



Presented by
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When it comes to engaging tribes, indeed – as Dr. Sharon Megdal pointed out –
ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL!

Consider these points:

- In Arizona, alone ~ there are 22 federally recognized tribes...
- That's 22 distinct tribes with very different customs, languages, traditions and political realities. But, 22 isn't a magic number either...
- For instance, the Hopi is one federally recognized tribe in Arizona; however, the tribe operates as 12 distinct, autonomous communities. This is because historically these 12 villages were self-contained and self-sustained; therefore, they current tribal government structure still accounts for the autonomy of those 12 villages who have purview over lands within their jurisdiction.
- Complicating this matter even more, some reservations have more than one tribal group represented. Look, for instance, at the Gila River Indian Community – the tribe is comprised of two distinct tribal peoples ~ the O'odham and the Pee-Posh (or Pima and Maricopa). This occurs because historically these distinct tribes were forced to relocate to these areas and consolidated or drawn into a box to be one conglomerate tribe.
- Plus, there are international considerations such how the O'odham and Yaqui peoples were divided the US-Mexico border. For the most part, political boundaries are arbitrary; even those that use natural features fail to account for the fact that that rivers change course and mountains crumble...
- Not only that, remember, that throughout Arizona and anywhere in the Americas for that matter, people utilized the resources around us for centuries before us. Therefore, even if these lands are no longer reservations or tribal lands, tribes still have an interest in what goes on outside of Indian country. Not only from a governmental level, but also from the perspective of tribal members living in and among us throughout the state... So, each of the 40 communities represented here has to remember that they have tribes and tribal members as citizens and stakeholders among your constituents.

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Plus, I want to relate this conversation back to what Dr. Dave White illustrated ~
DIFFERENT SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES CALL FOR DIFFERENT APPROACHES.

Specifically, when working with tribes, I offer these ideas or approaches to keep in mind:

- History isn't a thing of the past and scales of time are different.
- Tribes, like most other political frameworks, have multiple layers of government or bureaucracy ranging from local zones, chapters, villages, to agencies or districts to the federal, or central, government ~ it is unlike the structure of Arizona with its cities/municipalities, counties and other political subdivisions. And, more importantly, these political subdivisions deserve the same respect as you show your local mayors, councilmen, county supervisors or legislative representatives because they are electeds or other officials, too, within the tribal structure.
- This, in turns, means that individual tribal members have multiple layers of citizenship ~ they are affiliated with their zone, district and central tribal government, but lest we forget they are also residents and citizens of that city, county and state, just like everyone else in Arizona...
- So, that means as we move into these statewide planning efforts or other broader initiatives, we cannot only rely on government-to-government consultations with each of the 22 tribes in Arizona but we must also communicate with and engage tribal members as individuals and citizens outside of (or in addition to) the formalized consultations with tribal governments.
- Some common threads in engaging tribes include:
 - Face-to-face interaction is valued more than impersonal forms of communication (such as surveys, internet websites {which may not even be accessible because of a lack of technology or infrastructure} and other mass-communication methods). It's mostly about relationships, or as the opening speaker, Ms. Betsy Rieke described it: integrity.
 - Sometimes conversations and discussions occur in a fashion I like to call "multi-loguing," which as it may imply ~ means it's information that flows between multiple parties, at multiple times, in multiple forums. It isn't necessarily an event or situation that can be wholly discussed, considered or resolved in one sitting.
 - Or, to sum it up in a nutshell: tribal engagement does not mean conducting a public meeting, holding a public hearing or sending a tribal consultation letter and calling the process complete or successful.

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