

BUSINESS VOICE

HALIFAX'S BUSINESS MA

AGENTS OF CHANGE 8.0

Success not just about financials, but causes close to home for these HRM innovators

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Opening the global marketplace **Pg 19**

BUILDING BOATS

147 years of seaworthy sails **Pg 22**

CLIMATE FOR CHANGE

Turning opportunity into action **Pg 28**

NIVA SABESHAN
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER
MOTRYX INC



MOTRYX INC TAKES OFF WITH THE HELP OF NEW BLOOD.

A small start-up in Downtown Halifax is using its new data-sensor technology to read the quality of blood samples when they're being moved from one place to the next. This innovation is already having a tremendous impact on the efficiency of numerous laboratories and hospitals and has the potential to benefit entire healthcare systems around the world.

And now, a new grad is helping the company expand its business across two continents. Niva Sabeshan graduated from the Dalhousie MBA program in April and joined Motryx's team of eight as their business development manager.

"Niva comes to the table with a lot of experience that is not in any of our areas of expertise," says Dr. Franziska Broell, CEO of Motryx. "It has something to do with her education, and a lot to do with her self-starter attitude. As a small start-up, we need her level of motivation and ability to take initiative to help us meet our growth potential."

Within a month on the job, Niva completely immersed herself in the company and took over all financial grant writing. She's now focused on expanding their client base throughout Europe and the United States.

"Niva is helping to build a strong reputation for our business within our target market internationally," says Dr. Broell.

Hiring Niva was made easier for Motryx with the Graduate to Opportunity program (GTO), which helps start-ups, small businesses under 100 full-time employees, non-profits and social enterprises offset the cost of hiring a recent graduate.

Employers receive 25% of a grad's first-year salary (35% if the grad is diverse) and 12.5% of a grad's second-year salary from the province.

"Not enough businesses know about this program," says Dr. Broell. "GTO's wage subsidy makes it easier for us to hire top talent in-house."

**GTO'S WAGE
SUBSIDY MAKES IT
EASIER FOR US TO
HIRE TOP TALENT
IN-HOUSE.**

"I found a place where I feel motivated to work every day," says Niva. "As a new grad I came in and immediately assessed the company's business needs. I get to switch gears quickly, from hiring, to writing reports, to researching or managing our finances. I am learning so much, and at the same time helping set the culture of a new company."

More than 1,000 recent graduates have already been hired by employers across Nova Scotia with the help of GTO. Save money on the next person you hire. Visit novascotia.ca/GTO. Applications are typically turned around within five business days.

Business Voice is published 11 times a year for members of the Halifax Chamber of Commerce and Metro Halifax's business community. Views expressed in Business Voice are those of the contributors and individual members, and are not necessarily endorsed by, or are a policy of, the Halifax Chamber of Commerce.

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**HALIFAX
CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE**



We don't need a handful of people living zero-waste lives — we need millions of people living a lower-waste life."

— Alexa Goodman, Founder, Stop Trashing It

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COVER STORY:

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AGENTS OF CHANGE 8.0

Success not just about financials, but causes close to home for these HRM innovators

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CHAMBER EVENTS

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

BUSINESS AFTER HOURS

BNI and the Halifax Club

DATE: Tuesday, December 3
TIME: 4:30 - 6:30 p.m.
LOCATION: 1682 Hollis St.

WONDER WOMEN

PRESENTED BY: **BOYNECLARKE LLP**

DATE: Friday, December 6
TIME: 8 a.m. - 3 p.m.
LOCATION: Westin Nova Scotian

CHAMBER 101

DATE: Wednesday, December 11
TIME: 12 - 1:30 p.m.
LOCATION: Halifax Chamber of Commerce, 32 Akerley Blvd.

POWER LUNCH

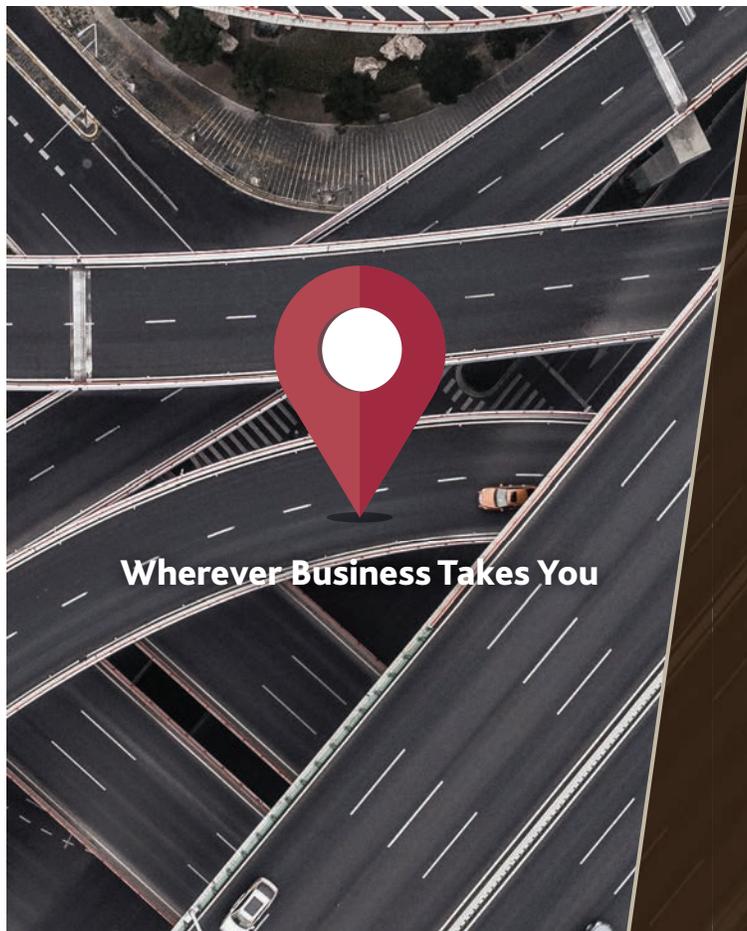
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DATE: Friday, December 13
TIME: 12 - 1:30 p.m.
LOCATION: Halifax Chamber of Commerce, 32 Akerley Blvd.

2020 HALIFAX BUSINESS AWARDS

PRESENTED BY: **RBC**
DATE: Thursday, January 23, 2020
TIME: 5 - 9:30 p.m.
LOCATION: Halifax Convention Centre

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Business is a journey filled with twists and turns, risks and opportunities. When you're wondering if you should stay the course or take a detour, we can help you plan the best route now and for wherever business takes you.

Contact Craig Maloney, MBA, CPA, CA, CBV, Partner, Corporate Finance, at 902.493.5430 or craig.maloney@mnp.ca

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A December state of mind

Wrapping up another successful year with our members

@prezhfxchamber



PATRICK SULLIVAN
PRESIDENT & CEO

It's hard to believe 2019 is already coming to end. In the last year, we've seen huge event growth, welcomed new staff and new members, built our voice for advocacy and started to work on our 2019-2023 strategy.

We're grateful to our members for their continued feedback on our initiatives. Your comments and suggestions help us shape our events, our membership engagement and our advocacy work. We work for our members.

In 2019, we garnered hundreds of responses to our new website polls, from the fracking conversation to cannabis. Our executive team held close to 100 meetings with government officials,

community groups and members on advocacy issues and strategic plan initiatives. Thanks to our new website, we're able to interact in even more two-way communication with our members.

We implemented our "host" initiative at luncheons to provide a platform and exposure to members and to ensure better and more diverse representation on stage. Ninety two per cent of the time, these hosts were women who were able to show the great talent and organizations we have locally.

We're also introducing a Halifax Chamber Annual Report this year, to be released in late January 2020 and at our Annual General Meeting in April 2020. Members will be able to see a snapshot of all the work we've done together, from event numbers, to advocacy meetings with government, to new members. Look for that in 2020!

In December's issue, we're excited to focus on our Agents of Change, the eighth edition. We've included local leaders with a variety of backgrounds. It's important to showcase our range of businesses here in Halifax and we're always looking for new speakers and new businesses to highlight. If you know of a local business leader working on a great new project, send them

our way! We'd love to hear from you.

Our Agents of Change include a young tech guru breaking down cryptocurrency barriers for businesses, an environmentalist spreading action instead of awareness, an entrepreneur finding alternatives to egg products and a brand-new business helping Halifax plan better and eat healthier. Please flip to page 14 to read more on their stories.

We're also thrilled to shine a light on eBay's Retail Revival program taking place right here in Halifax. They had plenty of cities to choose from across Canada, but they chose Halifax, in conversation with the Halifax Partnership, for its current business landscape and opportunity for even more growth. Hear about their success stories on page 19.

All in all, we're thankful for a successful 2019. A special thank you goes out to our staff, our Board of Directors, our Affinity Partners, our sponsors, our ambassadors and our task forces. Your continued support and dedication to the Chamber propels us forward and pushes us to do better. We value your efforts to continue growing the Chamber so we can support our members and their goals.

Thank you, everyone. Happy holidays and a happy new year! ■

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NEW & NOTED

We welcome our new Chamber members

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Business Network International (BNI) is the world's largest business referral organization. Members commit to attending and participating in weekly meetings. They grow their businesses by cultivating long-term relationships, developing sufficient trust in each other in order to refer clients and contacts. Members hone their business skills through interactions with fellow members.

Dalene Allen

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Caitlin MacLachlan

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Tanya Sieliakus

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NOVA SCOTIA ASSOCIATION FOR COMMUNITY LIVING

Nova Scotia Association for Community Living (NSACL) is a province-wide, not-for-profit association of people with intellectual disabilities, families and others leading the way to build a just and inclusive society. NSACL works strategically with other disability rights organizations, in particular with Nova Scotia People First.

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Melanie Quigg is a clinical social worker servicing HRM and all surrounding areas. Quigg has over 15 years of experience providing therapy and counselling services to children, adolescents, adults, couples and families, as well as experience leading training and workshops on mental health and wellness. Her genuine, down-to-earth demeanour enables Quigg to effectively utilize evidence-based psychological therapy to create an individualized program based on what works best for her clients!

Melanie Quigg

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Start2Finish’s mission is to break the cycle of child poverty by providing ongoing educational support to Canada’s at-risk children throughout their school years, nurturing mind, body and social health so they are empowered to succeed and become role models for change. Start2Finish operates programs throughout the country including its Backpack and Running & Reading programs within HRM.

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MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

How our members are growing Halifax



DURTY NELLY'S WINS INTERNATIONAL AWARD

Durty Nelly's Authentic Irish Pub has won global recognition for their Irish pub food program in downtown Halifax. The Irish Hospitality Global Awards is an annual conference, gala and awards ceremony handing out awards to Irish pubs all over the world in a variety of categories. The ninth annual Irish Hospitality Global Gathering took place in Dublin over Oct. 7 and 8, 2019. Representatives from Durty Nelly's couldn't be present at the awards ceremony, however, found out via Twitter that they'd won Best Food Experience in The Americas. Executive Chef Richard Sanford and the entire team at Durty Nelly's is extremely proud and excited to be recognized globally.



VISIT US AT 2207 GOTTINGEN ST.!

HaliPad Real Estate Inc. is excited to open its doors in the vibrant north end business community and looks forward to supporting local initiatives in the area we now call home. HaliPad agents are knowledgeable, full-time REALTORS® committed to providing our clients the tools and information needed to make

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GLOW OF NOVASCOTIAN CRYSTAL IS GROWING

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RETREAT HELPING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

More than 120 international students from 37 countries studying at post-secondary institutions across the province will come together for the **EduNova Study and Stay™** programs retreat, representing the official launch of the programs this year. Participating students will be provided with the education, tools, community connections and supports needed to

launch a successful career and a fulfilling life in Nova Scotia after they graduate. The objective of the program is to retain 80 per cent of participating students for one year post-graduation. The high percentage of students who stayed in the province post-graduation from previous cohorts speaks to the ongoing success of the program.



HALIFAX STANFIELD REACHES NEW HEIGHTS IN 2018

Halifax International Airport Authority (HIAA) is pleased to release the results of its 2018 Economic Impact Study, which indicates that the airport is contributing more than ever to the Nova Scotia economy at an incredible value of \$3.8 billion. "Halifax Stanfield is an ideal gateway for tourism, trade,

investment and immigration and is one of the most critical pieces of transportation infrastructure in Nova Scotia," said Joyce Carter, President and CEO of HIAA. "As an active member of the community, we're proud that our work and that of our tenants and partners, benefits the entire region."



HOPE BLOOMS ANNOUNCES CONSTRUCTION OF THEIR GLOBAL KITCHEN FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

On Sept. 25, **Hope Blooms** announced the start of construction of their Global Kitchen for Social Change with Lindsay Construction breaking ground mid-September. The project will address growing demand for food access at their existing garden site as well as educational programs. The 3,000 square-foot community kitchen will serve as a teaching hub

and connector for youth organizations across Nova Scotia by providing outreach mentorship for youth, social entrepreneurship and urban agriculture. The design of the kitchen incorporates the look and feel of the greenhouse while integrating a commercial-grade kitchen for Hope Blooms production and a multi-purpose space for the larger community.



RESTORING THE PAST

Tower Interiors was awarded the contract to recreate the historic valance over the throne chairs in the Red Chamber of Province House. A historic picture was provided by the Nova Scotia legislature and the style had to be reproduced to match the picture. Made from rich red velvet and created in the traditional style, the valance

was fabricated with sumptuous fullness and installed on site in July 2019. It is adorned with gold coloured tassels, fringe, cords and rosettes just like the historic picture provided. “We have received great feedback from Province House who are very pleased with our reproduction” says Pam Tower, Interior Designer.



PORT OF HALIFAX WEBSITE SEAN LEWIS JOINS IRIS COMMUNICATIONS

Sean Lewis is joining **Iris Communications** (Iris), an independent strategic communications, government relations and public advocacy firm, as a partner to expand the firm’s strategic communications offering to new and existing clients. Lewis has over a decade of experience as a senior communications advisor and corporate communications leader providing communications advice and training to public and private sector organizations on media relations, stakeholder engagement, crisis and issues management. Immediately prior to joining Iris, he was the Director of Communications with Irving Shipbuilding, responsible for the organization’s internal and external communications. Prior to Irving Shipbuilding, Lewis was also a Director with Corporate Research Associates (now Narrative Research). At Iris, Lewis joins partners Kirby McVicar and Trevor Floyd.

AVANTI COACHING FOUNDER JOINS IKEA TEAM

Olga Manzoni, Founder of Avanti Coaching, is excited to announce her new role with **IKEA Halifax**. Manzoni joins the leadership team as their People and Culture Manager. Manzoni is a certified executive coach (CEC) with a graduate certificate in executive coaching through Royal Roads University. She is also a bilingual talent and leadership development specialist with more than 25 years of human resources and leadership experience, working with individuals and management teams in Canada and the U.S. Manzoni is excited to take on this new role and to continue working as an executive and professional coach.



LANDMARK DFS CONFERENCE IN CANADA!

Dress for Success Worldwide hosted their first ever International Conference in Vancouver, Canada! “This is a milestone after 22 years of hosting all annual conferences in the United States of America. Now serving 30 countries and 160 affiliates around the world, it is an honor to be hosting this event on Canadian soil,” says, Julie Wisen, Board Chair, **Dress for Success Halifax**. It’s also a landmark occasion to have our CEO, Brenda Saunders/Todd, participating in the organizational structure of DFS at all three levels in the same year (local, national and international) with Joi Gordon, CEO, Dress for Success Worldwide. Congratulations, Brenda!

PROPELLER BREWING COMPANY EXPANDING TO QUINPOOL ROAD

Propeller Brewing Company is excited to announce expansion to a third location. To keep up with their growing community of craft beer lovers, they’re adding a retail location on Quinpool Road, in The Keep. “We’re excited to find ourselves a great spot on this side of the Common,” said Michael Allen, General Manager of Propeller Brewing Company. “We can’t wait to bring the Propeller hospitality to Quinpool.” A full retail store including growlers and packaged product in the works, along with a spot to sit and sample Propeller’s award-winning, rotating lineup of craft beer — or relax with a pint. Further details to be announced, but open is slated for early 2020.



GETINTHELOOP RAISES FUNDS FOR RMHC®

This summer, mobile marketing platform **GetintheLoop Halifax** partnered with Ronald McDonald House Charities® (RMHC) Atlantic to help spread awareness of GetintheLoop’s recent launch in the city and to raise money for the charity which provides families of sick children a home away from home while their child is being treated. For every download of

the free app generated by the campaign, \$1 was donated to RMHC® Atlantic. The successful collaboration was a great way for the local owners to give back to the community while strengthening their connection to the city and fostering a local, community focused approach to marketing — the hallmark of the GetintheLoop platform.



JUNKERY’S SHRINKING THEIR CARBON FOOTPRINT

The carbon footprint of transportation is a major issue that many eco-minded businesses are finding difficult to address. **Junkery** is the first junk removal services company in Canada to become bullfrogpowered with green fuel for 25 per cent of its fleet. “We’re proud of our decision to choose Bullfrog for our junk removal fleet,” says Ginny Sterling Boddie, Co-founder of Junkery. “It’s a unique solution for our business and it makes us feel good knowing we’re doing that much more for the planet.” The company even sorts and recycles every possible item to keep it out of the landfill — diverting more than 85 per cent of materials it collects.



TESTING YOUR HOME FOR RADON

Have you tested your home for radon gas? If not, consider testing in order to ensure your family is not exposed to this radioactive gas — the second leading cause of lung cancer. Radon gas is formed from the breakdown of uranium in the soil, which then enters homes through cracks in the foundation and other entry points. There are no areas in Canada that are radon free. The only way to ensure your home does not contain high concentrations of radon is to test for it. Radon detectors can be purchased at the **Lung Association of Nova Scotia** or you can borrow a short-term radon detector from public libraries across the province. For more information, visit ns.lung.ca.



AGENTS OF CHANGE 8.0

Meet this year's Change Agents, from left to right: Alexa Goodman, Founder, Stop Trashing It; Keegan Francis and Mrugakshee Palwe, Co-founders of Atlantic Blockchain Company; and Nevell Provo, Co-founder & CEO, Smooth Meal Prep. Missing from photo is Hannah Chisholm, Founder, Eggcitable.

Success not just about financials, but causes close to home for these HRM innovators **By Sara Ericsson**

Nevell Provo got his entrepreneurial start by selling potatoes at the age of four.

They were sourced from his uncle's garden and may have been stolen, but those potatoes were the start of it all for Provo, who later moved on at the age of 10 to making slingshots from dollar store balloons and discarded bottle caps and selling them at school for \$2 apiece.

"I had entrepreneurship in my DNA—I was always creative and trying to solve people's problems while making a buck," he laughs.

That drive returned when he returned to North Preston from Baltimore, where he lived while playing basketball, to partner up with his family and co-found Smooth Meal Prep, which has grown from just 10 customers to passing \$100,000 in revenue within its first year in business. Provo is one of several young Nova Scotian innovators who make up this year's Agents of Change as they find success with businesses and also champion causes including the environment, community action and education.

BUILDING UP HOME

Business is all about family and community for Provo, who grew up in North Preston and returned home to find his mother in the beginning stages of starting a meal prep business. The two partnered with Provo's brother, Corvell Beals, to co-found the company and create low-carb and high-protein meals for fitness or health-minded people built around ingredients like ground turkey, chicken breast, sweet potatoes and brown rice as a fast yet healthy food option for people on the go.



Photos Sara Ericsson

“We consider ourselves the meal of fitness and calculate the nutritional content for those looking to lose weight or follow a fitness system to gain muscle mass. We also want to show that our food is made slow but eaten fast and that you can eat quickly but still be healthy,” says Provo.

Provo serves as company CEO, with Beals serving as COO and his mother as Head Chef. It now counts seven employees and several community volunteers, all from North Preston and has worked to mobilize the community’s youth through



“We haven’t seen many businesses from the black community in Canada. So for us to lead that charge and inspire others, I think it’s one of those great feeling things again.”

— Nevell Provo, Co-founder & CEO, Smooth Meal Prep

a summer program for kids from North Preston. Provo says they are now also seeing spinoff of others talking to Provo and asking questions as they seek to start their own business within the area.

“Our employees being from North Preston is something we pride ourselves in — to employ people who might otherwise have challenges finding employment,” says Provo.

It’s been a step-by-step process for Provo and his team as it’s his first time spearheading a business, but things are going well as they continue to see growth and success. It’s been a mind-blowing journey for the young entrepreneur, who sees it as a testament to the potential that exists within North Preston.

“We haven’t seen many businesses from the black community in Canada. So for us to lead that charge and inspire others, I think it’s one of those great feeling things again,” says Provo.

FINDING SUCCESS IN SOLUTIONS

A source of inspiration can come from a family member or something else just as personal — a lifelong allergy.

Hannah Chisholm is the Founder and Head of Eggcitables, which is a chickpea-based vegan egg alternative product. She has been allergic to milk, egg, nuts and shellfish for as long as she can remember and also recalls the first time products like soy milk, tofu cheese became locally available to her.

What she could never find, however, were eggs.

“When I was around 19, all dairy alternatives were available to me except for eggs. So that got me wondering why, especially since plant-based eating was becoming so popular,” she says.

She did some research and found chickpea flour added to water creates a substitute for omelettes and tried it out for herself, successfully making her



Mrugakshree Palwe and Keegan Francis,
Co-founders Atlantic Blockchain Company
(ABC)

first-ever omelette. She then spent the following few years playing around with the recipe, adding nutritional yeast and other ingredients to improve its texture and taste.

While pursuing a business degree at St. Francis Xavier University, Chisholm was accepted into the Wallace Family Internship summer program which required her to find and explore a potential business idea. She immediately thought of her egg substitute and a potential customer base in the growing number of plant-based eaters and others with allergies that could benefit from such a product. That opportunity then led to being accepted into the 2018 Summer Institute business accelerator program in Fredericton and to Chisholm pursuing the business full time, travelling to farmers markets across Atlantic Canada as she made her product by hand and from scratch to sell at each one.

While Chisholm's own base is

“*I don't think people realize they can make impact just by choosing certain foods to eat. So if we understand that, it might play a factor when people choose what to eat.”*

— **Hannah Chisholm,**
Founder,
Eggcitable

currently Antigonish, her company has ties to Dartmouth in its partnership with the Dartmouth Adult Services Centre, a social enterprise employing people with intellectual disabilities, who package and produce Eggcitable products that appear in 63 retailers across six provinces.

“In the moment it feels slow, but reflecting back it's definitely a big milestone for sure. We also have our e-commerce website and it literally sells all across Canada. We've sold in almost every province, coast to coast,” says Chisholm.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL FACTOR

These innovators are also looking at how to help the environment. Chisholm's Eggcitable consumer packaging, for example, is 100 per cent biodegradable.

“I don't think people realize they can make impact just by choosing certain foods to eat. So if we understand that, it might play a factor when people choose what to eat,” she says.

Another environmental innovator is Stop Trashing It. Founder Alexa Goodman, who started her passion project after her research during her master's degree at Dalhousie University, found that most social media campaigns around plastics pollution were emphasizing awareness of the issue rather than promoting real solutions.

"That narrative wasn't helpful. This push for awareness is overwhelming because people are already aware — they know what's happening, but they don't know how they can help," she says.

Goodman's project aims to shift awareness into action by challenging people to cut one single-use plastic item from their lives. She acted as the project's first low-waste ambassador when she eliminated disposable coffee cups from her own life and says this lived experience showed her its end goal should be for many people to produce less waste as a zero-waste lifestyle is impossible to sustain.

"We don't need a handful of people living zero-waste lives — we need millions of people living a lower-waste life," she says.

“*We're the only company who has a component of education included with our consultation. We're passionate about spreading knowledge on what blockchain is and how it can be leveraged.***”**

— Mrugakshee Palwe,
Co-founder, Atlantic
Blockchain Company

Goodman has taken her project to events across Canada and to the Sustainable Oceans Alliance (SOA)'s Our Ocean Youth Leadership Summit in Norway for the second time. It's been recognized and endorsed as a SOA hub and uses ambassadors and hashtags like #Plasticfreechallenge and #Dontbeatrashhole to inspire people to join its cause.

Goodman hopes that as the number of pledges grows, the movement will show Canada's government that real action starts from the bottom up and that if these people can change, its policy can too.

"We don't want to lead change by awareness or opinion, but rather by action. And if we can show our government what it is we want by living that truth, I think that's powerful," says Goodman.

THE EDUCATIONAL COMPONENT

As Stop Trashing It educates people on plastics pollution, another set of Halifax innovators are looking to educate others on software called blockchain.

Acadia University graduates Mrugakshee Palwe and Keegan Francis



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founded the Atlantic Blockchain Company (ABC), a Halifax-based blockchain and cryptocurrency consulting company that focuses on developing their client's competency with the software and then creating and employing a blockchain or crypto strategy.

The co-founders started their business after discovering that Atlantic Canada was falling behind with regards to the software.

"The main barrier to the adoption of the software is that people don't understand what it is or why they need it," says Palwe.

The software produces a record of transactions made using a cryptocurrency, like Bitcoin, to purchase items. This record is maintained like a ledger across a network of computers, with the ledger existing on each one through the blockchain software. Palwe says this ledger network ensures the traceability and accountability of transactions.

"Depending on the organization, you want to be tracking what you are supplying from its source to its

“*We don't want to lead change by awareness or opinion, but rather by action. And if we can show our government what it is we want by living that truth, I think that's powerful.”*

— **Alexa Goodman,**
Founder,
Stop Trashing It

destination. This gives you the ability to hold accountable all of the items that change hands in the supply chain,” says Palwe. “It comes down to trusting the source and knowing where it's coming from.”

Palwe says ABC's goal in increasing blockchain awareness is to establish connections within Atlantic Canada and then use them to accelerate the adoption of blockchain here at home before broadening that network internationally. And they see this vision becoming real because they are approaching the software with an education and awareness strategy built into their business plan.

“We're the only company who has a component of education included with our consultation. We're passionate about spreading knowledge on what blockchain is and how it can be leveraged,” says Palwe.

HOMETOWN ADVANTAGE

But each agent of change seems to lead back to how the Halifax Regional Municipality and province of Nova Scotia has had a significant role in their respective journeys.

Chisholm's Antigonish-based business began a partnership with the Dartmouth Adult Services Centre social enterprise, where employees with intellectual disabilities have been packaging Eggcitable products for more than one year.

“I've been a big fan of social entrepreneurship my entire life and was involved in a related program during university. It's a partnership we're really proud of and they're doing a wonderful job,” she says.

Goodman found inspiration to start Stop Trashing It during her master's degree studies at Dalhousie and has presented at events across the city while Palwe and Francis have also presented ABC at technology hubs across the Atlantic region, including Halifax.

Provo says these fellow innovators and the many other young entrepreneurs in Halifax, combined with the great number of public and private resources available in support of fledgling businesses and projects, all add up to equal a place that supports small businesses and creates opportunities for their success.

“I didn't realize how great this place was to start a business. I don't think there is a better place for us to start,” he says. ■



Cathy Chapman and daughter Sandra Stone of Stoneman's Jewellery in Lower Sackville say eBay's Retail Revival program has helped them launch an online marketplace that now accounts for 25 per cent of their total business.

Photos Sara Ericsson

Buying into online

Halifax area retailers go local to global with eBay's Retail Revival program **By Sara Ericsson**

A Lower Sackville retailer sold a watch to a customer in Singapore and it's all thanks to the internet.

That store is Stoneman's Jewellery and it and its fellow Halifax retailer KingsPIER Curated Collections are among several other retailers chosen from across the province to take part in the launch of eBay's Retail Revival program.

Going online doesn't mean losing local, but rather gaining global, as retailers selling their items to in-person customers at their stores are suddenly able to market their wares to the global marketplace.

With the year-long complimentary

catered training and promotional support the businesses selected for the program receive, both retailers are looking forward to cementing the presence of their new online stores and become real players within eBay's Canadian online retailers. And if that helps draw people in to visit their physical stores as well, then all the better.

"It's a unique opportunity because it broadens your customer base and allows you to reach people who'd otherwise never visit your store in person. And since Halifax is a worthy tourism destination already, this could even bring people to our stores themselves, too," says KingsPIER owner Laura MacNutt.

INTERNET-SUITED ITEMS

Cathy Chapman and Sandra Stone are the daughter-mother team who run Stoneman's Jewellery in Lower Sackville. The duo sells items including jewelry, fine watches and other items including tea cups.

The two decided to pursue Chapman's lifelong dream of selling jewelry and opened their shop almost four years ago. Since then, they have gathered a loyal following of customers and have seen a steady increase in sales as they navigate the management of a new business.

The store's main focus is the sale of its jewelry and other accessory items

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20 >



“It’s giving us a huge advantage. We’d like to get to a place where 50 per cent of our business is done online and 50 per cent from in-store sales.”

— Cathy Chapman, Co-owner, Stoneman’s Jewellery

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19 >

including watches, along with jewelry repair, watch battery replacements, engravings and key cuttings, with Chapman looking after the front end of things while Stone does the bookkeeping, researches current jewelry trends and serves as the store’s President.

But as the duo began looking into other areas their sales could potentially branch into, they found items such as tea cups that while they may appeal to certain customers, did not directly align with other items in their storefront. And so they found out about the Retail Revival program and decided to apply.

“Being on eBay was something we had always wanted to do. It was always a back thought — something we’d do once we were established here and had gotten our feet wet — that we’d try to get out there and be more than just local. So we applied and the next thing we know, we’ve been chosen for this program. We couldn’t believe it,” she says.

A NICHE MARKET

Halifax fine vintage retailer and KingsPIER owner Laura MacNutt sells a large number of unique pieces, often with Canadian roots or made by Canadian companies, that are best described as experienced haute-couture clothing and apparel — luxury items of varying ages and styles that are currently in or have been restored to pristine condition.

Whether it be a designer-constructed coat made of seal hide or a pair of handmade shoes no longer available in store, buyers can expect to find it all at KingsPIER.

“We have a robust selection of quality, no-faux product. We make the claim that anything that looks like leather is leather and fur is fur. If you find anything that defies that, we’ll pay you \$15. We’re really confident in the quality of the product,” says MacNutt.

The store functions with an art gallery-like approach to clothes shopping — customers browse, admire and consider the item’s origins and style. It’s something that makes MacNutt’s items perfect candidates for online shopping, where a customer can have a leisurely browse through a row of items from the comfort of their couch.

It’s also the uniqueness of her items that makes them prime candidates for online sales — MacNutt uses a recently sold pair of men’s size six leather Dack’s

“Being on eBay was something we had always wanted to do.”

— Cathy Chapman,
Co-owner,
Stoneman's
Jewellery

shoes to Japanese customers. Because many of these items are so niche, MacNutt says they appeal to an audience looking online for that something different.

“There are many collectors of vintage-wear out there, but not necessarily in Halifax or Dartmouth. But because the internet has a global reach and clients all over the world are seeking these special pieces, they are able to find our pieces online,” says MacNutt.

TARGETS AND GOALS FOR IMPACT

The platform will serve to broaden the reach of each business. With that sale to Singapore, Stoneman's has now sold several pieces across Canada and to customers in the United States.

Stone says their appointed eBay strategist helped them learn the keywords, photography styles and information to include in describing each item they sell and that they are already seeing a difference because of it, with 25 per cent of their total sales now coming from online.

“It's giving us a huge advantage. We'd like to get to a place where 50 per cent of our business is done online and 50 per cent from in-store sales. This is letting us go all the way around the world and we definitely want to get the most out of that as possible,” says Stone.

KingsPIER is newer to the game and has a few items posted to their site, with more ready to be posted once their final strategy is in place. The help provided through the program has been invaluable, according to MacNutt, who says it gave them the advice they needed to know how to design their online store and tailor it to their specific customer base.

“I had put stock on eBay in years past, but I wasn't equipped with a proper understanding of how to market them to reach the audience we needed to reach. But now, with the eBay Retail Revival, we've been provided with all kinds of support that has given us those tools to reach the market properly,” says MacNutt. ■



Laura MacNutt of KingsPIER Curated Collections models a 1950s vintage seal coat made in Newfoundland. The shop contains a multitude of items and each seems more unique than the rest, with many MacNutt says could appeal to a niche online market of vintage apparel buyers from around the globe.



Photos contributed

Ships ahoy!

I. H. Mathers still thriving after 147 years **By Joey Fitzpatrick**

There’s a story about Isaac Harry Mathers, founder of I. H. Mathers, standing atop Citadel Hill with a telescope, watching for approaching vessels. Upon seeing a promising ship he would row out to greet the captain and offer his services to meet whatever needs the ship might have while in port.

While the role and marketing techniques of the ship’s agent has been refined over the last 147 years, the essence remains the same — meeting the requirements of the marine and offshore industry.

“The company started as a ship’s agency and it’s still a ship’s agency,” says I. H. Mathers CEO, Brian Lane. “Obviously our service offerings have greatly expanded over the years.”

A ship has any number of requirements while in port, from tugboats to fuel and supplies, repairs, spare parts and cargo to be loaded and unloaded. The job of the ship’s agent is to arrange for those requirements to be met.

“A good ship agent will begin to take note of the most in-demand services and then set up his own companies to provide

“ *We are part of a worldwide network and we can physically move almost anything from point A to point B. We have the connections with the transport companies and shipping lines to move any type of specialty freight, on time and intact.”*

— **Brian Lane,**
CEO, I. H. Mathers

those services,” Lane points out.

Over the years I. H. Mathers has expanded its offerings to include offshore logistics, freight forwarding, customs brokerage, custom warehousing, off-shore personnel and even immigration consulting. All of these sectors now form important components of the company’s business.

“We describe ourselves as a fully integrated marine, offshore and logistics services business,” Lane says. “We have clients that require a single service and we have clients that require everything from our specialty warehouse service to customs brokerage. It can be as simple as required and on some of these significant offshore projects the requirements can be very sophisticated.”

I. H. Mathers has a specialized logistical facility in the Burnside industrial park. The company’s expertise in freight forwarding allows it to move merchandise and equipment from Halifax to Truro or from Singapore to London, England.

“We are part of a worldwide network and we can physically move almost anything from point A to point B,”

Lane explains. “We have the connections with the transport companies and shipping lines to move any type of specialty freight, on time and intact.”

Custom brokerage is an area of expertise relating to the customs and excise rules in various countries. These experts know what the potential duties are and which items are exempt, when moving items from one country to another.

“Freight forwarding and customs brokerage are joined at the hip,” Lane explains. “Our clients can take comfort in knowing that the freight forwarder is talking to the customs broker in the next chair and is also talking to the specialty warehousing person who could be receiving and repackaging the shipment on their behalf.”

Another area of specialty for I. H. Mathers is immigration consulting, in which they facilitate temporary work permits for employees in various sectors.

“We have certified immigration consultants in-house who support companies that have specialty workers coming into the country on a temporary basis.”

Some of the major projects serviced by I. H. Mathers include the Sable and Deep Panuke offshore energy projects, both of which are currently winding down. This is driving diversification into new industries like defence and aquaculture logistics.

I. H. Mathers has comprehensive programs in both quality assurance and health and safety, which conform with the industry requirements of its clients.

“Oil and gas in particular has very high standards on the health and safety



From left, Jeff Strong, Harry Mathers and Greg Coffin.

front,” Lane explains. “We meet or exceed all of those standards.”

The company is ISO 9001:2015 certified, which is third party audited to ensure that the company is meeting its standards. Staff members are certified in their respective areas.

With its head office in Halifax and a branch office in St. John’s, the company has 40 full-time permanent employees and through its offshore personnel supply company, provides employment for between 60 and 300 in various offshore projects.

“That’s a significant component of our business,” Lane explains. “Those people are employed by us and we make them available to key clients who are working offshore.”

The company is also home to the honorary Danish and Norwegian Consular Offices in Nova Scotia.

I.H. Mathers began in 1872 at the Pickford & Black wharf, now known as Historic Properties and has maintained a daily log through 147 years of history — two world wars, a Great Depression, the Cold War and the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The company now spans six generations of the Mathers family. Current president, Harry Isaac Mathers, is the great grandson of the company’s founder and his own son, daughter, grandson and granddaughter also work with the company.

“It’s remarkable for a family business to carry on through all of that time,” Lane says. “And there are exciting prospects for the future.” ■



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The stress of elder care

Seeking solutions to address the province's aging population



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JEANIE BURKE PRESIDENT,
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CARE HALIFAX

Juggling work, family and caring for aging parents is a lot to handle. More than eight million Canadians are currently doing that and Halifax resident Shelly Hollett, 55, understands the role of a caregiver all too well. Hollett's father, Mr. Blackhurst, an 83-year-old with a love for his pet cockatiel Jasper, needed a lot of care after a stroke.

"There was constant worry and guilt that I should be there with him all the time," said Hollett, who also juggled full-time work and helping her family members. Hollett's situation is common. Today, people like her spend more than 114 million hours per year caring for a senior loved one. Many think caring for a senior is the responsibility of all family

members, but when you consider that more than half of those caring for seniors are women, that notion needs to be examined.

The latest report from the Canadian Vanier Institute of the Family found that 30 per cent of all women in Canada reported that they provided care in 2012, compared with 26 per cent of men. Women also spend close to six years providing care, compared to four years for men. Three-quarters of women caregivers aged 45 to 65 also worked full time.

Is it any wonder caregivers, especially women, are stressed? More than 80 per cent of women say caregiving has strained their ability to manage their work-life balance, according to a survey by Home Instead Inc., franchisor of the Home Instead Senior Care network.

Stress can lead to a decline in caregiver health, increased blood pressure and physical ailments. "Work became quite stressful, because I'd be getting emergency calls all the time," says Hollett, recalling how as her father's health declined, her own stress levels increased.

Stifling career advancement may also concern women caregivers, leaving them reluctant to tell their employer they are caring for an aging senior.

As Hollett's father's needs increased, the family hired private homecare to help with daily tasks like bathing, dressing, transfers from his wheelchair

and ultimately, 24-7 palliative care. She eventually took a three-month leave from work to manage her stress levels and when she was ready, her employer allowed her to ease back into working full time.

Close to 20 per cent of women caregivers feel pressured to reduce work hours to care for their senior loved one, according to another report by the Vanier Institute. Among women caregivers who have access to flexible work arrangements, nearly half felt they couldn't utilize those options without it having it negatively impact their careers.

Examining caregiver impacts on the Nova Scotian economy is essential. By 2030, more than one in four Nova Scotians will be aged 65 and older. Research undertaken by the Nova Scotia Centre on Aging at Mount Saint Vincent University and the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging affiliated with Dalhousie University, is expected to reveal the positive effects of having family caregivers play a role in senior care, potentially adding tangible value to the Canadian economy.

"Without the support of my employer and paid help from private homecare, I'm not sure how I would have coped," said Hollett.

There needs to be more awareness of the unequal burden placed on working caregivers from employers and government alike to lighten the load.

Recognizing excellence

Province's apprenticeship agency holds annual industry meeting **Contributed**

The Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency held its 5th annual industry meeting on Oct. 16 at the Best Western Plus in Dartmouth with approximately 170 in attendance.

The annual industry meeting is an opportunity for the agency to meet with employers in the skilled trades, labour organizations, industry partners, organizations representing equity-seeking and under-represented groups, such as women, newcomers, Indigenous peoples, African Nova Scotians and persons with disabilities, as well as training providers of the skilled trades and other government organizations.

Deputy Minister of Labour and Advanced Education, Duff Montgomerie, welcomed the participants, provided a few remarks on the growth of apprenticeship with the increased numbers of apprentices, employers and diversity in the skilled trades and spoke of the impressive work of the agency over the past five years. The Deputy Minister presented the agency's 2018-2019 annual report.

The agency recognized two Platinum Milestone Award recipients, five Apprenticeship Award of Excellence recipients and 22 Apprenticeship Employer Champions, of which four companies were present.

Platinum Milestone Awards

The Platinum Milestone Award recognizes employers who have been supportive of the apprenticeship system and successfully completed more than 20 apprentices since 2007.

This year the recipients were:

- L.E. Cruickshanks Sheet Metal Ltd. (Heather Cruickshanks)
- Municipal Group of Companies Ltd. (Dexter Construction) (Mike Connors)

Apprenticeship Award of Excellence

The Apprenticeship Award of Excellence recognizes exceptional individuals who have demonstrated ingenuity, engagement and leadership in advancing the apprenticeship training and the trades qualifications system and the strategic goals of the agency.



Marjorie Davison (CEO, NSAA), Mike Connors, Heather Cruickshanks, Duff Montgomerie (Deputy Minister, LAE), Brad Smith (Apprenticeship Board Chair)

This year the recipients of the award were:

- Blair Mikkelsen, Training Director, JATC, IBEW 625
- Shirley Mitchell, Manager of Human Resources and Quality Systems, Coast Tire
- Scott Miller, Owner/Operator, Miller Masonry
- Sarah Robinson, certified Automotive Service Technician and Truck and Transport Mechanic, Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal
- Carol MacCulloch, past Apprenticeship Board Chair and past President, Construction Association of Nova Scotia.

Employer Champions

The agency identifies employers of apprentices who champion the value of workplace training, apprenticeship progression, journey person development, safety, diversity and trades certification. This year 22 Employer Champions were recognized for their superior contributions to the apprenticeship system in Nova Scotia.

Those in attendance were:

- Jeff MacPhee, Breton Diesel
- Bonnie DeCoste, Decoste Electrical & Ventilation Ltd.
- David Thornhill/ Lt. Cmdr. Ned Feltham, FMF Cape Scott
- Yvette MacKinnon, Harry Rhyno Refrigeration Co. Ltd.

2019 Apprenticeship Employer Champions

Breton Diesel
 Ross Refrigeration
 DeCoste Electrical & Ventilation Ltd.
 Beloved Construction
 Department of National Defense - FMF Cape Scott
 Landry Brothers Ltd.
 Harry Rhyno Refrigeration Co. Ltd.
 Henry's Service Centre (NAPA)
 Tilia Builders Inc. - Liam Finney
 Custom Machine & Too
 Bicycle Thief
 Canning Auto
 Newman Electric
 Iron Dog
 DJ MacLean & Sons Carpentry Ltd.
 Bridgewater Honda
 Midway Motors
 Seacrest Electric Ltd.
 Waycobah First Nation
 Belfor
 Upham's Carstar Quality Collision Service
 Marrimac Fire Protection Ltd.

The agency was very pleased to have Stephen Harrington of Deloitte Canada as the keynote speaker. Harrington's address prepared the attendees for the strategic planning session that followed with an excellent presentation and questions from the audience on "the Intelligence Revolution and the Future of Work."

For more information, visit the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency's website at www.nsapprenticeship.ca.

Driving your brand through online search

How to make the most of your brand's image online



GLEN DUFOUR
DIGITAL PERFORMANCE
STRATEGIST, REVOLVE

Your brand's presence on the search engine results page (SERP) can often be the first impression a user will have of your brand. As such, it is important to ensure your brand is portrayed positively, delivers the right message, is unique from competitors and encourages click-through.

As there are a variety of ways a user can engage with your brand on search engines, auditing and managing your online presence is essential to presenting a cohesive brand image on the SERP.

To audit your brand's search presence, simply start by searching for your brand on search engines much like a searcher would and take inventory of what you find.

We've identified five key areas you should pay attention to:

1. Your brand's search results

When auditing your brand's search results, ask yourself: "Does this accurately and succinctly describe who we are and what we do?" and, "Is our brand presented in a professional manner?" Remember that a first impression is often set at this stage so also ensure your result looks professional by paying attention to the styling, including language, consistency, punctuation and capitalization.

“It is important to ensure your brand is portrayed positively, delivers the right message, is unique from competitors and encourages click-through.”

2. Your brand in local SEO

Brand's with brick and mortar locations should pay special attention to their Google My Business listings. In an increasingly mobile-first world, your audience is taking to search engines to find information about your brand such as your locations, hours of operation and contact details. Google My Business makes it easy for users to get this information directly from the search result without having to visit your website.

3. Your brand in SEM

With a limited number of search results available on the first page of search engines and high competition to appear in these coveted positions, brands are increasingly using paid search engine marketing (SEM) to appear at the top of the SERP. Whether or not your brand is taking advantage of paid search ads, check the SERP to see who is appearing for your brand terms and related keywords.

4. Your brand on social media

While many users will visit your website directly, some searchers will visit your brand on social media networks. Take inventory of what profiles appear for your brand in the SERP and ensure the correct profiles are indexed. If you've setup social media profiles for your brand but have neglected them, users will still find these pages through search so it is important to keep active profiles to maintain a positive brand presence online.

5. Your brand in the online community

For local businesses, review sites like Yelp, Yellow Pages and TripAdvisor are very popular destinations for searchers. Third-party reviews, such as word-of-mouth and referrals, are highly useful for influencing the purchase decisions of your target audience. Pay attention to your brand's rating across these sites and engage with reviews, both positive and negative.

After taking an inventory of your brand's presence on search engines, identify areas of opportunity and begin to prioritize and address. Note that an audit is not a one-time exercise. Search engines are dynamic and continually changing, so make it a best practice to routinely monitor your brand in the SERP to ensure your target audience has a positive experience with your brand.

Authored by Glen Dufour, Digital Performance Strategist at Revolve. If you would like to discuss a digital performance audit of your website, which reviews and provides recommendations on SEO, SEM, website usability and social media presence, please email info@revolve.ca.

Small business success in Sackville

Annual awards dinner recognizes stand-out local businesses



MICHELLE CHAMPNISS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
SACKVILLE BUSINESS
ASSOCIATION

On Thursday, Oct. 17, the Sackville Business Association hosted their annual Business Breakfast & Business Awards. Almost 200 business owners gathered together to enjoy breakfast and listen to guest speaker Tareq Hadhad, owner of Peace by Chocolate.

Hadhad's family moved to Canada in 2015 after the chocolate factory operated by his father in Syria was destroyed in a bombing and the family was forced to flee the country. Shortly after arriving at their new home in Antigonish, the Hadhad family was invited to a potluck. The chocolate treats they brought with them were so well received, they were gone in minutes. It was this experience that made the family decide to open their first chocolate factory in Nova Scotia.

In August 2016, Peace by Chocolate was opened in a shed built by volunteers in Antigonish. Today, Peace by Chocolate has become one of the largest employers in the Antigonish area and attracts up to 20,000 visitors a year.

We asked Hadhad what words of wisdom he would give to someone who is trying to grow their business.

"Grow it with much care about society, environment, contribution and purpose. Always think out of the box, be remarkable and unique and remember



Halifax Mayor Mike Savage was present for the annual awards ceremony in Sackville, honouring the many small businesses that make up the vibrant community.

to take advantage of the phenomenal connectivity across the globe. Look for existing opportunities and resources that are available around you," says Hadhad.

"It's so also important to focus on listening to constructive feedback throughout the whole journey of the business to learn from previous mistakes and make sure that the business grows selflessly and sticks to the core values which it was built on."

Hadhad also explained why he loves the business world in Canada.

"The accessibility, openness, abundant seed capital and shared market, as well as the big opportunity for small businesses to scale up and get their ideation to a startup, to growth and then finally to a mature business," says Hadhad. "There are so many talented

entrepreneurs who are trying to build their own path in the Canadian market because they believe that the Canadian economy is stable and they have a fair chance to succeed."

Each year, the Sackville Business Association presents three business awards in recognition of businesses that go above and beyond. This year, the trophies were presented at the Business Breakfast by Halifax Mayor Mike Savage. The winners of the Sackville Business Association's Business Awards were: Brian's Barber Shop, Best Customer Service; EurekaTec, Best New Business; and Hellas Diner for Business of the Year. They had received 366 nominations and votes. Thank you to the community of Sackville for their support in recognizing local businesses.

Creating a cleaner climate

Actions against climate change present opportunities for Nova Scotia



SCOTT SKINNER CEO,
CLEAN FOUNDATION

Climate change is the issue of our times and we can't talk about climate change without talking about energy. To help stave off the most devastating consequences of too many greenhouse gases in our atmosphere, we need to simultaneously change the way we produce energy and the way we use it in all facets of our day-to-day lives.

We've heard the warnings and we've seen the realities of worsening weather events. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has bluntly stated we have but 11 years left to take action to avoid the worst impacts. The stats are alarming and those stats have a human face. There are environmental, economic and social costs to climate change for us — and our children, grandchildren and all generations to come.

But let's dare to be optimistic and embrace the opportunities that lie at the heart of climate action.

We can and are creating the clean jobs that help future generations believe they can have a future here in our province. We can harness the energy and passion of Indigenous citizens. We can take advantage of the skills of experienced workers transitioning into new industries.

Clean energy will be at the center of this reinvigorated economy. Nova Scotia must build on what we've accomplished so far and keep going with urgency and ambition. We must make even more homes and businesses energy efficient. We must make sure our new buildings



Contributed

are energy net zero. We must electrify more of our economy as our grid becomes greener. And we must rev up electric vehicles as our next rides.

The good news in a very difficult climate story is that the transition to a cleaner economy will create good employment. We can also make sure this transition is fair, inclusive and builds authentic partnerships with Indigenous communities.

There will be difficult decisions and there will be economic shifts that are challenging for many. But this transition isn't an option or something we can ignore or put off for another day. As we have seen very recently on streets across Canada and the world, our youth are telling us that the day has come for serious action. They have read the science and they understand the urgency. Their voices are loud and clear.

Luckily, it has also become clear that there are very impressive numbers of clean jobs now. If we continue and build on meaningful climate policy there will be tens of thousands more across the country and significant increases in Nova Scotia, in the years ahead. Here are three examples:

- Clean Energy Canada recently reported that there were 298,000 jobs in the Canadian clean energy sector in 2017 and they forecast that to increase to nearly 560,000 by 2030 if we continue with meaningful climate policies.

- Efficiency Canada research shows that 436,000 Canadians are now working in energy efficiency and Efficiency Nova Scotia has estimated that at least 1,400 of them are working here in Nova Scotia — including a trade partner network that has grown from 130 to 300 companies in the past two years.
- Nova Scotia now has 57 approved solar photovoltaic equipment installers. One year ago, there were only 13.

This is all before we really start to bend the curve downward on emissions as a nation. Yes, there will be employment transitions for many hard-working Canadians, but we can tackle this with compassion and support. The earlier we begin, the more manageable the transition will be.

So let's end the talk of jobs versus the environment and instead tell a tale of jobs and the environment. Let's use our ingenuity to design a resilient economy and sustainable communities that can thrive in the future. Let's continue to show leadership and face the challenge of climate change head-on and in our own backyard. Tinkering with the status quo will not be enough.

If you would like to learn more about Nova Scotia opportunities resulting from the transition to a low carbon economy, reach out to us at the Clean Foundation — we'd love to talk.

2019 AGM and convention

How your policies can reflect current politics



ALITA FABIANO
COMMUNICATIONS &
MARKETING OFFICER,
CANADIAN CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE

In late September, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce concluded our 2019 AGM and Convention in Saint John, NB. But the feel of this year's AGM was different than in years past, with being only one month away from the federal election, all the topics discussed were had knowing that our political landscape is about to change.

CANADIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE RESOLUTION

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce recently passed a Halifax Chamber policy resolution that will ensure government data collection agencies, like Statistics Canada, will be speaking with SMEs on the future of skills in Canada. With the upcoming shift in Canadian jobs, it is imperative that we understand, through discussions with small and medium-sized enterprises, what skills, training and more specifically, what jobs will be needed in the near future. Businesses are most aware of what jobs their organizations will need to flourish and should be consulted by those providing programs and funding for educational Work Integrated Learning (WIL) programs.

From our chambers competition to our policy resolution debates, our AGM kept the upcoming election top of mind. Our pollsters and pundits session with David Coletto, CEO and Founding Partner, Abacus Data and Huw Williams, President, Impact Public Affairs, was invaluable in helping us and our chamber network improve our advocacy strategies ahead of the federal election. Here are a few takeaways:

- Organizations that are not vocal during the election period, risk being marginalized from the conversation after the election has taken place. It is important to stay vocal on the issues important to you.
- Work with current candidates to give them a platform to address your Board of Directors or members.
- It is crucial to connect your issues to the public's issues in order to influence voters. Show them how business issues affect their daily lives.
- Mobilize your network. Give your members the tools to get the message across as to why it is important to the local community. Amplification of your message is the only way to break through the election clutter.
- If you run an advocacy campaign make sure to collect data. Advocacy campaigns are more than just a single event; they must provide you with enough insight to build an advocacy base moving forward.

To learn more about our 2019 AGM and Convention, head to chamber.ca

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Export business of the year

REDspace delivers stellar content, priceless experience to industry-leading clients **By Sara Ericsson**

There's a company working on creating global-scale software experiences for some of the biggest television network players in the game and it's all happening from right in Bedford.

REDspace President and CEO Mike Johnston says the company works with its A-list clients to create websites, video-delivery technology and user-friendly digital platforms across all devices that deliver the client's content to the user.

Hard work has paid off for the software company that now counts entertainment giants like WarnerMedia,

Sony Pictures and NBC among its client roster. And while working with such A-list clients sounds like a tall order, Johnston says his company has it boiled down to a simple formula that only a Nova Scotia-based company can do — taking a humble, collaboration-focused approach that gets to the bottom of the client's problem by sitting down and working through it together.

"There are big things happening here. We're competing above our weight class, solving problems that have never been solved before and working on world-class projects," says Johnston.

EXPORTING LEADS TO EXPANDING

To sum it up in a few words, Johnston says his company is building the future of video-delivery and other innovative technologies for the world's largest entertainment and TV networks.

"Think of how you consume media — there's always a smartphone, tablet, laptop or smart TV around — so we work to create global-scale software experiences that result in user-friendly experiences on any kind of device," says Johnston.

The company was started in 2000 when Johnston returned to Nova Scotia



Photos contributed

“There are big things happening here. We’re competing above our weight class, solving problems that have never been solved before and working on world-class projects.”
 — Mike Johnston, President & CEO, REDspace

The company’s work may be export-based, but it all happens from their home base in Bedford. The company has grown significantly over the past few years, hiring 60 new employees in 2019 alone and surpassing 200 total staff. Johnston says it all goes to show that Nova Scotia is a talent hub for technology work.

from living in the United States. With entertainment industry-based clients traditionally located outside of Canada, it quickly became vital to work within the international market. Ninety-five per cent of the company’s business remains export-based.

A want to diversify its offerings led the company to creating video-based training and corporate learning programs and to creating web space for e-commerce transactions, health-care platforms, the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32 >



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Johnston says his company's work on building the future of video delivery and other technologies for the world's largest entertainment networks means the bulk of its business has been export-based, but that more work with Canadian and Nova Scotian partners is being added to their roster.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31 >

aerospace and defense activity, as well as the oil and gas sector.

"We're experimenting with ways we can apply our capacity and tech to help transform other industries and that's where we're seeing more opportunity to work with Canadian partners and government initiatives," says Johnston.

Being recognized for their export work is humbling for the company, according to Johnston, who says such awards also go a long way in recognizing the region as a technology success story. He says continuing to recognize what companies in Nova Scotia contribute is vital to ensuring the region continues to grow.

"We're quietly confident and our calibre of skill is world-class and then some. When companies see that and as these awards draw attention, that attracts both business and talent," he says.



GROUP BENEFITS – GROUP RETIREMENT – PLANNING

“ We’re quietly confident and our calibre of skill is world-class and then some. When companies see that and as these awards draw attention, that attracts both business and talent.”

— Mike Johnston,
President & CEO,
REDspace

SOMETHING IN THE MAPLE

The company’s diversification has also led to partnering with Canadian and Nova Scotian entertainment media clients and the hiring of 60 new employees in 2019, bringing its total staff to more than 200. Eighty per cent of these new hires have been international, with more than 20 countries of origin represented across the staff.

He also says such recognition is but one example of the support technology companies in Nova Scotia receive, with other forms of support coming from institutions including the province’s community colleges and universities that offer research and foundational support.

It all adds up into helping REDspace continue to bring in large numbers of export dollars into the region and reinforce Nova Scotia as a technology hub people should pay attention to.

But it’s not just this support that has REDspace clients singing the company’s praises. It’s also the company’s humble, collaborative approach that Johnston says clients recognize as uniquely Nova Scotian, joking that they often ask him whether there’s something in the maple syrup.

It’s an approach these clients don’t find with companies outside the region and it’s exactly what means they’ll be back for future business.

“For years we had trouble telling that story and that’s really shifted in the last couple of years. It’s a point of pride that we hail from here,” says Johnston. ■

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Leading the city's innovation ecosystem

Health and life sciences startups see success in Halifax



CHADWICK MEYERS
 ECONOMIST & POLICY
 ANALYST, HALIFAX
 PARTNERSHIP

When you hear the word startup, what comes to mind? Do you think of a sleek software company offering a smarter, better, quicker solution for your troubles? Halifax is brimming with these promising young tech companies pushing the envelope on what's possible. However, a largely unheralded strength of our city's startup scene is the life sciences research community. From pharmaceuticals to medical device manufacturers, health and life sciences startups are quietly leading Halifax's burgeoning innovation ecosystem in raising investment funding.

According to data from business investment database, Crunchbase, health and life sciences companies in Halifax raised more than US\$100 million through 45 publicly disclosed investments over the last five years — almost

twice the amount raised by information technology companies over the same period. In May, ABK Biomedical raised a \$30 million investment round to grow the company's breakthrough liver tumor treatment technologies. The deal broke the record at the time for the largest ever venture capital round raised in Atlantic Canada. Other homegrown medical startups like BlueLight Analytics, Appili Therapeutics and Adaptiiv have freshly raised significant investment rounds and are also poised for rapid expansion.

Not only are young companies attracting sizable investments at home, they're finding success in markets outside Halifax. Just this year, Densitas landed a major procurement contract to deploy its AI-powered breast density scanning technology in 24 clinics across Germany, Solid State Pharma tripled its downtown space and is hiring 25 new employees based on the success of its crystallization engineering exports and five-year-old Panag Pharma was acquired for a \$27-million price tag by an Ottawa-based pharmaceutical company.

The mounting success of these companies won't be a surprise to those familiar with the depth of the expertise and research infrastructure in and around Halifax. Bionova has become an ardent champion for the life sciences sector in Nova Scotia, setting the ambitious target of doubling the number of companies and increasing the sector's annual sales from \$300 million to \$1.1 billion by 2030.

Entrepreneurial spaces, like the labs at Innovacorp in the heart of Dalhousie's medical campus, are proving invaluable in bringing experienced entrepreneurs and talented researchers together to build promising companies.

While Halifax's entrepreneurs are excelling at attracting early-stage capital to start new companies, fewer have found success in growing their business to a greater scale. This challenge is certainly not limited to Halifax companies; it is rather so common that the gap between startups and scaleups is aptly named the "valley of death." However, we may be starting to see the dial move on this, with companies like STI technologies, Nature's Way and Resmed all growing in revenue and employee count recently. Scale-up successes and landmark investments like ABK Biomedical's record-breaking funding round build experience and attract more talent and capital to the region. Other positive signs include the increased commercialization supports popping up across Atlantic Canada and the startup community's increasing emphasis on scaling companies as reported in *Entrevestor's* 2018 Data Report.

Exciting things are growing in Halifax.

Learn more and follow along with the growth of Halifax's Innovation District at www.halifaxinnovationdistrict.com.



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