, Phil. Appreciate it.

Phil: Yes sir.

Tino Magnatta: Great question. Best team wins, right Frenchie. Best team wins. About teamwork.

Francis SiJohn: One of the things we always said of teamwork is we're either going to succeed together, or we're going to fail together. I told them I'm not going to let them fail. We're going to pull out every resource available. What a great moment.

Tino Magnatta: Fantastic story. Hello. I have Frenchie on the line. It's Tino. Do you have a question for him?

Hadee: I have three and this is Hadee from Temecula, Southern California. How are you gentleman this evening?

Francis SiJohn: Good, how are you doing?

Hadee: I am fabulous. If you have to see my notepad, I have never ever made so many notes. Frenchie, you've kept my attention. A great story, thank you so much.

Francis SiJohn: You're welcome. Thank you.

Hadee: So I have three quick questions for you. The first one is I read an article where they said there were many tribal members that applied for the next CEO position. They chose you in particular. Why do you think you were the choice?

Francis SiJohn: Well, I'm not sure. I went up against some really good applicants. I couldn't really tell you. I don't know if it was just maybe part of the presentation that I had, but we had some very good qualified other applicants that were in there that are actually here working at the casino, which are real gems and really great employees. I couldn't really tell you for sure why. I've taken on the job, I take my job very serious, and I want to work hard for my tribe because I have a vested interest here not only because it's my job. I have a vested interest here because these are my people, this is my tribe, this is my homeland.

Hadee: Sure.

Francis SiJohn: I have every reason to succeed. Like I said, I don't take my job lightly, I take it very serious and there's a lot riding on it.

Hadee: I love the fact that you came from the guest service area of the casino. Saying that, with your expansion that you've done, the brand new entertainment area, et cetera, particularly where you are because you said it's so competitive, you know your guests are going to go back and they're not going to say "Oh, gosh. Coeur d'Alene has got such beautiful chandeliers and carpets and the new

service bar that you have, but the employees were terrible but we're going to go back again because of the carpet and the chandelier." You know that's never going to happen, right? How do you ensure your teams provide the best guest service and best service that will match the level of the resort that you've put together now?

Francis SiJohn: Well, what we've done here at the Coeur d'Alene Casino is you could have the best chandeliers, best carpet and everything, but if you don't have guest service or customer service or respect for your guests that are coming through the door, that's been some of our philosophy is that we really have a real tribal hospitality.

Hadee: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Francis SiJohn: You're not coming into our casino, you're coming into our home. You're coming into our home. If I was to come into your home or you would come in my home, I would make you come in, sit you down, make you feel comfortable, ask would you like a beverage, just treat you like you're at home. That kind of philosophy has been ingrained here for 26 years is like that unspoken truth.

Hadee: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Francis SiJohn: People here that had worked here, that's our tribal hospitality.

Hadee: I love that.

Francis SiJohn: They never have you come in here, ignore you, treat you with disrespect, and then say "Oh yeah, here's the video gaming device. Here spend your money and by the way come back." It's not that philosophy.

Hadee: Do you have a high percentage of tribal members working at the casino?

Francis SiJohn: Yeah. In fact, I was just meeting with our HR director and we were going over the numbers. We have close to 850 employees working for us full time right now. Probably about 30 percent of those are tribal members. Every tribal member that's able to work and wants to region all the way from Silver Valley down to Clarkston up into Elk River Idaho that drive two or three hours just to come here because this is a corporation. It is a casino, but we're more like a family. Even with our non tribal members, you're part of this social capital here at the casino so you're treated fairly and we have great benefits.

I believe that's what keeps everybody coming back is that it is like one big family. People have retired here. We have some employees 18, 19 years. We got people here that had been here three weeks and they come in and would come back, we check on them. "How do you feel? How do you think about things? You've been here about a month." They're like "Wow, I've never worked

at a place like this. I never knew it was like that. I feel like I'm family. Everybody knows me."

Hadee: I love it. I love it.

Francis SiJohn: That makes a big difference.

Hadee: A unique competitive advantage. Thank you so much, Frenchie. I really enjoyed and I hope to see you at NIGA as well as you, Tino.

Francis SiJohn: Absolutely.

Tino Magnatta: Definitely.

Francis SiJohn: Thank you for calling in.

Tino Magnatta: Thank you.

Hadee: Thank you gentlemen.

Tino Magnatta: Thank you Hadee. Okay, bye-bye.

Hadee: Bye.

Tino Magnatta: Great questions and great answers.

Francis SiJohn: Great questions, yeah. Thank you.

Tino Magnatta: Yup. This is Tino Magnatta, I have Frenchie on the line. Do you have a question for him?

Rob: Hi, Tino. Hi, Francis. This is Rob Watson. Frances, my dad worked down with you down at Hanford. I'm sure you're probably glowing too.

Francis SiJohn: Oh, yeah?

Rob: Yeah. Congrats on your expansion and becoming a bigger destination resort in the area here. Do you feel your property will be able to attract players from a further market away? Have they expanded your marketing potential? I'm just curious on what you guys' plan is to expand out and try to attract more players.

Francis SiJohn: That's a good question, Rob. Thanks for calling in. That's one of the things as a business, and I mentioned this before, is if we stay status quo and we're in the gaming market and you draw a circle around our market, we have three or four other tribal casinos that are trying to get after the same customer. We saturate that market. What we've been doing this last couple of years with Laura and I coming up with a marketing strategic where we're action into northern Oregon,

Eastern Oregon, as well as into Montana and Southern Idaho and we're also looking at in the Seattle area. We got to get out there and get different gamers, but we're also doing a very big push on the international tourism, culture tourism here at the Coeur d'Alene Casino. We've been meeting with groups from Europe, Italy, France, Mexico. We got a lot of international groups that are booking hotel rooms here, we're sharing our culture but in a respectful way and also giving them opportunity to make tourism recreation and things of that sort.

I think that customers, we're doing all kinds of fantastic things. We're thinking out of the box because we're going to have to. Again, we got three or four gaming operations within our circle now so it's tough to keep going after the same customers so we gotta look outside that box.

Rob: Destination resort, you guys have that beautiful area up there. Wish you guys luck.

Francis SiJohn: Thank you, Rob.

Tino Magnatta: Thank you so much, Rob.

Francis SiJohn: Much appreciated. Look forward to seeing you down there sometime.

Rob: You bet.

Francis SiJohn: Thank you. Great stuff. Yeah. There's some good questions.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah, this is Tino Magnatta. I have Frenchie on the line. Do you have a question for him?

Speaker 7: Hello. Is that you, Tino?

Tino Magnatta: Yeah. That's me. We're talking to each other. If you can, hold on one sec, let me try to get. I think that person just fell out. If you're listening, call back, and we'll get you when you come back. We're going to go to another caller. You just dropped the line. Let me get another caller on. Hello, this is Tino Magnatta. Do you have a question for Frenchie?

Michael: Aloha! It's Michael Caahanoi, how are you guys today?

Tino Magnatta: Good, Micheal. How are you?

Francis SiJohn: Good.

Michael: Good, good. Great show so far, Frenchie. I think you've been doing just a fantastic show today. I love the core value that you're bringing.

Francis SiJohn: Thank you.

Michael: One of the questions that I always liked. I've been talking for about seven generations, three behind and the three in front of him. It sounds like your planning really involves that. How do you incorporate developing tribal members to be the next leaders?

Francis SiJohn: Well, you know. What we do here at the Cord Delaine Casino, I'll give you a quick example, is that I'm trying to [inaudible 00:45:09] hospitality business, food and beverage business, and maybe even into some marketing. It's really ironic you ask this question because we've had a young tribal member and we continually tell our young people and myself and Laura and the rest of the executive tribal members that have been here, our old people, our tribal leaders have always told us you have to go get your education. You're going to have to leave home and you're going to have to go get your education, but you always can come back and help your people out. We had this one young individual, this young tribal member, who grew up here and he went on to college and became a really good athlete, football star down in Southern Idaho. He just contacted me probably about two or three weeks ago and graduated with his bachelors in marketing. The timing couldn't have been more perfect. Laura and I was talking about how do we promote young tribal members, how do we make it attractive for them to come back here to work aside all the tribal politics and what not.

This young individual came in and Laura had a great idea. Where do we put this guy to work? Where can we put him to work? What she came up with was a plan to be able to, we contract with a marketing firm out in Spokane, is that he would spend half of his time at a marketing firm. He has his concepts and methods, a very smart on a marketing up in the Spokane area. He can work on gaming marketing or he can work on whatever else that firm is doing and then two days out of the week he comes down here and he works in our marketing department here. That being said, the timing again was an opportunity for this young man. He took it so we have a career path for him. Let's see if that really put his concepts and methods to work, he's got a marketing degree, he's going to be a great asset for the tribe. We want to encourage more tribal members to do that.

Like I said, with WSU the tribe has an agreement with them for higher education, University of Idaho, they're both just south of us. Eastern Washington University is 30 minute drive. Laura and I are both alumni there, graduate from there, she's a graduate from UI Business College. We have these opportunities and we have to grow within ourself. We have to be able to get our social capital, our young people, our younger generation and get them interested in looking at this type of business.

It's not just a casino, it's an economic engine for this region so it becomes even more. We want to encourage that, we want to be able to hire summer youth. Laura's putting together a program where we can hire some summer youth that are 14, 15 years old that are in high school. They need a summer job, come in and work in the marketing, work in the food and beverage industry, work in administration, work in HR, and just open up their minds and create those

opportunities. Those opportunities that when we were growing up, those opportunities were very limited, but they were there. Now we've got more opportunities and we're doing good business, so why not create something like that for them.

Those are the success stories. Those decisions that we make now, we might not see the benefit of that, but the generation five to ten years when we're gone and out of here, they're going to see the fruits of our labor here. It's evolving thing. It never shuts down.

Michael: That's fantastic.

Tino Magnatta: Thanks.

Michael: All good points. It's great that you kind of have the opportunity to recognize tribal members and get them moving forward. As a leader, I think we've all through our years developed some core things that we focus all of our energies around. Sometimes those come up as pet peeves, things that you see that just bug you just a little bit. What are your pet peeves when you go to work every day that you look for to make sure they don't happen?

Francis SiJohn: One of my pet peeves is when I come in onto property, I come in different entrances and exits to the casino all the time. I want to make sure that when I come here on a daily basis I go through the back of the house, or I'll maybe go through the front of the house, or I'll come in the side door, but I just don't generally come up to the back door of the executive office, come into my office and shut the door.

I want to come here during the day, my day starts about 5:30 in the morning when I read the security reports, manager on duty reports from the graveyard shift, I'm looking at the BGS reports to see what the percentage of the gaming floor is. I have to get up all of those reports before I get here to work. Then when I get here to work, I'm down, I'm talking with the guys that are on the floor, troops that are on the ground. That's where we're going to get the real flavor, the real truth of the day. See what's happening, what we can do better, listen to our employees. I may come through the hotel and I'll talk to some of the house keepers and see how things are going.

That's been my own pet peeve or my strategies. I take about two hours, sometimes it takes me, depending on how busy we are, sometimes it takes me three hours to get up to my office. That's actually good time for me to really see what's happening on the floor whether I'm talking to a custodial guy or HVAC engineer, or maybe I'm just talking to a gaming supervisor on the floor, better yet I get to stop and talk to some of the customers and sit down and have a cup of coffee, new customers I don't know or they might know me and call me aside. That's where you get the great intel and great information on how

successful your business is running. Then, by the time I get up here it'll be 10 o'clock or so and my administration works starts after that.

Michael: Yeah. That's amazing. It's great.

Francis SiJohn: Yeah.

Tino Magnatta: Michael, thank you so much.

Michael: Thank you. Can really tell the positive energy, Frenchie. You guys are doing a great job. Have a good one tonight.

Tino Magnatta: Michael, thank you. Michael I heard you got hired at Den right? Den National?

Michael: That is correct. I'll be joining as Vice President of Marketing.

Tino Magnatta: Congratulations.

Michael: Thank you, thank you.

Tino Magnatta: Alright.

Francis SiJohn: Congratulations Mike, nice job.

Michael: Thank you. Have a good one.

Tino Magnatta: Alright. Talk to you soon buddy. Bye-bye

Michael: Bye.

Tino Magnatta: Hello. This is Tino Magnatta. Do you have a question for Frenchie?

Speaker 7: Hello?

Tino Magnatta: Hey, how are you?

Francis SiJohn: Hello.

Tino Magnatta: You fell off last time, but we got you back.

Speaker 7: Yeah. I was trying to get in on that call and I couldn't do it. Here we are anyways.

Tino Magnatta: Okay. Here we are.

Speaker 7: I'm going to go ahead and ask questions for Francis.

Tino Magnatta: Sure.

Speaker 7: My understanding you guys are on the renovation. Can you tell me a little bit about the renovation and how that's coming along?

Francis SiJohn: Well, we're just actually finished up with the renovation. We finished about four months ahead of schedule and a million dollars under budget. [inaudible 00:52:13] 2000 square foot remodel on our main gaming floor as well as our event center. We have a new HVAC system that we put in and has new smoke eater in there. It actually went very well. We had a really good team of employees, owners, reps, and facility guys that really turned it up and they really did an outstanding job. I owe it to those guys that were on the floor to be able to finish four months ahead of schedule as well as a million dollars under budget. It's all good positive things that are going on up here at the remodel. It's great. People are liking it.

It was a little bit disarray, a little bit of confusion October, November, December with some of our guests, but we had good way finding signs, we had good staff that just took ownership of it, able to help our guests locate their machines and communication to our guests. It all turned out really great and now the end product our customers are coming back and they're loving the new facility that we have down here. Thanks.

Speaker 7: Okay, well that sounds all good and I'm excited to come on down there and come to some of your events there. I always like going to your events. That event center got a new sound system?

Francis SiJohn: Yeah we got a new sound system in our even center, we got remodeled, we got a brand new stage. We've partnered up with PorchLight Entertainment, a gentleman by the name of Chris Louden out of Las Vegas. He owns Stoney's Rockin' Country. He's been doing our event buying for us and our first main kick off event is going to be May third with Cole Swindell. He's at the top of the charts right now and we have a brand new sound system and light system.

Tino Magnatta: That's great!

Francis SiJohn: I tell you what, Chris brought some of his lighting guys up from Vegas and they were hooking everything up. I tell you what, that system they do and the sound system is top shelf. We're going to have some great shows. We're putting together a summer series. Laura and I was just talking to some of our event buyers and we're putting together a really good summer even series for the Coeur d'Alene people. I think we're calling it Coeur Summer fest.

Laura: Coeur Summer fest.

Tino Magnatta: Wow.

Francis SiJohn: We're gonna have one heck of a line up, we're getting contracts and confirmations. We'll be coming out with that on our website here within probably the next week.

Speaker 7: Okay.

Francis SiJohn: If you want to come on down, you should have a good time. You can bring your hubby down or whatever and you guys will have a great time. We have a great buffet down there, seafood buffet night. We got great food, great entertainment, and we've got some really fabulous machines. We got some good class three machines you don't have in Washington so come on down.

Speaker 7: Oh, I will. I will. Me and my girlfriends are ready to come down and celebrate. Thank you very much guys for your time. I appreciate it.

Francis SiJohn: Oh, you bring them down.

Tino Magnatta: Sounds fantastic.

Francis SiJohn: You bet, come on down. We'll see you soon. Alright. Thank you.

Tino Magnatta: Thank you.

Speaker 7: Alright.

Francis SiJohn: Thank you, thank you.

Tino Magnatta: That was great. Good stuff. Alright, let's move on here. Let me just see. You guys hear me? Okay? Francis?

Francis SiJohn: Yup, yeah. I'm here.

Tino Magnatta: Okay good. Thought I'd lost you there for a second. Let's get the next caller on. Let me see here, there's so many. Alright. Here we go. Hi. This is Tino Magnatta. I have Frenchie on the line. Do you have a question for him?

Speaker 9: Good evening.

Tino Magnatta: There you go. How are you?

Speaker 9: Good how you doing?

Tino Magnatta: Can you hear us? In you in a bad area or can you hear us? I guess you're in a bad area. Okay. You can hear us?

Speaker 9: I can hear you.

Tino Magnatta: Okay great. Do you have a question for Frenchie?

Speaker 9: Yes. Good evening guys. Amazing show again tonight. Frenchie, one of the questions I have and this radiates through the integrity that it appears you have. Has there been, you look at your 50 years of being [inaudible 00:56:47] where you're at and the different tribal areas. That's priceless education. Is that still happening in the tribe so the young people grow up with the same respect and integrity that you have and pride?

Francis SiJohn: I believe it is. I believe it is. It's a real life up here. We have these families, we have these young people that are really engaged with the tribal issues and tribal issues at hand and they well educate themselves on what those topics are. I think that, even with myself, growing up in tribal politics and things of that sort, I remember being with my grandfather, my dad and being able to have to go to these meetings and go to these counsel meetings, go to these general counsel meetings and listen to the people talk. My grandpa would always say "Everybody listen up because one of these days you're going to be sitting up there trying to answer these questions."

I would have never thought in 100 years that I would be there, but I was. I was very fortunate. That's when you start beginning to learn. That's when you [inaudible 00:58:03] to help to survive and help your people to survive in that sense. Being in there at a young time, I think that as long as the young people get involved the better off our tribe's going to be. Again, they're going to be in generations where our next tribal leaders. If we're not educating them and not helping them in the right direction and help making their critical making skills, where are they going to be as a tribe in the future?

Speaker 9: Sure. It's obvious, again you touched on your grandfather, when you brought him up before, the life experiences he experienced with you and the knowledge that he gave you that you didn't even know you were getting is priceless. The integrity that he's taught you. That start then, it doesn't start with a college degree. That starts way then. I just hope that the effort that you have and the heart that you have and the passion and integrity can trickle down. Tonight's the first night I've heard one of these that I think of the whole situation of the tribe completely different than I have before. You're building the future and it needs to continue to build. Cultures changing in our country so crazily anyway, but to think what it's like in a tribe where 50 years ago you were playing in a dirt field, now it's a huge casino.

Francis SiJohn: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 9: Jealous. Congratulations. Keep up the great work. I know you've got a lot of people that want to talk to you. Congratulations and bless you for the person you are.

Francis SiJohn: Oh, thank you for calling in. Thank you for those kind words. I really appreciate it.

Speaker 9: Yeah. You're a good man.

Tino Magnatta: Thank you so much.

Francis SiJohn: Thank you.

Tino Magnatta: Thank you. Alright. That was fantastic. Frenchie, we're out of time. It's been an incredible show. I really appreciate it. Laura, thank you too. I want you on the show too, Laura. We'll talk about that. I want Chairman on the show. You guys are fantastic so continue everything you're doing and I have a ton of people who still want to call in. We're out of time but we'll have more on the people from Cur Delaine on the show so stay tuned. Thank you so much guys. It's been fantastic.

Francis SiJohn: Thank you Tino, and thank you for the great opportunity to allow us to be on the air with you and it's great opportunity we'd sure like to share again anytime. Laura, do you have anything?

Laura: Oh, no. Thanks, Tino. You take care. Talk to you soon.

Tino Magnatta: Thank you so much guys. Yes. We will talk soon. I'll talk to you guys later. Have a good one.

Francis SiJohn: Okay. You too, Tino. Thank you.

Tino Magnatta: Bye-bye.

Francis SiJohn: Bye.

Tino Magnatta: Alright. That was fantastic. A lot of concepts were explored, a lot of great wisdom, and tribe is just fantastic. Great leadership, great people, and everybody's working together for a common cause. Next Thursday, I believe it's the 24th, at 5:30 PST again I have Ryan Frohberg who's the CMO of Casino Del Sol and he's a very good friend. He has an amazing story and some personal things that he had to overcome in his life which later became very valuable for him moving forward. I hope that you all tune in. Remember, everybody's got a story to tell, you just have to have time to listen. Have a good night and God bless.

END