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BUSINESS VOICE

HALIFAX CHAMBER OF COMMERCE | MAY 2017 | VOLUME 26 ISSUE 4

Keeping our foot on the gas

Meet Chamber Chair
Mark Fraser

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HALIFAX'S BUSINESS MAGAZINE



(Back Row – Left to Right) Linda Menzies, Greg Mosher, Robert Dean, Jerry Inman, Stephanie Smith, Maura Timmons
(Front Row – Left to Right) Sean Stuart, Krysta Adamski, Earl MacLeod, Bill Vienneau, Giselle Linden

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Photo: Paul Darrow



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Please address editorial enquiries and changes to information to:
Halifax Chamber of Commerce
100-32 Akerley Boulevard,
Dartmouth, Nova Scotia B3B 1N1
Tel: 902-468-7111
Fax: 902-468-7333
info@halifaxchamber.com
www.halifaxchamber.com

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Layout & Design: Peter Ross

Contributing Writers: Erin Elaine Casey, Jon Hiltz, Carol Dobson, Jon Tattire, Johanna Eliot, Jennifer Nicholson, Ron Hanlon

Customer Relations Specialist: Jennifer MacLean

Sales Executives: Victoria MacDougall, Karen Publicover, 902-426-2811 ext. 1163

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2717 Joseph Howe Drive
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HALIFAX CHAMBER
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CHAMBER EVENTS

For a full and up to date list of our Chamber events, please visit
www.halifaxchamber.com/events



SPEAKER: Janet Knox,
 President & CEO,
 Nova Scotia Health Authority
HOST SPONSOR:
Medavie Blue Cross
DATE: Friday, May 5
TIME: 11:30 am – 1:30 pm
LOCATION: Halifax Marriott
 Harbourfront Hotel

BUSINESS After Hours

PRESENTED BY:
FMP Mortgages
DATE: Wednesday, May 10
TIME: 5:30 – 7:30 pm
LOCATION: Suite 800,
 1701 Hollis Street, Halifax

ANNUAL Spring Dinner

PRESENTING SPONSOR:



DATE: Thursday, May 11
TIME: 5 – 9:30 pm
LOCATION: World Trade &
 Convention Centre, Halifax

LET'S TALK EXPORTS BREAKFAST

HOST SPONSOR:
**Export Development
 Canada**
DATE: Wednesday, May 17
TIME: 7:30 – 9:30 am
LOCATION: Pier 21, Halifax

CHAMBER 101

DATE: Wednesday, May 17
TIME: 12 – 1 pm
LOCATION: Halifax Chamber
 of Commerce



Networking Trade Show

DATE: Wednesday, May 17
TIME: 2 – 4 pm
LOCATION: Pier 21, Halifax



DATE: Friday, May 19
TIME: 12 – 1:30 pm
LOCATION: Halifax Chamber
 of Commerce

NETWORKING AT NOON

**FACILITATED BY: Level Chan,
 Partner, Stewart McKelvey**
DATE: Thursday, May 25
TIME: 12 – 1:30 pm
LOCATION: Halifax Chamber
 of Commerce



REGISTRATION OPEN!

DATE: Thursday, June 15
LOCATION: Oakfield Golf Course

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Welcome to our incoming Chair

Mark Fraser will help us imagine the possibilities

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PATRICK SULLIVAN
PRESIDENT & CEO

It's hard to believe that it's the time of year to welcome a new chair to the Halifax Chamber of Commerce. Mark Fraser, Executive Vice-President of T4G has taken the helm of our board of directors with the support of Cynthia Dorrington of Vale & Associates following suit as Vice-Chair. For those of you who don't know Mark, you'll learn more about him in this issue.

Timing would have it that the change in the board and the seasons is signifying more change in your Chamber of Commerce. Change that will be led by Mark and myself. What I've learned about Mark is that he is a catalyst for innovation. He's an intrapreneur. I'll remind you that our membership is made of up 83 per cent small businesses. That means most of the people we're talking to every day are entrepreneurs, — or hopefully, intrapreneurs — like Mark.

Mark's innovative thinking will be incredibly helpful over the upcoming year as we start thinking about the Chamber's next strategic plan. While we've dedicated our time and resources to our current strategy, it's also important to look at what's to come and what will be important to Halifax over the next five years. Imagine what you want Halifax to look like in 2023 and we'll build a strategic plan to get there. We'll be looking at what our members need, what priorities we need to set to serve those needs and how we can best allocate our resources to succeed. You'll be hearing from us when the time comes. We need input for the entrepreneurs, intrapreneurs and the business community because without you, we would cease to exist.



We'll be looking at what our members need, what priorities we need to set to serve those needs and how we can best allocate our resources to succeed."

I'm placing you into the entrepreneur/intrapreneur categories for a reason. Maybe you're above the curve in terms of: creativity, systematizing, writing, problem solving, project management, leadership skills, sales and the list clearly goes on. Your dreams are the passions and goals that brought your business to life. You realize that being a member of the Chamber will help you achieve those goals, and so much more. We want you to reconnect with why you started, and imagine the possibilities.

You raise the bar for the rest of us. It is my belief that entrepreneurs think differently. You frame your world

differently. You've faced your challenges, but from what I've seen, most of you are looking at your situations with optimism and purpose. Otherwise you wouldn't be doing it. And the Chamber is in your corner, helping you make it a reality.

I hope that our members can learn from people like Mark and catch on to this entrepreneurial mindset that he so clearly demonstrates. As for the Chamber, if you start to think of us as an extension of your team, you have more people you can count on to help your business run smoothly. We will help make your business thrive.

Just imagine what's next.

HALIFAX CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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NEW & NOTED

We welcome our new Chamber members

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Cecil and Cheryl lead Halifax Life Real Estate Group under the Brokerage of Keller Williams Select Realty. Cecil is a member of the Associate Leadership Committee for Keller Williams and has 40 years of experience. Cheryl Jenkins is a Fellow of the Real Estate Institute of Canada with more than 25 years of entrepreneurial experience.

Cheryl Jenkins

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The We Are Young (WAY) Association is a non-profit organization that works to grant unfulfilled wishes to elders living in Nova Scotia. By granting wishes, the WAY Association hopes to raise social awareness around the inequalities of our elders, honour the role they play in our society, and help bridge the gap between generations.

Cara Boudreau

PO Box 35202, Clayton Park, NS
902-574-8044
cara@weareyoung.ca
www.weareyoung.ca
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RETIRED MEMBER:

Ann Trecartin

Halifax, NS
902-429-5923
ann@mainbrace.ca

STUDENT MEMBERS:

Brandon McKay – Engineering, DAL
Halifax, NS
506-424-0712
brandon.mckay@dal.ca

Hugh McNamara – MBA, DAL
Dartmouth, NS
902-448-6315
Hmcnamara@dal.ca

Piaoqing Lin – Accounting Student
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Halifax, NS
902-989-2861
piaoqing.lin2@msvu.ca

Are you a new member?

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MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

How our members are growing Halifax



TOWER INTERIORS RECEIVES AWARD

Tower Interiors has been recognized by the Consumer Choice Awards for the seventh year in a row in the category of Interior Design. Consumer Choice Award recipients are not selected by a panel of judges, but are chosen by you... the consumer. Each year, consumers are surveyed to gather their opinions, perceptions and expectations regarding the services they choose on a daily basis. "We are honoured once again to be chosen by the public as their interior design firm of choice," says Owner Pam Tower. "This is an incredible award to win, to have our efforts acknowledged. We are truly committed to creating functional design solutions to enhance work and life for our clients." Thank you for all of you who made this a reality!

A.P. REID INSURANCE AMONG TOP 10 BROKERAGES

An annual report published by Insurance Business Magazine recognized **A.P. Reid Insurance** Stores as one of the "Top 10 Insurance Brokerages in Canada." The company, which took fourth place, was the only Atlantic Canadian-based brokerage to be featured on the list. The special report released weighed the metrics from hundreds of brokerages nationwide; and took into account areas of business, such as revenue growth, revenue per broker, client growth, and policy growth. "We've worked tirelessly over the last seven years to build a first-class, national organization capable of competing with the large national and multi-national insurance brokerages from Ontario and Western Canada."



CHRISTINE'S COMMONSENSE HEALTH COACHING LTD. CELEBRATES THE LAUNCH OF THE NEW ENERGY REBOOT PROGRAM

Christine's Commonsense Health Coaching Ltd. just launched the new Energy Reboot Program. It is specifically designed for individuals who are exhausted, tired all day, stressed or burnt out. The new Energy Reboot Program consists of eight weekly or bi-weekly structured sessions addressing all aspects of health to help their clients get the vibrant energy and lasting health they desire with natural means. Dr. Christine Sauer is a German physician and Naturopath. She lives in Halifax since 1997 and is now working as a Mobile Energy, Health and Wellness Coach. For more info contact 902-222-2742.

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DRESS FOR SUCCESS RECEIVES SUPPORT

RBC Dominion Securities employees spent a day with Dress for Success Halifax as a new initiative launched during International Women's Week and presented Brenda Saunders/Todd, Executive Director of **Dress for Success Halifax** with \$5,000. "We are incredibly grateful for the local support of RBC Dominion Securities, as well as their national contribution to launch the Dress for Success Canada office in the amount of \$50,000. These financial contributions are in complete alignment with RBC and their mandate to support the advancement of women across the country," says President Julie Morine. For more information, www.halifax@dressforsuccess.org.



SEATTLE CITY LIGHT SELECTS INTERTALK DISPATCH CONSOLES

InterTalk (formerly Pantel International) has been awarded a contract with Seattle City Light, the 10th largest public power system in the United States, to upgrade their existing dispatch console system after successfully completing a competitive procurement process. The 22-position console system will feature an IP-connected backup facility, and will take advantage of InterTalk's integrated radio voting and transmitter steering system. Serving approximately 400,000 customers, the utility's new system is expected to go live later this year. To learn more, visit intertalksystems.com.

RODD HOTELS & RESORTS INVESTS IN YARMOUTH

Mark Rodd, President & CEO of **Rodd Hotels & Resorts**, recently announced a \$2-million investment in the Rodd Grand Yarmouth Hotel. Renovations are currently underway with a focus on refreshing and modernizing guest rooms, fitness facilities, meeting space and common areas. Renovations will be implemented strategically in phases during non-peak times to limit any potential interference with guests. Providing employment for more than 80 people in peak season, Rodd Grand Yarmouth prides itself in being a part of the local community.



HALIFAX STANFIELD LAUNCHES NEW VISUAL IDENTITY AND TAG LINE

The new **Halifax Stanfield** logo and tagline: Connecting Means the World, was recently unveiled at a public launch event for passengers, airport community members and stakeholders. "We are thrilled to share our new visual identity with the world," says Joyce Carter, HIAA President and CEO. "The focus of our new tagline, Connecting Means the World, reflects the potential Halifax Stanfield has to transform lives and to be a catalyst for growth in our region's economy. It also mirrors the essence of Halifax Stanfield — our people who create a positive, human and caring experience through the personal connections we make with passengers and visitors."

THE LUNG ASSOCIATION OF NOVA SCOTIA PARTNERS WITH CAMP BRIGADOON

The Lung Association of Nova Scotia is pleased to partner with Camp Brigadoon for a sixth year to bring Camp Treasure Chest to children and youth living with asthma and other lung diseases. Campers from across the Maritimes take part in a variety of activities while meeting other children who share similar experiences, all while under the watchful eye of doctors, nurses and respiratory therapists. Thanks to our donors, we can ensure that no camper is left out because of financial barriers. There is always a place around the campfire. For more information, visit www.ns.lung.ca.



HALIFAX AREA SENIOR CARE EXPERTS OFFERS SENIOR CYBERSECURITY

Canadians aged 65 and older represent the fastest growing group of Internet users according to Public Safety Canada, but they do not always take the precautionary steps to stay safe online. **Home Instead Senior Care** collaborated with Public Safety Canada to launch a new public education program, Protect Seniors Online, available at www.ProtectSeniorsOnline.ca. The program offers complimentary resources and tips to help seniors understand how scammers operate and take proactive steps to help protect sensitive information. For more information, call Home Instead Senior Care at 902-429-2273.

DMC OPENS NEW OFFICE

DMC is delighted to announce the opening of its Halifax office to better serve its many Nova Scotia clients and to welcome new clients. Since it began in 2002, DMC has achieved national success as a disability management company with more than 460 clients across Canada. DMC manages workers' compensation and sick leave claims for employers, and offers services in safety consulting, safety training, and industrial hygiene. By minimizing lost time and improving productivity, DMC delivers exceptional results: 91 per cent of DMC's clients pay below industry rates for workers' compensation and 94 per cent benefit from decreased claim costs. www.dmcconsulting.ca.



TESLA COMES TO THE HOLIDAY INN EXPRESS & SUITES HALIFAX BEDFORD

Palm Holdings is excited to announce the installation of 22 high-powered, electric vehicle charging stations for guest use across their properties in Canada and the United States. The new stations, installed through a partnership with electric auto manufacturer Tesla Motors and charging installation company EnviroSpark Energy Solutions, are located at Palm Holdings prominent hotels. Not only will these stations serve as an amenity for Palm Holdings' environmentally conscientious guests, but they will also serve to bolster Palm Holdings' commitment to cleaner air and environmental stewardship.

HALIFAX CONVENTION CENTRE CORPORATION CEO APPOINTED

The **Halifax Convention Centre Corporation** announced that Carrie Cussons has been appointed President and CEO of the organization for a contract period to Nov. 30, 2018. Cussons brings a diverse business background, including more than two decades of management experience with a concentration in financial and operational leadership. She joined the organization in 2009 as chief financial officer and oversaw the corporate services group with responsibility for finance, human resources and technology. She quickly became a strategic lead in all areas of the business and was responsible for developing and implementing the organization's plan to prepare for the transition to the new Halifax Convention Centre.



CATHERINE J. WOODMAN JOINS KNIGHTSBRIDGE ROBERTSON SURRETTE

Knightsbridge Robertson Surrette is pleased to welcome Catherine J. Woodman to the firm's Human Resource Consulting practice as a Senior Consultant focused on leadership solutions. As the firm helps clients strengthen their organizations through leadership and talent development, Woodman's uniquely diverse leadership experience in HR management and public relations offers client's valuable perspective. Woodman joins a diverse team of skilled professionals who comprise the firm's HR consulting practice. Together, they address a wide array of challenges beyond recruitment through leadership coaching and development, talent assessment, strategic planning, change management, compensation consulting and contract HR consulting services. www.KBRS.ca.



PROSTATE CANCER CANADA ATLANTIC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR APPOINTED

Prostate Cancer Canada is pleased to announce the appointment of Ellen Townshend as Executive Director for the Atlantic Region. Ellen has held senior roles in philanthropy for the past 10 years, including leading corporate development since joining Prostate Cancer Canada Atlantic in 2013. Ellen has a passion for connecting people and investing in her community. Congratulations!

ST. JOHN AMBULANCE NS/PEI RECEIVES GRANT

St. John Ambulance NS/PEI was recently granted \$150,000 by Bell Let's Talk. The funds will be used to innovate their national First Aid Training programs by including mental health first aid. The work will be led by N.S./P.E.I. Council in partnership with our National Office in Ottawa.

CUT STEAKHOUSE WINS COVETED AWARD

For another year, **CUT Steakhouse** has been awarded the coveted CAA/AAA Four Diamond Award. What is truly outstanding is that CUT Steakhouse has maintained this esteemed rating for nine consecutive years. There are only a total of six restaurants in Atlantic Canada to receive this highly esteemed Four Diamond Award in 2017. "We are tremendously proud of our staff ... this is truly their accomplishment," says Robert Risley, President of RCR. CUT Steakhouse offers a relaxed dining experience to please even the most sophisticated diners. CUT features dry-aged USDA prime beef, aged and butchered in-house to our own exacting specifications.



ARNARLAX TURNS TO MARITECH FOR INTEGRATED SEAFOOD SOFTWARE

Maritech, a global leader in seafood data and software, announced that Arnarlax, the largest farmer and producer of quality salmon in Iceland, has selected Maritech's software solution to streamline its business processes. When it came to the choice of a software provider to implement this ambitious digital expansion, the decision to partner with Maritech, which has more than 40 years of experience in developing software for and with the seafood industry, was as clear as the pure Icelandic waters from which the company draws its pristine quality fish stocks.

SOBEY SCHOOL OF BUSINESS MARKS 25 YEARS

2017 marks the 25th anniversary of the Sobeys School of Business at **Saint Mary's University** Executive MBA program. The program has helped more than 625 business leaders make an impact with purpose and it's still going strong. Businesses, not-for-profit organizations and government departments across the region have benefited from having a leader go through the Sobeys EMBA. This year, IvyExec.com has ranked the AACSB-Accredited Sobeys EMBA program fifth in Canada. As the second-year EMBA students leave in March for a 10-day whirlwind trade mission to Ho Chi Minh City, the year continues to accelerate toward an anniversary celebration with our partners and alumni in April.



THE LEUKEMIA & LYMPHOMA SOCIETY OF CANADA DELIVERS MORE THAN 200 CARE PACKAGES

In the summer of 2016, **The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society of Canada's** (LLSC) Atlantic Region launched their new patient care initiative, the Empower Pack (a free care package for blood cancer patients). They are proud to announce that since its launch, they have delivered more than 200 care packages across Atlantic Canada at no cost to the patients, and hope to continue this success in 2017 by delivering an additional 200-300 more care packages. The LLSC would like to thank their generous donors for their contribution in making this initiative possible. To learn more, visit www.llscanada.org/empowerpack.



NEW TERM BEGINS FOR NOVA SCOTIA ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® PRESIDENT

The Nova Scotia Association of REALTORS® (NSAR) is pleased to welcome its new President Anne Da Silva. Da Silva was handed the reigns from Roger Sanford at the Association's recent Annual General Meeting. Da Silva is a Real Estate Broker based in Halifax, Nova Scotia but works with offices around the Province. During her 13-year career, Anne has served on the Board of Directors of the Nova Scotia Association of REALTORS®, as a Regional Director twice for the Halifax-Dartmouth Region, Chair of Professional Standards and members of the Executive Committee as Vice President and President-Elect.

GREAT EARTH EXPEDITIONS INC. WINS AWARD

The folks at **Great Earth Expeditions Inc.** — Nova Scotia's adventure tour specialists have much to celebrate these days. They have recently been awarded Halifax's "Tour operator of the Year" from the *Luxury Travel Guide* based in the U.K. To celebrate their recent achievement, owner and local travel writer Ryan Barry has plans to open an office on the Halifax waterfront and begin offering foraging tours, camping trips and even international tours. Ryan will also begin filming for a local travel show in May which will showcase the hidden gems of Atlantic Canada. Visit www.greathearthexpeditions.com for more details.



Keeping our foot on the gas

Meet Chamber Chair Mark Fraser **By Erin Elaine Casey**

Mark Fraser has innovation on his mind. Innovation is a word that gets thrown around a lot these days, but it's probably safe to say that the new Chair of the Halifax Chamber of Commerce understands it better than most.

"I think we can do more," he says. "I also believe that a lot of people think that innovation equals science or technological adaptation, but it's not true. Just because you're better at something today than you were yesterday, doesn't mean it's innovation. It's improvement."

Fraser is Executive Vice President and partner in T4G, an agency that focuses on "brilliant technology solutions for your business." T4G's work spans

digital marketing, custom development, managed services and leadership on the forefront of data science. The company serves the retail, travel, financial services, communications and public sectors.

Winding your way through the maze of tidy yet funky cubicles and bright offices that house T4G's 64 Halifax employees, it's easy to see where Fraser gets at least some of his infectious energy. Everyone is clearly working very hard, and most of the faces that glance up to check us out as we walk by are — there's no other way to say it — young.

A series of twists and turns leads us to a large conference room with a wall of windows looking out on a utilitarian

plaza of small businesses on Kempt Road. Fraser jokes about the slightly gritty view, saying T4G has a long-standing tradition of setting up shop in city neighbourhoods that are more "up-and-coming" than currently "cool."

But in fact, nothing could be cooler than this open-concept office and Fraser himself, dressed casually in jeans and a patterned dress shirt. In a way, it's the "hidden gem" factor of T4G and dozens of other innovative businesses and organizations in Halifax that inspires and drives Fraser in his work to promote this city as a leader in innovation and economic growth.

"This idea that there's nothing



Photos by Paul Darrow

here,” Fraser says, smiling. “We need to break that, because there’s lots here. We can always do a better job of storytelling. The days of companies being a ‘best kept secret’ need to be over.”

So do the days of Halifax itself playing second fiddle.

Fraser sees opportunity all around us, from the exceptional talent pool graduating from Halifax’s many post-secondary institutions to the flow of skilled immigrants to the increasing roster of internationally successful businesses. “There are enough businesses here doing well on the global stage that we can say: These are not flukes,” he says. “We’ve got a good thing going and that proves that



“There are enough businesses here doing well on the global stage that we can say: These are not flukes. We’ve got a good thing going and that proves that this is a scalable phenomenon.”

— Mark Fraser, Executive Vice President, Partner, T4G

this is a scalable phenomenon.”

Fraser should know. He’s been with T4G Limited, a Canadian company with more than 220 employees, offices across Canada and a growing presence in the United States, for 18 years. Today, Fraser is responsible for the firm’s digital marketing practice, including T4G Kick — a full service digital-first agency — as well as the content and campaign execution delivery teams. Over the years, he has played a key role in the growth of the firm and been engaged in many of the company’s key accounts.

At the Halifax Chamber AGM in April, Fraser moved from his board position of Vice-Chair and took over as chair of North America’s oldest chamber of commerce.

“Patrick Sullivan and his team are the face of the Chamber for activities, public statements, and lobbying,” he explains. “The role of the board is governance and setting long-term strategy. We’re part of the business community and we have to be the conscience of the community. Our job on the board is to be listening and listening really well, and that takes time and effort. That can be hard to do if you don’t practice it.

“I’m thrilled that I was considered for the role,” he continues, “and I’m

excited to be in the middle of so many things happening! I’m looking forward to continuing the progress that the Chamber has made over the past few years.”

Fraser credits his staunch support for the business community to his long career at T4G. He grew up in Clayton Park, went to Halifax West High School and Mount Allison University, and set off on a trajectory that ultimately landed him at T4G in Toronto.

“In 2003, I moved back here from Toronto to open our office by choice. I choose to live here. The trade-off is being on a plane almost every week, but I make that choice because of what this region provides. It’s a great place to be.”

“We’re here because of the talent supply that this city provides,” he explains. “We didn’t come here for the work, we came here for the people. There’s a heavy concentration of post-secondary institutions, and for this reason we’ve done a terrific job of attracting talent that is extremely capable, highly skilled, and very loyal. Turnover rate is very low. And we’ve been able to translate that into being a great place to work.”

T4G was recently named to the Great Place to Work list in Canada for the 10th year in a row.



What does this perspective mean to Fraser's role at the Chamber? He believes not so much in products, and systems, and, well, stuff. He believes in people, and in their talent, education, skills, commitment and ideas. He believes the future lies in cultivating, capturing, and exporting what we do best: creating and innovating.

"We've got a wonderful opportunity to look at new things we can export. We're pretty solid in exporting products, but we can look more at exporting services. Advanced analytics and innovation services are a great example. Our ability to export that in Canada and the U.S. is directly related to our excellent talent supply. That's something I think we can do more with."

Fraser also believes there is more we can do to improve youth retention in the region. "It's not about convincing people this is the only place in the world to be," he says. "It's about communicating to youth that there are fantastic companies here where you can start and keep a very satisfying and joyful employment experience. And if you do choose to move outside the region, there are awesome organizations to come back to if you choose to come back."

Improving immigration rates and skills development are also key goals for the Chamber and for Fraser personally. "All that construction around the city requires skilled workers," he explains. "In terms of immigration, the Chamber has worked hand in hand with Nova

“It's not about convincing people this is the only place in the world to be — it's about communicating to youth that there are fantastic companies here where you can start and keep a very satisfying and joyful employment experience.”

— Mark Fraser, Executive Vice President, Partner, T4G

Scotia Immigration to provide support to the business community and to lobby the federal government for increased quotas, particularly for the provincial nominee program. Last year saw our highest number of immigrants to Nova Scotia since World War II. Immigrants are essential to our economic success in this region — there's more to be done. If it were up to me, there would be no limit to the number of skilled workers we can attract and bring in."

The economic challenges in this region are magnified by demographics: an aging population, a low birth rate and youth outmigration.

"Those three factors conspire to create a very challenging economic situation. We can mitigate that by keeping our foot on the gas when it comes to immigration, and being energetically creative when it comes to exporting services," says Fraser.

Fraser has another vision for Halifax, one that also fits squarely in the hidden gem category: He thinks Nova Scotia, and Halifax in particular, is the perfect place for seniors.

"Nova Scotia has a wonderful opportunity to turn our demographic disadvantage to an economic advantage. We have the conditions here to create real estate development to attract retirees who have money to spend: recreational activities, top-notch health care and world-leading research in areas critically important to seniors. We're known worldwide for orthopaedic research, for example, and there are health tech and information and communications technology start-ups focusing on the seniors market. The talent to care for us is here — being able to project that to the broader seniors community is key."

The timing for this particular kind of innovation is ideal, and Fraser thinks more and more aging Canadians will consider staying and living in Canada more of the time.

"With the right policy development from the provincial government, and the right mindset from the business community, we have a great opportunity to be known worldwide as THE place to age gracefully."

This ability to see the bright side and wring every ounce of energy and positivity out of life is not limited to Fraser's work world. As an alumnus of Mount Allison, he serves as a Regent and member of the executive committee of the Mount Allison University Board of Regents. He's also a graduate of the comprehensive Program for Leadership Development at Harvard Business School. In 2007, Fraser was named as one of Canada's Top 40 Under 40.

Oh, and he's also a marathoner and a Level 1 Alpine Ski Canada Official.

Running marathons is another way for Fraser to exercise his drive and commitment and get some time for himself. He does one every couple of years, and is running the Berlin marathon this fall. Life is, after all, very busy. His "very patient" wife, Mylene, is an entrepreneur with her own interior decorating business, and 14-year-old son, Cole, and 12-year-old daughter, Paige, are competitive alpine skiers.

"For me, running is my opportunity to think. It's therapeutic and I get to do my own private problem solving."

To wrap up, we talk about the Chamber's goal to make Halifax among the top three highest growth city economies in Canada by 2018, and Fraser practically jumps out of his seat.

"We've already achieved it!" he says. "In 2017, it looks like Halifax will be still among the top three city growth economies in the country."

The Conference Board of Canada places Halifax, with a projected GDP growth in 2017 of 2.4 per cent, tied for third for growth among the top 13 census metropolitan areas (CMAs).

This is no accident. "The Chamber worked to support the attraction of mega-projects like the Big Lift, Nova Centre, shipbuilding, and producing materials for Muskrat Falls. More than 80 per cent of our members have fewer than 24 employees. It can be hard for smaller businesses to get involved in those things. The Chamber's programs and services helped our members be a part of those big projects."

"Our job now is to create a new strategic goal," Fraser says.

It's clear that for him, optimism is evidence-based, not pie-in-the-sky. He knows Halifax will grow because it has the talent, perseverance, skills, track record — and most importantly, people — to thrive. ♦



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ATTRACTING ENTREPRENEURS

Photo: Joseph Robichaud/Tanglewood Studio

An open door policy

Canada's Start-up Visa program attracting entrepreneurs from around the world **By Jon Hiltz**

One need only turn on nightly news to see that xenophobia — and the urge to close borders to outsiders — seems to be on the rise in today's world. Thankfully, Canada is standing out as a noticeable exception to that trend.

In fact, our country has put in place programs and incentives designed to attract entrepreneurs to our shores. Case in point is Canada's Start-up Visa program, offered in Nova Scotia through companies like Innovacorp. In place since 2014, this program is designed to entice entrepreneurs with the skills and vision to build innovative businesses and create jobs for Canadians.

"Most of our applications come from the ICT, life sciences, clean technology and ocean technology sectors," explains Innovacorp CEO Stephen Duff. "We tend to see the majority of applications coming from the ICT sector — probably because it typically has the lowest barrier

The local and federal government, as well as local agencies like Innovacorp, are offering many supporting programs to start-ups to help them bootstrap through the early stages, which we found greatly helpful and user-friendly."

— **Dr. Hai Hu,**
Co-Founder,
Orgrimmar
Technologies Inc.

to entry in terms of start-up capital requirements of any sector we work with. Software companies in particular are also much easier to relocate than companies with significant physical assets or infrastructure."

Duff says potentially successful applicants for Innovacorp need to have "a unique technology product and/or service that cannot be easily duplicated. In addition, the business must be past the idea stage and have a working prototype."

These are just some of the criteria required — this is not an easy club to join. Since 2014, Innovacorp has seen many applicants, but few who have crossed the finish line.

"We have had more than 500 applicants and have accepted six companies into the program to date: MouseStats (ICT, Iran), Skyline (ICT, China), Shout! (ICT, Portugal), Agada Biosciences

“ We tend to see the majority of applications coming from the ICT sector — probably because it typically has the lowest barrier to entry in terms of start-up capital requirements of any sector we work with.”

— Stephen Duff,
CEO, Innovacorp

(life sciences, U.S.), Apptonomy (ICT, Costa Rica), Inboundli (ICT, Germany).”

One of these companies, MouseStats, agreed to talk about its experiences with the program, and tell *Business Voice* why it is such a needed commodity in today’s business world.

“MouseStats is a visitor experience analytics suite for websites. Website owners are utilizing our services to get insights on how visitors are interacting with their webpages,” explains CEO Kousha Nakhaei.

Kousha and his brother Ehsan, brought their expertise from Iran, and they are convinced this was the right decision for them and the company.

“Running an information technology start-up needs some strong IT-related infrastructures. Our service main target audiences were premier websites and other world-class start-ups, as well as local businesses.”

Further to that point, Kousha has some very positive words for both the start-up program and for Canada.

“A few countries had start-up visas and Canada was the best choice. This includes great Internet infrastructure, supported in a high priority in almost all services, good investment opportunities, and the most important thing: a clear and fair residency path. Canada has not forgotten the point that humans are behind start-ups, and a job is just a part of life. No one is truly interested in investing time, money and paying taxes in a country which you are not accepted as a real resident.”



Photo: Contributed

Originally, the two brothers had not even considered Canada as a choice, but that quickly changed.

“Our initial goal was to register an overseas corporation, and immigration was not in mind. I was searching

and comparing overseas options, and I randomly got to know some countries that were starting start-up visa programs. I searched more and reached the CIC website and read about Canada’s Start-up Visa. The description was more than

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appealing, addressing all our business requirements, and we made it our top priority.”

The fact that Kousha and his brother were able to qualify is a testament to not only their keen instinct on where to do business, but also indicates that Innovacorp knows how to vet the proper companies. The process is quite an uphill climb and rightfully so.

“The whole procedure took over a year and a half. We had been interviewed by Innovacorp for more than six months and I think getting hired at Google requires less interviews. This time is reasonable [however] if one considers how complicated it is evaluating a start-up.”

Moving forward, MouseStats clearly has taken advantage of the opportunities available to them in the great white north.

“We are permanent residents now, living in Halifax. The company has grown in the past year and a-half, and several famous international enterprises are among our customers. More than 95 per cent of our earnings are made outside Canada, mostly from U.S. We are paying taxes and taking advantages of available infrastructures here.”

Another company that has taken advantage of Start-up visa incentives is Orgrimmar Technologies Inc. Also known as Skyline, they are a Halifax-based tech start-up in the enterprise software solution space.

“We help mid-sized, high-growth companies convert their data into

insights and action by rapidly building custom workflow apps and dashboards that connect data, systems and people,” said Dr. Hai Hu, one of two company founders. Dr. Hu and his colleague, Dr. Changhai Jiang are now permanent residents from China and have eight employees in Halifax and Beijing.

Hu is clearly aware of the services available to him by bringing his company to Nova Scotia as opposed to elsewhere.

“Having experienced both Beijing and Silicon Valley, Halifax draws our attention for its many great benefits for a tech start-up. First, we have a big pool of young grads in engineering and technology, with a notably lower salary base as well as renting costs, which helps the company to run lean and grow fast,” he says.

“Second, the local and federal government, as well as local agencies like Innovacorp are offering many supporting programs to start-ups to help them bootstrap through the early stages, which we found greatly helpful and user-friendly. Last but not least, Halifax is a great location culturally and geographically as a gateway to the North American market. Ontario and the East Coast U.S. is close enough to build business ties.”

Hu also recognized the process and the help that Innovacorp provided to make their connection a viable one.

“It’s a very efficient and well organized process. We have all the help we need from Innovacorp throughout the entire process before and after landing in Halifax.”

“Canada has not forgotten the point that humans are behind start-ups, and a job is just a part of life. No one is truly interested in investing time, money and paying taxes in a country which you are not accepted as a real resident.”

— Kousha Nakhaei,
CEO, MouseStats

In the end, four members of the Orgrimmar team received their permanent residency through the Start-up Visa program and things with the company are moving forward.

“It’s been great working from Halifax, we are still looking for a pilot customer here, but I am confident that with the value provided in our product and services, it should happen in the near future.”

As Orgrimmar expands, it will not only be good for them, but for Halifax as well, as they will continue making the great city their base of operations.

“We will grow our business locally from Halifax, and eventually extend to other parts of Canada and the US market.”

Most people who live in our expansive, opportunity-filled country will tell you firsthand that Canada is among the top places in the world to live. But hearing that from people who have come from many other countries around the globe, with their extensive research on the best places to do business, is a testament to the quality and efficiency of Canada’s appeal as a business destination.

As the Start-up Visa program continues to invite the best and brightest minds to join the Canadian experience and bring their talents to our soil, it’s clear that programs like these should make every Canadian feel proud.

To those who have been successful in bringing their companies to Canada through this program, Canadians say: “welcome home.” ♦

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Transformative ideas

A day with Barn Raisers will raise your company's roof **By Jon Tattrie**

The idea behind Halifax-based Barn Raisers is simple. Canada has plenty of businesses that want expert help to take them to the next level, but they don't want to hire an agency to access its public relations experts, creative directors, business strategists and copywriters. Instead, they hire Barn Raisers — and they bring the experts to them for a day of “accelerated strategic ideation.”

Co-founder Mike Maloney explains: “In the traditional agency model, someone from the company would be the liaison between the agency and the company,” he says. “The agency would go back and maybe a month later bring a couple of concepts. The person on the client side would then try and sell that to the rest of the company.”

You can see the gaps into which projects disappear. If the agency gets it a little wrong, or the liaison doesn't deliver the plan accurately, the whole thing falls apart. Barn Raisers gathers all the key players in the same room for the day session. “We eliminate all of those steps. We make the client a part of the agency for the day.”

Maloney is the communications and media expert, bringing his 20 years in public relations with companies including the Nova Scotia Liquor Commission, Adobe, Corel and Cisco Systems. Co-founder Brian Hickling is the advertising and brand specialist, drawing on his two decades working on ad campaigns for the likes of Ikea, Nike, Labatts and Rogers Communications. Chaz Thorne, the corporate strategist, uses his MBA and 20 years in business to bring a veteran eye to operations.

“Our goal is if they have a marketing challenge, a branding issue, or an innovation challenge, we help them generate up to 100 ideas to solve that problem and then narrow it down to five or 10 transformative ideas that they'll want to run with immediately,” Maloney says.

Barn Raisers started as The Give Agency. “It was a one-week pop-up agency where we invite marketers and ideas people from all different disciplines together in one room for one week to help non-profits, free of charge,” Maloney says.



From left, Chaz Thorne, Mike Maloney and Brian Hickling are the three principles of Barn Raisers Inc. You can find them at www.barnraisersinc.com.

Photos: Contributed



“If you're standing still, you're going backwards. A lot of companies realize they need to continually innovate and move forward, but they just don't know how to do it.”

— Mike Maloney, Co-founder, Barn Raisers

They held the first session in Halifax for Feed Nova Scotia. The day produced one really big idea: Nova Scotia's Biggest Potluck, which had citizens host their own potlucks across the province to raise money for the food bank. It cost \$200 to organize the potluck, and it brought in \$33,000.

“That has since taken off tremendously and we are in final talks with a national retailer to blow that out nationally,” Maloney says, adding that Canada's Biggest Potluck would benefit food banks across the country. “One of our first ideas

from our first day is now in a position to earn millions for non-profits. We knew we were onto something good.”

That's when they opened Barn Raisers to do the same thing for businesses. They still pop-up The Give Agency and helped good causes, with weeks in Toronto and Halifax in 2017. Maloney says the investment brings rewards.

“If you're standing still, you're going backwards. A lot of companies realize they need to continually innovate and move forward, but they just don't know how to do it.”

Growing our numbers

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The latest population trends signal progress **By Ron Hanlon, President and CEO, Halifax Partnership**

Halifax's five-year Economic Growth Plan for 2016-21 has set an ambitious vision for long-term economic and population growth. By 2031, we aim to grow Halifax's population to 550,000. And we're on the right track. To meet our target, we need to make Halifax the most welcoming to immigrants and young professionals.

This has been a record year for population growth. We grew by two per cent, the city's best population growth since 2001, bringing our annual growth above the 1.7 per cent target. This is a great start, but we need to continue to build on this success for the next 15 years to sustain our growth. The new ONE N.S. Dashboard — a dashboard measuring progress toward the ONE N.S. goals — shows that we're also making progress on our provincial population goals. More working age Nova Scotians are staying, more people are moving here from other provinces, and some people who left are now returning. We are also seeing a trend towards increased immigration and a growing number of international students studying at our universities and colleges. Given opportunities, many are choosing to stay here after graduation. This is all

positive news for our city and province — trends that must continue for long-term economic growth and prosperity.

There's never been more support for businesses to attract global talent and grow their workforces. It just became easier to hire immigrants and international graduates through the Atlantic Immigration Pilot. Through this program, Nova Scotia can nominate 800 more immigrants for fast-tracking into the province. International professionals are provided priority processing at the federal level and quicker access to a work permit, while employers can access permanent intermediate skilled labour and international graduates without submitting a Labour Market Impact Assessment Form. This is an incredible opportunity to grow our population and skilled workforce. However, it's a case of "use it or lose it." Nova Scotia employers need to demonstrate the demand for immigrants or these 800 positions will be delegated elsewhere.

Growing our population also depends on our ability to retain young professionals. The Partnership's Game Changers Action Plan was inspired by a call to action from the *One Nova Scotia*

Report to stem youth out-migration. Game Changers is inspiring and supporting businesses to hire young professionals, provide experiential learning opportunities, and connect young people to local business networks through the Partnership's Connector Program. The goal is to reduce the net average loss of youth from 1,300 a year to 0 by 2019. We are already seeing progress with 500 more youth aged 20-29 staying in the province in 2015-2016 than the year before. Moreover, Halifax saw an increase in the number of youth aged 20-29 for the first time in 10 years. The new *Game Changers Guide to Hiring Youth* provides the information and resources businesses need to hire and engage young professionals, and can be downloaded at halifaxgamechangers.com.

Every business has a role to play in making Halifax a top location for talent. I encourage you to take advantage of the Atlantic Immigration Pilot, the Game Changers Action Plan and other workforce development programs. Let's keep moving in the right direction and working together to make Halifax and Nova Scotia a more welcoming, attractive place to live and work.



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Are your employees stealing from you?

Three things that allow it to happen



JENNIFER NICHOLSON CPA, CA,
PARTNER, EXECUTIVE FINANCE

How did you feel when you read that title? Did your chest tighten as you thought: “Wow, I hope not!” Did you think “Absolutely not — I have great employees who would never do that!” Well, think again.

The Association of Certified Fraud Examiners has consistently reported that, on average, organizations “typically lose five per cent of their revenue in a given year as a result of fraud.” If fraud were a country it would have the fifth largest economy in the world today. Seriously! This consists of a mix of fraudulent financial reporting — where senior executives “cook the books” to meet the expectations of investors and creditors, and misappropriation of assets, where employees steal from their employers.

Both are common. We are all familiar with Enron, WorldCom, Livent, Sino Forest and numerous other high-profile multi-billion-dollar financial statements frauds, but often it is much closer to home. Recently it was disclosed that James Gladden, Vice President of Information Technology for the Alberta Motor Association (AMA), a non-profit organization, allegedly defrauded his employer of \$8.2 million over a three-year period. This is a shockingly large amount over a relatively short period of time, especially for an NPO. Sadly, frauds like this are discovered all the time, which means many more are happening and haven’t yet been discovered and may never be.

How does this still happen after all of the awareness of fraud and changes to auditing standards? Let’s look at the Fraud Triangle. This illustration shows the three risk factors necessary for fraud to occur:

OPPORTUNITY

Fraud happens when it can. Fraudsters find loopholes in systems and procedures that allow them to steal and get away with it. For us accountants, we call this a lack of internal control — defined as rules, requirements and system limitations that prevent and detect errors and fraud. In the AMA example referenced above, internal controls were weak. Gladden was trusted by his employer and had sole authority to process and approve the purchase and payment for goods and services used by AMA’s IT department. Because of this power he was able to fabricate invoices and funnel payments to his own companies. In his role as VP of Information Technology, he was also able to give himself authorization to view senior executive email accounts and therefore access to information not required for his job. His fraud was uncovered when he was forced to go on disability leave and someone else took over his duties.

Ensure you have tight internal controls in place such as segregation of duties, dual signatures and computer controls that limit access to sensitive information.

PRESSURE

Gladden owned expensive cars and homes — including a vacation home in Arizona and a \$5-million investment property in Edmonton. He lived a lifestyle that was far beyond what he could afford on his \$210,000 a year salary.

Employees will look for opportunities to commit fraud when they feel pressure to “keep up with the Joneses,” have excessive personal financial obligations or need to support an addiction such as gambling or drugs. Look for signs that your employees are living beyond their means or exhibit suspicious behavior that hints at an addiction.

FRAUD TRIANGLE



RATIONALIZATION

The claims against Gladden are yet unproven, so we don’t know what the rationalization for his theft was. Most corporate fraud is committed by first time offenders who don’t see themselves as criminals. The fraudster justifies their behaviour to themselves in a way that is acceptable to their internal moral compass. Sometimes the employee believes that they are just “borrowing” money and will pay it back eventually. Sometimes the employee is dissatisfied at work due to inadequate pay or a perceived slight and believes management deserves it. And sometimes management cheats customers or uses high pressure sales tactics themselves and therefore the employee believes that they are justified in their fraudulent behaviour.

There is an old “20-60-20” rule that says that 20 per cent of the people will do the right thing all the time, 20 per cent of the people will do the wrong thing in most instances if given the opportunity and the other 60 per cent can be swayed either way. This leaves a lot up to the “opportunity” point of the fraud triangle. So tight internal controls, continuous monitoring and strong management oversight are required to protect your hard earned assets.

To learn more about how to protect your business from employee fraud contact Executive Finance Partners.

Collaboration is key

The strategy that opens the door to amazing relationships

**JOHANNA
ELIOT**
PRESIDENT,
ELIOT & VINE



In the restaurant industry, the ability to tap into a hyper-interactive digital world excites us and also challenges us to stay relevant and re-think how we view our internal and external relationships. The deeper we look, the more we realize our connections are limitless and that to succeed, collaboration is key! Technology has put the world at our fingertips and has drastically increased the audience that both our private and work lives can reach.

Internally, it's important to create an environment that merges employees' individual goals with those of the business. Knowing an employee's end goal helps the employer and employee work together and consider what roles and tasks will help them achieve job satisfaction and also reach their ambitions. Collaborating with your team also means having an environment that fosters the sharing of ideas, and suggestions for innovation. Employees who interact directly with your customers will have unique and important perspectives on ways to innovate that will keep your customers coming back again and again.

Externally, there is a vast pool of potential partners when thinking of collaborating externally. For a restaurant these will vary from vineyards to local food tours, from guests to local foodie influencers. One of our favourite ways to collaborate is to plan intimate dinner events, with offerings different from our regular menu. We partner with our wine, beer and spirits suppliers and influential personalities in the industry to create special beverage and food pairings, shared over some great storytelling in an intimate setting. This works well for



Photo: dmmmentorp/123RF



Employees who interact directly with your customers will have unique and important perspectives on ways to innovate that will keep your customers coming back again and again."

us because we help and trust each other, have an open line of communication and possess similar values.

Our dinner guests play an integral role in the success of our business. Not only do they help to push our brand by telling others and sharing their experience digitally, they also give us much-appreciated feedback. Feedback gives us an opportunity to improve and innovate, adds value to our business, and helps us to commend and train our employees. Because of the way we interact with our guests, we've come across people with great culinary know-how who've ended up contributing articles on our blog, sharing their insights of the food world.

Food festivals present opportunities to promote our brand while being a part of and interacting with our local community. One thing to note is that not all partnerships will necessarily involve the product or service you deal with. At Eliot

& Vine, we also make sure we do our part to contribute to local charities to help with their fundraising endeavours.

As seasons change, we tweak our menu to reflect the change in local fare. When our new menu is ready, we love to bring in local influencers, the media and some of our valued guests to have a taste of our new offerings and give us honest feedback. This allows us to provide engaging content for our media and in return, get feedback plus some press and photography for our restaurant.

At the end, measuring the success of a collaborative effort helps us to assess what went well and where we would improve next time. Adapting and evolving based on that data is what will make future partnerships easier to execute and more successful. Collaborating demands of us to realize that there is enough to go around for everyone. This is what opens the door to amazing relationships.

Ditch the company potluck

Challenge is the most important element in team building exercises



DANIELLE RUSSELL MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR, SCOTIABANK BLUE NOSE MARATHON

Team building is the most important investment you'll make for your business. It builds trust, encourages communication, increases collaboration and allows your team to learn new skills. Effective team building activities will almost always lead to more engaged employees — an invaluable asset for every employer.

When considering your next corporate team building activity, seek out experiences that challenge your team. Choosing an activity that's unique and slightly outside of people's comfort zones will encourage them to come together in a new way. Potlucks, barbecues and weekend retreats are wonderful networking opportunities, but they lack the most important element of a successful team building activity: the challenge.

Introducing: **The Killam Properties Marathon Team Relay.**

Perfect for people of all fitness levels, the Marathon Team Relay provides a unique opportunity for individuals to run the Scotiabank Blue Nose Marathon in an entirely new and exciting way — as part of a team!

In teams of four to eight people, Relay participants will each run a portion of the full marathon course, running amongst participants from the Marathon, Half Marathon and 10K. At the end of the final leg, the team will cross the finish line together and have the bragging rights of finishing a marathon (and a shiny new medal to hang in the office!).

The rush of crossing a finish line is like no other — you're tired but energised,



Photos: Contributed

“Perfect for people of all fitness levels, the Marathon Team Relay provides a unique opportunity for individuals to run the Scotiabank Blue Nose Marathon in an entirely new and exciting way — as part of a team!”

you're excited, you're proud, and you're already counting down the days until your next race. Crossing the finishing line together with your colleagues will be an experience like no other, guaranteed to be fondly remembered for years to come.

The relay breaks the marathon route up into eight legs, which range from 3.8 to 6.3 km in distance to welcome people of all fitness abilities. What makes the event so great for team building is that it's not about how fast you get to the finish line, but how much fun you have getting there. It's not a team building event that lasts one day, as the weeks leading up to the event are sure to bring many other team building opportunities. Many corporate Relay teams train for the event together. This can involve running, cross training, stretching and trying new healthy recipes as a group.

The Blue Nose Marathon welcomes approximately 13,000 participants to the event each year — there's entertainment on course, spectators cheering you on all over the city, and even a dedicated running support team to help you over those pesky hills. There's never a dull moment on race weekend and everybody walks away feeling inspired, motivated and proud to have been a part of Atlantic Canada's largest running event.

So, instead of planning an activity that feels like another day at the office — why not try out the Killam Properties Marathon Team Relay? Spend time together, share an experience and work towards a common goal — it'll be your best time ever!

The Scotiabank Blue Nose Marathon takes place May 19-21, 2017.

So what happens now?

The Chamber continues to work on the files important to our members



NANCY CONRAD SENIOR VP
POLICY, HALIFAX CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE

You may have seen the work we have done over the past few months on pre-budget submissions, letters to government and commentary on issues that impacts you — our members — and you may have thought so ok, but then what?

Well, we continue to work on the files — via meetings with government officials and our elected leaders — MPs, MLAs, ministers, the mayor and council, reminding them of the issues that impact you every day. At these meetings, via our communications vehicles and in social media, the lines have been drawn, these are our expectations and we want action. Whatever it takes to get the job done, we do it.

Our members value a competitive tax regime, regulations that make sense and an open for business environment.

In our advocacy efforts, the key focus continues to be tax reduction, regulation reduction and indexing personal income tax brackets. Governments have many competing demands and voices. Some say why not increase spending. But we must live within our means. We pay some of the highest taxes in the country. It is critical that the concerns and impact on our members be heard — consistently and often. Certainly, there are many that view the business community does not understand or even contribute to the needs of the community. Businesses hire people, support many on-the-ground initiatives and pay lots of taxes that in turn support education, health and community services.



We step up and take the backlash when needed or we support those leading the charge for change.”

This is long-game work. It requires being watchful for a shift in the political winds to ramp up, pivot quickly and raise the volume on our work.

So, do we make a difference? Yes. The last time you pre-cleared at the Halifax Airport, shopped on Sunday, heard talk about coding in the classrooms, healthy workplaces, a rebalance of commercial and residential tax burden, and the urgency around our demographic issues to name a few — we were there.

But we are ground level as well — connecting you to who and where you need us, commenting on bylaws that don't make sense, questioning the lack of predictable development approval times, seeking efficient transit and even raising

the dialogue on commuter rail. Front line customer service and regulatory issues are huge for our members so the attention by both the provincial and municipal governments after many years is gratifying.

We are your champions, leaders and collaborators. We are your local Chamber on the ground working for you for more than 250 years — 100 years before confederation by the way. We step up and take the backlash when needed or we support those leading the charge for change. Whatever it takes to get the job done.

So, keep in touch and when your Chamber staff calls let us know. We want to hear from you — we walk the talk.

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Funding to grow

Connecting companies with the resources they need to succeed



KAYLA COTTON HALIFAX
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Imagine, for a moment, your business thriving at its highest potential. What does this look like? Depending on your business, the answer may be a better product, new technologies or a wider client base. No matter the answer or business, the most important question to ask is; what is holding you back from succeeding?

For many businesses, the answer is cash flow. There are many opportunities to receive grants, incentives and funding for Nova Scotians through many different organizations and we've made finding the right match extremely simple. Providing easy access to funding is just one of the many resources offered through **Grow HALIFAX**, a Halifax Chamber of Commerce initiative.

Grow HALIFAX was created as a way to connect our members to the resources

they need to be productive and competitive in today's market. This is achieved by determining needs, making meaningful connections, delivering training/education programs, executing events and providing access to funding.

Just head to our website, www.halifaxchamber.com and click 'Funding Opportunities' under the **Grow HALIFAX** tab. There, you'll find dozens of links to funding programs in different categories including opportunities specific for small businesses, start-ups, exporters and creative industries. Funding is also available for staffing, training and increasing diversity in the workplace.

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

An example of an opportunity available to business owners in Nova Scotia is the Workplace Innovation and Productivity Skills Incentive (WIPSI). This initiative of the Canada Nova Scotia Job Grant and provides eligible employers with funding to invest in employee skills through workforce training.

WIPSI is designed to encourage employers to invest in training to:

- Improve productivity
- Increase innovation
- Support the introduction of new technology, machinery and equipment, or work processes

- Provide employees with transferable skills
- Upgrade skills
- Increase inter-provincial and international competitiveness
- Foster workplace diversity

Businesses of all sizes can receive up to \$10,000 per employee for skills upgrades, which include tuition, examination fees, textbooks and even travel costs.

Eligible applicants for WIPSI must be:

- Located in Nova Scotia
- Active in the NS Registry of Joint Companies/Incorporated by an Act of the Nova Scotia Legislature
- Have existed for more than one year
- Able to demonstrate the need for training
- At least \$25,000 in wages or owner remuneration

By taking advantage of funding opportunities, your business can grow faster to reach new successes. These resources are available to help invest in the future of your business, and when our businesses grow so does our city! So, check out our website for more information on funding available to Nova Scotia's, and feel free to reach out to us if you have any questions.

Are you interested in **Grow HALIFAX**?
Contact Ashley@halifaxchamber.com

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94%



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88%

Value our
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85%

Value our
Events



82%

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- 3 Build a vibrant downtown core

Our Members value our work



80%

are satisfied with their
Membership

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- 1 Group Health Insurance
- 2 Member to Member Marketplace
- 3 Home & Auto Insurance

"I can't say enough about the membership value that we receive from our Membership!"

The customer service is outstanding, the professional development opportunities are amazing and the Business Voice profile has done so much to enhance our organization."

*- Brenda Saunders-Todd, Executive Director,
Dress for Success Halifax*

Why businesses remain

- 1 Networking & development
- 2 Keep up to date on issues affecting business
- 3 Establish a business profile

A course with seaside charm

Chester Golf Club offers many interesting twists **By David Pretty**

Chester Golf Club in Mahone Bay is one of Nova Scotia's oldest and most unique golfing destinations. Its breezy, ocean-side vistas and tree-lined fairways have attracted and charmed players since 1955.

Club General Manager Dave MacMillan says Chester's "undulating and challenging greens" make for a genuine challenge.

"The greens and the precarious winds are the course's greatest defence," he adds.

Renowned Canadian course architects such as Bill Robinson, Graham Cooke and Les Furber have all contributed. The Chester course, for example, is a 6,100-yard, 18-hole, par-70 with many interesting twists. After three seaside holes, the course cuts into the woods and then emerges back onto the coast for the final three.

"The back nine is a wonderful series of ball striker's holes that can make or break your round," MacMillan enthuses.

The 17th hole brings players oceanside again to contend with the on-shore breeze. The 18th plays along the coast one final time before leading players back to the clubhouse for refreshments and more breathtaking views.

"First time visitors to Mahone Bay are always blown away," MacMillan says. "It's 'Canada's ocean playground' in one gorgeous vista."

Chester Golf Club's accessibility is also appealing.

"We're completely open to the public" MacMillan notes.

Atlantica Oak Island Resort and Conference Center, the Best Western in Bridgewater, and a few local bed and breakfast spots all offer affordable "stay

and play" deals for those who want to make a weekend out of their game.

Group rates, power carts, rental clubs, an on-site driving range and practice facilities, men's and women's locker rooms with showers and a fully-equipped boardroom all make Chester Golf Course an ideal destination for charity events and corporate outings.

"Our clubhouse is also a very popular dining destination," MacMillan adds. "We're particularly well-known for our seafood and our chowder is some of the best around."

Between the fantastic menu, friendly service, and spectacular view, dining at Chester is the perfect accompaniment to your golf day.

Make Chester Golf Course your play and dine destination this summer to discover a special place tailor-made for unforgettable memories!

A UNIQUE SEASIDE GOLFING EXPERIENCE



Chester offers visitors the magic of a classic golf course in a seaside setting. The course routing provides a golfing adventure that is both challenging and enjoyable for all skill levels. It is a joy to play, whether you aspire to break one hundred twenty or par of seventy. Any missed shots will be due to the distracting beauty of the Atlantic Ocean, the islands and the colourful sailboats tacking in the wind.

After your round, come in and sample some of the finest seafood found in Nova Scotia. We're told the seafood chowder is superb.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU!



220 Golf Course Rd • Chester • NS • www.chestergolfclub.ca • Tee Times & Pro Shop: 902-275-4543 • Dinner Reservations: 902-275-4702

Beauty and challenging golf

Lost Creek is ideal for corporate events and tournaments **By Carol Dobson**

One of Nova Scotia's most beautiful golf courses, Lost Creek, in Beaver Bank, is getting geared up for a new season of golf for members and the general public.

Lost Creek has gone through 18 years of transformation, all to improve the aesthetics and play-ability. The enhanced quality and re-design of many holes has been the responsibility of Lost Creek's Superintendent Mike Duchesne, who has been awarded the 2017 Atlantic Canada's Superintendent of the Year Award. You will see it is well deserved when you play the course.

The club is ideally set up for corporate events, whether it's a company tournament, a reception, or a wedding. The fully-equipped and licensed clubhouse can serve up to 250 guests per day and the spacious upper deck is ideal for groups of up to 60 people, with another 60 being able to enjoy the new lower

deck. If the weather turns grey, there's a cozy fireplace at the ready.

Lost Creek makes life easier for those tasked with planning corporate events with a number of packages that can be tailored to make the day enjoyable

for all, especially the organizer.

Come and enjoy The Creek, only minutes from Bedford-Sackville and downtown Halifax -Dartmouth.

For information on the course and its offerings, contact at the club@lostcreek.ca.



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The best of past and present

Digby Pines mixes old fashioned charm with a challenging course **By Zack Metcalfe**

The famous golf course designer Stanley Thompson was known for his habit of incorporating the lay of the land into his final designs. In other words, he worked with what the landscape gave him, and of all the courses he championed from coast to coast, one awaits you in Digby.

"The layout, bunkering and stuff like that is all in his original design," said Scott Nickerson, Head Professional of Digby Pines Golf Resort. "Other than adding a few tee decks and parking lots, it's pretty much [as Stanley left it]. We have a lot of undulation in our fairways, and not a lot of flat ground, which puts a lot of extra trickiness into the game."

Unlike most modern courses, Nickerson and his staff make no effort to tame the forest lining the course's fairways, allowing for its 18 holes to be subdivided by true wilderness. Besides the natural

“Other than adding a few tee decks and parking lots, it's pretty much [as Stanley left it].”

— Scott Nickerson, Head Professional, Digby Pines Golf Resort

beauty this affords golfers, it also presents a challenge above and beyond the glades surrounding other courses.

"You're punished if you go in the woods," Nickerson joked, their thickness making a free swing difficult.

But golfers at Digby Pines have more to admire than just the trees. Several of the course's holes overlook the Annapolis Basin as well as the course's resort. The hotel, built in 1929, catches the eye with old fashioned charm.

Of course these antique details are complemented by the trappings of a modern course, with a resort restaurant, a 19th hole, spa, outdoor pool, outdoor chess,

hikes, some 30 cottages and packages which allow visitors to experience everything else this region has to offer. Nickerson makes special note of whale watching.

Digby Pines has approximately 150 members at its course, catering primarily to tourism traffic and one-off visits. But its all-inclusive memberships remain competitive. Nickerson said they hope to begin the 2017 season May 5 and will remain open until the weekend of Thanksgiving. In a typical year they'll host 20,000 rounds.

"We had one of our best years last year," he said, "and we're looking forward to topping it."



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Nothing beats a classic

Granite Springs prepares for 26th season **By Zack Metcalfe**

zack.metcalfe@gmail.com

Of all the courses in HRM, none offer quite as classic a golfing experience as Granite Springs, its humble greens nestled amid Bayside scenery.

David Perry is the club's general manager, taking the helm only recently, and as a lifelong golfer he attests to the uniqueness this course brings to the tee. For one, its holes are smaller than those of other courses and designed more tactfully, demanding strategy from its golfers rather than a strong swing. The 18 holes in question range from 6,400 yards down to 4,800 on front tee decks.

"They're not 7,500 yards, so you don't need to be a heavy-hitter to play them," said Perry. "It's more cerebral, so you need to think your way around the course and pick your spots."

Granite Springs also feels the wind of Shad Bay, its tees confronting these gales from several directions, which

creates a variety of challenging holes. As well, this club has been sprucing itself up in recent years, widening the course, softening its fairways and converting the relative jungle surrounding them into appealing glades.

"It's going to take on a new feel," said Perry.

Granite Springs makes a point of opening earlier than its provincial counterparts, beginning the season in late April and continuing well into November, weather permitting. And this year, their 26th running, Perry is reaching above and beyond the 20,000 rounds they've hosted in previous seasons. For this, he plans to use their facilities to the utmost.

The golf course itself is inland, said Perry, but their lodge, with a total capacity of more than 400 people, offers spectacular views of Bayside and the ocean which borders it. The lodge's dining room

is complimented by the Bayside Bar & Grill. Located between the front and back nine, the club itself hosts everything from tournaments to weddings.

Memberships range from fully privileged to intermediate and include speciality offers for senior and junior players. As well, Perry is introducing 20, 30 and 40 round golf passes which are entirely transferable and offer visitors a flexible alternative to memberships. Clinics will also be on offer for juniors and ladies.

All told, Perry said the true allure of Granite Springs is the natural beauty which surrounds it, said to be stunning enough in places that golfers have difficulty concentrating on their shots. This is true of the course, the lodge, even of the drive separating you from them.

"The people who play out here absolutely love it," he said, speaking, of course, from experience.



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The Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program

A new option for immigrating to Atlantic Canada **By Suzanne Rix**

Great news! There is a new option for employers wishing to hire immigrants and for immigrants wishing to immigrate to Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador. The Canadian government and the governments of the Atlantic Canadian Provinces have recently announced the new three-year Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program.

The program is designed to allow employers looking to fill labour gaps with applicants who meet their needs by providing them with job offers and settlement support. In 2017, up to 2,000 applications will be accepted under the program.



The program is designed to allow employers looking to fill labour gaps with applicants who meet their needs by providing them with job offers and settlement support.”

The Atlantic Immigration Pilot has two programs for skilled workers:

- The Atlantic High-Skilled Program; and
- The Atlantic Intermediate-Skilled Program.

It also has one program for international student graduates:

- The Atlantic International Graduate Program.

PROGRAMS FOR SKILLED WORKERS

For the skilled worker programs, the applicant must have worked for at least one year (1,560 hours total or 30 hours per week) within the last three years. The work must be paid, in one occupation, and at skill level O, A, B (high-skilled) or C (intermediate-skilled) of the National Occupational Classification (NOC).

This is a positive development because usually only NOC O, A and B work is considered eligible work (with certain limited exceptions), but the Atlantic Immigration Pilot also applies to NOC C occupations.

Another positive aspect of the Atlantic Immigration Pilot is that the minimum language level is Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) Level 4 in English or French. This is lower than the current requirement for most programs of CLB Level 5 or 7.

In terms of education, workers must show that they have either a Canadian high school or post-secondary diploma, certificate or degree; or an Educational Credential Assessment showing that their education is equal to a completed Canadian secondary (high school) or post-secondary diploma, certificate or degree.

PROGRAM FOR INTERNATIONAL GRADUATES

Applicants under the International Graduate Program do not need any work experience, but they do need a minimum two-year degree, diploma, certificate or trade/apprenticeship credential from a recognized publicly-funded institution in an Atlantic Canadian province.

Applicants need to have been a full-time student in Canada for at least two years and have graduated in the

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**deadline is six weeks from publication date*

last 12 months before applying. They need to have lived in one of the Atlantic Provinces for at least 16 months in the last two years before they graduated.

This will be a great option for international students wishing to stay in the region.

PROGRAMS FOR BOTH SKILLED WORKERS AND INTERNATIONAL GRADUATES

All applicants must have a job offer from a designated employer in an Atlantic Canadian Province (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island or Newfoundland and Labrador) for a non-seasonal job. Employers can apply to be designated and eligible under the Atlantic Immigration Pilot via applicable provincial bodies.

Although the employer does not need a Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA), the employer does need to show that efforts to hire locally have not been successful. The employer must also provide an individualized settlement plan co-signed with the foreign worker and must commit to working with a service provider organization on



Photo: Daniel Ernst, 123/RF



The Atlantic Immigration Pilot is a wonderful new option for both regional employers and qualified applicants wishing to come to Atlantic Canada who have a job offer from a designated employer!"

settlement and retention.

In summary, the Atlantic Immigration Pilot is a wonderful new option for both regional employers and qualified applicants wishing to come to Atlantic Canada who have a job offer

from a designated employer!

Suzanne Rix is a leading immigration lawyer and partner in the Halifax office of Cox & Palmer.



Helping you grow in Nova Scotia

Our immigration lawyers will help you navigate the complexities of immigration law so that you, your family or your employees can work or study in Canada.

Based in the Halifax office of Cox & Palmer, Suzanne Rix and Emily Racine advise clients on which type of immigration application would have the greatest success. Legal services are offered in English and German.

Cox & Palmer is a full-service, top-ranked Atlantic Canadian law firm with the knowledge and experience you can rely on for solid legal solutions. We work with clients to understand their needs and provide valuable advice when it matters most.

Suzanne Rix

srix@coxandpalmer.com
902.491.4124

Emily Racine

eracine@coxandpalmer.com
902.491.4102

coxandpalmerlaw.com
@coxandpalmer

COX & PALMER
The difference is a great relationship

Succession planning for small business owners

Making sure your wishes are respected **By Carol Dobson**

A will is one of the most important documents a person can have, as it exists to ensure their wishes are respected and acted upon after their demise. This is especially important if a person is the owner of a business, to ensure a succession plan is in place in case something unexpected happens.

In fact, Heather de Berdt Romilly, the Executive Director of the Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia, says that wills and estate planning calls (including personal health directives and powers of attorney) are top of the list in terms of the 20 thousand annual calls to LISNS' hotline.

"Our 'It's in Your Hands' document about life cycles is our most often requested publication," she says. "And it will be updated later this year as the legislation changes."

LISNS is currently in the process of making writing a will a more technically convenient process through the development of a wills app and is hoping to create a similar app for small business owners on various legal aspects of small business in the near future.

"We want to be able to take what is involved in writing a will, putting together the information that can be transferred into a will template so that an individual can do it and then have it reviewed by a lawyer," she says. "By helping people do that work up front, it will save on lawyers' fees and it will also be good for lawyers who do wills and estates because they will be able to be more efficient and do more wills. So both sides will know what is expected of them."

Over the past number of months a team of students from Saint Mary's University has been working under the Co-Curricular program at the university to develop the application. De Berdt Romilly says they have been an incredible asset and having one of the students as a Commonwealth Scholar doing a Masters degree in digital security encryption has been key when it comes to privacy issues



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— Heather de Berdt Romilly, Executive Director,
Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia

around the final version of the app.

The app has been beta tested in several different situations, including with volunteer navigators, students in the wills clinic at the Schulich School of Law, and at the IWK hospital.

The first step in developing the app was designing the 12 screens that include common phrases used in wills and the will template itself. Currently it can be filled in and saved to a USB drive or printed off in draft form. Then the individual can take the document to a lawyer for review, modifications and anything else required to make the will legal and valid.

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The final phase, she hopes, will be rolled out at the end of the year and will involve the will app, plus a way to create a personal health directive and power of attorney. Given the positive comments on the app so far, LISNS is already looking at how they can create similar apps for other legal aspects of life, including some geared for small business.

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Managing innovation can be tricky

Instead of managing, focus on creating the right conditions for innovation



MARK FRASER
CHAIR OF THE BOARD

At risk of upsetting the many engineers who read *Business Voice*, it is my opinion that innovation cannot be managed. There. I said it.

Although there are many tools and processes that can be employed for innovation, rigorous process and enterprise systems can have a negative impact on innovation efforts by suppressing creativity and spontaneity. So I am an advocate for an alternate model — one that is centered in attitude and behaviour. Instead of attempting to manage innovation, I believe that organizations should instead focus their resources on setting the conditions that will allow innovation to thrive.

Many companies, one way or the other, are working on innovation. This can range from back-of-napkin conversations all the way through to heavily funded and structured R&D departments. And I would argue that innovation can happen at any company, and with meaningful result, if the following six conditions were present.

1. A CULTURE WILLING TO TAKE RISK & ACCEPT FAILURE

Most attempts at innovation do not lead to success. Instead, they lead to other attempts at innovation. So be prepared to take risks with your efforts, and reward failure like you reward success: Good job, we got an answer, let's move on to the next challenge.

2. CROSS-FUNCTIONAL TRUST

Innovation will not thrive if it is only the “R&D people” that are engaged. Silos tend to create echo chambers that limit the intelligence of the team, while collisions among diverse team members add dimension and perspective to anything the team works on. Trust needs to be present on innovation programs right across the entire enterprise so that opportunities to innovate have already considered the sales team or the CFO, as opposed to isolating them from the process.

3. RESERVED TIME FOR THE EXERCISE OR PROGRAM

Truly successful innovation programs need to have company capacity reserved for it. Time and resources need to be set aside so that participants can plan for their activities, reduce the need for compromise when it comes to priorities and eliminate hope as an innovation strategy. Hope is never a good strategy for anything.

4. A COMMON LANGUAGE

Whether it is design thinking, agile or lean start-up, there are many commonly accepted approaches, systems and lexicons that can be used for teams to coordinate activity. The use of a common vernacular pays dividends, and it is less about which approach you use, and more that one is used consistently by all participants.

5. UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ADAPTATION AND INNOVATION

Adaptation — also known as incremental improvement — is NOT innovation. Adaptation is your job: the incremental improvements that companies make on a regular basis in response to changing market conditions, customer feedback and product roadmaps. Innovation is completely different. Adaptation changes the slope of the curve that your business is on today. Innovation puts you on a completely different curve altogether.

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6. LEADERSHIP

Leadership needs to be present on these initiatives. Leadership not only needs to support the setting of these conditions, but they also need to participate themselves. Innovation is increasingly being discussed at the board level within the enterprise and leadership is the conduit to the board, communicating the value of innovation in exchange for their commitment to make resources available. With leadership participation, that conversation will always be more productive, and will also help people feel more inspired — generating new leaders at all levels of the enterprise.

Managing innovation can be tricky. But these conditions will absolutely provide the right kind of internal supports for it to thrive. ♦

Mark Fraser is Chair of the Board of Directors of the Halifax Chamber of Commerce and Executive Vice President at T4G Limited. T4G's Innovation Practice (www.t4g.com/services/labs/) is concentrated in Halifax where they help companies bring to life innovation programs.

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