

2018 Tribal Government Benchmarking Survey – Deep Dive – IT Skill Sets in Indian Country

Overview

During the 2nd half of 2018, Info-Tech Research Group in partnership with TribalNet explored the 2018 Tribal Government Benchmarking Survey¹ results. In this first, of three, survey deep dives InfoTech Native American Technology Research Center (NATRC) explores the skill sets that were most lacking amongst the results. Understanding these scores helps to shine light on the skill trends occurring in and around Indian Country. Even if these rankings do not correlate directly to your tribe, they do represent the overarching patterns of common skill set gaps that are prevalent in tribal nations. Ensuring that your tribe is proactively addressing the skills gaps revealed in this survey will help to build and sustain effective teams that are capable of carrying out initiatives that further self-determination and tie to the key force factors affecting tribal nations and communities.

Good or Expert Understanding - Tribal Leadership:

As illustrated in Figure 1, Benchmarking Survey respondents indicate that individuals who hold tribal leadership positions are perceived as underequipped when it comes to key skills and expertise that help build strong and resilient nations. In particular, cybersecurity and technical knowledge are perceived as the most poorly represented skill sets amongst tribal leadership with 82% and 54% respectively being very poor and somewhat poorly represented. Strategic, operational and management knowledge skills are also perceived as lacking amongst tribal leaders with 41%, 50% and 45% respectively being very poor and somewhat poorly represented. It is critical that members of the tribal leadership team gain capacity and strength in these key areas to help ensure sustained growth and prosperity within tribal nations.

Tribal nations are known to seek out and sustain periods of rapid growth that can pull resources away from routine operational and management tasks. Prioritizing resource allocation around growth can cause unintended consequences, including

Skills and Experience

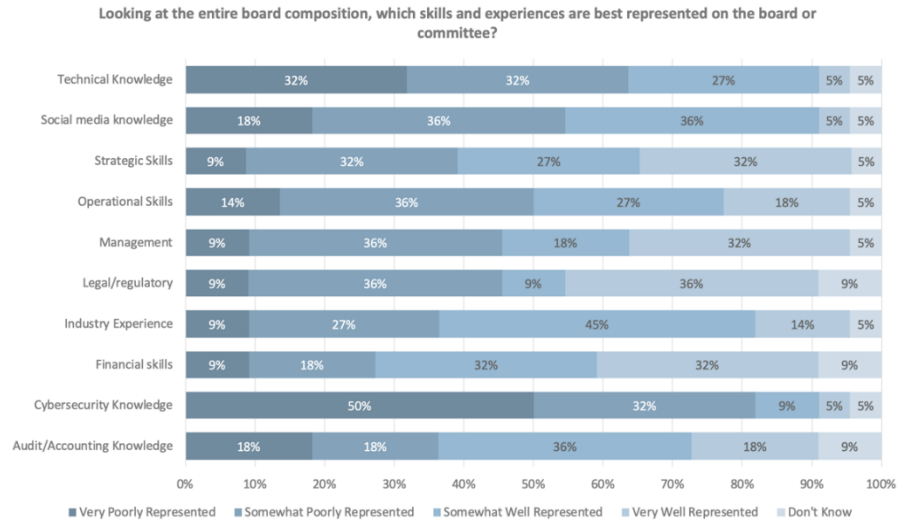


Figure 1: Skills & Experience at board level. 2018 Tribal Government Benchmarking Survey

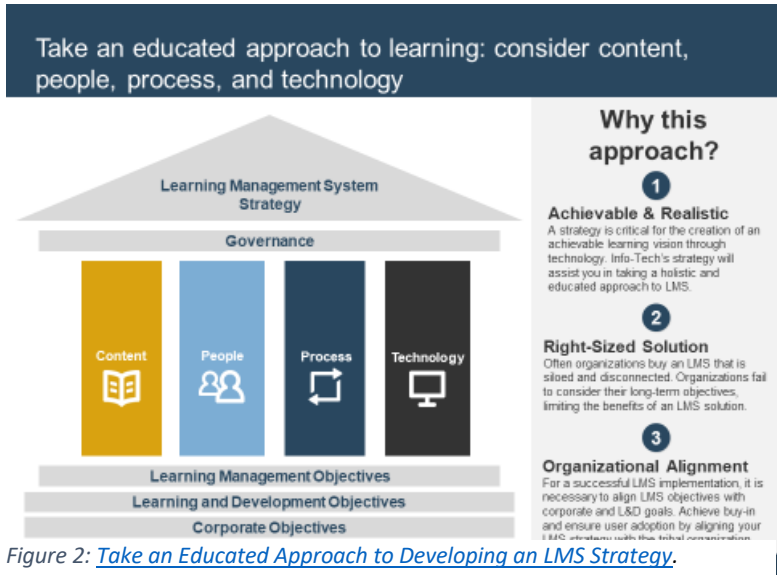


Figure 2: Take an Educated Approach to Developing an LMS Strategy.

¹ This survey was offered to and completed by federally recognized tribal employees in the United States.

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shortages and gaps in critical skill sets and areas of expertise. According to Info-Tech’s 2016 HR Trends and Priorities Report, the #1 trend for 3 years in a row has been the development of the next generation of leaders however only 32% of HR and 28% of non-HR respondents thought their learning & development function was effective. Tribal leadership must actively work to close the gap around their perceived and/or actual lack of skills, experiences and knowledge. In order to achieve this goal, Tribal nations should deploy a Learning and Development (L&D) strategy in order to create a comprehensive organizational skills roadmap that considers and addresses the skill and experience needs throughout all areas of their nation. As illustrated in Figure 2, leveraging a structured learning management strategy & solution² will increase L&D efficiencies and cultivate internal talent, thus providing a competitive advantage to tribal organizations. In addition, a formalized and holistic L&D strategy will avoid compartmentalized learning efforts.

Good or Expert Understanding – Economic Development

The Benchmarking Survey also includes a deeper look at the perceived skills and experience of individuals who guide the Economic Development process within tribal nations. Again, as illustrated in Figure 3, cybersecurity and technical knowledge are perceived as very poor and somewhat poorly represented among this subset of professionals who serve tribal nations with 83% and 61% respectively. Not unlike their tribal leaders, though more so, strategic, operational and management skills are also perceived as poor and somewhat poorly represented with 72%, 72% and 61% respectively. The key to improving

Skills and Experience

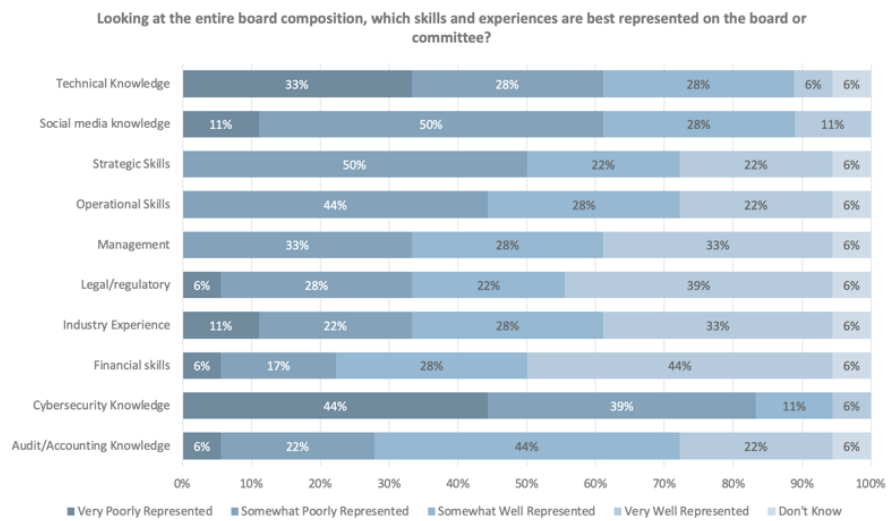


Figure 3: Skills & Experience at Economic Development level. 2018 Tribal Government Benchmarking Survey

tribal nation operational, management & strategic skills on economic development strategy is to understand what prevents effective planning and execution and then remediating those challenges.

Effective strategy and operation leadership skills improve employee engagement and reduces turnover, but most importantly, it drives bottom-line results. Developing these strategic and operational skills will yield the following economic benefits within tribal nations:

- Yields results: Strategic and operational skills will provide a realistic, workable economic leadership framework that is built upon a foundation of constant improvement.
- Invaluable managerial skills: Balancing daily and long-term operations with defined, and often limited, resources is complex. Developing these skills and focusing on practicing them assists leadership in determining how to perform work more efficiently and effectively, while staying within financial parameters.

² [Take an Educated Approach to Developing an LMS Strategy.](#)

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- Adaptable to a changing environment: A multi-year economic plan will inevitably be affected by changing internal and external influences. Therefore, tribal nations need to develop skills to accommodate flux, while at the same time incorporating tribal leadership’s mission and objectives.
- Strategic planning and operational skills are responsive to tribal community needs: Successful development and utilization of these skills can assist with accountability and participation in identifying and developing initiatives and priorities that are important to tribal members at large.

Tribal nations will be more successful in their pursuit of economic development if they embrace technology and grow their skills and knowledge in the key areas uncovered by this survey.

It is common for tribal economic development professionals to overlook their responsibilities when it comes to knowledge around technology. In addition to the proper legal and best practices based oversight and governance of economic entities involving technology (ie: GDPR & PCI DSS, Gaming MICS, etc.), critical business opportunities go untapped due to hesitancy that centers on a lack of IT knowledge. It is crucial that tribal economic development professionals identify and minimize the skills gaps that would otherwise preclude their tribal nations from effectively moving ahead with lucrative high-tech opportunities.

Define a leadership strategy to ensure your development efforts pay off

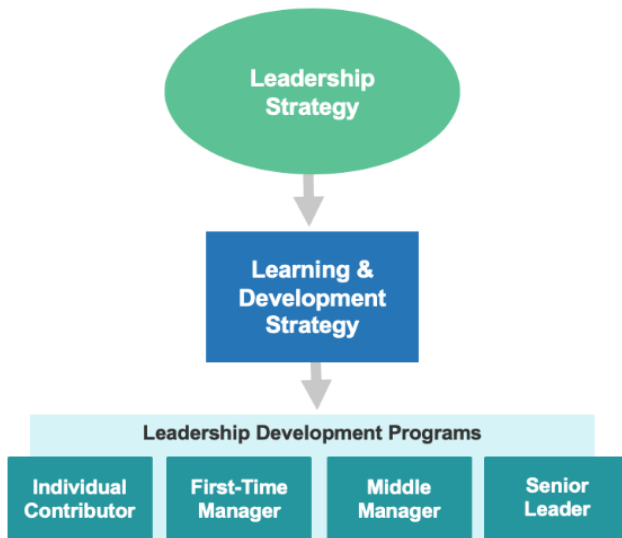


Figure 4: [Develop a Leadership Strategy to Drive Organizational Results](#)

The challenge is that less than half of business leaders would describe the return from their leadership development efforts as good or very good (Korn Ferry Institute, 2015). InfoTech’s Native American Technology Resource Center (NATRC) has found that by formalizing a leadership strategy and growing the leadership skills of middle managers, tribal nations will be well equipped to realize their maximum potential for future growth.³ By adopting the L&D methodology set forth in Figure 4, tribal nations can formalize an L&D strategy in order to alleviate their skill set gaps.

It is worthwhile to note how a leadership strategy fits in the broader tribal organizational strategy. A leadership strategy is not to be confused with a leadership development program. It is more comprehensive and comes before designing any development programs and is defined as a plan for meeting tribal organizational needs that considers:

1. The tribal organization’s vision for leadership and how it supports services, programs, and business strategies.
2. Leadership competencies required to carry out these strategies.
3. How to align people processes to meet leadership needs, including addressing any organizational barriers to leadership success.

³ [Develop a Leadership Strategy to Drive Organizational Results](#)

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Good or Expert Understanding – Health & Membership

The Benchmarking Survey includes a deeper look at the perceived skills and experience of individuals who are responsible for overseeing the healthcare initiatives within tribal nations. Not unlike their counterparts, cybersecurity and technical skills (43% and 43% respectively) are very poorly or somewhat poorly represented among healthcare leaders, but to a lesser extent, when compared to the prior subsets of tribal professionals. Instead, while strategic skills are 72%, the operational and management skills and expertise of tribal healthcare leaders appears to be broad but shallow with 43% very poor or somewhat poorly represented. Surprisingly, Financial and Legal/Regulatory skills are identified as very poorly or somewhat poorly represented 57% and 58% respectively among healthcare leaders. The confidentiality, integrity, and availability of healthcare records are carefully guarded and heavily regulated. Consequently, the strict regulations around Electronic Health Records (EHRs) create the necessity for all tribal health leadership to remain vigilant around the confluence of legal/regulatory, cybersecurity and technical skills.

Healthcare leaders and the organizations they are responsible for introduce unnecessary risk to tribal nations when they fail to provide in-depth representation across this broad spectrum of key skills and expertise. This poor representation of skills puts tribal nations at greater risk and jeopardizes the overall quality of patient care and security of patient records. In order to provide secure EHRs while delivering exemplarily patient care, tribal healthcare organizations must work to

Skills and Experience

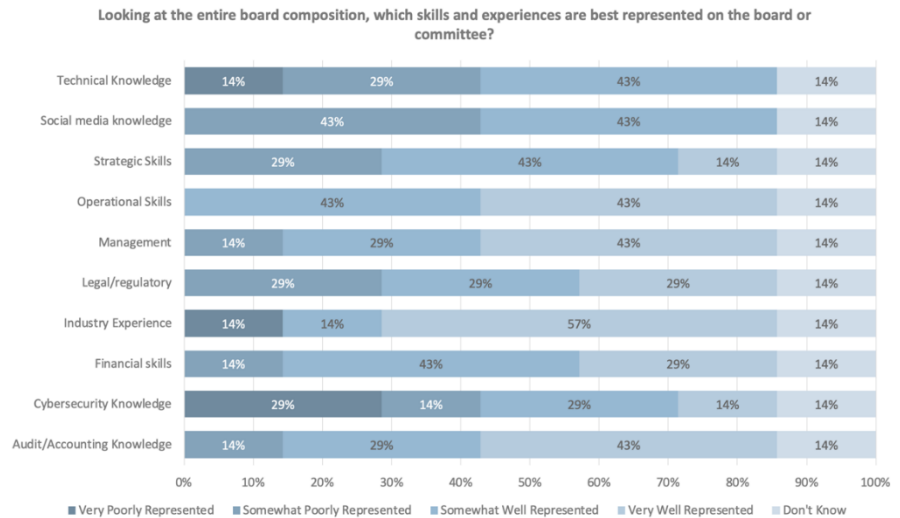


Figure 5: Skills & Health & Membership level. 2018 Tribal Government Benchmarking Survey

Various technical deployment scenarios are available depending on the healthcare service model selected

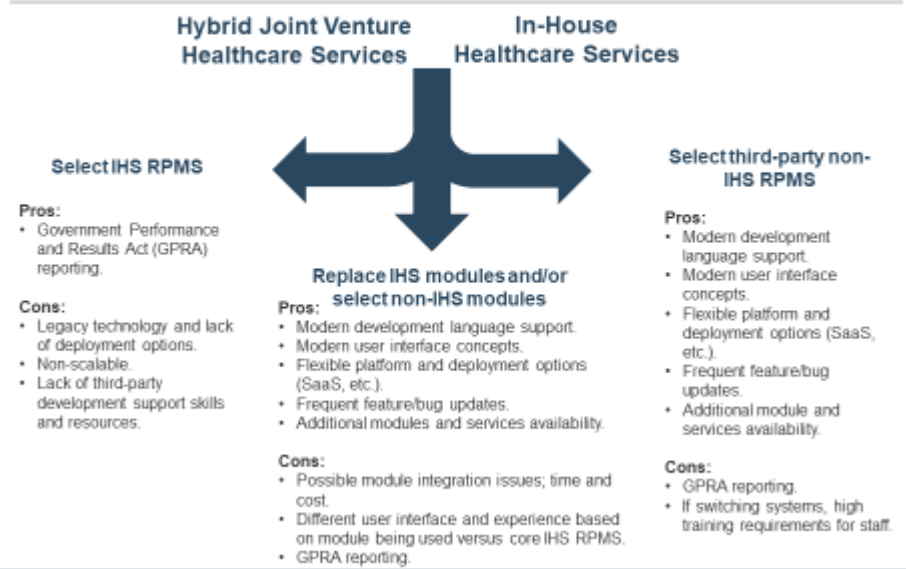


Figure 6: Select, Implement, or Change a Resource & Patient Management System

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advance their overall skills and expertise in these key areas. For example, the U.S. Indian Health Service (IHS) and its Resource & Patient Management System (RPMS) has set a slow pace for tribal nations when it comes to managing and maintaining EHRs. The importance of operational, strategic and technology skills at the health leadership level cannot be understated for these skills are critical in order to properly evaluate and understand the tribal nation implications of continuing to rely upon the IHS RPMS or if a switch is needed and beneficial. Without technical skills, tribal healthcare leaders may not be able to fully navigate the complex decision making process of selecting and implementing, or changing the tribe’s RPMS, as demonstrated in Figure 6.

Forces Affecting Tribal Nations

The Benchmarking Survey identifies seven key force factors that are currently affecting tribal nations as they move forward with building and growing strong nations. In order to remain competitive, tribal nations and tribal leadership must personally learn about & continue to explore these force factors. Building these skill sets, internally are necessary to support the most effective self-determination outcomes.

According to respondents (figure 6), blockchain surprisingly ranks as the least important force factor affecting tribal nations. Info-Tech’s research suggests that blockchain is an area that should be highly considered across various areas of Tribal nations such as sacred sites, cultural history, elections, digital identity, EHR, and more that can benefit from greater security, trust, and transparency that this technology⁴. Conversely, Advanced analytics (75%), cloud (50%) and open data (42%) are identified as somewhat or very important forces to tribal nations.

Force Importance

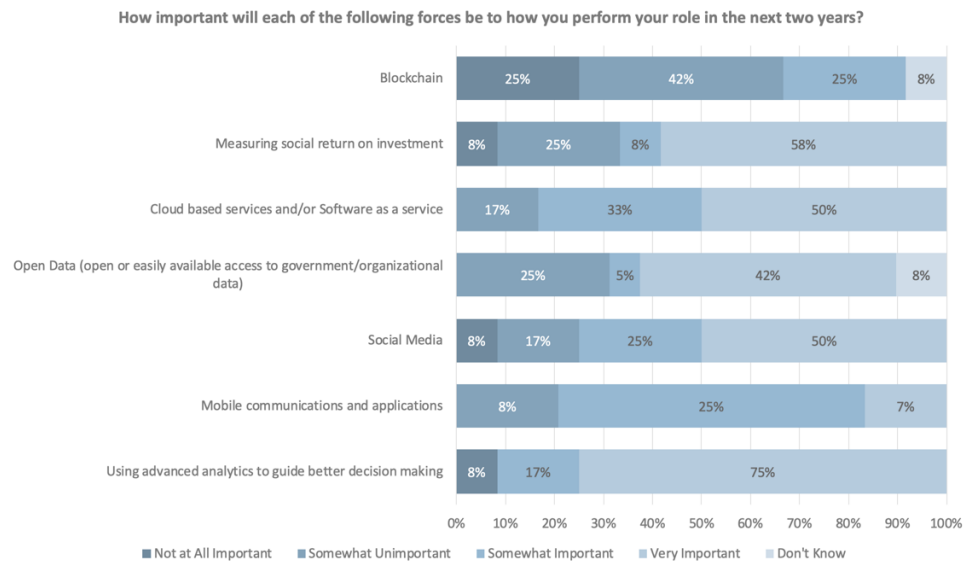


Figure 6: Force Importance. 2018 Tribal Government Benchmarking Survey

⁴ [Capitalizing on Blockchain 2.0 in Tribal Government](#)

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When executed correctly, a leadership development program results in clear benefits including increased ability to meet strategic objectives and higher levels of engagement across all areas of the business. Despite the fact that your management team may have all been top performers within their previous roles, the skills needed to excel as a manager, director, or manager often vary. Although strategic, operational, financial, and legal/regulatory management is not something that every leader excels at, it is often the primary way to add value within a tribal organization. Therefore, not providing effective leadership training to tribal employees is

setting them up for failure. The benchmarking survey indicates that tribal managers can improve their proficiency by developing key skills and increasing their expertise. As tribal leaders, it's your responsibility to help them become more effective in these areas.

Skill acquisition is also part of a larger workforce planning strategy and depends on whether or not the required skill is core to the internal environment. Tribes should consider three key questions as they create a formal strategy to develop internal skills and expertise⁵:

- **Do you expect this skill to be required by the tribal nation for the long term?**

Certain skills will be central to tribal business initiatives and competitive advantage.

- **Even if the skill need is long-term, do you need a dedicated employee, or can it be combined with a related role?**

This is very dependent on the size of the tribal organization. Smaller tribes are staffed by employees who wear multiple hats. In larger tribes, skills may be divided into unique roles due to the magnitude of required support.

- **Has a strategic direction for this area been set?**

For any area of tribal business, tribal leaders must decide on a strategic direction in order to build the right resources. A tribal organization may decide that a particular skill set will be central to its ongoing success. In this case, having a dedicated person on staff to manage that area of expertise will be critical.

Follow Info-Tech's three phase team-oriented process to help leaders improve their skills

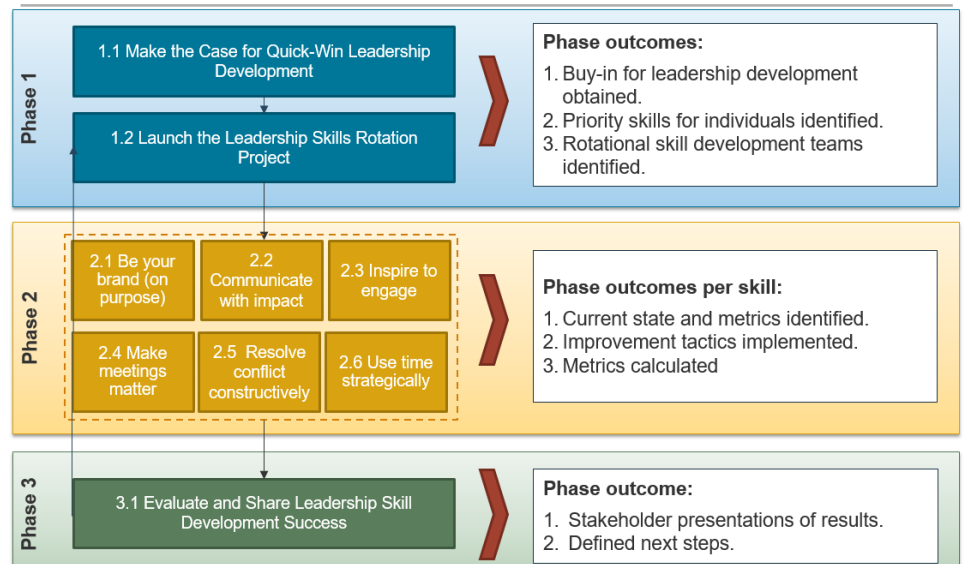


Figure 7: [Acquire New and Hot IT Skills](#)



Figure 8: [Acquire New and Hot IT Skills](#)

⁵ [Acquire New and Hot IT Skills](#)

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The speed of business is moving faster than ever before. This means that tribes have a limited amount of time to consider business plans, understand their implications, and develop needed skills to assess and deliver.

Conclusion

In summary, do not underestimate the importance of the development of leadership and managerial skills, which will bolster tribal nation's ability to capitalize on the key force factors highlighted in this survey. Tribal leaders and their nations must gain ground around the 2018 Benchmarking Survey force factors by fostering a culture that supports the growth of internal skill sets and expertise. In addition, tribes must proactively look forward to the near and long-term force factors and opportunities that are on the horizon. This will ensure that the ground gained is not lost due to the fast-paced and ever-changing landscape. Through a focused leadership, learning strategy and program tribal nations can be well positioned to not only provide better community services and government programs, but also to become a more innovative and transformative influence in Indian Country.

About the Analyst – Linda Marie Arredondo – Director of Research, Native American Technology Research Center:

Linda Marie Arredondo was born in Kansas, under the Full Moon of the Big Bear. She is a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation (CPN). Prior to joining Info-Tech, Linda Marie served as the Director of Information Technology for her own tribe. In this role Arredondo provided oversight for the design and management of technology infrastructure for CPN's executive, government and judicial branches. Additionally, Arredondo provided IT governance and oversight for CPN's gaming, hospitality, enterprise, industrial, and healthcare initiatives. Linda Marie Arredondo has 20+ years of successful IT leadership experience. Arredondo gained this experience while leading IT organizations in a variety of industries, including: government, finance, healthcare, enterprise, and emergency management. Arredondo received a Bachelor of Science degree in Business, summa cum laude, from St. Gregory's University in Shawnee, Oklahoma.

About the Native American Technology Research Center (NATRC):

Info-Tech's Native American Technology Research Center (NATRC) focuses on providing practical and tactical advice for CIOs, VPs and Director level IT professionals who serve tribal nations. Evaluating vendors and products specific to the needs of tribal nations is a revolutionary way to help evaluate current and future technology. Increased value and accelerated results can be realized by combining NATRC's research publications with analyst calls and consulting services that leverage best practices across four major IT focus areas: IT/Business Alignment, Applications, Infrastructure and Risk Management.

About Info-Tech:

With a paid membership of over 30,000 members worldwide, Info-Tech Research Group (www.infotech.com) is the global leader in providing tactical, practical Information Technology research and analysis. Info-Tech Research Group has an eighteen-year history of delivering quality research and is North America's fastest growing full-service IT analyst firm.

About TribalHub:

After 20 years of service dedicated to Native American government, gaming/hospitality, enterprise and health industries, TribalHub leverages extensive industry experience to offer a set of products and service divisions through TribalHub's four core operational divisions; TribalFocus, TribalValue, TribalWise and the long standing TribalNet. Bringing all of this together is the TribalHub membership; connecting industry vendors and Native American organizations and enterprises with benefits and discounts within every division of the TribalHub family.