

Forbes Forest Finds



Rodney with a Chaga Mushroom, photo provided by Rodney Forbes

Owner: Rodney Forbes
Product: Non-timber forest products
Established: 2012
Market: Local, International
Number of Employees: N/A
Website:
<http://forbesforestfinds.ca/>



“The world needs new ideas and yours could be the one that changes our lives for the betterment of all.”

The Business

Manitoba's boreal forest is home to a *‘natural treasure trove’* of non-timber forest products. This relatively untapped resource is what inspired Rodney Forbes, the owner, to start Forbes Forest Finds in 2012. The business sells non-timber forest products from the boreal forest around The Pas, Manitoba. It began after interest from an individual in the United States who was looking for high quality non-timber forest products. Rodney's business has built a reputation of offering high quality, organic and sustainably harvested natural non-timber products. He defines non-timber forest products as *“anything on the landscape that isn't a tree.”* Forbes Forest Finds sells these products in bulk commercially or in the retail market to consumers. Some of the retail products include: wild rice, wild rice dry soup mixes, wild teas, wild mint lip balm and many others. For Forbes Forest Finds being located in rural Manitoba is a necessity. It is where the forest is, and in order to get the best product to market, he located his business close enough to process it fresh. For Rodney the *“products are everywhere around you, you just have to bend down and pick them up.”*

The Motive and Skills

Rodney believes the most important skill for success is determination. *“There are many obstacles that may stop you from entering the market but you must choose to go through those barriers and come out on top.”* Furthermore, *“integrity is key to ensuring success of your product”.* Rodney is committed to maintain a high quality product and will

not cheapen it to increase profit. His pursuit of integrity is motivated by his love of the boreal forest, the plants that grow there and the various ways they can be used. This includes connecting with First Nation communities to understand traditional ways of using non-timber forest products.

Rodney is also committed to supporting community economic development in rural and northern communities. He received funding from the Community Economic Development Fund to go into First Nation communities and train people in sustainable harvesting techniques. Rodney purchases products from these communities and processes them for commercial and retail sale. This is particularly important for remote communities with limited economic opportunities.

Challenges and Support

Rodney acknowledges many challenges when developing a new business or idea. One in particular is developing relationships with first time cliental. Being in an emerging market has many benefits but it also requires building trust and displaying honesty with first time buyers to ensure the growth of his business. Rodney succeeded in overcoming this challenge by offering the best quality product possible.

A Piece of Advice from Rodney

“Don't give up, it is a long road, but perseverance will get you to the end. The world needs new ideas and yours could be the one that changes our lives for the betterment of all.”

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