



Conversations w/Tino

Guests	Nick Pierre
	General Manager
	Northern Quest Resort and Casino
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Tino Magnatta: Welcome to another episode of GT Radio, Conversations With Tino. And tonight I have a great guy who's got some pretty incredible stories about his tribe, Nick Pierre, GM, Northern Quest Resort and Casino. How are you, Nick?

Nick Pierre: Pretty good, thank you.

Tino Magnatta: So we were chatting. Usually we have about 10 minutes before the show where I chat with my guests, and I just heard that you got voted into tribal council after nine years of absence.

Nick Pierre: Yeah. I started [inaudible 00:00:59].

Tino Magnatta: Congratulations.

Nick Pierre: Thank you.

Tino Magnatta: Congratulations. And when you were 22 you were the youngest person and now you're the youngest person. And so we were talking about that, and give us a little bit of insight on what that experience is like for you being on the tribal council, number one, and in what instance you have. And then the second thing, what is your message to the younger people out there about getting involved?

Nick Pierre: So I'll give you the cliché answer. It is surreal, it's totally humbling. It's a great honor to actually one, to even be considered when you have tribal members coming up to you saying, "Hey, why don't you run?" It's a great feeling to have. And then just to be able to effect change for the tribe is just a awesome feeling. And that's something to the younger generation because when I got on at 22 I didn't have ambition or anything. I didn't think much of myself or anything. I had Phil Haugen who's our COO and my boss and he was my boss at the time in a different role. And I had another tribal elder, Shirley Black there pushing me to try to run for council. And they kept bugging me and kept bugging me.

Finally. I was like, "Fine, I'll do it just to touch you guys up." And when it happened it was like, "Wow!" But the younger generation, if you believe what you can do can change the betterment of the tribe, go for it. Go make that change. Changes is good for a tribe. As long as it helps the whole tribe go for it.

Tino Magnatta: Now, I know that we've talked to a couple of times where you have to have been pushed into things. What do you think that the people around you see in you-

Nick Pierre: Honestly-

Tino Magnatta: ... that makes them want to support you?

Nick Pierre: Honestly, I don't know. Even looking at myself, I don't know, I think I'm calm and collected. It's something I learned from my dad. He passed away a little over a

year ago, but one thing I've really learned from him is it is what it is. Don't get upset, just deal with it. I don't know if that's what people see in me or what, because even I look at it and it's like, man, why do people think that of me? It's baffling to me, but I guess maybe that's what they see.

Tino Magnatta: Hello? Are you there?

Nick Pierre: Are you there?

Tino Magnatta: Yeah. The line just dropped. Go ahead and repeat what you said.

Nick Pierre: Oh, fine. I was just saying I don't know what it is people see. I don't know if it's what I've learned from my dad that kind my mentality is it is what it is. So there's no point in getting upset. You just deal with whatever it is and move on from it. Just don't get upset. I don't know if that's what people see in me that make them want me on council or what, but that'd be my guess.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah. You're blessed to have those great people around you. You really are. Now, why do you think that there's a little bit of a lack of the younger generation wanting to get involved, especially in tribal politics? I've notice that. You think that they just feel it's too hard or?

Nick Pierre: Good question. Just my experience, when you're young you just think other people know more and they should be the ones deciding. You always need multiple opinions to make a sound decision. To me it's important that you have elders on there, you have young people, you have middle aged people. It brings a balance really.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah. It gives different vision on different things, right?

Nick Pierre: Yeah.

Tino Magnatta: You were born in '79. Tell us a little bit about Kalispel and the community and how it was before the casinos were there. Tell us a little bit about your tribe and your nation.

Nick Pierre: So my parents they married right out of high school and started a family. So this was '72 when they moved into town because there were no jobs out on the reservations. So my dad moved them into town to get a job in town to provide for the family. I'm the youngest boy. I have a little sister. She was born in '81. So we grew up in town our whole life. I think I'm the only child left that still lives in town. The rest of live out either on the reservation or right next to it.

So growing up we'd go out there with my dad to visit. I'd go stay with my Uncle Randy. I took a lot of things, living in a town, I just took things for granted. Look at when you wanted water and you'd want to go have a drink of water you just walked to the kitchen sink and get your water. One our reservation water was

high in iron. You couldn't drink it. So I remember being little and thinking, "Why can't I drink that?" Every night that I'd stay with them we'd drive up the mountain and go up to the creek and have empty milk jugs, fill those up, and that's what they use for water the next day. And that didn't actually get fixed until the first time I was on council. So 2002, 2003. The proceeds from the casino helped changed that.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah. That was all before the casino was built. Now, you know that the tribe itself was really strong because your land is one of the poorest counties, right?

Nick Pierre: Yeah. Pend Oreille County is one of the poorest counties-

Tino Magnatta: It was, yeah.

Nick Pierre: ... in the state of Washington.

Tino Magnatta: Right. And it was a flood plain. That's right, right?

Nick Pierre: Yeah, situated in between the river and the hillside. So majority of the reservation is under a flood plane.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah. So it made it even harder for natural resources to really do anything.

Nick Pierre: Yeah. We all would joke we have some of the finest clay around.

Tino Magnatta: Now, you're using that orange color in your branding too from the water.

Nick Pierre: Yeah, the water did have an orange tint to it. So if you look at our Q on Northern Quest the Q is orange. There's other hints throughout our property where you'll see orange throughout the property. And that reminds us of where we were.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah. And you had said something to me when we spoke that's pretty cool. You said that before the casino was opened, we still are a closely knit community, but we were really close before the casino opened because those hardships that everybody had to do it together, right?

Nick Pierre: Yeah. Shirley and my dad and my uncle they tell me stories about... especially Shirley. Shirley tells the story like on Christmas and Christmas Eve they'd start at one... one house would start it. They'd go to the next style with some food. They'd sing songs there and they just went down the reservation like that.

Tino Magnatta: Wow!

Nick Pierre: And that really wasn't that long ago.

Tino Magnatta: Must be amazing.

Nick Pierre: That was 50, 60.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah. Yeah. Not that long ago at all. Tell me a little bit about your upbringing and what your parents and your past upbringing has taught you that stuck. Tell me some of those qualities.

Nick Pierre: Like I said, we grew up in town. I grew up here in Spokane, Washington. I went to a Rogers High school with is one of the poorest high schools in the city. My dad worked hard. He worked graveyard shift at Eastern State Hospital for 20 some years. My dad never called in. He was always at work. The biggest thing I learned was... I mean, when we were younger my mom stayed home and took care of us, and then as we got into school and all that, she went back to work.

But seeing my dad constantly never calling in, going to work all the time I just learned that's what you do. You go to work. And that helped get me to where I am today. You look at me, I have no college education. Proud graduate, Rogers high school. I did that in '97. School was tough for me. So back then I didn't feel like I had an option of going to college or anything like that. So I was looking at what I could do for my tribe. So we're a casino. So I thought I'm going to go get experience over at another casino. So I started at Coeur d'Alene Casino. I was bingo whatever.

Tino Magnatta: Coeur d'Alene, yeah.

Nick Pierre: Yeah. I was a bingo beverage server there. Did that for a few months, transferred to the chains department, did that for a few months, and then I transfer it to surveillance and did that for close to two years. When Northern Quest opened I became... I quit Coeur d'Alene. I went and I got hired as a tribal gaming agent. I did that for a few years, became supervisor, did that for a few years. Then I became executive director. And then 2015, May of 2015, is when I became assistant GM. And I was that for six months. And then I became GM. And I got there just because I'd never... Only time I ever called in was if I was truly sick. And I always went above and beyond and I got to where I am from that and, and I was fortunate because I have a great mentor in Phil Haugen. He's really pushed me into... he was one of the ones that pushed me into running for council. He pushed me into everything that I've gotten in my professional career.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah. Mentors are important, aren't they?

Nick Pierre: Yeah.

Tino Magnatta: You got to have them. What are the qualities that you've put into practice in your life that have gotten you to where you are now?

Nick Pierre: Just showing up and going above and beyond. I think that's really... and just asking questions and learning from... The biggest thing that I've taken is

experiences of huge, huge benefit to everyone. So for the ones that are starting out and all that, rely on those people, rely on your mentors and people that have been there longer than you because they can all teach you something. It's the kind of the learn one, teach one philosophy. Learn from someone while you're teaching someone else. Yeah.

Tino Magnatta: It's just you pay it forward, right?

Nick Pierre: Yeah.

Tino Magnatta: You're a very humble guy. And then we've spoken a lot about humbleness and everything. Would you say that that clause in you has gotten you partially to where you are?

Nick Pierre: Yeah. And maybe when I was younger I wasn't as humble as I should have been and I made mistakes and didn't really own up to them. But it's just learning from your mistakes and constantly learning.

Tino Magnatta: When you became a GM what were some of the things that surprised you? I know you made that transition and there was some things that surprised you because it's a big responsibility. How long have you been in the position now?

Nick Pierre: I think it's been three and a half years, maybe four years, somewhere around there. And the biggest thing that surprised me is... and everyone laughs at me want to say this but it's true. I'm not really a people person, but I used to be able to walk through a casino in 10 minutes. I could get from one point to the other. From when I became assistant GM and GM it wasn't like that. It would take me 40 minutes to get from one point to the next because everyone wants to talk to me and just people other team members wanting to talk to me. It was a big and it still is a big adjustment for me to learn how to do that. And I've gotten a lot better and I've found that those are the best moments of the day for me is when I'm getting to know the other team members that I've worked with and all that.

Tino Magnatta: So that was one of the hardest things for you to do, right? Just because you said you're not really a people person.

Nick Pierre: Yeah. It was the hardest, yeah. I don't know what it is. I'm just more comfortable within myself and everything, but I'm working on that and it's gotten better. There are times I want to hide back in my shell and all that and other times where I enjoy talking to everyone.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah, you're right. You're right. But you had also a mentor called Mr. Becker and he helped you with some stuff.

Nick Pierre: Mt. Becker. Funny story. And he's like consultant that we use at the casino now, but when we first opened I believe his title was director of hospitality. So he was

over food and beverage and that stuff. When I first started one of our first days my boss at the time wanted us that's to wear a tie. I didn't know how to tie a tie or anything. So I went and bought one. I ran into my sister, April, at work. I thought she would know. She didn't. So she took me to a Mr. Becker and Mr. Becker actually tied my tie for me that day. Man, he even talks about when I first started. He'd always try to talk to me and I'd have my head down and just walking through the hall and wouldn't talk, and now I enjoy the days that Mr. Becker is at work. So I can, I sit with him for a couple of hours and pick his brain, and it's great.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah. And Phil also helped you about the word thing, how to use your words and everything [crosstalk 00:18:43].

Nick Pierre: Yeah. And to this day I can always hear him in the back of my head when I'm going into a meeting or something. I can always hear him telling me, "Use your words. You don't want to come in and say it this way. You're going to make all these people mad if you say it that way. If you change some words in there no one gets mad." So I've learned to use my words. It sounds like you're talking to the kindergartner or something like that but... So it's funny that I say it, but I've learned to use my words.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah. Yeah. It's really cool, man. Really, really cool. Some great mentors there. There's no question about it. Tell us a little bit, and also the younger generation, tell us how important they are and how do you go about finding a mentor? How do you get someone to get involved like you have with your life?

Nick Pierre: Good question. That's a really tough one too. I don't know. The ones that I've found have just been... what's the word? It just happened. It's just like a natural connection almost. But I really can't say just how important mentorship is, and when you think about it you always think of an older person as a mentor [inaudible 00:20:15]. There're team members that I work with that they might be only a few years younger than me or whatever but... even my nephew I learned just talking to him daily I learn things, and it's like, "Yeah, that is a unique way of looking at it." So it's just not the older generation that you should have as mentors. It needs to be that... like I was saying, to get that whole balance of everything you need, younger ones, middle aged ones, older ones.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah. It creates a different perspective and balance. What are the things that you really like about your job and you like to do?

Nick Pierre: I would say the biggest thing is being able to effect change for my tribe. But then the most surprising thing has been, like I was saying, I do a thing, it's a monthly meeting I have. It's called Kick It With Nick. And it sounds really dumb and they've always done it where they've made it rhyme with the GM's name. They picked Kick It With Nick because I'm a big sneaker head. So they thought that sounded cool. That was my wife and my assistant that came up with that.

But it's a monthly meal that I have. Team members are selected and we do a breakfast one, we do a lunch one, and we do a dinner one. It's getting to know the team members. They get to know me. They get to ask questions about anything whether... some of them it's all been all work related and others have just been getting to know one another. So that's something really cool.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah. You said that on several occasions that that's one of the things that you really dig about the job. What are the most important elements of your new job as a GM and some of the things that you weren't really hands.on before that now you're intimately involved with?

Nick Pierre: I would say realizing, yeah, we're a casino but we're also in the entertainment industry. So learning the food and beverage. One thing when I was a part of the TGA that really interested me was entertainment at the property. Like how do you know what band to go after? What act to go after? How do you know how much PM? Just all that stuff? So those are really cool elements that I've really enjoyed.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah, there's a lot of great stuff. And now you have your eyes on the financials too, right?

Nick Pierre: Yeah. Previously it was all regulatory. Now looking at what changes need to be made and when you're off budget or anything how can you tweak certain things over here to get you on the right track? I'm 40 now. So I've worked in the casino industry half my life. To me it's an unbelievable field to work in. There's something new every day.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah. It's different than any other job. There's no real routine, right?

Nick Pierre: Yep.

Tino Magnatta: What is your advice to the younger native generation coming up in the business?

Nick Pierre: Get involved. Go above and beyond. Don't just sit back and think things are going to be handed to you. Ask those questions. Ask why. It's not a dumb question to ask that. You'll get a better understanding and that starts the ball rolling. The biggest thing I preach to not only am our tribal members that come to work at the casino but all the team members, I try to speak to orientation every week, and that thing is the most important thing is showing up for your job.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah. That's the most important part of it of course. You have to stay in there and work hard. No question about that. Now, there's been a lot of proliferation of gaming and there's some fear coming that the future there might be a bubble. Is there anything that the tribes can do to insulate themselves from

something potentially big that might happen that's not [crosstalk 00:25:50] revenues dropping or-

Nick Pierre: They need just always be looking at everything, whether that's expansion, looking at different fields, whether it's movie theaters or different restaurants, gas station, but making sure you're doing all your homework before you're making any decisions. That's the key to it. You don't want to not do your homework and then find out a year later that, man, that was the dumbest thing we could have did but we did it. But if we would've did our homework we wouldn't done it. So always have a eye for expansion.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah. And you had said something about never forget where you came from.

Nick Pierre: Yeah. Back [crosstalk 00:26:54]-

Tino Magnatta: Your dad didn't have running water until he was 12, right?

Nick Pierre: Yeah. So he was born in the early '50s. They didn't get indoor plumbing until he was 12. I try to tell my boys. My boys live a completely different lifestyle than my Dad. It's like, "You guys need to know where you guys come from. You don't want to take things for granted or anything like that," because the gaming could go away and then where would we be?

Tino Magnatta: Yeah. Where would you go? Exactly. Yeah. Where would you be. What do you see in your future? And in your opinion in the next 20, 30 years in terms of native nations what do you see?

Nick Pierre: Geez, 20, 30 years. That's tough. First for me and my future I want a lot of grandkids. Professionally, I mean, that's tough. I'd have to think a lot more about that.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah. That's a big question, isn't it?

Nick Pierre: Yeah.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah. It's a big question. Should we take some calls?

Nick Pierre: Sure.

Tino Magnatta: Great stuff by the way. Amazing [crosstalk 00:28:29].

Nick Pierre: Thank you. This has really been fun.

Tino Magnatta: It's good to know about the tribes and everything. So hang on one sec. Let me see here. Okay. I'm having a little bit of a technical difficulty again. This has happened to me a couple of times. So I have to click out. Technology is not... it's not perfect. It's not letting me bring anybody online. It always makes me log in. I

have no idea why. I've done over 100 shows. And this is just one of those things in life. Okay, let's try this again. Sorry about this. All right. Here we go. Here we go. All right. This is Tino Magnatta. Do you have a question for Nick?

Heidi: I certainly do. Tina, this is Heidi and Tivanna.

Tino Magnatta: Hey, how are you?

Heidi: I'm fantastic. Nick, I'm phoning from Temecula, southern California. How are you this evening?

Nick Pierre: I'm doing good. Thanks for asking.

Heidi: So I am very curious to know. As you were speaking you mentioned a couple of things and one of them was that it's all about learning from your mistakes and what lessons you got out of it. So I'm curious to know, what do you think has being one of the biggest mistakes you've made in your career and what lesson have you learned from it?

Nick Pierre: I would say-

Heidi: So if you just think back. Even brought back from your Bingo beverage manager days through to [inaudible 00:30:25] when you were travel gaming liaison, does anything come up top of mind for you?

Nick Pierre: Not top of mind, but overall I would say my biggest mistakes in the past was not believing in myself. I didn't have ambition or confidence in myself. I mean, it took a while for me to get it. And even when I started getting confidence it was always in my back that I wasn't good enough. So my biggest mistake would be not believing in myself. And I've learned you make mistakes and I've told my bosses, "I'm going to make mistakes, but I'm going to learn from it and not make that same mistake twice."

Heidi: And it's about failing forward, isn't it?

Nick Pierre: Yeah. Yup.

Heidi: So when you say you had very little confidence in yourself or you believed very little in yourself or you believed you weren't good enough what gave you the confidence? How did you start gaining that confidence? Because I love hearing what you're saying because that's what I teach in my programs about how to increase impact and influencing leaders in confidence. So I'm curious to know what built your confidence?

Nick Pierre: And it's funny I was actually talking to Phil earlier that, "I owe a lot of where I'm at to you." It's getting that push from someone that you look up to. If it wasn't for Phil Haugen or Shirley Black there I wouldn't had done anything. I would've

been fine where I was at. I went from making like \$9 an hour to making \$18 an hour when I switched over to work for the Kalispel tribal gamings. And I was happy. But then for some reason Phil and Shirley saw something in me and they started pushing me. And that gave me some confidence.

And then I would say and I dealt with this even within the last four years. I thought I didn't... I questioned why me and I would say with the team that I've built up... I have two great executives under me, Meg Miller and Kevin Zenishek. And I think hearing from them and them talking to me, and they're coming to me and the... Meg is one of the smartest people I know. Kevin is another smart person. Them asking me, hey, how would you do this or that, I mean, that's really given me confidence too.

Heidi: And it's really all self too. You're your best cheerleader or you wish critique, isn't it?

Nick Pierre: Yeah, yeah, yeah. And what happens more often than not is you're your biggest critic and you never really see that in yourself. So learning that and then moving on from that.

Heidi: And then Tino, can I ask another question?

Tino Magnatta: Absolutely. Heidi, of course.

Heidi: And by the way, nick, I always say in my program say it's about being limitless. So limiting yourself less because I believe we are the biggest obstacles towards our success. And you put that so well too. But another thing that you have repeated a couple of times during this conversation that you've been having with Tino is that you just need to show up for your job. He's asked you what advice do you give people and you said they need to just show up for your job. So I know that you mean that in many more ways than just arriving at work. So can you just go a little bit more into what for you looks like at team member that has showed up at the casino. What does that look like for you, especially at Northern Quest?

Nick Pierre: So obviously it's coming and doing your job, but then we have a thing we call you provide Kalispel hospitality, and that's finding a path to, yes, making people feel special, just having a smile on your face, being happy, providing that Kalispel hospitality. And [inaudible 00:35:50] deal with customers that are having bad days, but it's really finding that path to yes.

Heidi: And leaving your own crap at home. And sorry for my language. I know you're PG rated. But you can't be PG rated. It's gaming. So no, you can't be.

Tino Magnatta: Good point.

Heidi: I can say crap. There's been other ladies on this program that I have said worse words. Kalispel hospitality, you say that, and you mentioned showing up above and beyond. Do you have one or two examples you can give us of how some of your team members give that service that's just above and beyond? Have you got any example that jumps up at you of someone [crosstalk 00:36:41]-

Nick Pierre: Here's one we've used at a few of our team member forums, and it happened before I was GM. One of our shuttle drivers was we're going to the airport to pick someone up and they made the first loop and they noticed this guy standing there, and they made two other loop. So on the fourth the loop they said, "Hey, are you so and so?" And they're like, "No." Like, "Where are you going?" He said, "I'm staying at the Davenport," which is in downtown Spokane. For some reason the person that he was picking up had canceled or something like that. So the team member was like, "Hey, jump in. I'll take you down there." And the guys is like, "You sure?" But he made that connection. He made that person feel special and it's just go above and beyond.

Heidi: Oh, I love that. I just hope that person went to your casino and gambled there too.

Nick Pierre: Yeah, later on. That sort of evolved into a connection with them. We've done others where a buffet cook, for example, they're working on a buffet doing stuff and they noticed this mom and dad with this child, and the child just wouldn't pick anything to eat. And so the cook went up there, "I'm so and so. I noticed your son seems not to be liking anything that we have there." And it turns out the child was autistic and would only eat certain things and we didn't have them. So what that took was like, "Okay. Tell me what he likes." They told him what he likes. He went in the back and made him a plate and brought it out. So it's just that. Those connections.

Tino Magnatta: Cool.

Heidi: I love it. Nick, thank you so much and I can hear that you come alive when you're talking about the experiences that happen in your casino as opposed to you talking just about you. So you can see the passion that you have. So well done for that. And I hope you enjoy the book. I've sent you a book. And you have my favorite name. It's my child, my boy's name and my husband's name. So good on you.

Nick Pierre: Oh, that's cool. Thank you.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah, that's great. Both names.

Heidi: Thank you, Tino, so much. Have a good evening.

Tino Magnatta: No problem. Have a good evening. Bye bye.

Heidi: Bye bye.

Tino Magnatta: Hello, this is Tino Magnatta. Do you have a question for Nick or a few questions?

Jess Manelli: Hey, Nick, Tino. This is Jess Manelli. Thanks for having me on and it's really been a pleasure-

Nick Pierre: Oh, no problem.

Jess Manelli: ... listening so far. You've had quite a story and quite the rise. It's something to live up to as a young person in the casino industry.

Nick Pierre: Thank you.

Jess Manelli: So I'm calling from Las Vegas, and I was curious if... not if, but how much involvement and planning you guys are a part of or if the conversations have started yet and where they're at in terms of the planned Seattle hockey team coming from Las Vegas. I've only been out here for three and a half years. I'm originally from Michigan, and I was here when the Vegas Golden Knights became the team and I watched what an impact it had on the city, a people who never thought they'd be hockey fans and really truly what an impact it had on our industry and my personal role at my casino. So just curious what kind of talks you guys have been getting into in terms of the new hockey team over there?

Nick Pierre: Yeah. So we're on the other side of the state. So we haven't had any type of involvement on that. I can say I know Seattle is looking for another team to support especially after losing the Sonics and fighting to get them back. I do believe the Seattle community is going to really welcome a new team with open arms and it'll be a big thing for the city, but we have not had any involvement at all in it.

Jess Manelli: Okay. Yeah. And as far as even talking about viewing parties, something like that or some kind of promotion I know it's a pretty far drive over there, but nothing like that in terms of the hockey team?

Nick Pierre: No. We're more involved with Gonzaga athletics. In Spokane, you got to be a big Zag supporter.

Jess Manelli: Yeah. And you guys are pretty good too. So that makes it easy.

Nick Pierre: We love them.

Jess Manelli: Every year is big.

Nick Pierre: Yeah. I think, what did I read? We've made a five consecutive Sweet 16s, which is the highest active streak right now, I believe.

Jess Manelli: Wow! That's impressive. That's awesome.

Nick Pierre: We have sports bar. I can't even remember how big... there's a huge a TV screen that we have up in there. I mean, it's ginormous. The games will be played on in there. We do big things during the Seahawks. It's actually a 30 foot screen, like I said, ginormous. It's believable. We of course have that type of stuff in there. Yeah.

Jess Manelli: I also wanted to let you know a couple months ago we had the... I worked at D Las Vegas and we had the pleasure of hosting some of your marketing team, Ryan Lee [crosstalk 00:43:24].

Nick Pierre: Oh, okay, cool.

Jess Manelli: Yeah. No, they came out and checked up the property for a little bit and they were a great team. We were talking about doing some kind of... we weren't talking about doing a partnership. We were just telling them kind of what we do in terms of partnerships with other casinos, and they were just a great group and we'd love to come check out Northern Quest pretty soon.

Nick Pierre: Yeah. Yeah, that'd be great. Those guys, they're unbelievable. We're fortunate to have them part of our team.

Jess Manelli: Awesome. Yeah. Thanks guys and have a great night.

Nick Pierre: Thank you.

Tino Magnatta: Thank you so much. You have a great evening.

Jess Manelli: You too.

Tino Magnatta: Thank you. Bye bye. Great questions. Really great questions. We've got quite a few people here.

Bob: Hello?

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

Bob: Hello?

Tino Magnatta: Can you hear us? Hello? How are you?

Bob: Tino, can you hear me?

Tino Magnatta: Hello? Yeah, yeah, we can hear you. How's it going man?

Bob: Sorry about that.

Tino Magnatta: That's okay.

Bob: This is Bob in Las Vegas.

Tino Magnatta: Cool.

Bob: Hi, Nick. How are you doing?

Nick Pierre: I'm doing good. Thanks for asking.

Bob: Yeah, enjoying listening to you. I was kind of curious... you've had a great rise to the position that you're in now, and I guess in your position now a lot of it's all about the bottom line. And I was kind of curious if you had a way that you really enjoyed spending money, you felt confident, and liked doing it and ways that were more painful to write checks. So what do you like the most about your budget process and paying your vendors and necessities and what do you find the least favorite part of that?

Nick Pierre: Tough question. I would say when I look through the bottom line-

Bob: I mean, it looks like entertainment is really important to your property. And you mentioned trying to figure out the right bands to bring in at the right budgets and that type of thing.

Nick Pierre: Yeah. Let's see. I don't know how many years ago, our summer concerts took off and that was just... we had an open area. Phil Haugen was the one that was like, "Hey, let's try this out." We just had small local acts in there. So it started off really small. We've added to it each year. Let's see. I think three years ago when I got on we added a bigger stage. The next year we added large TV screens for the entertainment area. And then last year we took a really big step and we had I think it was about 4000 seats and they're all on the floor. If you were in the back it wasn't a very good spot. Last year we've added risers and all that. So we went up to about 2500 seats on the floor and then the rest up on the risers.

When I look at bottom line, when we look at the bottom line, we base that off of guest experience. So we've tried to focus on making the guests have a memorable experience. So whether it's entertainments acts, just last year we did... one thing that I've pushed out there is having a Christmas experience, and with another tribal member, Tina Nenema she was running with that stuff, with the Christmas experience. And she found this unbelievable. It looked like a lit up Christmas ornament that you walk under and just a beautiful thing. I don't get to do it justice by explaining it. But that was up to another thing, just driving that experience, making people remember their time at Northern Quest. That's the best part.

The worst part I guess it's just paying out bills. We did this last year and this was another thing that really made me happy is we've started up... Kalispel tribe

started up their own utilities department. So previously when I'd have to sign the bills and all that there'd be large light bills and that stuff I'd be paying off. I remember the first time I just got a big smile on my face when I see that I'm writing this huge check to Kalispel utilities. So that was really cool.

Bob: Yeah. That's way better way to write the check, right?

Nick Pierre: Yeah. I love just having that money recircle.

Tino Magnatta: [inaudible 00:49:20].

Bob: All right. So much for your time.

Tino Magnatta: Thanks Bobby. Appreciate it. Bye bye. Hi, this is Tino Magnatta. Do you have a question for Nick Pierre?

Michael: Hey, Nick. Hey, Tino. How are you?

Tino Magnatta: Good. Good. How about yourself?

Michael: Good. This is Michael from that Catalyst Marketing.

Tino Magnatta: Oh, cool. Michael, how are you?

Michael: Hey, good. Just picking up my dog from my daycare. So if hear stuff in the background.

Tino Magnatta: Well, good. That's okay.

Michael: So yeah. So Charlie, my dog, actually had a question. I'm just kidding. So Nick, have you had any projects or anything that you've come across in the role, your most recent role, that you're really proud of, anything that you've accomplished over the last year or so that you really think kind of made a mark on the property?

Nick Pierre: Yeah. Like I was just talking about the entertainment thing. Bringing in those risers we were able to up our game and test the acts that we got. In my personal opinion, we just had it last night the best concert we've ever had at Northern Quest with Judas priest, and we'd actually been working on them for three years. If you look at our summer lineup it has continuously gotten better and better each year. Last year we were I believe at 13 summer concerts, last year. This year we jumped up to 19. We would have had 20, but one canceled on us. They took a movie deal. So they won't be able to fulfill our date.

But the summer concerts have been what... one of the ones, the next one that... and not a big investment, but one thing that I've pushed this past year has been bringing a tribal identity to our property. So we've been collecting tribal photos

from tribal members. We've been getting some. Shirley Black there has been... she's donated a lot of them to us. So we'll take the photo, take it down. If it needs to touch up, we get it touched up, and then we've been putting them on metal prints and putting them around the property.

So now you're seeing more of a tribal stamp. We're getting tribal history too when you're looking at these pictures. And some of them, my [inaudible 00:52:01], which would be great grandma, and this is one of the favorite ones I've heard from tribal members. She's sitting and she always rolled her own cigarettes. But she's sitting down on the ground smoking one of her rolled cigarettes. And we actually put that right outside of our cigar lounge. So if I had to pick one thing, that would be the tribal photos on property. We're still trying to get more so we can get more around the property. But that would be the coolest thing that I've enjoyed doing.

Michael: That's great. Bringing the history inside the building. Tino remembers this. When I was at Flamingo, well, different types of history, but at the Flamingo we had these great pictures of the casino in the '50s and '60s all around the hallways and the back offices that you kind of remember where they came from. The tribal ties are completely different, a completely different spirit of that but it's great to hear. If I could ask one more, and I know you mentioned-

Nick Pierre: Yeah, sure.

Michael: ... a couple of names a few times that possibly maybe that fills this role, but who do you think has been your greatest mentor and what's one or two things that you've really been able to take away from them and apply that to your position now?

Nick Pierre: I would say my biggest one, and like I said I owe a lot to him, is I'm Phil Haugen. I learned great things and I learned bad things from him. And some things... if I would've listened to him I wouldn't have got married and that love type of things. But a big thing I've taken from him is what I said. He's the learn one, teach one. He's learned from Mr. Becker. He's taught me. I'm learning from him. So I'm trying to teach, like I was saying, Meg Miller, whom like I said, one of the smartest people I know, teaching her, teaching Kevin. I've said it a couple times. I just can't say enough about that mentorship.

Michael: That's great. Thank you [crosstalk 00:54:29]. You guys have a great night.

Tino Magnatta: Thank you, Mike.

Nick Pierre: Thank you.

Tino Magnatta: Nick, great interview. I really appreciate you coming on. You definitely have a lot of passion for your people and it comes out when you talk about it, and I'm

looking forward to having you back on the show. I really appreciate it. Been really great.

Nick Pierre: Thank you. This has been really fun. A couple of years back, I would have never have thought of doing this, but this has been a lot of fun. So thanks for having me.

Tino Magnatta: Thank you and have a great evening.

Nick Pierre: You too.

Tino Magnatta: Bye bye. All right. Goo. Nick is soft spoken, but he's got a lot to say in his tribe, went through a lot of hardship but came out on top mix. June 27th, I have Laura Stensgar, and Laura is an amazing woman. We're going to continue our series of Wonder Women of Gaming and it's going to be fantastic. She's great. So June 27th, Laura Stensgar and it's going to be fantastic. You all have a good night, and remember everyone has a story to tell but if you don't listen... All you got to do is listen. Have a good night. Thank you. Bye bye.

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