

Lēad™

Issue 21

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VALLEY NORTH

A dip into Canada's tech scene

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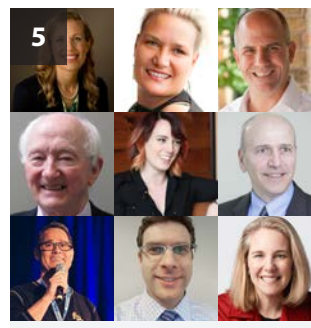
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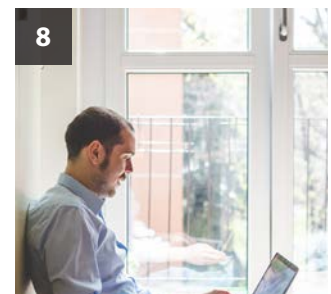
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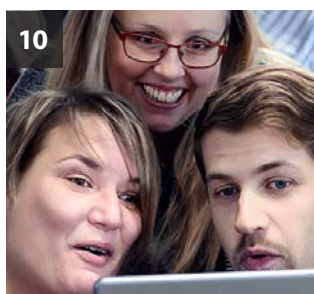
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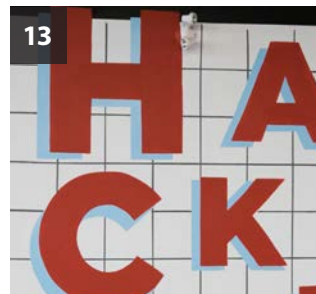
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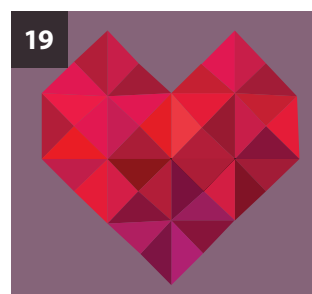
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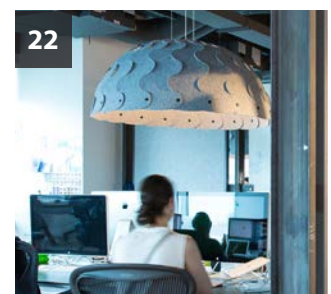
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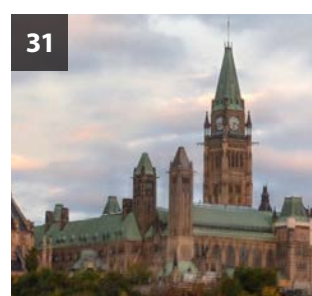
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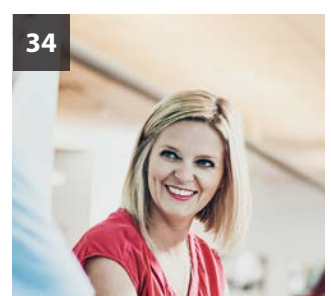
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Sandra Hokansson

President & Country Manager
Adecco Employment Services Limited

2017 will be an exciting year for Canada — and for Adecco.

To commemorate the country’s 150th birthday, this issue of *Lēad Magazine* is dedicated to a globally-recognized and impressive industry in this nation: technology.

Silicon Valley North

The Canadian tech sector has been an innovative, profitable and disruptive powerhouse for decades. From small R&D firms who boast thousands of patents under their belts to internet and SaaS behemoths like **Shopify**, **Slack**, **OpenText** and **HootSuite** — there are plenty of game changers that hail from this great land.

But can Canada be considered a bona fide Silicon Valley North? San Francisco’s Silicon Valley is the world’s preeminent technology supercluster that attracts companies, creates jobs, propels innovation and fosters tremendous economic growth (over

1% of the total US GDP in fact)¹. North of the border, we boast nearly 71,000 tech sector firms scattered from coast to coast that focus on much more than just information and communications technology (ICT)². Our tech hubs stretch from Vancouver to Montreal, encompassing Ottawa, Toronto and of course, Kitchener-Waterloo — a region that features the second-highest density of startups in the world³. I believe that we can proudly declare ourselves a nation of Silicon Valleys North!

In this edition of *Lēad*, we take a look at some notable members of these Valleys and what is driving their success. We sit down with **You.i TV** to discuss their stellar company culture and recent inclusion on *Deloitte* Canada’s Technology Fast 50 list⁴. **Syntronic** and **CVDiagnostics** offer their experiences with research and development in Canada, while the well-established **Celestica** suggests how to quickly commercialize those fresh ideas and inventions. **Function**

Point — representing the West Coast tech scene — discusses strategies for talent recruitment when competing with large tech companies. **Mediaclip** tackles the weighty topic of women in tech and leadership roles, while the expert employment law firm — **Rubin Thomlinson** — provides guidance on the liabilities surrounding virtual work. We are also extremely proud to feature an interview with **Shopify**: the Ottawa-based e-commerce “unicorn” that soared from startup to a \$1.9B valuation in just over a decade⁵.

All of these companies reiterate just how imperative talent is to their industry, particularly in an era of digitization and automation. **The Adecco Group** recognized this years ago and launched the Global Talent Competitiveness Index (GTCI)⁶ to measure just how well countries are able to grow, attract and retain talent. Fittingly, this year’s theme explored how technology is disrupting the world of work.

As we are seeing, innovation is increasingly emerging from collaboration and co-creation, not technical strides. The global workforce needs new skills and attitudes to meet this disruption.

In Canada, we are learning that innovation and technical talent is not enough. For our tech industry to succeed long-term and truly compete with Silicon Valley, we need executives with “hands-on experience scaling companies.”⁷ That is the compelling argument **Communtech** — the undisputed voice of Waterloo’s startup community — make in their featured article. They offer valuable solutions for luring tech talent and business leaders back home so that Canada can one day rival Silicon Valley — not just mirror it. Given the transition our economy is in, tech leadership — along with a forward-thinking drive and support from all levels of government — is paramount to positioning our economic future for success.

Canada 150

Much like the country’s own heritage, **The Adecco Group** has a proud Canadian history in the communities we serve. We are honoured to have worked with iconic Canadian businesses and brands for the last 40 years, and emerged as the country’s staffing leader in that time. We will be actively participating in celebratory events with key stakeholders over the year and have challenged our colleagues to each run, swim or bike 150 km to honour the milestone. In addition to helping create a healthier Canada through these efforts, our Win4Youth initiative will raise money for youth organizations around the world⁸.

The Canadian spirit of giving back is embedded in everything we do at Adecco.

A look to the future of Canada and Lēad

On this occasion, I have some personal news. After 13 years as President and Country Manager, I am taking on a new role in **The Adecco Group** organization, working to mentor and coach top talent — a key passion of mine. I’m passing the reigns to a seasoned group of leaders and will be supporting them in a new way. Lēad has been a 10-year journey and I have been honoured to be its Editor in that time. Over the next several issues, **The Adecco Group’s** Canadian leaders will be featured as guest editors and bring their unique perspectives to these pages.

The magazine and the organization are in exceptional hands. I look forward to seeing the continued innovation that comes from both the company and the country.

I hope you enjoy this special edition of *Lēad*.

¹<https://www.nextcanada.com/images/TechNorth-McKinsey-Report.pdf>
²<http://brookfieldinstitute.ca/research-analysis/the-state-of-canadas-tech-sector-2016/>
³<https://www.nextcanada.com/images/TechNorth-McKinsey-Report.pdf>
⁴<https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/ca/Documents/technology-media-telecommunications/ca-en-fast-50-winners-2016.pdf>
⁵<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/technology/tech-news/shopify-shares-soar-on-debut-day-of-trading/article24541814/>
⁶<http://www.gtci2017.com/>
⁷<https://www.nextcanada.com/images/TechNorth-McKinsey-Report.pdf>
⁸<http://www.win4youth.com/>



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Patrizia Piccolo, Partner
Rubin Thomlinson LLP

Patrizia Piccolo is a Partner at Rubin Thomlinson LLP, where she is dedicated to providing her clients with excellent legal counsel and client service. With 19 years' of experience, Patrizia is a trusted advisor to senior executives in transition, provides strategic advice and training to both large and small employers and their human resources and management teams, and is entrusted by employers and their counsel to conduct investigations into harassment and other problematic workplace behaviour. Whether advising an employee or an employer, Patrizia's practice covers all aspects of the employment relationship from hiring, performance management and workplace restructuring, to termination advice. Patrizia also advises employers on employment related regulatory issues including, Employment Standards Act, Human Rights Code, Labour Relations Act and Workplace Safety and Insurance Act compliance. A genuine people person, Patrizia is frequently asked by her clients, boards of trade and human resources associations to appear as a guest speaker on employment law matters. Patrizia is often quoted in the media on matters relating to the workplace and has written articles for the Mississauga News.



Marion Duchesne, Founder & CEO
Mediaclip

Marion Duchesne is the Founder and CEO of Mediaclip — a truly international company with a presence in 30 countries on five continents. Combined with her market experience, highly skilled team and Mediaclip's leading software solution, Marion strives to make online product personalization memorable, simple and fun by providing an outstanding user experience. She is a passionate leader and visionary who works to stimulate innovation, provide strong and unique differentiators and build corporate brand awareness while generating revenues for her clients (organizations in the photo industry). She has also served as Director of Strategic Planning of new markets at Telebec. She holds an MBA from UQAM and has graduated from the Entrepreneurship Development Program at MIT. In 2016, Marion was elected as a Business Women of Québec Award finalist in the "International Entrepreneur" category.



Iain Klugman, CEO
Communitech

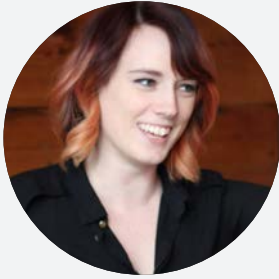
As CEO of Communitech in Waterloo Region, Iain gets up every day and works hard to support the growth of more than 1,000 small, mid-sized and large technology companies. He is fanatical about making Waterloo Region one of the hottest tech hubs in North America and believes passionately in the power of the entrepreneur-driven economy to deliver big results for Canada. Before joining Communitech in 2004, Iain's career spanned leadership roles in the private and public sectors, including Director of Global Branding and Advertising for Nortel, Executive Director of Communications with the CBC, CEO of a provincial Crown corporation, and roles with the Privy Council Office and Industry Canada. His success in helping to build Waterloo Region into a world-class tech community has made him a trusted adviser to numerous organizations, including the Advisory Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship for the Minister of Industry, the National Research Council's Industrial Research Assistance Program, the Waterloo Accelerator Centre and Innovation Guelph. Iain holds a MBA from Wilfrid Laurier University, a Master's in Public Administration from Dalhousie, a HBA from Laurentian, and has completed the Advanced Program in Human Resources at the Rotman School of Management.



Bob Griffin, Senior. VP Engineering and Development
CV Diagnostix

Bob Griffin's career spans over 4 decades within Operations and Engineering Management and includes 12 years' experience in Management Consulting with clients in Canada, Mexico and the U.S. Before joining SonoMedica (now CV Diagnostix), he headed the manufacturing operations of Visible Assets Inc.— the world leader in low-frequency RFID. He was responsible for manufacturing activities for WorldHeart Corporation, producing advanced, fully-implantable heart-assist devices, and has held the position of Vice President of Manufacturing for Visible Genetics, Inc. — responsible for R&D, design and manufacturing of DNA sequencing instruments and associated equipment. Bob has also held various positions across legendary companies, including Canadair (now Bombardier), General Instruments and Bell Northern Research — Canada's largest R&D company.

Contributors



Amandah Wood, Culture Specialist
Shopify

Amandah Wood is a Culture Specialist at Shopify — a Canadian-born commerce company. She acts as an employee advocate, keeping a strong pulse on people's beliefs, attitudes, behaviours and values at Shopify. Within her role, she uses her knowledge and understanding of what people need and brings those concerns to the team, while simultaneously finding ways to act on those learnings. Previous to her role at Shopify, she ran the popular interview series Ways We Work, writing about how both individuals and teams did the work they love.



John Cundari, Vice President and General Manager, Operations
Celestica

John Cundari is Vice President and General Manager of Celestica's Canadian Operations. In this role, he is responsible for strategy and operational execution of the company's manufacturing operations in Canada, as part of Celestica's global network. With a focus on Lean, Six Sigma and continuous improvement, John ensures that Celestica's Canadian operations are aligned to drive growth and accelerate customers' success across multiple markets, including aerospace, defense, industrial and energy. Prior to joining Celestica in 2001, he worked for Xerox and General Motors. Throughout his career, he has held various leadership roles spanning engineering, manufacturing operations and supply chain management. John is focused on establishing the Toronto operation as a Centre of Excellence for the acceleration of innovation and commercialization in Canada. He is an active member with the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters (CME).



Chris Wilson, Founder & CEO
Function Point

An entrepreneur at heart, Chris Wilson is the founder and CEO of Function Point. After completing his education at the University of Guelph and moving to Western Canada, he successfully founded a franchised retail business. During this time, Chris developed the business software acumen that would later help him launch Function Point. While working indirectly for the franchise, he developed software systems for small companies and educational institutes, incorporating Function Point in the spring of 1997. Ten years later, he sold his first company to solely focus on Function Point. Since then, Function Point has grown into a global venture with over 9,000 users from around the world. Chris is also a member of ACETECH, BC's only not-for-profit organization formed by CEOs of companies innovating with technology, and is an advisor to the technology management degree program at BCIT. He, along with his wife and FP co-founder — Jane, reside in Vancouver, BC and have two adult children.



Jimmy Kelland, Business Development Manager
Syntronic R&D Canada Inc.

Jimmy Kelland is the Business Development Manager for Syntronic Research and Development Canada Inc. In this role, he is responsible for researching opportunities across a variety of industries, including Telecom, Defence, Transportation, Industrial and Med-Tech. Jimmy enjoys meeting with companies in these markets, learning about their products and solutions — and the challenges they face — all while building long-term partnerships. Prior to joining Syntronic in 2014, he operated his own promotional marketing firm in Ottawa for over 23 years, providing clients with leading branding solutions.

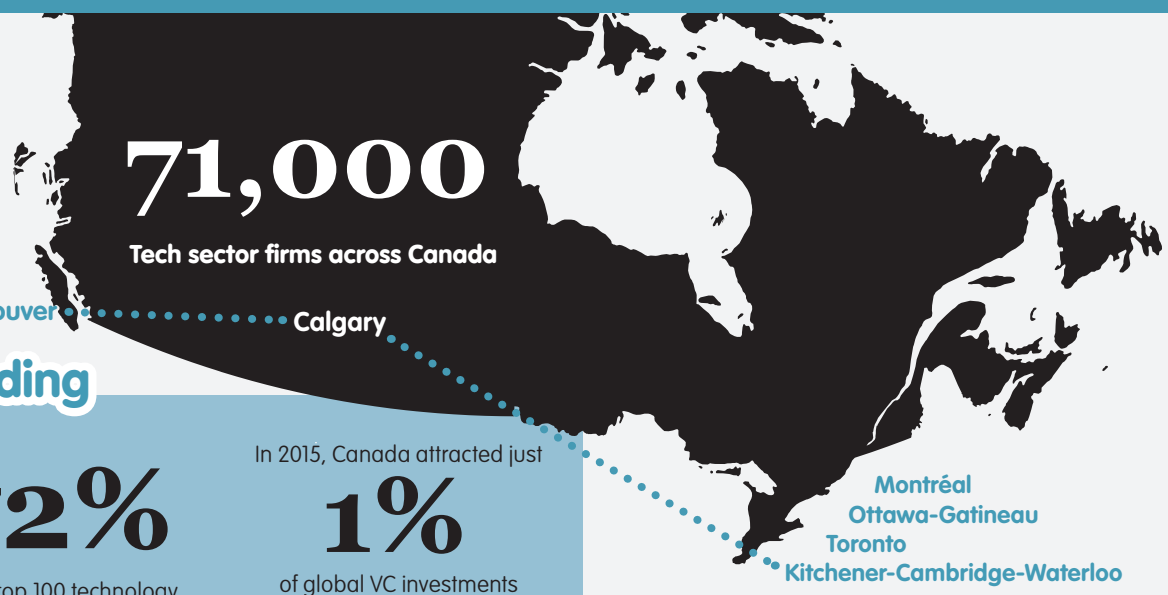


Heather Tyrie, VP, Employee Experience
You.i TV

Heather has a diverse background with 20 years' experience in both large and small organizations in the public and private sector. A versatile leader who has worked in IT and Marketing as well as Human Resources, Heather is passionate about creating great foundations for companies to grow and succeed. Heather currently works at You.i TV, a start up company based in Kanata that has developed a new way to build TV everywhere applications. Prior to You.i TV, Heather worked at Minto Developments Inc, Newbridge Networks (Alcatel), iMPath Networks and Industry Canada. Heather has a degree in Industrial Relations from McGill University, and is an Ottawa native with two lovely daughters and a lively dog.

Canada's Silicon Valley's Geography

Major Canadian tech hubs are: →



Startups & Funding



Kitchener-Waterloo features the 2nd highest density of startups in the world

72%

of the top 100 technology companies leveraged VC investments at some point to grow and scale globally

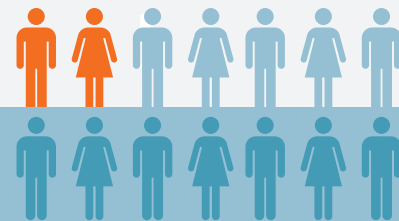
In 2015, Canada attracted just

1%

of global VC investments



Montréal
Ottawa-Gatineau
Toronto
Kitchener-Cambridge-Waterloo



Education

Canada would have to graduate 43,000 IT students per year of keep up with job growth.

In 2015, only

29,000

post-secondary students graduated from an IT field

Economy

The tech sector contributes **\$117 Billion to the economy** (7.1% Canada's total GDP in 2015)

84%

of Canada's technology companies are profitable

Canada tech firms invested

\$9.1 billion

on innovation in 2015 — making it the largest sector for R&D spending in the entire Canadian economy

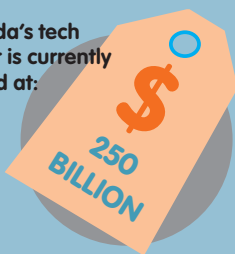


Since 2006, the tech sector has grown

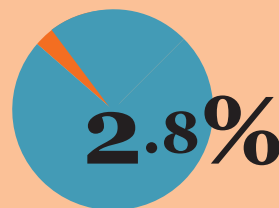
13.5%

outpacing growth in sectors such as Finance & Insurance + others

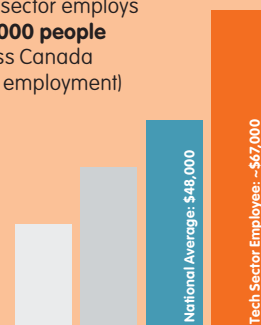
Canada's tech sector is currently valued at:



Employment



Tech sector employs **503,000 people** across Canada (total employment)



By the year

2020

Canada will generate approximately **218,000** additional tech jobs

Tech sector employees earn **~\$67,000** a year
National Average: **\$48,000**

Sources:

- <http://brookfieldinstitute.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/The-State-of-Canadas-Tech-Sector-2016.pdf>
- <http://www.mentorworks.ca/blog/market-trends/technology-industry-in-canada-2016/>
- http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2016/03/12/it-jobs-skills-shortage-canada_n_9440872.html
- <http://www.jll.ca/canada/en-ca/Research/CAN-Technology-Outlook-2016-JLL.pdf>
- <http://brookfieldinstitute.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/The-State-of-Canadas-Tech-Sector-2016.pdf>
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- <https://www.mentorworks.ca/blog/market-trends/technology-industry-in-canada-2016/>
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- <https://www.nextcanada.com/images/TechNorth-McKinsey-Report.pdf>



Not Up Close but Personal: The Intimate Responsibility of Employing a Remote Workforce

Patrizia Piccolo, Partner, Rubin Thomlinson LLP



As Canada's 150th birthday approaches, I have had the occasion to consider the numerous changes that society has experienced during that time. One need only to consider the technological changes in areas such as broadcasting, telecommunications, the internet, digital communication, digital media, cloud and quantum computing to name a few to realize that the advances that have been made in the last 150 years are incredible. As part of these technological advances, the workplace and workforce have changed significantly as well.

Employees — particularly millennial ones — are adopting a very different approach to where and when they perform their work-related tasks. Some are salaried employees who perform all or part of their work away from a traditional office, while others are contractors or freelancers who work entirely online. Whether we refer to it as telecommuting, virtual work, flexible workplaces, a distributed workforce, or remote workers, it's a trend that's growing in leaps and bounds. In fact, Policy Horizons Canada estimates that the virtual workforce has reached 112 million people globally and is growing by 33% annually¹. Further, The Adecco Group's 2016 Global Talent Competitiveness Index (GTCI) found that 30% of U.S. and European workers can be considered "free agents" — freelancers who are connected by technology, not shared office space².

Employers and employees alike have already recognized the various benefits of remote/virtual work arrangements. Workers are so committed to greater work-life balance that 82% of Canadians surveyed said they would be willing to change jobs for the opportunity to work from home, and 22% would even take a pay cut for it³. Canadians' strong preference for remote work could stem from our average commute being 21% longer than that of the U.S.⁴

Other recognized benefits of remote/virtual work include:

- Greater work-life balance for employees who don't have to spend time commuting;
- Reduced overhead costs for employers;
- Decreased absenteeism;
- Access to a larger (even global) talent pool; and
- An increase in worker satisfaction leading to greater productivity and reduced turnover.

These benefits have also been empirically proven. According to a 2015 Worldatwork study, employee engagement goes up by 23% when companies offer remote or flexible work options, and 65% of Canadian businesses report increased productivity when they offer it⁵. Further, 64% of businesses surveyed by BMO saw a positive impact on morale when flexible work arrangements were implemented⁶.

As positive as these benefits may be, they are not without legal risk. Below are several issues that employers need to consider before implementing a flexible or virtual work program:

1 Wage and hour laws: Employers must consider whether Employment Standards legislation requirements relating to breaks and meal periods, travel time to attend meetings, overtime, and maximum hours of work provisions apply. In Ontario, for example, certain Information Technology professionals (those who primarily investigate, analyze, design, develop, implement, operate or manage information systems based on computers and related technologies using specialized knowledge and professional judgement)⁷ are exempt from some minimum standards like daily rest periods and overtime. Employers must take extra care to ensure managers and other decision-makers are aware of legal wage and hour laws and take extra care to ensure that the laws are being complied with.

2 Health and safety considerations: From a health and safety viewpoint, employers and employees should also consider a few important points when agreeing to a remote/virtual work arrangement. These include workspace design and arrangements surrounding ergonomics, the scheduling of work and how the work is distributed, any concerns or issues with working alone, and any relevant Worker's Compensation and Occupational Health and Safety laws that may apply.

3 Privacy and data security: Remote/virtual work arrangements inevitably involve concerns regarding data security for employers. Many companies choose to minimize risk by mandating the use of employer-provided equipment, which better enables them to implement security. Other companies allow the use of dual-use devices such as personal cell phones or laptops. Since permitting employees to use dual-use devices may allow, for instance, a manager to access not only an employee's work-related emails but also personal Gmail accounts or cloud-based data [example photos on Dropbox], appropriate policies must be implemented. Consideration must also be given to employee privacy rights in relation to the manager's ability to access information on dual-use devices.

4 Human rights and reasonable accommodations: Remote/virtual work arrangements also impact an employer's obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code and other similar legislation in other Canadian jurisdictions. Remote/virtual work arrangements may constitute a reasonable accommodation for an employee with disabilities even if other employees do not telecommute. Furthermore, employers must respond to requests for remote/virtual work arrangements fairly and consistently to avoid an inference that an employer's decision to allow remote/virtual work was discriminatory. Maintaining and consistently applying a remote/virtual work arrangements policy can set parameters for neutral decision-making in this regard.

The opportunity for flexible work arrangements may soon be more than just a perk offered by progressive companies. A recent study suggests that by 2030, most Canadians will get some of their income through "virtual work." Further, the Federal Government has made a commitment to modifying the Canadian Labour Code to make flexible work a legal right for all employees of federally regulated industries⁸. We will, however, likely need additional social programs to better protect income, diversity and tax collection as work moves online — as Horizons Canada notes⁹.

In a constantly evolving legal landscape, employers should remain vigilant to make certain that their practices comply with relevant employment laws. Implementing policies reviewed by experienced legal counsel can help minimize risk as employers navigate through historical workplace boundaries. ■

¹<http://www.horizons.gc.ca/eng/content/canada-and-changing-nature-work>

²<http://www.gci2017.com/>

³<http://8417-presscdn-0-46.pagefy.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Work-shifting-The-Business-Case-Sham.pdf>

⁴<http://globalworkplaceanalytics.com/bottom-line-on-telework-in-canada/5972>

⁵<https://www.worldatwork.org/adimLink?id=79123>

⁶<https://newsroom.bmo.com/2013-04-26-BMO-Poll-Canadian-Businesses-Report-Significant-Divide-on-the-Benefits-of-Telecommuting>

⁷Exemption summary from Ministry of Labour found at: https://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/es/tools/srt/group_government.php

⁸<https://capitalnews.ca/canada-flexible-work-rights/>

⁹<http://www.horizons.gc.ca/eng/content/canada-and-changing-nature-work>



In 2005, Marion Duchesne founded *Mediaclip*, a Montreal-based company that offers innovative product personalization software for users to create one-of-a-kind photo albums, calendars, greeting cards and other promotional products — all customized with their clients' own photography. *Mediaclip* sells its solution across 30 countries to retailers, printers and various brands (including several Fortune 500 companies), and has just launched a cloud-based version of her solution. Below, Marion reflects on her journey from maternity leave to becoming the founder and CEO of a company that now employs close to 30 people and runs on the very family values that sparked her founding idea.

The Mother of Invention: From concept to commerce

Marion Duchesne, Founder and CEO of *Mediaclip*

Bringing a Company into the World

After earning my MBA in Strategic Planning Research, I took a job with *Bell Canada*, eventually branching out into product development for the company. My time there helped me to understand markets and develop my analytical capabilities, allowing me to become a sort of valkyrie of untapped business opportunities.

In 2005, while on maternity leave for the second time, I discovered a market opportunity in product personalization software. As it does for many entrepreneurs — particularly mothers — inspiration struck at home. I had countless photos of my children and wanted to create keepsakes out of them. I soon discovered, however, that the solutions available on the market were too complicated for most home users. All I wanted was an effortless way of creating DVD slideshows of my kids' photos. Since I was by no means a programmer, I turned to a developer friend of mine to create the software for automating the process. At first, I was excited by what the product could offer my family and friends but soon recognized the business opportunity in it.

Without an incorporated company and no concrete business plan, I headed to Ontario to meet with buyers at *Costco* and *Walmart* to sell them on my DVD-supported diaporama product (a photographic slideshow). *Walmart* was the first to bite, offering

my DVD creation services on their website. It was the first of its kind on the market and became quite popular with novice users who were becoming more comfortable with web services and e-commerce. Unbeknownst to me at the time, I had taken a step into the world of entrepreneurship.

“we chose to reskill, not restaff”

Knowledge is power in any industry. I did a lot of research on photography markets and held discussions with major players in the industry. As the photo market was undergoing a seismic shift from silver halide to digital, I used my growing understanding of digital production — and my determined mindset — to solidify my position as an innovator and visionary in the market. Coming off yet another success with *Loblaws*, *Fujifilm Canada* commissioned me to develop software for creating personalized digital photo albums for them. They viewed me as being uniquely qualified to bring a state-of-the-art, user-friendly solution to market since my DVD diaporama service was rooted in the user experience and I personally embodied the market's target demographic: a parent who wanted to hold onto my family's precious moments.

On the heels of that meeting, I approached a web development company and launched the first application in Canada that allowed users to create personalized photoalbums online and have them beautifully printed. The app swiftly gained traction in both Canadian and U.S. markets. I maintained quality assurance and oversight of the product by managing every stage of development and guiding our developers on the solution's design and functionalities. The platform was so successful in tackling *Fujifilm's* challenges that they asked me to expand it to calendars and other personalized products. I hired the best developers in Montreal to create the robust solution, which included three applications for personalizing virtually any photo product. Mediclip was born.

Hiccups & Rewards: A journey of challenges

The entrepreneur's path is often strewn with pitfalls, and Mediclip hit some rough patches from the get-go.

Tech Troubles

In 2012, when it became clear that tablets and smartphones would not support Flash (the technology originally chosen to develop Mediclip applications), we were forced to convert all our products to HTML5. Many websites and SaaS companies were undergoing the same challenge at the time, but we chose to reskill, not restaff. Rather than hiring HTML5 specialists, we gave employees an opportunity to expand their capabilities by learning the new language. I relied on my tenacity once again and was able to convince not only my clients but also my employees to take on this painful shift. For three years, the company's innovative business model — deriving revenue not only from licencing but also from retail sales through the platform — enabled Mediclip to maintain sales levels during the transition.

Gender Bias

Being a young woman also has its share of worries in the business world. Indeed, in some cultures and industry sectors, working with a female CEO is not common. I had to quickly adapt and assert myself as the president of a growing technology company. I took every opportunity to attend conferences and hold presentations (including at CES) and committed myself to continuously learning more about the technology and innovation that impacts my business. I would also go into meetings with my tremendously talented and diverse team. Together, our expertise shines.

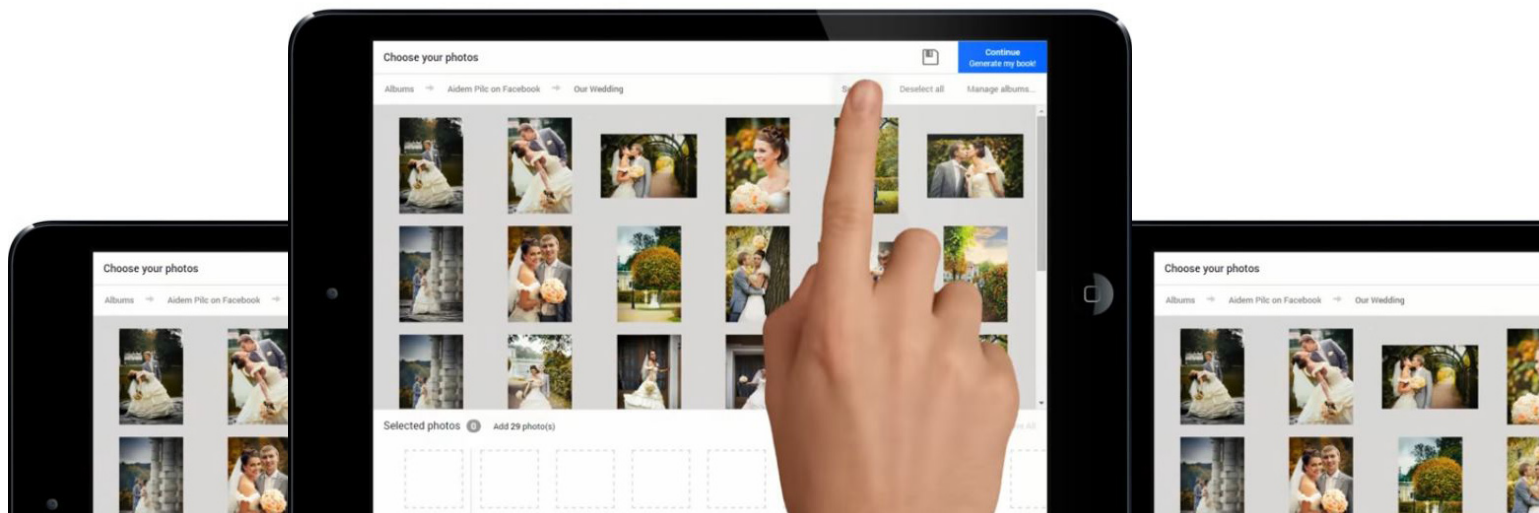
.com Mom

As a woman and mother, I also had personal challenges to tackle as I grew my business. Developing a foreign distribution chain required a lot of time on the road; the international scope of my operations required that I juggle my family's schedule and well-being with these business trips. With two young children — one of whom with severe dyspraxia that requires physical therapy, ergotherapy and speech therapy — reconciling family commitments with business demands was often a significant issue. Luckily, my business obligations were spread over several time zones, so I was able to devote my evening hours to my family and don the president's cap anew once the little ones were in bed.

I now recognize that the adrenaline and sense of personal accomplishment I derived from creating my company from the ground up was an excellent choice for both myself and my family. By achieving my full potential at work while devoting blocks of time to my family, I managed to be present for my children and offer them quality time. I instilled in them the value of perseverance, cultivating passions and pursuing dreams. For them, the company and its employees are part of the family now. And thanks to their mother's business trips, they have discovered the world and its cultures. Being a mother and an entrepreneur is possible, and I want to encourage women in tech to consider going into business for themselves. The challenges are steep, but so are the rewards.

My personal experience also permeates the way I run my business. Since the founder embraces strong family values, a deep-seated concern for work-life balance forms the company's dynamic atmosphere. Working hours are flexible, and telecommuting is encouraged across all levels of the firm.





Teamwork & Tenacity: The keys to success

From the beginning, I knew that I had to surround myself with the right people and trust the team I built, especially since I lacked software development experience. I had to wrap my head around the development process and learn to accept delays due to the innate uncertainties of technology. I also had to assimilate agile practices and manage the expectations of clients who demanded detailed work plans and fixed delivery dates. Once I committed to learning about software and its development, it contributed to my employees' well-being and loyalty. Talented people want to work with others from whom they can learn. Today, I am very proud of the quality of Mediaclip's software, and in the flexibility we have carved out for ourselves when implementing updates and developing new products.

To this day, operations at Mediaclip revolve around teamwork. Every team member participates in product development — from design to fielding client feedback. This human-centric organization has little use for hierarchy and mindless policies. The president's door is always open, and I am committed to operating with transparency for the long term, even as the organization keeps growing.

“The challenges are steep, but so are the rewards.”

The company culture is also based on developing each team member's skills. At Mediaclip, cutting-edge technology, platforms and approaches drive ongoing improvement — for our products and people. We are proud to be able to count on the loyalty of our employees, as evidenced by an extremely low turnover rate.

In business, there is no magic recipe and no innovative DNA. The better part of the invention process may be intangible, but growing an invention into a successful business takes hard work. My team's ideas and innovations have nourished my original vision of the company. I count myself as very lucky to have struck on the right combination of factors that encourage innovation, commitment and excellence in my team, and I believe that accounts for the company's commercial success.

To other tech entrepreneurs, I offer this advice: When you have an idea, let yourself dream and just go for it! Despite the many challenges, the entrepreneur's journey is exhilarating. ■



Hackers & Hustlers

An Interview with Communitech's CEO — Iain Klugman
— on the Canadian Super Cluster that Could Leap Over the Valley

The Toronto-Waterloo Corridor

Q: Communitech has proposed that the Kitchener-Waterloo region could soon rival Silicon Valley, not just mirror it. Please explain what you mean by “rival” and what would need to happen to bring that about. What infrastructure, governance and forward-thinking do we need to become the leading tech supercluster?

A: Tech clusters around the world all talk about being “the next Silicon Valley” and in Canada, the common refrain is “Silicon Valley North.” We don’t want to be Silicon Valley North. Silicon Valley came about because of a unique set of circumstances, and our belief is that we’ll be much more successful building a technology ecosystem based on our own unique attributes. There is no doubt Silicon Valley has been the epicenter of technology and innovation for the past few decades, and we have spent a lot of time developing relationships and encouraging our companies to spend time there. But our goal is to rival the productivity of the Valley, while

building something uniquely Canadian, and hopefully avoiding some of the problems they are currently experiencing.

Right now, Waterloo Region is a global tech ecosystem, with a university producing leading talent, the second highest density of startups in the world and a growing number of high-growth companies vying to be the next *BlackBerry* or *Nortel*.

That said, we need significantly more scale if we’re going to realistically rival the amount of wealth and innovation that the Valley generates. To accomplish that, Communitech has set the goal of helping to build 10 companies with annual revenues of \$100+ million in the Toronto-Waterloo Corridor by 2025. This type of scale can only happen if we tap into the complimentary talent pools in both Toronto and Waterloo, connect the two centers with efficient transportation, and attract and retain the diverse talent and capital that high-growth companies need.



Q: How important would the proposed Toronto-Waterloo Corridor be for that to happen? Why is it critical to bring Toronto into the mix?

A: It is essential. Both Toronto and Waterloo Region have thriving tech ecosystems, but reaching scale requires working together to build one cluster. To quote Toronto Mayor John Tory, “We need to work together to take on the world.” And by taking advantage of some of the things happening in Guelph, Mississauga and Hamilton as well, we have the opportunity to create an ecosystem that really can rival any in the world.

One real advantage is that the talent sets in Toronto and Waterloo Region are complimentary. Toronto has executive and sales talent, while Waterloo is producing some of the best technical talent in the world. In addition, universities in both cities are producing cutting-edge research in areas like quantum computing and artificial intelligence that will help to develop the technologies upon which the next billion-dollar companies will be built. As our companies grow, they need to access the market and talent pool in Toronto, but the hacker/hustler mentality of Waterloo will also help Toronto companies.

Q: The Toronto-Waterloo Corridor has been pitched as a way to lessen the “prosperity gap” between Canada and the U.S. by adding 170,000 high-quality jobs. Do you agree with this potential?

A: I do. We have seen in other clusters around the world — whether Silicon Valley, London-Cambridge or Tel Aviv-Haifa — that once clusters reach a certain scale, they grow exponentially.

There are a number of reasons for this, mostly related to talent and capital. As regions start to build \$100 million companies, they produce new sources of capital and experienced talent that can help the next generation of companies to grow. The combined strength of the Toronto-Waterloo Corridor will have a greater draw for talent, capital and customers, and will help companies to grow — thereby creating significantly more wealth and jobs.

Q: Is bigger always better when it comes to tech ecosystems? Are you concerned with losing the community feel that Waterloo currently has by introducing connectivity with Canada’s largest city?

A: There is a clustering effect for both talent and capital, and it tends to gravitate to the places where the

most exciting work is being done. This has been the secret to the success of Silicon Valley; it is the place where the smartest people in the world have wanted to live. It’s really difficult to generate that kind of gravitational pull without reaching a certain scale. In fact, the Startup Genome report suggests that 80% of venture capital gains will cluster in the top five ecosystems in the world¹.

While Waterloo Region has probably grown an ecosystem better than any other comparably-sized city, becoming a top five ecosystem that can attract the talent and capital our companies need to grow requires partnering with Toronto and other cities along the Corridor.

This might not have been possible even five years ago, but the tech ecosystem here has grown to the size that we can engage with Toronto in a true partnership fashion, and recognize the benefits that both ends of the Corridor can achieve by working together.

The community here is incredibly strong, so I’m not worried that sense of community will be lost. There is a long tradition of entrepreneurship and building some of Canada’s biggest companies in Waterloo Region; we’re certainly not afraid of building big things.

Q: How important is the University of Waterloo to the equation? What makes their graduates so sought after by tech firms the world over – including by Silicon Valley itself?

A: None of this would be possible without the University of Waterloo. It really is the engine that drives the Waterloo ecosystem. It churns out entrepreneurs and high-skilled employees, and does the research necessary to build great companies.

The roots of the university's success lie in how it was created – by local business people who needed to develop engineering talent for their industries, using a unique model called co-operative education that gave students real-world work experience before graduating.

The co-op program is the secret to the university's success, and I'm constantly amazed that so few other universities have tried to emulate it. Because of the real experience that graduates have, they are incredibly valuable employees the minute they step off campus and are recruited by companies around the world. This real-world experience also provides entrepreneurs with a view into problems that need to be solved in the business world, resulting in a lot of Waterloo grads producing profitable business-to-business startups, as opposed to more consumer-facing apps.

When you combine these graduates with cutting-edge research, a unique IP policy that lets professors and students own their own ideas, and an incredibly successful Velocity campus incubator program², it is a really powerful combination.

To take the ecosystem to the next level, we're also going to need significantly more business-focused talent. The approach the Lazaridis School at Wilfrid

Laurier University is taking to build technology-focused business graduates should pay big dividends, as will the increasing amount of technical talent being produced at Conestoga College. We're really blessed to have three great post-secondary institutions in this region.

Technical Talent & Entrepreneurship

Q: Recruiting technical talent is frequently cited as a key challenge for both startups and seasoned companies alike. Can you speak to why it is so difficult, particularly in Canada? How can it be overcome?

A: Recruiting high-skilled talent is difficult because there just isn't enough of it anywhere. Technical talent is certainly a big part of it, but there's also a lack of experienced talent in a host of other important areas, from user experience to product management, marketing and sales. Experienced people who have helped to scale a company are particularly valuable, as they can lead teams and help bring that experience to younger employees.

The key is to both train and develop more of the skills we need, particularly through co-op programs, while simultaneously becoming the destination of choice for the world's smartest people.

For the last 50 years, that destination has been the United States and to a lesser extent, the U.K. I think we have a real opportunity to step up and become that destination, but we need to actively pursue that opportunity. The federal government's recently announced Global Skills Strategy³ is a good start, but we also need to actively recruit internationally — everything from high-potential students to researchers and experienced business executives.

“It takes a village to raise a company.”

COMMUNITTECH

“Canadian entrepreneurs have an opportunity to build some truly great companies.”

Q: As you've pointed out, Canada has a pattern of losing tech talent and leadership to the States. Why do you think this is happening? How can we entice them to come back home and channel their experience in scaling tech companies for our home-grown startups?

A: This isn't a challenge only for Canada but for countries the world over. Even when I speak to counterparts in the United States, I hear about the same problems in Chicago or Denver, who are losing skilled talent to Silicon Valley or New York.

That said, there are a number of factors beginning to shift in our favour. The overall political climate in Canada is definitely an advantage. In addition, the extremely high cost of living in Silicon Valley is beginning to have an effect on where people want to work.

Many expat Canadians are not aware of the opportunities that now exist back home, so last summer we began running the Go North Canada⁴ campaign. We're working with partners like the City of Toronto,

Google, Thalmic Labs, the BC Tech Association, GM Canada, and Flipp to target Canadian expats working in American tech hubs — like Silicon Valley, Boston and New York — as well as in the U.K. and further abroad.

High-skilled people want to work on incredibly challenging problems, and for great companies. Those opportunities exist in Canada now — we just need to do a better job getting the word out.

Q: What about mentorship? Communitech offers a number of mentorship and collaboration opportunities for entrepreneurs and emerging tech leaders, but is mentorship enough to teach companies how to scale up?

A: Mentorship is an incredibly important part of what Communitech offers. From our business fundamentals programming for early-stage startups, through our Fierce Founders and Rev accelerators, we have a strong network of executives and entrepreneurs in residence who have specific skills to help companies grow.