



**HOLLYWOOD** — When an organization blazes a trail of success and innovation like the Seminole Tribe of Florida has with its ventures, officials are often bombarded with business pitches – some good, some not so good.

Put another way: people both within the Tribe and outside of it want a piece of the action.

In order to corral the many business ideas that come its way, Seminole Tribe of Florida Inc. (STOFI) has rolled out a new process – Potential Business Opportunities, or PBO.

PBO incorporates a set of guidelines and requirements for Tribal members and non-Tribal members who want to officially pitch their business ideas to the board.

The process is led by Golden Johansson, executive director of operations for STOFI.

“The board is constantly being approached and solicited to do joint ventures,” Johansson said. “And while we are interested in expanding the portfolio, we want to streamline the process.”



Golden Johansson, executive director of operations for the Seminole Tribe of Florida Inc. (Courtesy photo)

Johansson said many times board members and Tribal leaders are approached with ideas unexpectedly at events or even through Facebook or LinkedIn messages. It can create awkward public interactions, and social media messages are often missed.

### **Preparation pays**

The PBO process is now outlined on the STOFI website. Visitors will see the program’s goals and intentions, including some ideas the board will not entertain.

The process begins by emailing application materials to [pbo@semtribe.com](mailto:pbo@semtribe.com). However, Johansson advises advance preparation.

"You'll want to have documentation for a formal presentation - basically all the stuff you'd find in a business plan," she said.

Once an applicant's materials are received, someone will ensure the packet is complete before a potential presentation is scheduled before a newly formed PBO committee.

"We'll review it and decide if it's a viable business idea for the board to consider," Johansson said.

Whether an idea is presented to the board comes after the committee does its due diligence - like research and background checks.

While PBO guidelines are the same whether the person pitching the idea is a Tribal member or not, Johansson said Tribal Members have access to help in organizing a business plan and preparing a pitch. Tribal Member's ideas would be looked at first, too.

### **The 'bottom line'**

Ideas that could be considered include small franchises, partnerships or joint ventures, a restaurant concept or maybe a private label brand for certain products.

"We don't want to shy away from exploring new ideas. That's why we've put this process in place," Johansson said. "We want to make sure it's a good business opportunity to increase the bottom line of the shareholders. If it doesn't benefit our shareholders, we don't want to entertain it. The board is very generous but also very business savvy."

Johansson also stresses that the board wants to hear ideas and that "no idea is a bad one."

"We'll help you make it stronger and better. If it's not good for the board, maybe it is for Council or Gaming," she said.

Johansson, who began work for the Tribe in August 2018, oversees operations for all the board's businesses, which include cattle operations, campgrounds, trading posts, credit and finance, Seminole Sugarcane, wholesale cigarette and distribution, retail smoke shops, Seminole Petroleum, water, industrial cleaning services and commercial construction.

The PBO process covers Seminole Tribal operations, not those of Hard Rock International, Johansson explains.

Johansson has worked in the banking and finance industry for her entire career, most recently at Legacy Bank of Florida and previously for Bank of America in Chicago. She's been a resident of Florida for nine years.

The full details of the PBO process can be found by going to [stofinc.com](http://stofinc.com) and clicking on "[Business Opportunities](#)."

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