



Indigenous people were entrepreneurs from the early days and are finally moving back into a space of being strong business leaders. We hope that through Bouchier, we are inspiring other Indigenous people to live out their dreams and goals.



BOUCHIER DRAWS ON INDIGENOUS WISDOM

TO GO BEYOND 'JUST' CONTRACTING

By Gillian Edwards

Corporate values are often the work of consultants and workshops, placed on websites and brochures—and occasionally just shelved. At Bouchier, corporate values mean something more – they are the foundation of a company that treats its team like a family, where people matter, and it shows. Bouchier has an exceptional safety record, one that is rare in the oil and gas sector—so what's the secret?



“Indigenous roots are a contributing factor to our emphasis on corporate culture. We send people home safe each day,” says Nicole Bourque-Bouchier, co-owner, and CEO of Bouchier. “As owners, we created the organization with a positive environment in mind and from the early days, we were adamant about ensuring every team member felt like they were valued and more than a number in an organization.”

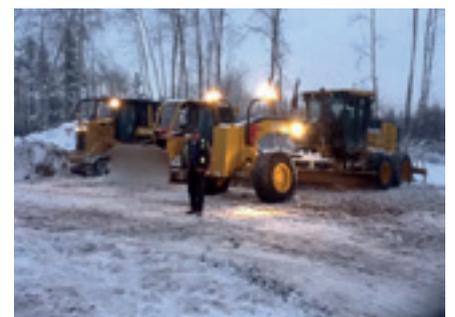
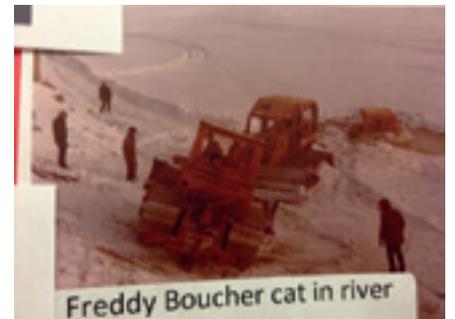
David Bouchier started the company more than 20 years ago, with a used dozer, an entrepreneurial spirit, and a lot of passion. Since then, it's grown to be Canada's leading Indigenous-owned company in the Athabasca Oil Sands Region, with clients that include many of the largest oil producers in Canada. But throughout the company's growth and development, traditional teachings and corporate values have remained con-

stants and it's something the co-owners are proud to finally share broadly and more publicly.

“As Indigenous peoples, we come from a place where communities thrive because of how they take care of each other and family has a larger and important meaning, which is one of community, says Bourque-Bouchier.

“When you are raised on the trapline, you have only the land and your family to depend on. There is no one above you and no one below you. We wanted to honour those lessons by bringing them to Bouchier,” says David Bouchier, co-owner of Bouchier.

With more than 400 pieces of large equipment, the company is relied upon for their quality and approach that draws on Indigenous knowledge and heritage. It uses generational presence, kinship, and setting intentions to create a full circle process that has helped foster the



loyal clients and lasting results for which they are known.

“Our traditional values and beliefs in the Seven Sacred Teachings have created the strongest foundation for our business,” says Bourque-Bouchier.

These teachings have shaped the company’s corporate values and they are now encouraging their 1,000 team members to keep the teachings of respect, bravery, honesty, humility, wisdom, love, and truth top of mind when they make decisions and work with each other. So, what began as civil earthworks projects has grown into something more, offering integrated site services that range from civil construction and road maintenance, facility construction and maintenance, and project management in an environment that drives results while uplifting each other.

It’s a company where people look out for one another and care about the

wellbeing of each person—now passing three consecutive years with one million recordable hours, injury-free. Their current contracts include a multi-year commitment with the Rural Municipality of Wood Buffalo, as well as projects with Suncor Energy, Canadian Natural Limited, and Imperial Oil.

“We are in an important space in time where truth and reconciliation, including economic reconciliation, has moved to the forefront of business. This is the time for Indigenous people to venture into the business place with confidence and determination,” says Bourque-Bouchier.

It’s one of the reasons that the company is committed to giving back to the broader community in the region. Bouchier focuses their giving to create opportunities for lasting positive change for Indigenous people to achieve their full potential. Their community investments have been focused in three areas



chosen purposefully to impact Indigenous lives meaningfully: culture and community, youth and recreation, and female empowerment. To date, more than \$5 million has been invested in the community.

Bouchier has also set a 45% target for Indigenous workforce, and it has created an Indigenous Empowerment Program to help each Indigenous employee discover their potential. As of 2021, Bouchier has achieved 40% of team members self-identifying as Indigenous.

“David and I often say, you must be in business for the right reasons, and the main motivation should be beyond financial – financial success is important – it allows you to achieve your goals. But there should be a bigger purpose at play, a vision of what you want to create and the legacy you want to leave behind,” says Bourque-Bouchier.

“Ours includes changing the face of Indigenous peoples to be seen

as strong entrepreneurs, creating workplace value and a family-based culture, and instilling these values in the communities where our people live and work.”

Bouchier and Bourque-Bouchier hope that more Indigenous people see an opportunity to create their own businesses that draw on their wisdom and knowledge. Their advice? Be willing to put in the time and work, always have a vision for the future that you can share, and remember that while culture trumps strategy, both are important in business.

“As the first peoples of the lands, we are proud to be a leading contractor in our own region,” Bourque-Bouchier says. “Indigenous people were entrepreneurs from the early days and are finally moving back into a space of being strong business leaders. We hope that through Bouchier, we are inspiring other Indigenous people to live out their dreams and goals.” ■