

UNQUESTIONABLY, THE WAY TO OVERCOME disruption is through innovation. Adecco launched its own innovation lab back in 2012 and tasked the team with spearheading new technologies and ideas for the staffing industry. Since then, the brilliant designers, technologists and engineers at Ignite have created pioneering apps, digital solutions and inventive workshops for Adecco and our clients. Every day, candidates, associates, recruiters and HR professionals use their designs to streamline job searches, improve the hiring process, increase efficiency, enhance reporting, and support career transitions. Simply put, Ignite helps connect the right people to the right work through their custom-built digital tools – and they're just getting started.

We sat down with Ignite's Strategist – Jon Bosworth – to discuss how companies can foster innovation internally and the lessons that arise from disruption.

Ignite was founded not only to design pioneering software for Adecco, but also to help our clients mitigate disruption by nurturing innovation from within. Do you think you've succeeded?

It's true that Ignite was founded as a countermeasure to the threat of disruption, but we don't operate out of that fear. We are motivated by the good that Adecco does for people and the transformative power of getting a great job.

We want to help our people focus on what they're best at – which is managing relationships with other people. Software can't manage relationships. But computers are faster and better at managing data, so if tech can lift that burden from people's shoulders, then they can focus on relationships. That's what drives us.

As far as disruption is concerned, the way to safeguard your business from it is to take a closer look at your processes and challenge any assumptions that were designed without a knowledge of digital technology. In an upcoming blog, Matthew David – the Product Manager for *Fetch* and *TxtOut* – advocates for the automation of data management tasks that are currently being performed by your staff. Not only will this make an immediate impact on your bottom line, but it will also make your business disruption-proof. Your team will be able to focus on relationship-building and understanding your clients.

With regards to succeeding in our mission, we don't see our mission as having an endpoint. Building technology isn't like building a house. There isn't a point where you are done and the hardhats come off and you put down your hammer. Technology products are living things. We will constantly be adding features, improving the products, and growing them

to address changes on the ground. Tech products should be thought of less like a movie or a book and more like *Facebook* or *Twitter*. When will *Facebook* be complete? When is *Twitter* determined a success? Digital products should constantly be growing and expanding to meet the needs of users. There are always more problems to solve and better ways to solve them.

In the last few decades particularly, we've witnessed the tremendous disruptions that technology is capable of bringing about. Entire industries have been toppled by a new app. Is technology still the primary driver of disruption and innovation, or could it stagnate?

Technology has always been the primary answer for solving human problems. When humans had a problem shaping rocks, they created the technology they needed to solve that problem: hammers and chisels. When Adecco told Ignite they were having challenges communicating with their associates about job opportunities, we created *Fetch*. We looked into the problem, validated its existence, explored why it was a problem, and then built a tool that solved that fundamental problem. And we keep on improving that tool to solve more and more problems for its users. Chances are, as long as there are humans, there will be problems and as long as there are problems, technology will be the way we solve them. We are a very inventive species.

Having said that, **digital** innovation is finite. Right now there are opportunities everywhere to look at problems that have historically been addressed through analogue measures and to challenge the assumptions that came with those measures. But once we have converted all the analogue assumptions to the digital reality, there will be less room for disruption in this domain.

Uber was able to disrupt personal transportation because that industry was built on analogue assumptions. You had to hail a taxi with your hands and pay cash. Uber came

and the user would end up happier – thereby disrupting personal transportation. So yes, digital technology is the driver of disruption right now, but before too long there will be new technologies that make the current digital systems obsolete, and then the cycle can start all over.

Everything moves so fast that there will always be a need for new ideas and progressive thinking. If you ever suspect that business has become stagnant or innovation has ended I'd say you aren't looking around enough. There will always be opportunities to innovate.

So what makes a company culture open to innovation and what stymies it? What steps can businesses take to foster innovation from within?

A company's culture emerges from the employees, and that culture translates to how operations are executed. A leader builds a team, the type of people they add to that team determines the type of culture and that culture shapes the business outcomes. Culture is fundamental to a company's brand. If the company hires people that believe in the brand mission and are passionate about their work, the culture will be more exciting and so will the environment, regardless of office layout or the quality of snacks.

Every business needs to cultivate a culture of innovation if they hope to be able to solve problems faster, work smarter, and be the best at their work. This all comes down to designing an atmosphere where new ideas are welcomed and given the opportunity to emerge without threat of retribution or consequences. Anthony Catanese, the Product Manager for our *Catalyst* workshops, recently wrote¹ about Cultivating a Culture of Innovation with more details about how we've helped teams – both within and outside of Adecco – shift their thinking to nurture creativity, innovation and a more rewarding work experience for employees.

We're hearing about a growing number of workplaces that have introduced progressive work perks like unstructured office hours, nap rooms, game areas, and even 4 day work weeks. Ignite offers some of these initiatives to inspire creativity among its staff. Do you think these types of next-generation office environments only work for startups and tech businesses, or do traditional work arrangements need disrupting across the board?

At Ignite, we definitely believe that the more opportunities you give people to reset, the more effective they can be when they do headsdowntime at their work.

[Editor's note: Adecco operates under the same belief. Our recent Health & Wellness issue of *Lead Magazine* explored this relationship.]

We collaborate a lot, and sometimes our best ideas come together over a game of foosball or a walk up the street for coffee. In our experience, when your teams depend on each other for success, you can trust them to manage their time and deliver the outcomes needed.

Our office environment emerges from our culture here. We all make suggestions and requests about what we want this environment to be to help us do the best work we can. It should also be noted that Ignite is the innovation lab for the biggest staffing company in the world, so we want to have a culture and an environment that is attractive to the best talent.

Ultimately, the environments we work in should reflect the culture of our teams and should facilitate the real work we do. But we also need to remember to respect, trust and appreciate our workforce. Most people spend more time at their work than they do at home, so the workplace should attempt to make their employees as comfortable as possible. These are the people you entrust with your brand every day.

The smart companies that realize this problem will change their thinking to be more comfortable and attractive to their talent; the companies that refuse to adapt to the changing needs of their workforce will ultimately lose their best talent to those smarter companies. At the end of the day, it makes better business sense to create an atmosphere your employees love to be in. That may be easier for startups than big companies, but in a big company the impact will be greater so it justifies the expense.

Some of Ignite's proposed early initiatives didn't take off right away or hit a snag. What did you learn about "failure", innovation and disruption? What advice do you have for companies who are currently experiencing disruption or setbacks?

Innovation is not a singular event, it is an ongoing process. Part of this process is failure. We have had some failures, but those failures have informed how we developed some of our best products, so the failures end up being important parts of the success. The reason we are committed to being lean is because we understand that failure will be the outcome more often than not, and we need the lessons of those failures to inform the successes. The biggest lessons

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Find that piece of your process that is slowing you down and attack that problem hard.”

we learned from some of our early products is to test more and test earlier. We now quickly build the most lightweight version of an idea to test it and see if it is worth investing in further. We've gotten better at understanding the data and setting success/fail thresholds earlier so we don't let a product that is not gaining adoption drag on too long.

For companies experiencing disruption, I'd advise them to look at their processes and find out what is slowing them down. Why are they unable to fulfill as fast as the disruptive force? Find that piece of your process that is slowing you down and attack that problem hard. If your processes are as digitized as possible your staff will be empowered to do their primary jobs better. In most cases, simply digitizing processes will make you disruption-proof.

In the event that this is not the problem, then I would recommend learning more about your customers' experience. Understand their problems better, their challenges better, and what value the disruptive force is providing that you are not. The answer is always hidden in the assumptions. You are susceptible to disruptions only when someone else can fulfill faster or more effectively because of a more streamlined process or because they know more about what the customer really wants than you do.

Ignite recently hosted an internal hackathon – a trend born in Silicon Valley tech companies but now being deployed in more traditional businesses as well. Although they sound a little sinister, they're helping companies solve problems and create innovative solutions internally. Can you explain how hackathons work and if they can benefit businesses in the midst of disruption?

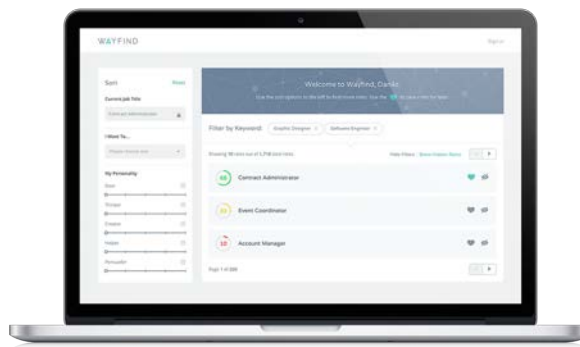
I believe every business would benefit from hackathons. We do them quarterly in an organized 48 hour event where we nominate problems we want to tackle, build small interdisciplinary teams that are compelled by the problems and then collaborate and prototype potential solutions to test. At the end we all come together, present our projects and show the outcomes.

We also have mini-hackathons frequently throughout projects. Whenever someone on a team is stuck on a problem, they are encouraged to gather their team together, throw a bunch of the perceived problems onto the whiteboard, add potential solutions and work through each of them together until we've hacked all the choices down to a few options, which propels the team toward solutions to test intelligently.

In fact, Ignite's *Catalyst* workshops are essentially augmented hackathons which we take to businesses. We facilitate bringing a team together, stripping away the hierarchy of their operations and working together to hack away at a problem they are facing.

What solutions is Ignite currently working on to continue disrupting the staffing industry and help people find their way to meaningful work?

We discovered that turnover at enterprise companies is at an all-time high (15%). Part of the reason that they're losing people is because digital products like *LinkedIn* and *Glassdoor* give employees more visibility into opportunities available outside of their company than within it. We also learned that millennials tend to change jobs every 3 years, largely because they're



looking for reasons to engage, clearer career paths at their companies, opportunities to grow, and investment in their talent development.

To confront all of this, we've designed *Wayfind*: a web-based tool that helps employees discover their dream job within their existing company. *Wayfind*'s user-friendly experience is more like *Facebook* than an employee survey. Employees take a brief self-assessment about their personality, interests, work styles and experiences. *Wayfind* then matches their profile to occupations in their existing company and even helps them understand how to navigate from their current role into a position they would excel at and love doing. We're really excited to be tackling the problems of turnover and career guidance through a digital solution that increases retention.

Our goal is to help Adecco digitize as many operations as possible to make us the best and fastest way for people to find the work they want and companies find the people they want. As we go along, we also collect a lot of data that is helping us understand the entire occupational life cycle. We hope to leverage this information to inform Adecco's approach to employment in the digital age. ■

1. <http://blog.ignitewithus.com/cultivating-innovation/>

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Professional

Consumer Expectations and Technology:

the driving changes of disruption in
workplace benefits and pensions

By Sun Life Financial



OUR EXPECTATIONS AS A SOCIETY ARE CHANGING. With the growing influence of millennials – and the speed of technological innovation – the bar keeps getting higher for meeting our evolving needs faster and more effectively. While technology will undoubtedly continue to transform the modes of healthcare and financial planning, the need for benefits and pensions will remain. People will still have to save for retirement, still want their dental and drug expenses reimbursed, and still require protection in the event of a catastrophic event such as a disability, major illness, or loss of life.

Nonetheless, technologies such as tele-healthcare, wearable devices and the Internet of Things (IoT) – along with the “big data” that they bring – are expected to create powerful changes for traditional insurance models. Our elementary needs may not be changing, but we’ve come to expect much more than just getting needs met – and millennials are among those pushing these demands.

Millennial employees have grown up with the Internet; they have expectations of instant access to information and gratification. It is these expectations that are inspiring Sun Life to use innovative technologies to implement preventative healthcare programs and retirement savings for both Gen X and Gen Y workers alike.

From Convenience to Prevention: Changing Expectations in Group Benefits

As a society, we’ve become increasingly impatient with repetitive administrative tasks that eat our time. This was apparent even 10 or 15 years ago. At that time, preparing and mailing benefit claims was an example of what people were trying to avoid.

That is why, in 2001, our organization launched e-claims, where routine health and dental expenses could be claimed for reimbursement online. Ten-years later – with the explosion of mobile technology – we introduced an app that lets plan members submit claims

from their smartphones, get instant adjudication of their claims and check on their pension plan balances.

Once revolutionary, those innovations became adopted virtually industry-wide and spread to other verticals such as banking. Years later, simple convenience is not enough for consumers and employees. Modern consumers are looking for more.


At Sun Life, we believe employees are looking for **empowerment**. They want benefits that help to prevent illness rather than just treat it. In the group benefits area, this has led to 2 trends:

- A focus on preventive benefits, known generally as wellness programs. These include elements such as fitness, nutrition, massage, mindfulness and yoga.
- The capability to integrate an employee’s digital health information with platforms that track, incent and reward action steps toward better health and well-being.

In 2016, we’re seeing a mixture of elements come together to create disruption: a tremendous growth in the technologies that enable a customized health and wellness experience coupled with rapidly changing consumer expectations towards prevention and personalization, led in part – in our view – by the increasing millennial presence in the workplace.

Mobile applications and websites are being used to support employer-sponsored wellness programs, from recording health statistics, to tracking fitness goals and monitoring an individual’s weight loss progress. And wearable technologies – such as *Apple Watch* and *Fitbit* – are being adopted in greater numbers, allowing the digital transfer of activity metrics instantaneously.

As our expectations for choice and flexibility intensifies, a strong push continues for flexible health spending accounts that allow the employee to either buy the coverage they need or spend on medical and wellness-related expenses at their own discretion. It is changing the way many employers are designing and funding their benefits plans.



“Gamified environments give them goals to accomplish, let them track progress towards those goals and provide a community to compete, collaborate and share with.”

Gamification in Retirement Saving: a Way to Combat Instant Gratification

It is no surprise that in this age of *iTunes*, *Netflix*, and *Amazon*, people expect everything to be “instant” – especially millennials who have known no other way. They want simplicity and they want choice, and they want whatever they choose to be delivered as close to immediately as possible.

Plan sponsors often find themselves at a disadvantage with pensions, as they can only offer the promise of savings or retirement income to be enjoyed decades later. It’s a tough fit in an instant gratification world. But plan sponsors and providers are using technology to break through.

At Sun Life, we implemented the principles of gamification into our retirement saving program and we’ve seen it work first hand: it’s helping to popularize the benefits of saving and motivating employees to take action. Gamification uses the same elements that make games innately fun and engaging, and applies them to tools and processes that typically aren’t considered a game. In 2013, Sun Life launched a gamified online program – *money UP* – to increase the financial literacy of employees who have a Sun Life workplace retirement plan through their employer. *Money UP* challenges plan members to learn more about their retirement plan by completing a series of missions and games. It’s a fun, innovative program that can increase financial knowledge and help plan members complete important retirement and investment planning steps along the way.

Gamification can be effective among all generations, but millennials may gravitate towards it even more than others do. Gamified environments give them goals to accomplish, let them track progress towards those goals and provide

a community to compete, collaborate and share with. While these elements are essential to any motivation program, they are particularly critical to millennials, who are accustomed to fast feedback and online learning.

In our world, it has been a game-changer. Millennials have not only been the most active users of *money UP* at 39% of players in the game, they are also most likely to take action: 39% opened a new product or increased their savings contributions in real life because of it.¹ The successes of gamification are expected to be applied to a wide range of industries and solutions looking to increase human motivation and compliance – from customer engagement, training and education, to sustainability, human resources, and health and wellness.

The Next Wave

The explosion in technology – especially mobile technology – is perhaps at its most disruptive in mature industries that haven’t traditionally relied on technology to build their businesses. Industries like print, taxis, and bricks and mortar video stores have all experienced massive change and decline.

But all industries – group benefits and retirement included – are vulnerable to disruptive change. We’re seeing it firsthand. The world is moving forward on the technology front with or without us. And expectations for simplicity, choice and personalization have long passed the tipping point. So we at Sun Life are all in – and will continue to work with the aim of meeting the changing needs and expectations of this new and growing generation of employees. ■

1. Results are from December 2013 through March 2016

Group Benefits and Group Retirement Services are provided by Sun Life Assurance Company of Canada, a member of the Sun Life Financial group of companies.

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PREPARING FOR DISRUPTION:

People and Planning are Key for SaskEnergy's Response

By Kenton Olson, B.A. (Hons)

The McKinsey Global Institute recently included advanced oil and gas recovery among its list of 12 technologies that will produce significant disruption in the near future and considerably transform the economy.¹ Technologies such as horizontal drilling are expected to tap gas deposits that were previously inaccessible, increase the output of fossil fuels in a cost-effective way, unlock new types of reserves, and potentially usher in another energy revolution. In fact, McKinsey estimated the impact of natural gas revenue driven by new technologies to reach \$800 billion globally.

As a natural gas distribution, transmission and storage company, utility provider, natural gas marketer, and provincial Crown corporation, SaskEnergy operates within a variety of industry spheres. Each of these disparate sectors brings unique business disruptors, creating both opportunities and challenges for the company and its employees as they continually develop strategies to manage them and take advantage of new technologies in their field.

Changing Community Expectations

Consumers and citizens are demanding greater corporate social responsibility from the businesses they support and work for, particularly among millennials. Even during economic downturns, consumers expect social responsibility balanced against value for money. Conscious consumerism or “inclusive capitalism”² – addressing cultural, safety, environmental and societal concerns – is an ever-growing disruptor across industries, including those providing public necessities.

Public input into infrastructure development consistently ranks near the top of the summary list of the risks

SaskEnergy faces each year. While this should come as no surprise, given the elevated regulatory oversight of energy projects in Canada, this growing scrutiny has fundamentally changed the relationship between pipeline companies and their community stakeholders.

“Gone are the days where utility providers could independently develop the terms of their planned infrastructure,” says Doug Kelln, SaskEnergy President & CEO. “There has been a significant increase in the time, effort and planning that goes into pipeline projects, but the biggest shift has been a philosophical one, highlighted by our evolved approach of planning *with* communities, rather than planning *at* them.”

For SaskEnergy, this shift has paid significant dividends, as the company has been able to successfully construct and install a number of major projects in the last few years. These include a \$70 million transmission pipeline covering 132 kilometres in west-central Saskatchewan, and a number of new pipelines to deliver or expand gas service to industrial customers. In 2013, one of these customer-driven projects unearthed human bone fragments, which scientists determined to be approximately 1,000 years old. The discovery temporarily halted work, allowing SaskEnergy to work with local First Nations to develop a mutually agreeable approach and effectively redesign the route.

“That situation had a positive outcome, in large part, because of the pre-existing relationship with First Nation communities, which is greatly valued by SaskEnergy,” Kelln explains. “That familiarity was invaluable in this case and validated both groups’ decision to continue with a long-term relationship.”





This approach is currently being put to the test as SaskEnergy seeks to develop long-term infrastructure plans in and around urban centres like Regina and Saskatoon. To successfully implement utility corridors (areas designated to jointly accommodate a number of utility facilities, rather than have them routed individually), the company will need buy-in from a wide range of stakeholders – land owners, rural municipalities, community associations, provincial ministries and other Crown corporations, to name but a few.

“Working collaboratively on infrastructure plans requires us to listen more and to be more patient, but it’s the new reality,” says Kelln. “If we do it properly – with strong dialogue

and planning with communities – our plans will be successful and our system will be positioned well to operate safely for many, many years.”

Responding to Commodity Prices with Innovation

Economists and investors expect commodity cycles to fluctuate with market conditions; that reality is nothing new. But with global economies becoming more integrated through radical trade deals and economic zones, recent market swings have had more acute impacts on industries and national economies. It’s up to businesses and governments to take preventative measures and respond with innovation to ease the fallout when these hit.

While recent natural gas commodity prices have not experienced the same rapid decline as oil prices, the last five years have seen both very low and relatively flat market pricing, punctuated by a March 2016 dip below \$1.30 per million cubic feet – the lowest mark since the late 1990s. An economic advantage for Saskatchewan residential, commercial and industrial customers, the low price supported strong provincial growth, evidenced by a near 40 per cent increase in the volume of natural gas used within Saskatchewan between 2009 and 2015.

Over that same period, the sustained low prices reduced interest in conventional natural gas drilling in Western Canada. Only one new gas well was drilled in Saskatchewan in 2015, down from a record 2,138 in 2003 – just as demand increased to

historic levels. To continue to meet customer needs, SaskEnergy increased transportation of gas from Alberta through technological innovation.

Today, with more than 50 per cent of total Saskatchewan supply being imported from outside the province, SaskEnergy has successfully re-engineered large portions of its transmission pipeline to effectively reverse the flow of gas on the provincial system. In this regard, the early adoption of **mobile compressor technology** within the 15,000-kilometre provincial transmission grid has proven to be a game-changer for the company. In many ways, these trailer-sized units, which can be hauled by a conventional truck and deployed within a matter of hours to provide up to 1,150 horsepower of compression, have come to symbolize SaskEnergy’s “nimble and flexible” approach to problem-solving.

To minimize customer rate impacts from the higher costs of importing gas, SaskEnergy sharpened its focus on productivity and efficiency initiatives. These efforts – ranging from increased collaboration with other Saskatchewan Crown corporations to technology and process service optimization projects – generated more than \$35 million in savings between 2009 and 2015, with a further \$4 million expected in 2016.

Preparing the Workforce for Disruption

Even when a company manages to meet the challenges presented by business disruptors, these factors inevitably bring about change



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(usually rebranded by communicators as “adaptation”, “evolution” or “innovation”) for the organization, and its success or failure begins with the people affected by it and tasked with managing it.

Ordering a fleet of new mobile compressors to help reverse the flow on Saskatchewan’s natural gas system was rather straightforward. But asking a wide-spread team of experienced front-line workers to change the way they have been working for decades in order to implement new technology proved to be a little more challenging.

To this end, SaskEnergy implemented formal change management (CM) practices in 2009 to develop a common, company-wide framework to the growing level of change, and CM elements are now formally imbedded in every SaskEnergy project plan and every supervisor’s development plan.

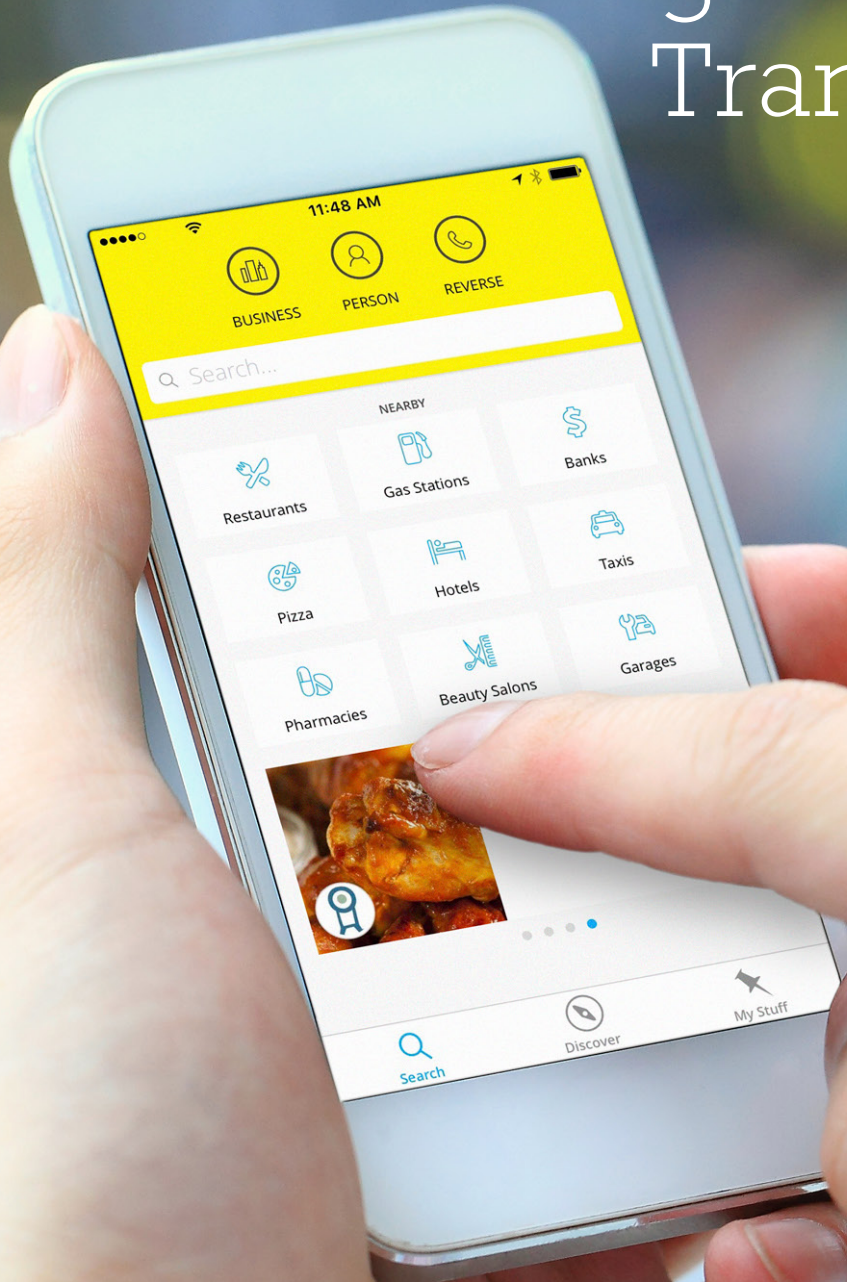
A related initiative, the SaskEnergy Leadership Network, recently celebrated its five-year anniversary. Created with the primary objective of helping managers and supervisors develop and apply key skills in working with their employees, the Leadership Network is built on CM fundamentals. The regular Leadership Network meetings have proven to be a valuable forum where individuals share ideas about how to continue to keep their teams – and themselves – one step ahead of the next big thing coming down the pipe. ■


1. <http://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/business-technology/our-insights/disruptive-technologies>

2. Wooldridge, Adrian. *The Great Disruption: How Business Is Coping with Turbulent times*. Economist Books, 2015

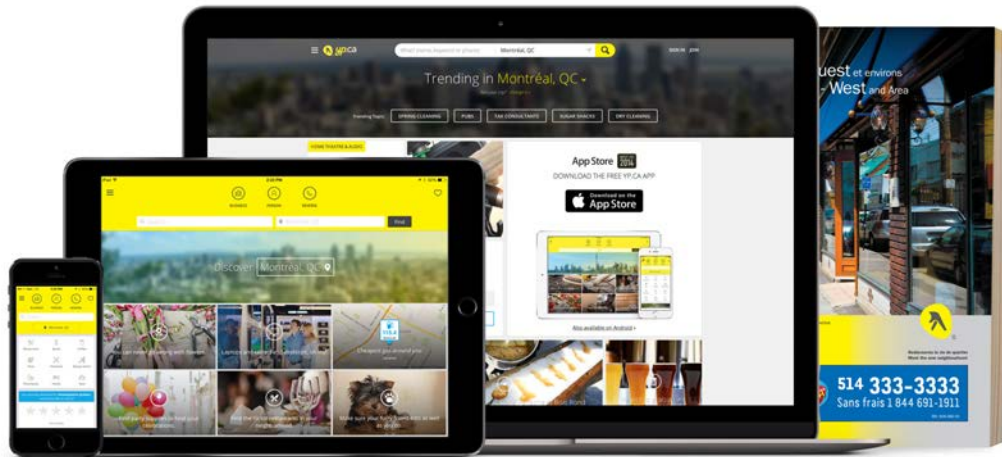
Yellow Pages: Navigating a Digital Transformation

by Fiona Story
and Justine Gagnon





FOR OVER 100 YEARS, YELLOW Pages has contributed to the growth of the local Canadian economy by helping small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) build relationships with consumers. Through its iconic telephone directory, the company helped Canadians find information on local goods and services while allowing local businesses to showcase their offerings. The rise of online advertising, new technologies and large global players, however, quickly created turmoil in the industry. Many print directory companies were hit by a sudden change in consumer behaviour. Undeterred, Yellow Pages decided to tackle the disruption by undertaking a digital shift to transform everything from the heart of the brand's image to the company's culture. Today, its successful digital media solutions are once again helping customers find local businesses – and doing much more.



In early 2000, Yellow Pages began creating a digital strategy. In order to effectively navigate its digital transformation – while developing and managing new digital marketing solutions – the company needed to assemble a team with the appropriate expertise. As such, the company hired over 300 people who specialize in digital media and information technology. Then in 2014, Yellow Pages implemented a strategy designed to reacquire digital growth, appropriately dubbed the Return to Growth Plan. Based on four main pillars of the organization – brand, customers, media properties and employees – the plan's objective was to guide the company's digital transformation and reacquire revenue growth and profitability by 2018.

Brand: The Yellow Pages brand was well established in Canada and has always been associated with local search. While recognizable, Yellow Pages had to overcome a perception of its brand being rooted in print and align it with the new digital reality of the company. A company's brand forms much more than just its visual identity; it equally reflects the essence of the company. Customers need to have an accurate perception of a company's brand in order to build lasting relationships. So a greater investment in the definition and recognition of the Yellow Pages brand was essential. In 2014, it was decided that the brand's general budget would increase by a few million dollars to reach over \$15 million. This sort of investment in positioning the Yellow Pages brand in the digital space was essential to its evolution alongside the rest of the business.

Customers: Since its inception, Yellow Pages' focus has been on small and medium-sized Canadian businesses. Because of a lack of resources and time, SMBs often lag in digital. Yellow Pages recognized that digital solutions

were of great value to its SMB customer base; they could help them better adapt to the digital reality and reach prospective customers through digital means. It developed a suite of digital media and marketing tools that let their clients get their businesses online, be found, advertise, and offer promotions. These platforms and services essentially let the company's SMB customers build stronger relationships with their own clientele.

Yellow Pages also developed a more aggressive and proactive strategy for acquiring and retaining its customers – and its sales team was paramount to this shift. The skills required in the digital era were no longer the same. With this in mind, in 2008, a large majority of the sales force changed to make room for a dynamic technology-savvy team nationwide.

The results were apparent – since 2015, the customer renewal rate with Yellow Pages has remained stable at 85%, making it one of the highest loyalty rates on the market. The company also successfully increased its rate of client acquisition: it acquired 13,000 new clients in 2013, 22,000 in 2014 and over 30,000 in 2015.

Media: Yellow Pages opted for a verticalization strategy for its media properties. Mobile devices experienced the greatest growth in consumer usage and they became central to Yellow Pages' media platform development. A search on a mobile device is not performed in the same way, or for the same reasons, as on a desktop computer. On a mobile device, people search for a local result for a current need: to perform an action or find a result in their vicinity at that moment. This function led Yellow Pages to develop optimized mobile applications that allow localized searches based on specific needs such as dining, shopping, real estate or deals.

“The environment created by the transformation of Yellow Pages also brought a change to the profile of the typical employee.”

Employees: The fourth pillar is one that comprises the strength of Yellow Pages: its employees. A transformation of this magnitude in a company can give rise to uncertainties. Specific HR elements need to be paid attention to in order to assemble an efficient team, ensure a healthy environment, recruit new talent and result in success. The transformation of a business model often creates disruption among the employees: concerns, rumours, voluntary departures, etc. To ensure that these situations were avoided, Yellow Pages opted for transparency in communicating with its employees. In addition, bi-annual meetings between staff and upper management are organized to discuss the plan for a return to growth. From an organizational standpoint, Yellow Pages reviewed its company values by calling for participation and feedback of employees at all levels of management to ensure a better reflection of its current image. Managers are also invited to adopt this open-minded and attentive attitude to keep communication open throughout the different stages of the transformation.

The environment created by the transformation of Yellow Pages also brought a change to the profile of the typical employee. The digital industry requires skills and abilities that are different from the print industry: the employee must be more agile, creative, and resourceful – and of course, possess digital expertise. As a result, the company invested significantly in recruitment. For existing staff, Yellow Pages decided to optimize the success of its digital shift by offering continued training to support the different teams' technical skills and abilities. The company has been so successful in delivering results of its Return to Growth Plan, the Quebec government recently granted Yellow Pages funding for continued education and creating new jobs as part of its digital transformation.

By strategically considering, developing, implementing and evaluating each of these elements, Yellow Pages was able to successfully execute the various stages of its digital transformation that arose out of industry disruption. Now, 62 % of Yellow Pages' revenue results from digital services and products, compared to just 20 % in 2009. In 2015, the company's media generated more than 464 million visits. Yellow Pages' digital shift also led to the acquisition of specific companies to reinforce its position: Dine.TO and Bookenda in the restaurant sector, the DuProprio/ComFree network – which added a digital real estate platform to its portfolio, and more recently – Juice Mobile, a top-rated mobile advertising technology company that helps brands design, purchase and manage mobile ads. Even though it is in the midst of a transformation – in a constantly evolving industry – Yellow Pages is reinventing itself and re-emerging as a key digital service provider for Canadian businesses. ■

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