



Startup Support

Q: You mentioned that the Waterloo Region features the second-highest density of startups in the world. What do you think it is about the region that inspires entrepreneurship?

A: There is a long history of entrepreneurship in Waterloo Region — from the German and Mennonite settlers to the manufacturing, financial services and, of course, technology companies that have been built here.

The current growth in startup activity was a deliberate choice, though. Regional leaders made the decision to invest in programs like Communitech, the Accelerator Centre and the Velocity Garage to revitalize downtown Kitchener as an attractive place for companies to grow, and all of us worked to help entrepreneurs in any way that we could.

Entrepreneurs are at the center of the success of this community, but we really believe that it takes a village to raise a company, and Waterloo Region has committed to making itself into the best place to start and grow a technology company in the world.

Q: So do you believe that incubators and accelerators are critical for startups, or is there something to be said for 'going it alone'? Is collaboration between innovators and established companies the key to their success?

A: It is incredibly rare for a company to be able to grow 'alone.' Whether they join a formal incubator or accelerator, there is always a need for founders to learn from their peers and mentors, to develop new skills, and hopefully — avoid mistakes that others have already made before them.

Incubators and accelerators can help companies to accelerate their growth in ways that would be difficult on their own. As an example — our Rev program⁵ takes companies that have a solid product and helps them to build a scalable sales team to drive revenue. But it's important that companies understand the value that specific accelerators or incubators can bring at their particular stage of growth.

We also host more than 25 monthly peer-to-peer meetings for different roles, where practitioners can learn from their peers within the community. One of the most effective ways to learn is from someone who has recently faced a similar problem, so we try and encourage that kind of collaboration across the community.

The challenge, of course, is finding the right kind of mentorship and coaching for companies that are scaling. There are fewer people with the experience of taking a company from \$10 million in revenue to \$100 million or more. We've been working on building out our scale up programming for the last two years. It includes access to this kind of mentorship, coaching in specific areas like HR or marketing, and CEO peer-to-peer groups for companies at a similar level — all so that they can learn from each other.

There is no doubt that scaling up is a challenge, but when I look at the fact that we now have more than 140 companies taking on that challenge, I get really excited about what is happening in the region.

Even for those not enrolled in an accelerator or incubator, there are other ways that organizations like Communitech can help — from introductions to venture capitalists, recruitment help or PR and marketing advice. Most of the really high-growth companies in the region have benefitted from multiple programs, mentors and funding opportunities to help accelerate their development.

One of the most gratifying things to see is that our current high-growth companies are already providing the mentorship, leadership and investment to earlier-stage startups. Garage Capital is a great example of this, where the founders of Vidyard and BufferBox have established an angel fund to invest in the next generation of companies.

Q: On the topic of collaboration, could you talk a little about Communitech's partnerships with the Canadian Digital Media Network and the Google Tech Hub? How did you get involved with these, and how are they helping the Waterloo tech ecosystem?

A: The Canadian Digital Media Network is a nationwide network of 26 innovation hubs that work together to support our companies, both through specific programs aimed at helping companies land in new international markets, or to access the expertise of another innovation hub elsewhere in Canada. The Google Tech Hubs are based on a similar concept, but with innovation hubs largely in the United States, and with opportunities to tap into the expertise, connections and resources that Google can provide.

Both of these networks expand the opportunities and support that we can provide to our companies, and allow us to provide advice and expertise to companies from across North America. It's really an example of taking the collaborative spirit of Waterloo Region and applying it more broadly.

Q: To end off, could you impart some advice for Canadian tech entrepreneurs?

A: Think big. I really believe that there is a massive opportunity for Canada, and Canadian entrepreneurs have an opportunity to build some truly great companies in Canada right now.

I would also encourage those who are successful to remember to help those who are coming up behind you. This is something that we're really seeing in Waterloo Region right now, and I think it bodes incredibly well for the future. ■

“To take the ecosystem to the next level, we're also going to need significantly more business-focused talent.”

¹<https://blog.startupgenome.com/waterloo-the-david-vs-goliath-of-startup-ecosystems/>

²<http://velocity.uwaterloo.ca/>

³<http://www.budget.gc.ca/fes-eea/2016/docs/themes/skills-competences-en.html>

⁴gonorthcanada.ca

⁵<https://rev.communitech.ca/>



Why Tech ♥'s Ottawa: The Story of CV Diagnostix

By Bob Griffin, Senior. VP Engineering and Development CV Diagnostix

CV Diagnostix, Inc (CVD) is a company focused on providing research, development and design services to other businesses in the Medical Device space with emphasis on Cardiovascular diagnostics. In addition, where the opportunity arises, CVD will enter into appropriate business relationships, e.g. joint venture, to develop, commercialize and exploit ideas and Intellectual Property in our preferred business space namely Medical Devices in heart-health technologies and methodologies. Our team's initial thrust is aimed at one of the more challenging cardiac diseases known as arteriosclerotic vascular disease or more commonly called Coronary Artery Disease (CAD). This disease ranks among the World's highest causes of death and debilitation. There are many excellent tools available to clinicians in this arena but none which are non-invasive, non-stressful, involve no drug injection or radiation and can be effectively employed at a primary care level.





The Start of a Startup

In 2015, a U.S. based company — *AusculSciences Inc.* — committed itself to producing a non-invasive medical device based on its earlier work in CAD detection. The device had already obtained Food and Drug Administration approval and had undergone clinical trials, but the company wanted to lean on outside expertise to develop a ‘commercialized’ version of the device, which family doctors could use to diagnose patients. This decision created the foundation of CVD and gathered together a team with the requisite experience, and technical and scientific expertise to bring the device to market.

“... essential parts of successful location are the availability of talent, an appropriate infrastructure and entrepreneurial culture.”

Location: At ‘The Heart of It All’

Deciding where to locate a new tech business is one of the most critical decisions stakeholders can make. We needed to consider whether a proposed locale would be appropriate to the nature of our business, whether it has adequate ‘infrastructure’ for current and future needs, and whether it can draw in the right talent to support an entrepreneurial culture.

For CVD, we also had to consider what institutions were in the vicinity to support our research. The primary consideration had to be accessibility to a fully capable cardiac research facility and the availability of a patient population to provide insight into CAD.

Ottawa: The Capital Choice

Early on, the University of Ottawa Heart Institute (UOHI) was identified as the institution best suited to CVD’s needs. It is ranked as a ‘world-class’ cardiac research institute and has a mandate to support and foster developments in cardiovascular sciences and methodologies for improved patient outcomes. They had the facilities, capabilities, talent and patient population needed to conduct and guide the necessary investigation we were looking for. The UOHI made it clear, however, that they would only undertake a project that had significant potential to be medically efficacious. After extensive negotiation and vetting by the UOHI staff, we were thrilled when they agreed to undertake our research project!

After achieving the research agreement with UOHI, we decided to locate the development team in Ottawa to be close to the centre of our study. The city also boasts an availability of talent, bustling infrastructure and an entrepreneurial culture. It was a simple decision. Further, Ottawa offered our budding health tech business various resources and advantages, which we didn’t feel we could get elsewhere. These included:

- **Governmental Support:** At the beginning, we turned to Invest Ottawa, which provided not only an address and a place to have a desk but also introductions to business contacts to help us set down roots in the region and get our operations going.
- **Workforce Solutions:** We recognized that to attract appropriate talent, we needed to offer not only a competitive base salary but also a well-considered benefits package. We were fortunate to get guidance in this area from Adecco and other financial consultants who helped us structure a highly attractive benefits package, and manage the recruitment of key technical staff. This allowed us to build up our essential team rapidly, even before



- **Attractive Real Estate:** Locating proper office space and managing the negotiations can be a challenge when it is happening coincidentally with building a team and establishing business goals. We worked with a local commercial real estate agency who found us an ideal location in Kanata — the largest high-tech concentration in Canada. It serves as the best setting for attracting the level of talent we need and provides a foundation for our expansion plans.
 - **Skilled Personnel:** In the medical devices realm, companies are obligated to comply with ISO Quality Management Systems requirements. This is a non-trivial matter and demands implementation of sound practices throughout the organization. Being in Ottawa allowed us to attract personnel with the experience and knowledge necessary to guide and manage our efforts, and the local chapter of the American Society for Quality (ASQ) certainly helped in this regard. With their help, CVD is proud to have registered to ISO-13485-2016.
 - **Young Talent:** Another benefit of our Ottawa location is the presence of the University of Ottawa and Carleton University. These institutions enabled and encouraged recruitment of their talented students via their co-op programs. CVD was pleased to host several students last year and benefitted greatly for the contributions and creative thinking of their ‘fresh’ brains. We will continue to participate in the program and believe that our company’s entrepreneurial spirit helps inspire these up-and-coming engineers and scientists, while they bring so much to our culture and progress.
 - **Federal Grants:** Canada is blessed with not only impressive venture capital providers, but also extensive public funding programs for research and development. Being situated in Ottawa gives us easy access to both streams. While we haven’t done so up to this point, CVD intends to leverage the support of the National Research Council’s Industrial Research Assistance Program (IRAP) in the new year. The Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) program offers another possibility for funding, and we will continue to pursue work which qualifies under the Scientific Research and Engineering Development (SR&ED) program. We are confident that these will help us to build upon the strengths of our current team and extend our expertise to further grow the Canadian medical devices industry.
- Building out — and sustaining — a business is never an individual effort. In addition to hard-working internal team members, companies will need to rely on the expertise of external organizations at some point in their journey. It is important to select the support services, location and team members who will protect your reputation, grow your business and share in its success. The resources and support services discussed above — and of course, the city of Ottawa itself — each helped CVD get to where we are today. We are pleased to announce that we are half way through a 200-patient research study thanks to everyone’s support and guidance.
- We hope other entrepreneurs won’t ‘skip a beat’ when it comes to selecting Ottawa for their HQ.■

“Canada is blessed with not only impressive venture capital providers, but also extensive public funding programs for research and development.”

We Don't Hire Employees; We Hire Humans:

An Interview with Shopify's Culture Specialist

Amandah Wood
Culture Specialist, Shopify



Q: Despite your size, Shopify has aimed to maintain a startup like culture. What does a startup mindset impart that a more corporate environment may not?

A: Our COO — Harley Finkelstein — did a great job of summarizing this at our company-wide summit earlier this year. He explained that often when large companies fail, it's not because of external factors but because of internal ones. At some point, there is a trade-off made where they benefit financially from their size, but at the cost of their culture. They end up losing the entrepreneurial, startup culture they once had. Our goal is to maintain a startup mindset to help us move faster, learn faster, place more bets, and better leverage our clout — all while staying connected to our merchants.



Q: Shopify is also known for holding internal Town Halls and open “Ask Me Anything” sessions with the CEO. How important is this spirit of transparency, accessibility and consultation across all levels of the company? Has it come to be expected from the younger talent force the tech sector tends to employ?

A: If information flows freely throughout Shopify at all levels of the company it means that people can make better, more-informed decisions quicker. It's crucial that this happens in all directions, not just top-down. The second part to this is that we hire intelligent people, and we want to create an environment where they can bring their own opinion, history and experience. This shared pool of knowledge means that we collectively make better decisions as a company. Our Town Halls and AMAs are just two of the ways we encourage transparency at a company-wide level, but the concept of “default to open” permeates in everything we do.

“Our goal is to maintain a startup mindset to help us move faster, learn faster, place more bets, and better leverage our clout.”

“When our people grow and learn, we grow.”

Q: Shopify has invested a lot of thought into the design, features and finishes of your office spaces. Your Ottawa HQ, in particular, has beautiful finishes more in line with a boutique hotel or restaurant than typical tech space. Can you tell us a little more about the decision to incorporate chandeliers, reading rooms, charging stations, sauna-like meeting rooms, and pianos? How important is office design to attracting and retaining talent?

A: For us, office design goes beyond retaining talent. It's also about letting Shopifolk thrive in an environment that is most comfortable for them. We realize that our people work in different ways, so we intentionally designed our spaces to accommodate different personalities and different working styles. Whether it's a nice quiet nook or an open-concept space that resembles a bustling coffee shop, we want our spaces to reflect the diverse set of personalities that work here. We've collaborated with Linebox Studio on office design to tailor a well-rounded employee experience¹. We also partnered with our IT department to install cameras and TV's in every meeting room and event space to ensure that people working remotely always have the ability to tune into any meeting or company gathering that's happening in the office.



Q: Years ago, the tech industry took “office perks” to the next level by offering foosball tables, slides, cafeterias, catered meals, yoga spaces and breakout rooms to their employees. These are now becoming more standard among both big players and startups alike. Are these still important to workplace culture and talent acquisition? How do Shopify’s perks stand out?

A: Perks and benefits are the symbols of a company’s culture, but they aren’t the culture. For example, we value people who have a learning mindset. When our people grow and learn, we grow. The ways we support this is through things like our ‘Own Your Own Development’ perk where employees can expense opportunities to help them grow, such as conferences, books, workshops, etc. The best way to summarize our philosophy around perks is “we don’t hire employees; we hire humans.” Humans are multidimensional; it’s our interests, beliefs and experiences that define who we are. We want to support as many of these areas as we can, whether that means supporting people’s personal interests, development or health goals. ■

“...so we intentionally designed our spaces to accommodate different personalities and different working styles.”

¹ <http://adeccocanmarketing.com/lead20en/lead20en-collaborative-spaces.html>



Closing the Commercializing Gap in Silicon Valley North

John Cundari, Vice President and General Manager, Operations, Celestica

A foundation for success

Over the past 20 years, Canada has created a solid foundation for Canadian startups by fostering entrepreneurial activities and providing them with resources to flourish. These achievements have led our country to be considered a hub of technology and entrepreneurship, and have earned us the name of “Silicon Valley North.”

We have a strong track record of developing world-leading university research, intellectual property and technology. Private and public partnerships are also well-established, as a result of efforts by organizations such as MaRS and the Ontario Centres of Excellence. They have helped many Canadian entrepreneurs build proofs of concept, business plans and marketing strategies for innovative ideas.

The value chain: a path to globalization

Canada's entrepreneurs are certainly skilled at generating innovative research, yet they need help bringing their products to market and competing on the global stage. They need to be able to leverage a robust ecosystem to quickly acquire the necessary expertise and relationships to expand to international markets. Such expertise and relationships exist in Canada, but to take full advantage of them, we need to have a shared vision among large tech companies and entrepreneurs to commit to commercialization. It is also critical for small, Canadian business to be able to get their product to market quickly thereby gaining a significant edge over their competitors. When a product's lifecycle can be as short as six months, it is essential for emerging companies to get products to market at the right time and at the right price — and that's where the value chain plays a critical role.

“... we have been experiencing strong demand for technical roles, yet not enough workers with the right skill sets to fill them.”

Today, the value chain is global. Components are sourced from all around the world. In fact, design, manufacturing and aftermarket support can all be done in various regions worldwide. In this global environment, the supply-chain is as critical as having the ideas, capital and management team to get there.

Companies who understand and embrace global opportunities and have the know-how to manage their value chain are rewarded with commercial success. While this has been true for some time in the ICT (information, communication and technology) industry, it is becoming increasingly important in diversified markets such as high tech electronics, green tech, aerospace and defense, healthcare and industrial products.

Celestica's support

Headquartered in Toronto, Celestica is a \$6 billion company with over 25,000 employees worldwide and over 1,800 in Canada alone. We have a strong global reputation and a wealth of experience in working in international markets, as well as the capability to help small businesses expand beyond Canada. We offer smart supply-chain solutions for the entire product lifecycle to help businesses gain a competitive advantage in their markets and to help reduce costs, improve speed-to-market and drive innovation. Our history and bench strength in technology enable us to be not only a trusted partner to the customers we serve but their “go to” for complex technology solutions in high-reliability applications. For example, we've successfully worked with Canadian small businesses and entrepreneurs by spearheading initiatives such as ReMAP, which accelerates the commercialization of innovations developed in Canada for the global market.

“It is clear that to keep top talent in Canada, we need to offer them the ability to grow their careers and their businesses here.”

At Celestica, our focus is on high-reliability products in diversified markets. We are connecting, coordinating and continuously optimizing our people, equipment and processes in a digital environment. We are investing in automation solutions, the equipment to digitally connect our factories, and data analytics to drive greater value for our customers.

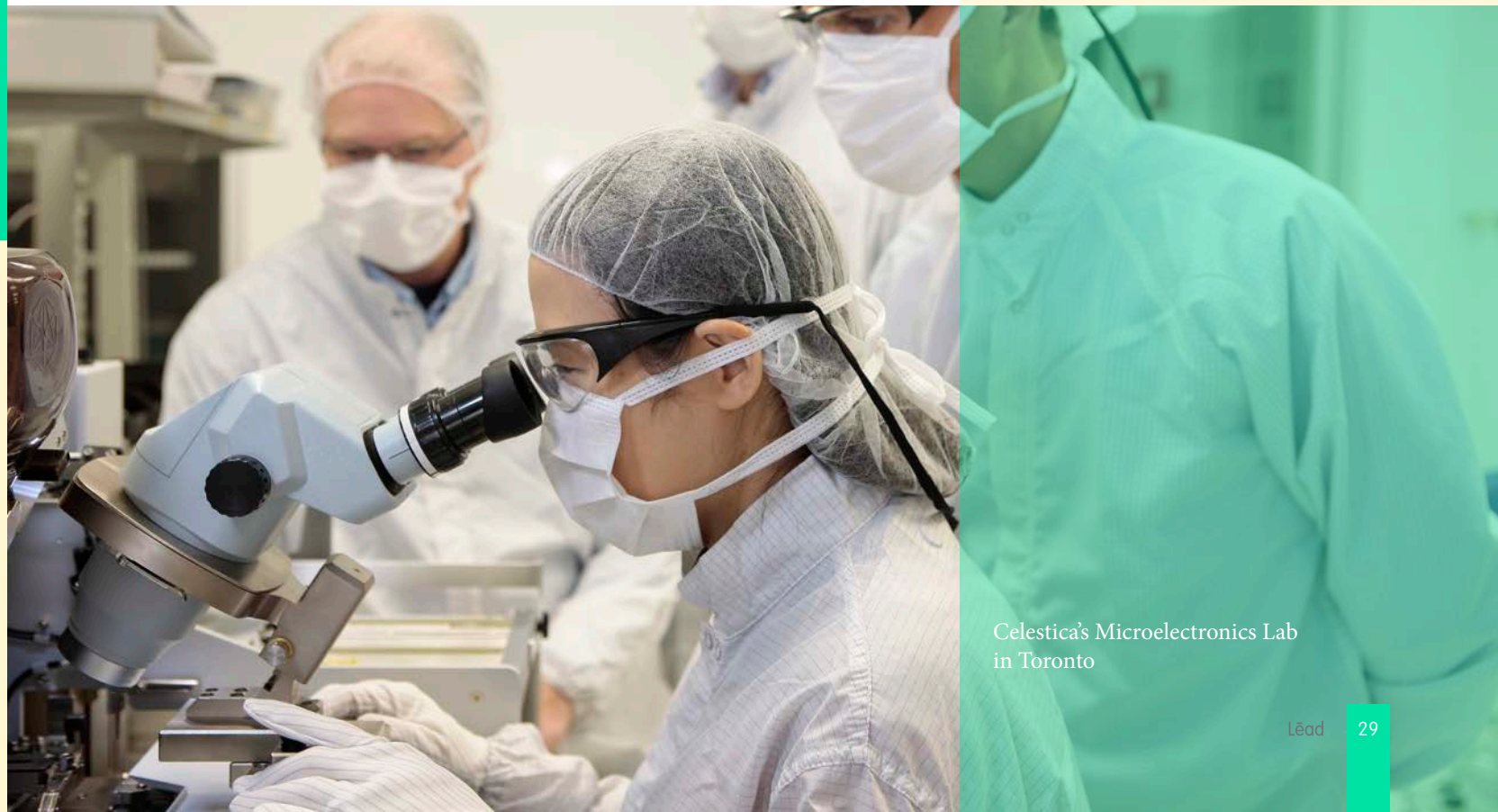
Automation and knowledge workers: the keys to longevity

As a result of these investments, we have been experiencing strong demand for technical roles, yet not enough workers with the right skill sets to fill them. We are witnessing a demand for more workers who are able to adapt to new innovations in advanced manufacturing. These workers must be skilled in understanding products' technical requirements, yet also be flexible enough to work in the connected factory, a rapidly changing manufacturing operations centre where automation allows us to manufacture products for multiple types of customers.

These workers exist in Canada, but an increasing number of them are heading to the U.S. and other markets, where more opportunities are readily available. Some of these skilled workers are scientists and engineers looking for new career opportunities, while others are entrepreneurs who believe they can receive greater access to funding and mentorship elsewhere. It is clear that to keep top talent in Canada, we need to offer them the ability to grow their careers and their businesses here.

Canada has the ideas and the talent to be recognized as a global leader in innovation. By building out our infrastructure and investing in our knowledge workers, we can close the commercialization gap and showcase our potential on the world stage. ■

“... we need to have a shared vision among large tech companies and entrepreneurs to commit to commercialization.”



Celestica's Microelectronics Lab in Toronto



On Point: An Interview with Chris Wilson

In recent years, Vancouver has emerged as a Canadian hub for tech companies — both homegrown and foreign. The rapid growth of the industry has led to an increased demand for technical employees. With companies like *Facebook*, *Microsoft* and *Amazon* setting up shop in the city, how can smaller tech companies compete for talent? We sat down with **Function Point** Founder and CEO Chris Wilson to better understand Vancouver's tech industry and his advice for recruiting and retaining employees.

Q: First, let's get introductions out of the way. What is Function Point all about?

A: It's quite simple. Function Point's mission is to help creative people in modern organizations be more productive and more profitable by providing best-in-class project management software. Used by over 9,000 people across the world, our all-in-one solution helps teams connect each stage of project management. Our goal is to make productivity more personable; to warm it up and give it a heartbeat.

Q: You were founded over 20 years ago in Vancouver and have remained there through today. Can you talk a little more about how you've seen it change over the years? With several large technology companies moving into the area, are small and medium-sized local businesses struggling to attract talent?

A: Big or small, there are certain advantages associated with company size. I think people are attracted to Function Point and other similarly-sized tech companies because they offer a

unique opportunity for personal growth and learning. Currently, we hover around 50 employees which gives us the ability to experiment, test and pivot quickly. We see our team getting their hands on new technologies and approaches, which is exciting whether you're a wily vet or just starting your career. And these ideas are coming from within the group. It's so exciting to see someone's ideas making a difference so quickly.

At smaller companies, you're also constantly interacting with different departments, teams and people within the organization. Experiencing all these different sides of the business can really benefit one's professional growth.

Finally, we're a very flat organization with an open door policy throughout the company. If someone wants to speak to me or someone else on the leadership team, we're available.

Interview

Q: What about the inverse? Does talent tend to follow larger tech companies like Facebook, Amazon and Microsoft into the city? What are some of the advantages of big firms moving into the tech scene there?

A: We often see talent from some of these larger tech companies end up at smaller businesses in the end. These are people who maybe want a change and who know they can make a big difference in a smaller organization. There's no denying that benefits the local tech community.

There's also a bit of a ripple effect that comes with Vancouver's rising profile as a tech hub. We're seeing more investment in tech education, with companies like Brainstation and Red Academy helping train the next generation of talent. And we're seeing more investment by the provincial government which recently committed to a \$100 million British Columbia tech fund to make early-stage capital more available locally.

Q: Let's talk funding now that you've mentioned it. Function Point has chosen to not take on VC funding in the past. Has this affected your ability to recruit, when compared to larger firms?

A: In short, it hasn't. Some people want to work at a VC-backed start-up where the expectations associated with investments play a role in their day-to-day. We believe we sit in a great place as a business that is customer funded and values-based, and we've managed to attract a talented team of people who agree.

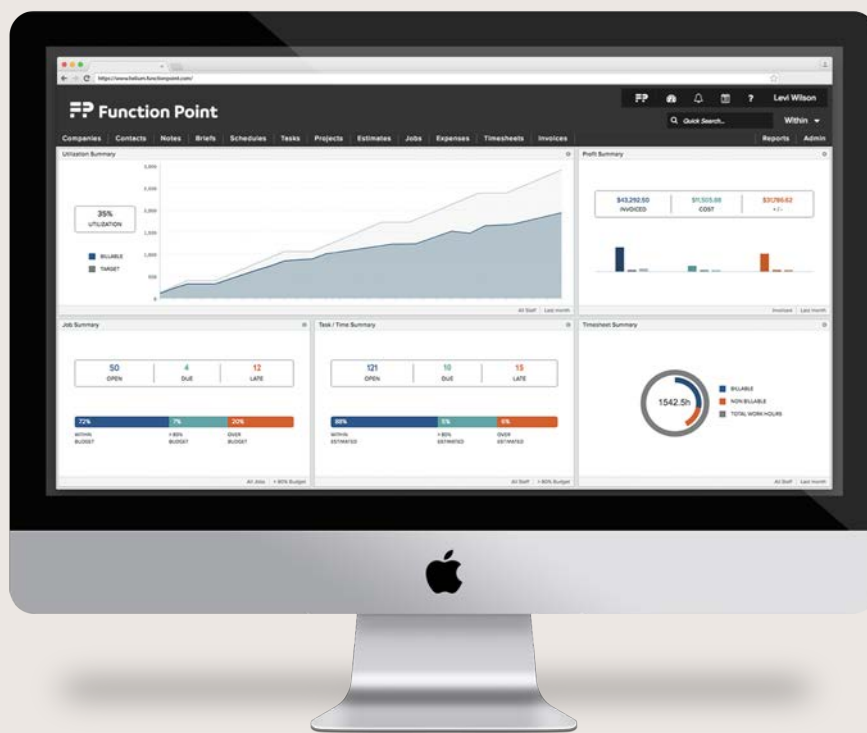
Q: Studies, HR Managers and Millennials themselves¹ often cite the need for greater mentorship and career development — particularly for young employees. Does Function Point believe in the value of internships and co-op programs?

A: Absolutely. Most of us did internships early on in our careers. If we can help someone get a good start and provide them with skills that will help them establish their careers, then that's something we want to be doing.

Of course, the benefits go in both directions. The majority of our internships are part of co-op programs for university students. We've happily hired a number of these talented co-ops into full-time positions once they were done their studies.

In general, people in tech are very aware of the skills gap that exists in this industry. After 20 years of working in tech, I've noticed that training and education have now become top priorities among industry leaders whether you're catering to an intern or full-time employee.

“... professional education is rewarding on both a personal level, but also benefits the company as a whole through the knowledge and concepts these employees bring back into to the organization.”



Q: So how can employers better address this generation's need for learning opportunities?

A: Whether it's an education fund or a mentoring program, employers need to find ways to provide the next generation of talent with learning opportunities. They also need to be flexible and creative in how they provide it, as formal training isn't always available for each role.

At Function Point, we offer employees a \$2,000 personal development fund to spend on books, courses, conferences or training. Managers work with employees to identify and research different learning opportunities and approaches. When working in tech, it's so important to stay on top of trends and what the future holds. In this way, supporting professional education is rewarding on a personal level but also benefits the company as a whole, because of the knowledge and concepts these employees bring back into to the organizations. That's money well spent.

Q: And what about the other end of the spectrum? Developers have a reputation for quickly moving from one company to the next. How have you been able to retain some of your more senior staff?

A: I've been fortunate to have employees stay with the company for many years, including our VP of Product, who has been with Function Point for 14 years. I think it comes down to always providing opportunities to learn and experiment. Because of who we are, we can quickly change direction and make the kinds of investments that expose us to new technologies. Right now, those investments have us looking into more automation, API integrations and AI, and our team is all too happy to play and experiment in those worlds.

I have said it many times. We want to work with people who are excited to come to work in the morning and still feel energized at the end of the day to best spend their free time. If a team member is thinking of moving to a new firm, they can speak of it. We will do our best to help them get back on a track that excites them, but if they're not learning and growing, then we should help them get to where they want to be. Sometimes that means changing departments; other times it means changing careers. We do our best to support our people in either scenario.

Q: So whether we are talking about talent attraction or talent retention, how are smaller firms like Function Point able to compete with the perks large tech companies tend to offer?

A: No, we don't have in-house yoga or a cafeteria. Instead, we try to match our perks with our culture as a values-based company.

Part of our mission at Function Point is to contribute to the well-being of our employees, customers and community. With that in mind, we offer paid volunteer time, allowing staff to work at a charity of their choice. Employees also have liberal access to paid time off for personal health, and members of the team who travel for work are given additional personal time to experience the places they're visiting before heading home.

We try to create an environment around the office that is inclusive, safe and collaborative, and is a place where everyone's contributions are celebrated. The company was co-founded by my wife — Jane — and I, and we speak about being an equal opportunity employer. I'm proud of the ratio of women and men being about 50/50. Perhaps most importantly, we strive to pay a fair wage, which beats just about any perk. We want the team to be thinking about the problems they're trying to solve, not how much they're being paid.

Lastly, at Function Point your coworkers are just as likely to be a recent parent as they are a recent graduate. We always keep that in mind when organizing company events and get-togethers. Instead of beer taps, we lean towards scavenger hunts or curling bonspiels — we are Canadian after all. ■

“... have us looking into more automation, API integrations and AI, and our team is all too happy to play and experiment in those worlds.”

And Canada is thrilled to have a company like Function Point in our Valley!

¹<http://adeccocanmarketing.com/lead20en/>





When a Global Design Powerhouse Moves to Silicon Valley North

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

When I look out the windows of the Syntronic office, I am always amazed. Our Canadian Head Office is located right in the heart of Kanata North's tech neighbourhood: a district buzzing with innovation. The region benefits from excellent universities and colleges, government departments and various organizations — such as *Invest Ottawa*, *CENGN*, and the *Kanata North BIA* — all of whom help promote development and entrepreneurship in this great city.

Kanata North has also proven to be a vibrant hub for talented and creative people. Behemoths such as *Amazon*, *Apple* and *QNX* have set up offices nearby and brought in top talent to the city. Their success and growth has further attracted countless engineers, software designers, entrepreneurs and investors into the core. There are now more than 21,000 brilliant people working at over 500 companies in this neighbourhood, and many of them are in walking distance of the Syntronic office.

Opening up our North American HQ here was a strategic — and successful — move.

Canal Cities: From Stockholm to Ottawa


Syntronic has seen a lot of growth and change since it began operating in 1983 out of Stockholm, Sweden. Two years after starting as a media company, Syntronic moved its Head Office to Gavle (about 160km North of Stockholm) and quickly

became a sought-after engineering design house. In order to serve some of our larger global customers, we opened offices in various regions of the world, including China and Malaysia, and most recently — Ottawa.

Sweden and Canada are similar in many ways; it's not just our shared love for hockey. The quality of life and the quality of the talent in Ottawa is familiar to the European mindset and is what attracted Syntronic to the area. And with the help of partners like *Invest Ottawa* and the *Kanata North BIA*, it made the whole process of settling in Ottawa fairly easy.

Syntronic's Ottawa team has grown very quickly in the last two and a half years. When the office opened in 2014, we started with a team of 12 hardware engineers who were sent to our Swedish Head Office to learn Syntronic's way of working and the Swedish culture. They were introduced to practices such as “fika” where once a week the team stops working to chat and enjoy coffee and treats together. It allows the employees to get to know each other better — on a personal level — and improves the overall relationship between co-workers.

“... we've been conscious to attract the kind of talent that our customers require.”



Ottawa, Ontario

While the team was getting acquainted, we undertook standard new business acquisition activities. We were starting from scratch in the Americas and no one knew us at the time. We worked hard knocking on doors to introduce ourselves and get potential customers to give us a try so we could prove ourselves.

In March of this year, Syntronic R&D Canada was proud to hire our 100th employee. Within less than three years, we've expanded from boutique to enterprise firm. As we've grown, we've been conscious to attract the kind of talent that our customers require. Many of the highly experienced engineers who joined our team are looking for variety in the projects they take on, which we can offer them through the assortment of client assignments we support. I believe that this is what attracts top talent to Syntronic — even with a much talked-about skills shortage and their choice of tech companies to work for in the area. The variety keeps things interesting and builds their experience portfolio.

Even as we've grown our team, we've tried to maintain a startup feel, all the while leveraging what we've learned in 34 years of business and infusing it into everything we do.

Filling a Niche

In addition to our exceptional workforce, we've been able to play a vital role for customers in Kanata. With hundreds of R&D, development and tech firms in the area, many need technical expertise, talent and experience in order to meet project timelines, product launches, ramp ups, design competitions or funding targets. Often, they've built a great team and have innovative ideas for products or solutions, but run into the situation of needing expertise or external help to get through road blocks during the design or development phase. Syntronic is able to assist these customers by infusing our own high-performance team into their workforce and helping them reach their development targets. Our full-time permanent designers are used as a flexible workforce to complement our customers' current teams and do more in less time.

Having a partnership with a global engineering design house like Syntronic offers our clients various advantages. In addition to specializing in the design and development of software innovation and test systems, production services and aftermarket services, we have successfully completed over 2,500 projects around the world. We offer our customers the peace of mind of working with a proven design partner.



Stockholm, Sweden

Global Talent, Local Delivery

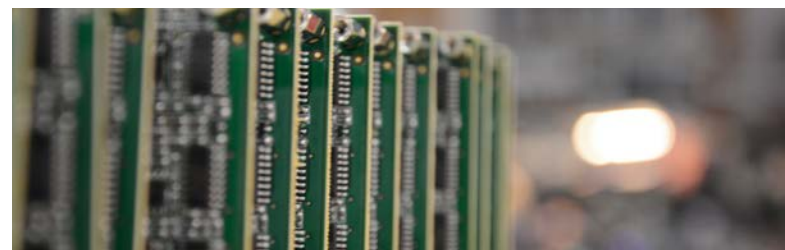
There are also times when our Ottawa customers require global support. Having 16 offices around the world, we are able to cater to each customer's unique needs. Clients can work with our Ottawa office while having access to our other global design sites. A design project can take place at three different Syntronic locations across multiple time zones, all while having the Ottawa team manage it and interact with North American stakeholders. We're able to work collaboratively for a 24-hour period, with each location taking over the work from another region throughout the day, thereby allowing our customers' project to be completed in much less time.

Our customers have also benefited from taking advantage of our lower cost regions, like our offices in Malaysia. The bulk of a project can be completed in a low-cost region, while a smaller Syntronic team from Canada can oversee it and be responsible for testing, verification and quality assurance. By keeping design costs low, customers can maintain a competitive advantage without compromising on quality. Whether our customers interact with Syntronic in Ottawa or at an office in Malaysia or Sweden, they can expect the same level of service and streamlined processes across the globe.

I am confident that our quick rise and success in Ottawa is due to our highly talented employees who have proven to

our customers that we are a valuable, affordable and flexible way to add talented workers to their core team — whether they need extra help from one specialized individual or an experienced high-performance team.

There is certainly more growth awaiting Syntronic as Silicon Valley North heats up and we rise to the challenge of helping our customers with their exciting R&D projects along the way. ■



“The quality of life and the quality of the talent in Ottawa is familiar to the European mindset.”





5 Questions with...

Heather Tyrie of *You.i TV*

You.i TV is building the future of TV by enabling global media and entertainment brands to develop video streaming apps across any consumer device, on any screen. Situated in the Kanata North Business Park with just under 200 employees, we sat down with Heather Tyrie, VP, Employee Experience to talk about You.i TV's rapid growth, work environment and work hard/play hard culture.





Q: What does Ottawa offer that has made it so successful in fostering tech start-ups and growth?

A: Simply put, it's in the local DNA. Going back 30+ years — when companies like Nortel, Mitel and Newbridge planted roots in Ottawa and fostered innovation, incubation, and ultimately, spin-off companies — robust talent from all over Canada and the world started to make Ottawa their home. With this, a broad tech community developed — across the entire ecosystem and functional roles. And once they were here, how could they not fall in love with the city? Today, Ottawa is ranked #17 out of 230 on Mercer's 2017 list of most liveable cities. It has history, culture, low crime rates, good schools and great outdoor amenities.

Q: Ottawa's tech ecosystem has certainly come a long way since those big names moved in. But are there still challenges of talent recruitment in the city's tech industry?

A: The growth of the tech sector in Ottawa is very exciting. Right now, there are over 500 companies with over 21,000 skilled employees in Kanata North alone. Recently named the largest tech park in Canada, the region has been quite a draw for talent. Over the years, we have seen that pool become quite strong, but it never seems deep enough from a recruitment perspective.

The growth of the talent pool starts with high schools and universities. Over the years, there has been an ever-increasing focus on STEM (science, technology, engineering and math), thus creating a group of well-educated, highly-skilled recruits. Even though we see great momentum here, the pool remains small nationwide — making for a relatively competitive market in the tech sector.

Q: You.i TV employs tech talent in Ottawa, Toronto, New York, and Atlanta. How does your recruitment strategy differ for each of these markets?

A: Not much. We're looking for people who want to be game changers, and that is location agnostic. When we talk to incoming talent, we focus on our company's employee value proposition. The short version of that value prop is this: at You.i TV, you get to be part of the TV revolution. It's a life experience, not just something for your resume. Our teams work collaboratively to create mind-blowing solutions using technology that others only dream about.

Q: Your 30,000 sq ft Ottawa office is in a tech hub with some big names. Has this made tech talent recruitment more challenging? How do you overcome it and make your perks stand out?

A: Job seekers are increasingly concerned about what you do, the impact they can have and finally — the size of the organization. To that end, we actually haven't had too many issues in finding the talent we need. I attribute this to a few things:

- 1 We have a good local brand. As the company has grown, we've received a lot of positive press in regards to high-profile client signings, funding news and award wins — all of which potential employees take note of. Our CEO — Jason Flick — also sits on the Board of Invest Ottawa and is very active in the local tech community.
- 2 We're involved in and give back to the tech community. As a company, we've played host to Agile development groups and Technovation Mentors (a mentoring group for girls wanting to become software developers), for example. Our employees also share their experience at a number of conferences, panel discussions and seminars.

3 We're involved with local colleges and universities. We have a deep commitment to Ottawa's colleges and universities. Our recruitment team frequently attends campus networking events and career fairs, our staff sit on program advisory boards or actively teach, and we typically hire 8-10 students per term — a big commitment for a company our size.

4 We're active in the community. Many of our employees eagerly support local charities and community events. Whether it's fundraising for the local food bank or the Snowsuit Fund, to Dragonboat and Hope Beach Volleyball, you'll often find our team members raising money and participating in the community.

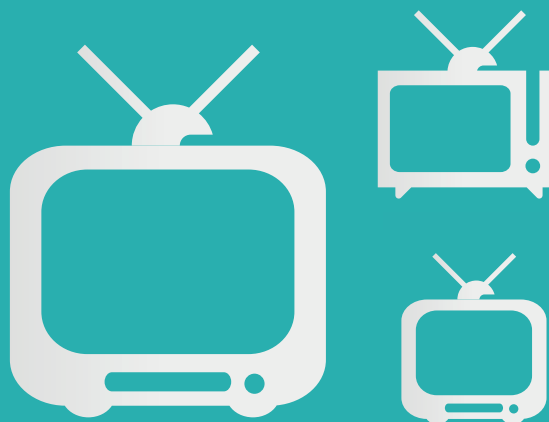
5 Our employees are our best recruiters. Over 35% of our hires come from employee referrals. It speaks volumes when the people who already work for us tell their friends, neighbours and acquaintances about how great it is to work at You.i TV.

6 We are passionate about diversity. We believe it is so important to have a welcoming environment for everyone: women, visible minorities, LGBTQ. One of the best things about tech companies — and ours in particular — is that people are focused on the contribution that a person makes to the team, and not on anything else.

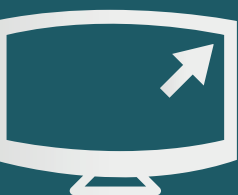
Q: Your strategies and culture are clearly working for you! Congratulations on being ranked as 16th on Deloitte Canada's Technology Fast50 (and 127th across North America). How have you managed such an impressive growth over the last 5 years? How do you plan to scale your growth as you go global?

A: Thank you. We're really proud of how much the company has grown in such a short amount of time. There are two main things that we've kept a close watch on as we've grown: process and culture. Getting those elements right are a key part of managing the changes in the organization as we scale up.

When the company was small (i.e. 30 people), things like communication and processes were easy — you could just talk to the person in the seat beside you. When we started getting close to 100 people, it became clear that we needed to provide more structure and create processes that were repeatable. To help us with that, we recruited people with extensive experience who had 'been there and done that.' We also created 'guilds' — groups of employees who are interested in making improvements in specific areas that impact the whole company.



On the culture side, we made a conscious decision about the elements of a small company that we wanted to keep as we grew larger. Just like with process, we realized that as we approached the 100 person mark, we really needed to talk about what our core values were — as people and as a company. We looked at what had made us successful and what we all could identify with. From the ground up four values emerged that really represent who we are and what we're all about: Own it, Challenge Everything, Be Creative, and Build Relationships. These values are used every day to instill passion in our team and find even more game-changers in the field. ■



There are over
50,000
unfilled vacancies
across Canada's IT sector.

**It's time to get candid about
your candidate pool.**

**Roevin offers expert solutions and insights proven
to deliver the technical talent your company urgently needs.**

- Technical talent recruitment
- Talent mobility programs
- Brand attraction strategies
- Job description & pay rate guidance
- Expert hard & soft skill testing
- Contractor risk mitigation
- IT sector consulting
- Industry salary guides

Dive in at Roevin.ca

Roevin



THE ADECCO GROUP



The Adecco Group is the world's leading provider of workforce solutions, transforming the world of work through talent and technology. Through our distinct and specialized brands, we offer total workforce solutions — including temporary staffing, permanent placement, career transition, talent development, outsourcing and labour market expertise. We partner with employers, candidates, colleagues and governments to empower people, fuel economies, and enrich societies.