

# BUSINESS VOICE

HALIFAX'S BUSINESS MAGAZINE



## HALIFAX BUSINESS AWARDS 2018

Celebrating excellence in our community

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Rejoicing in success of all sizes **Pg 5**

### OPENING THE DOORS

IKEA Halifax brings better living to Nova Scotians **Pg 30**

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**MODULE II:** May 3-5, 2018  
**MODULE III:** September 20-22, 2018  
**MODULE IV:** November 2-4, 2018

**APPLICATION DEADLINE: February 12, 2018**

In collaboration with:



Jointly developed by:



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*We've been thrilled with the excitement and reception to our store opening."*

30

— Sue Coulet, Store Manager, IKEA Halifax



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# CHAMBER EVENTS

For a full and up-to-date list of our Chamber events, please visit [www.halifaxchamber.com/events](http://www.halifaxchamber.com/events)

## NETWORKING EVENTS:



DATE: Wednesday, January 10, 2018  
TIME: 12 - 1:30 pm  
LOCATION: Halifax Chamber of Commerce Boardroom



DATE: Wednesday, January 17, 2018  
TIME: 12 - 1:30 pm  
LOCATION: Halifax Chamber of Commerce Boardroom

DATE: Wednesday, February 21, 2018  
TIME: 12 - 1:30 pm  
LOCATION: Halifax Chamber of Commerce Boardroom

## NETWORKING EVENTS:



DATE: Friday, January 19, 2018  
TIME: 12 - 1:30 pm  
LOCATION: Halifax Chamber of Commerce Boardroom

DATE: Friday, February 16, 2018  
TIME: 12 - 1:30 pm  
LOCATION: Halifax Chamber of Commerce Boardroom



PRESENTED BY:  
**Scotiabank Blue Nose Marathon**  
DATE: Tuesday, January 9, 2018  
TIME: 4:30 - 6:30 pm  
LOCATION: Tempo Food & Drink, 1875 Barrington Street

## NETWORKING EVENTS:



PRESENTED BY:  
**Design Marketing**  
DATE: Wednesday, February 21, 2018  
TIME: 4:30 - 6:30 pm  
LOCATION: 780 Windmill Road

## Culture & Diversity Training FREE One Day Training

DATE: Wednesday, January 24, 2018  
TIME: 9 am - 4 pm  
LOCATION: Halifax Chamber of Commerce Boardroom

## SIGNATURE EVENTS:



PRESENTING SPONSOR: **RBC**  
DATE: Thursday, January 25, 2018  
TIME: 5 - 9:30 pm  
LOCATION: Halifax Convention Centre

## ANNUAL STATE OF THE PROVINCE ADDRESS

with Premier Stephen McNeil  
DATE: Wednesday, February 7, 2018

## THANK YOU TO OUR DECEMBER SPONSORS:



## SAVE THE DATE!

## ANNUAL Spring Dinner

DATE: Wednesday, May 2, 2018  
TIME: 5 - 9 pm  
LOCATION: Halifax Convention Centre



DATE: Thursday, June 14, 2018  
TIME: 11 am - 8 pm  
LOCATION: Brightwood Golf & Country Club

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# Celebrating success

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**PATRICK SULLIVAN**  
PRESIDENT & CEO

January is here and it's time to start executing those plans you spent hours developing at the end of 2017. Each new year brings an opportunity to learn from the previous year's mistakes and build upon your successes.

The Chamber is ready and excited to jump right into the year ahead and it seems like you, our members, are geared up to do the same. Now is a great time for you to reflect on what you're doing and why you're doing it. Start your year off strong by knowing what you're spending your time on and create value for your customers.

At the Chamber, we'll be kicking off 2018 with a celebration of success at the 18th Halifax Business Awards on January 25th at the Halifax Convention Centre. The 2018 Halifax Business Awards will showcase some of the top talent in our city. There's been a lot of great things happening in Halifax and we are thrilled to see that this year's finalists display excellence, leadership and passion. They are amazing representatives of the Halifax business community's present and its future.

While you're reading through this issue, my challenge for you is to take a moment to celebrate success in your own organization, and in the organizations around you. I know first-hand that we're often so busy working on day-to-day tasks that we struggle to stop for a moment and rejoice in our accomplishments. Take a moment to look at what Halifax has done well over the past few months, (there's a lot to choose from) and I bet you'll learn something new.

With this being my second Halifax Business Awards, I've realized that my favourite thing about our finalists is that

*"We're celebrating the new, the small, the innovative, the exporters, the big business and the business leaders. These businesses and business leaders, like many of our members, are an excellent example of why we are proud to call Halifax home."*

they come from different fields, areas and expertise. They are a true reflection of our business community. Not only that, but we get to celebrate finalists in six different categories. We're celebrating the new, the small, the innovative, the exporters, the big business and the business leaders. These businesses and business leaders, like many of our members, are an excellent example of why we are proud to call Halifax home.

Take a good look at the companies featured in this issue. You'll see some familiar names and you'll be introduced to a few that, maybe, you haven't heard of before. Reach out and congratulate them on their successes, and be sure to let us know of any successes happening in your organization.

I can't wait to see you at this year's event on Jan. 25 to celebrate. Happy New Year! ■



## Silver Economy Summit

**March 6 & 7, 2018**

"A look into the future economy"  
FEATURING KEYNOTE:



TED GRAHAM  
Head of Open Innovation  
General Motors

AdvantAGE: Embrace the boom

- 

CONNECTIONS
- 

EXPERT PANELS & WORKSHOPS
- 

TRADESHOW




[HALIFAXCHAMBER.COM/EVENTS/SILVER-ECONOMY-SUMMIT](http://HALIFAXCHAMBER.COM/EVENTS/SILVER-ECONOMY-SUMMIT)

# NEW & NOTED

We welcome our new Chamber members

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aaron@ablesense.com  
www.ablesense.com  
COMPUTERS, IT & TECHNOLOGY –  
E-Commerce

## ACHIEVE CENTRE FOR LEADERSHIP & WORKPLACE PERFORMANCE

At the heart of our workshop material and resources lies a belief that training, knowledge and skill development changes the individual lives, communities and organizations that we work with. We also believe that people should be able to like where they work. ACHIEVE provides professional development training in the areas of leadership and workplace performance.

### Eric Stutzman

62 Sherbrook Street  
Winnipeg, MB  
204-452-0180  
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### Suzanne Saul

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902-423-2557  
info@attica.ca  
www.attica.ca  
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### Della Doucette

1743 Bedford Highway  
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### Benjamin Harris

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benjamin.harris@butterfieldgroup.com  
www.butterfieldgroup.com  
FINANCE & INSURANCE –  
Financial Services

## CAVENDISH BEACH MUSIC FESTIVAL

Cavendish Beach Music Festival, the largest multi-day music event in Atlantic Canada, is back again for its 10th year, from July 6 to 8. Join us in Charlottetown to celebrate summer and country music, while enjoying 40-plus acts across three stages. This anniversary year brings excitement featuring top headliners and the best in Island hospitality!

### Jill Campbell

96 Kensington Road  
Charlottetown, PE  
902-892-5647  
jill@whitecapentertainment.com  
www.cavendishbeachmusic.com  
EVENTS – Festivals/Special Events

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Launched in 2015 by Linda Peers, Coconut Goodness Food Products Inc. was born out of a desire to create a probiotic, dairy-free kefir that could make a significant difference in one's health. The company's product, The Cultured Coconut, is currently available through retailers throughout the Maritimes, Toronto, Montreal and Ottawa.

**Linda Peers**

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902-229-8595  
linda@theculturedcoconut.ca  
www.theculturedcoconut.ca

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**Donna Harding**

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902-422-5552  
donna@hardingrealestate.ca  
www.hardingrealestate.ca  
REAL ESTATE/CONSTRUCTION –  
Real Estate Residential

**HOPE BLOOMS INC.**

Hope Blooms engages youth in marginalized communities in actualizing their full potential and becoming positive agents of change in their communities through experiential education, in creating innovative youth-driven impact in food security, social inclusion, education and environmental stewardship. Since 2007, Hope Blooms has provided a safe space for youth in Halifax's inner-city to grow their own food, contribute to community development and produce and market their own signature brand of salad dressing, with proceeds going into scholarships for the youth involved.

**Jessie Jollymore**

5527 Cornwallis Street  
Halifax, NS  
902-405-3890  
jessiejollymore@gmail.com  
www.hopeblooms.ca

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**Jennifer Kurmey**

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**André Lalancette**

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**Joe Romkey**

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902-209-0339  
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**Kevin McKenzie**

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**Andrew Kleinknecht**

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Head of St. Margaret's Bay, NS  
902-826-1088  
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**Michelle Carter**

2742 Robie Street, Suite 200  
Halifax, NS  
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michellecarter@willowesthetics.ca  
www.willowesthetics.ca  
PERSONAL CARE & SERVICES - Spa

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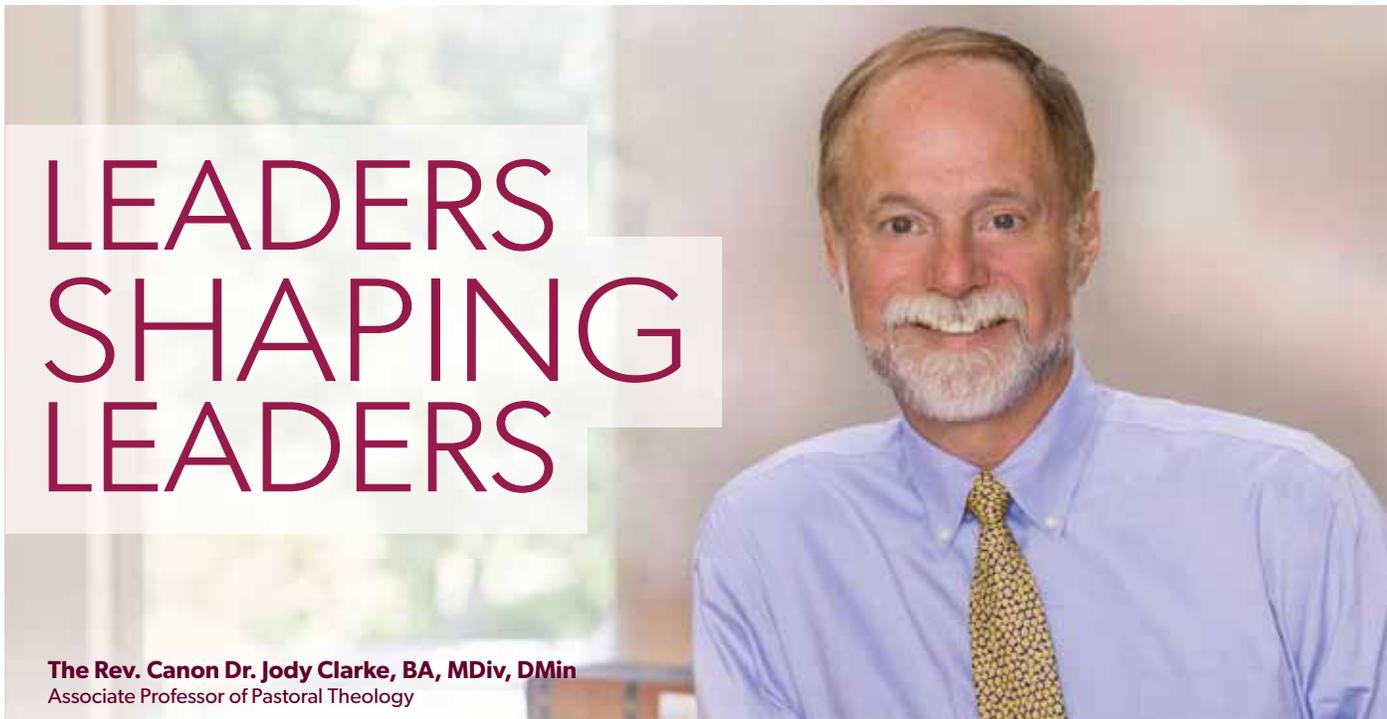
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*Are you a new member? To submit your 50-word description for New & Noted, please contact Melissa MacDonald, Communications Specialist at [Melissa@halifaxchamber.com](mailto:Melissa@halifaxchamber.com) or 902-481-1238 within the first six months of membership.*



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# MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

How our members are growing Halifax



## NEW MANAGEMENT AT MARITIME AIR CHARTER

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## FUTURPRENEUR CANADA ANNOUNCES PARTNERSHIP WITH TD BANK GROUP

TD's commitment of \$500,000 over three years will help the national non-profit organization **Futurpreneur Canada**, provide valuable services to aspiring young entrepreneurs throughout Atlantic Canada. The generous contribution will allow more Atlantic entrepreneurs to build their confidence,

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**HABITAT FOR HUMANITY NOVA SCOTIA ANNOUNCES APPOINTMENT OF RICK GANT AS NEW CEO**

With more than 25 years of experience building strong relationships with business and community leaders, **Habitat for Humanity Nova Scotia** is pleased to welcome its new CEO, Rick Gant. Most recently Gant was CEO of Boomerswork.com, where he helped take the employment agency from a startup to a revenue-generating business. Gant built his 26-year career at RBC before retiring as the Atlantic Regional Director in 2014. He has also provided leadership to numerous volunteer-driven associations. One of Gant’s top priorities will be overseeing the construction of Habitat Way, the proposed 95-home development in Spryfield.

**BEDFORD APPLIANCE WAREHOUSE**

EST 1994

**BEDFORD BUY & SELL HAS A NEW NAME**

We’re changing our name! We’ve evolved over the past 24 years and now it’s time for our name to evolve with us. As of Jan. 1, 2018, Bedford Buy & Sell will become **Bedford Appliance Warehouse**. We will have the same great selection, services and customer care that have made us a successful family-run business since 1994. Thanks, as always, for your support!



**VENOR WELCOMES NEW TEAM MEMBERS**

**Venor** welcomes Danielle Heartz, a young professional who brings passion, motivation, a strong work ethic and an intuitive personality to Venor as our Recruitment Administrator. As Technical Recruiter, Jack Gillis’ ability to cultivate, develop and maintain relationships makes him one of the most likeable technical recruiters in HRM. Senior Consultant, Jackie Gilbert has established deep and lasting relationships with clients, through her consultative and methodical approach. Her ability to understand what’s important and deliver on those key factors are paramount in achieving successful results.



**O2 WELLNESS: MORE THAN A GYM**

**O2 Wellness** is the gym that’s redefining what it means to be a gym. It’s much more than weight racks and cardio machines — it’s a platform for attaining whole-body health. Inside O2, you’ll find fitness equipment unique to the HRM (no used equipment). You’ll have access to expert personal trainers, meal plans, sleep plans, massage therapy, spin classes, pilates, yoga and free laundered towels. With childminding services and 24-hour access, O2 makes optimum health attainable for all. Open in December 2017, at the Sunnyside mall in Bedford — eat, train, sleep, be well!



**RECORD YEAR FOR ROYAL NOVA SCOTIA INTERNATIONAL TATTOO**

The 2017 **Royal Nova Scotia International Tattoo** celebrated Canada 150, the Halifax Explosion and Vimy Ridge this year and yielded an increase of more than 10 per cent over 2016’s box office. “We wanted to produce a show that would act as a tribute to Canada in this banner year,” says Jennie King, Managing Director. Large numbers of Canadian and youth participants, innovative 3D and projection mapping technology, new programming with a great cast and events around the city helped the Tattoo achieve this goal. Individual and corporate donations rose by 10 per cent, advertising revenue by three per cent and total revenue by 15 per cent.

**SERVICEMASTER RESTORE PROUD SUPPORTER OF THE RONALD MCDONALD PJ WALK**

**ServiceMaster Restore** is proud to be the presenting sponsor of the Rise & Shine PJ Walk for Kids in support of Ronald McDonald House Charities® Atlantic, helping keep families with sick kids together. Ronald McDonald House Charities Atlantic serves more than 2,200 Maritime families through Ronald McDonald House® and Ronald McDonald Family Rooms® in Halifax and Moncton.



**CYSTIC FIBROSIS CANADA FUNDRAISER NETS THOUSANDS**

**Cystic Fibrosis Canada** is unBOWLievably excited to announce that the Lawn Summer Nights Halifax event raised more than \$40,000 for research and care for Atlantic Canadians living with cystic fibrosis. This event wouldn't have been possible without the amazing support of our 2017 presenting sponsor KPMG, partners, donors, volunteers and participants. We extend a big thank you to our volunteer committee led by Jen Fitzpatrick, and of course to St. Mary's Lawn Bowls Club. To learn more please visit the Lawn Summer Nights Facebook page.

**APPILI THERAPEUTICS RAISES \$3 MILLION AND RECEIVES FDA AND HEALTH CANADA APPROVAL FOR CLINICAL TRIALS**

**Appili Therapeutics Inc.**, a development company focused on drugs for infectious diseases, announced in October 2017, that it raised \$3,062,000 in a private placement financing from new and current investors, bringing the total equity raised since inception to \$7,477,000. They also announced that both the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and Health Canada have cleared its investigational new drug applications and clinical trial applications, respectively, to conduct a clinical trial in Toronto on their first product, ATI-1501, a taste-masked antibiotic targeting anaerobic bacterial infections.

**CENTRE FOR WOMEN IN BUSINESS GETS A BOLD BIRTHDAY REBRAND**

**Mount Saint Vincent University's Centre for Women in Business** welcomed 2018 with a tip-to-toe rebrand unveiled during its annual Holiday Cheer event in December. At its core, the rebrand is an emboldened call to action, featuring an intrepid new colour palette, logo, and website. "The women we work with are risk takers who want to shake up the status quo," says Executive Director, Tanya Priske, of the 450-plus entrepreneurs who make up the Centre's business community. "Our new brand was inspired by those stories."

**QUEEN'S MARQUE SELECTS WALLACE QUARRIES LTD. FOR FACADE**

The **Armour Group Limited** is pleased to have secured locally quarried sandstone from Wallace Quarries Ltd. to be used as the main cladding material for the Queen's Marque development. This is the largest order for Nova Scotia sandstone in more than 50 years. Wallace Quarries represents an important legacy of locally founded, owned and operated Nova Scotian business. The choice of Wallace sandstone demonstrates Queen's Marque's commitment to being shaped by Nova Scotia's past, present and future. Queen's Marque will represent an almost \$200 million private investment in Nova Scotia by The Armour Group, with a target completion date in 2020.



**THIRD WAVE RECOGNIZED IN THE OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY**

**Third Wave** is proud to be recognized as one of the top-10 most promising oil and gas technology solution providers for 2017 by *CIO Review*. The award acknowledges companies at the forefront of the industry, providing innovative technology solutions and making an impact in oil and gas. Third Wave has focused on the energy sector since 2009 and is excited to continue their work in oil and gas. Their extensive knowledge and experience would not be possible without the incredible clients they've had the pleasure of working with in this arena.

**DRESS FOR SUCCESS HALIFAX PARTNERS WITH SEPHORA**

**Dress for Success Halifax** is thrilled to announce their newest partnership and successful launch of the first Canadian pilot project, Classes for Confidence, with Sephora, who also stands with those facing major life transitions and look for ways to use their strengths for even greater good. "The 90-minute free class takes place at Sephora and teaches clients how to apply makeup for a professional, natural look for job interviews that leaves our clients feeling confident and ready to face the future and is aligned with Sephora's social impact initiative," says Executive Director, Brenda Saunders/Todd.



**LOOKING FOR DONATIONS OF CPAP AND BIPAP MACHINES**

Do you have sleep apnea? Do you have a used CPAP or BiPAP machine that you no longer need? The **Lung Association of Nova Scotia** is looking for donations of gently-used CPAP and BiPAP machines for our Sleep Apnea Refurbishment program, which provides assistance to low-income

patients who suffer from sleep apnea but are unable to afford treatment. Machines can be dropped off at Lions Clubs around Nova Scotia, or brought to the Lung Association's office at 6331 Lady Hammond Road, in Halifax. For more information on this program, visit [ns.lung.ca](http://ns.lung.ca).



**ZIPSURE.CA BRINGS HOME WINS MARKETING AWARD**

**ZipSure.ca**, a Nova Scotia based digital insurance provider whose parent company is A.P. Reid Insurance Ltd., was recognized at the WebCon Rental Marketing Conference, taking home the title of Best Marketing Team of the Year. The WebCon Rental Marketing Awards recognize the outstanding and innovative online marketing achievements of the

rental housing industry. "This is a great honour for us, and we are thrilled to be recognized as this year's Best Marketing Team. This recognition is a testament to the team's dedication to providing solutions to landlords and tenants across Canada," said Co-founder, and President and CEO of A.P. Reid Insurance Ltd., Jamie Reid.



**WELCOME TO EAST COAST LANGUAGE COLLEGE (ECLC)**

**East Coast School of Languages (ECSL)**, an award-winning Halifax business best known for providing English training to international students, will be marking its 20th anniversary this year. To celebrate this milestone, ECSL has changed its name to East Coast Language College (ECLC). "We've been approved as a private career college to deliver the ACE TESOL teacher training certificate," says Sheila Nunn, President and CEO. "We also offer classes in Spanish, French, Arabic, Mandarin, and English. Our new name better reflects our position and longevity in the language industry." For more information, visit [www.eclccanada.com](http://www.eclccanada.com).

**WE ARE YOUNG**

*Granting Unfulfilled Wishes to Our Elders*

The WAY Association is a non-profit organization that works with sponsors, volunteers, and its community to grant unfulfilled wishes to elders living in the province of Nova Scotia.

Find out more at [www.weareyoung.ca](http://www.weareyoung.ca)

[the way association](https://www.facebook.com/weareyoungassociation)  
[weareyoungassociation](https://www.facebook.com/weareyoungassociation)



MEET THE STARS OF THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY AT THE...

# HALIFAX BUSINESS AWARDS

**JANUARY 25, 2018**

[WWW.HALIFAXCHAMBER.COM](http://WWW.HALIFAXCHAMBER.COM)

PRESENTING SPONSOR:



**WINNERS IN SIX CATEGORIES WILL BE ANNOUNCED:**

- New Business of the Year
- Small Business of the Year
- Export Business of the Year
- Innovative Business of the Year
- Business of the Year
- Business Leader of the Year

## RECYCLING CHAMPIONS RECOGNIZED AT DIVERT NS MOBIUS AWARDS

In October, **Divert NS** hosted the 19th annual Mobius Awards of Environmental Excellence in Halifax. Businesses, members of academia and government came together to celebrate winners for their efforts in recycling and diverting waste from landfills. Divert NS extends congratulations winners in the following categories: Small Business of the Year, Truro Veterinary Hospital; Large Business of the Year, Marine Atlantic; Institution of the Year, Bridge Adult Service Centre; Emerging Leader of the Year, Stella Bowles; Community Project of the Year, Halifax Tool Library; Innovator of the Year, AgSeed Technologies; Hall of Fame winner for 2017, David Harris. To meet the winners and learn about the Mobius Awards, visit [divertmobiusawards.ca](http://divertmobiusawards.ca).

*Are you launching a new business or product? The Halifax Chamber wants to share your story! Please contact Melissa MacDonald at [Melissa@halifaxchamber.com](mailto:Melissa@halifaxchamber.com) or 902-481-1238.*



## NEW GRADS BOOST BUSINESS

BY COREY AALDERS

Pinto Engineering Limited has a new go-to person for innovation.

Jason Landry, a recent graduate from the Civil Engineering Technology program at NSCC, is bringing new ideas, new technology skills and new business to the Halifax-based engineering firm, Pinto Engineering Limited, and he's changed some company thinking while he's at it.

"When Jason joined our team, our view on hiring a young person changed," said Malcolm Pinto, President and CEO.

Pinto hired Jason with the help of the Graduate to Opportunity (GTO) program.

Before the GTO program, Malcolm says he may have considered hiring a recent graduate, but the program encouraged him to give it serious consideration.

**THIS IS A WONDERFUL WAY TO SUPPORT YOUNG GROWING MEMBERS OF NOVA SCOTIA**

GTO provides salary incentives, 25% of the first year's salary – 35% if the new grad is a member of designated diversity group – and 12.5% of the second year's salary.

Malcolm says the program is great because it does two things. First, it requires the employer to take a risk, and second, it requires the employer to commit to the process for two years.

"This is a wonderful way to support young growing members of Nova Scotia, said Malcolm. "Through GTO our graduates become employed and stay in our province."

Jason says the opportunities at Pinto are vast and that he continues to learn.

"Employment at Pinto has exposed me to various projects like concrete, steel and wood building design, bridge and wharf design, as well as restoration of buildings and wharfs. What I learned in school I am applying towards these projects and, at the same time, adopting new skills," said Jason.

This opportunity has been a game changer for Jason. In addition to the new job, the money saved has allowed Pinto to buy the office equipment he needs to do his job, and says without GTO the costs to hire and provide that equipment might be too high.

Malcolm says Jason will have a job at Pinto as long as he wishes and their workload permits.

"Jason is young, smart, and capable but more importantly wants to do well. In my eyes, Jason is a long-term employee," said Malcolm.

The GTO program is one of many ways government is helping prepare young Nova Scotians for work and helping them get a foot in the door to land good jobs here at home. The program encourages employers to take a chance on a recent grad and provide them with the experience they need to grow and succeed here in Nova Scotia.

**Explore the benefits of Graduate to Opportunity at [novascotia.ca/GTO](http://novascotia.ca/GTO)**



NOVA SCOTIA



**THE HALIFAX CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

is pleased to present this year's Halifax Business Award finalists. Now in our 18th year, and sponsored by RBC, this event allows us to showcase Halifax's best and brightest business leaders and entrepreneurs. Businesses and individuals are judged by a panel spearheaded by Gina Gale, Senior Vice-President with BDC. We have dedicated this issue to profiling the incredible individuals who have made it to the finalist stage. These pages don't do their hard work justice, but they do provide a sample of who these individuals are. We hope you enjoy getting to know this year's finalists and book Thursday, Jan. 25 to celebrate with us.

To view the full interviews with this year's nominees, please visit our website:

**[www.halifaxchamber.com](http://www.halifaxchamber.com)**

Thank you to IKEA  
for hosting the 2018  
finalists for this  
year's photo shoot.

# 2018 HALIFAX BUSINESS AWARDS

Presenting  
Sponsor:





# NEW BUSINESS of the year finalists



Sponsored by:



## New Business of the year finalists

L-R: Sarah Andrews of Sattva Boutique, Joanna Gore of Appili Therapeutics Inc., Jeff Farwell of J Farwell Sailing Co. and Julie Shore of Halifax Distilling Co. Not pictured: Sam Murphy, The Barrington Steakhouse & Oyster Bar.



### APPILI THERAPEUTICS INC.

#### Who/What inspired you to open a new business?

Drug development is a complicated, highly regulated business that is a wonderful blend of pure science, statistics, public health policy and finance. Appili was formed as a collaboration between myself and an investment bank based in Toronto, to tackle the growing unmet medical needs in infectious disease. I am inspired by the opportunity to work with like-minded people who enjoy solving problems and pushing the boundaries of our knowledge.

#### Tell us one thing people may not know about your business?

The gender and cultural diversity of our team — our executive team is gender balanced and I am very fortunate to be joined by our Chief Financial Officer, Kimberly Stephens and Vice President of Drug Development, Jamie Doran — experts in their respective fields — as well as Sean McBride, Vice President of Business Development. I believe the varied perspectives of our team members give us a major advantage. Our diversity provides fresh insights as we develop new treatments for infectious diseases.

#### Do you have any tips for people who are thinking about starting their own business?

Surround yourself with great talent. Running a business is hard and even with passion, innovation and drive, one person alone does not have the entire skill-set to run a successful business. It takes a team with many different talents, experiences and skills to bring ideas to fruition. While you may think you cannot afford to spend the time and resources to access the right individuals who are brilliant and uniquely talented, you cannot afford not to.



### THE BARRINGTON STEAKHOUSE & OYSTER BAR

#### Why did you choose Halifax?

Our company chose Halifax as our place to do business because of the warm reception we received from the community after opening our first restaurant here. Halifax is a welcoming community that has only grown stronger in recent years. Doing business in Halifax and being part of the growth is very rewarding. It's important for us to feel like we are part of something bigger than ourselves.

#### What is your proudest accomplishment?

The relationships we've built in Halifax. Being in the hospitality business it's important to get to know people and make others feel welcomed. Halifax has made us feel welcomed and it's a great feeling when you enter our dining room and see faces that have been supporting us since day one. These relationships with our vendors, suppliers, neighbours and guests are what we are most proud of so far.

#### How can we encourage youth to explore entrepreneurship as a possible future career?

Encouraging youth to explore entrepreneurship is so important to our community. By giving our staff the opportunity to present ideas, fundraisers, menu changes and new job positions, we are giving them the opportunity to create their own projects. Our staff members are empowered by the ability to share ideas and implement them right here. It's important to inspire youth to take on new projects in the workplace because they will be the ones to come up with the next great idea.



**HALIFAX DISTILLING CO.**

**Tell us one thing people may not know about your business?**

The one surprising thing many of our customers don't know about our business is that the distillery is owned and operated by two ladies — and even more astonishing to people is that one of those ladies is our Master Distiller!

**Where do you see your organization in 10 years?**

Our vision is that within 10 years J.D. Shore rum is “the” rum — everyone will be drinking J.D. Shore rum and all the other rums are only a memory.

**What is your proudest accomplishment?**

Our proudest accomplishment is that Halifax Distilling Co. is the first rum distillery in downtown Halifax. Halifax Distilling Co. is the people's distillery!

**What has been the biggest challenge to being a new business?**

Our biggest challenge has been money management — having the financial resources that allow the business to have enough product and enough staff to satisfy our customers' requests in a timely manner.

**Do you have any tips for people who are thinking about starting their own business?**

We want to tell anyone starting their own business that they require tenacity — the strong ability to “keep on truckin'” when all the nay sayers say what you want to do can't be done. Follow your dream. When you are following your dream, you keep your drive — no matter how dismal things may appear at times. Soon you will realize that even when you aren't at work, you are living and breathing your dream — they are one in the same!



**J FARWELL SAILING CO.**

**How did you get your start?**

I had several small businesses growing up, but in particular I began booking out Murphy's on the Water's boats for lifeguard summer cruises. I soon learned how to make a profit while creating a unique experience. I quickly expanded and then began a relationship with the Murphy family. I was fortunate enough to buy into their family business while mortgaging my home and my mother's home (I love my mom who believed in me). I continued to buy more shares over time and eventually bought them out and merged with Dennis Campbell with Ambassadors. I worked with Dennis as my partner for a few years and then sold my business to him in January, 2017. Next up was J Farwell Sailing Co.

**What is one thing people may not know about your business?**

It's definitely the “wow” factor. Most of our guests leave the tour saying, “It was the highlight of our trip,” or “I had no idea that this was available.” The hands-on sailing experience is thrilling and we've created products that reach a variety of different markets. We believe we are bringing one of Nova Scotia's most beloved traditions to visitors and locals — giving them a taste of our beautiful province.

**What has been the biggest challenge to being a new business?**

Coming from a larger business of 500 employees to my new business of eight employees, I've been humbled to get back to the basics of starting from the ground up. I have an appreciation for all small businesses that take that leap and go for it. Like many businesses, we operate in a highly regulatory environment and experience setbacks and other operational issues. We adjust, solve problems and move forward.



**SATTVA BOUTIQUE**

**What is one thing people may not know about your business?**

The meaning of the name Sattva. Sattva is a Sanskrit word (the language of yoga and Ayurveda) used to describe a state of mind. The state of mind that feels light, clear, connected and content — an intangible experience of wholeness, balance and truth. We actually don't talk about this much in our business, for most people it's just a word, but it helps me and my staff come back to our intention on a regular basis.

**Where do you see your organization in 10 years?**

That's a tricky one! It's always good to have goals, but this is so far away, anything could happen by then. Right now we need a small addition to our existing shop. As well, there is opportunity for growth in e-commerce, especially connecting with the growing population of conscious consumers. Then there is another store. I don't see another Sattva specifically, but a sister store with similar beliefs and different products. That should take about 10 years! I would also like to employ and mentor as many people as I can. I am learning what a big impact we can have on the lives of our staff members and the lack of retail or fashion careers available for those interested in staying in Halifax.

**What is your proudest accomplishment?**

An unsolicited nomination for this award is a pretty big deal. If I place, that would definitely become my answer to this question in the future. Another big one was the one-year mark of our store on Agricola Street. At the same time I hired a Boutique Co-ordinator, my full-time employee. This was a pretty proud moment. For me it was a measure of success — I felt like I was going to make it.



# SMALL BUSINESS of the year finalists



Sponsored by:



## Small Business of the year finalists

L-R: Trevor Bergmann of AeroVision Canada Inc., Anita Kirkbride of Twirp Communications Inc., donalee Moulton of Quantum Communications, Peter MacLaren of BlueLight Analytics and Faten Alshazly of WeUsThem.



### AEROVISION CANADA INC.

**If you could follow in the footsteps of a successful business, which would it be and why?**

Elon Musk and SpaceX. They failed repeated attempts to launch their own rockets — three times with the fourth being their final try, due to available capital. Even after being told the business would never work and to leave space to the professionals, they persevered and launched their first of many successful flights.

**How is your business contributing to making Halifax a better place?**

AeroVision Canada Inc. continues to bring the focus of the Canadian unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) industry back to Halifax at every available opportunity. More and more, we are afforded opportunities to discuss topics such as drone regulations and tech news with the media, and each time we try to draw attention to the technological center of excellence that Halifax is becoming. AVCI has also offered youth groups a chance to learn more about drone technology and how they can steer their education towards a future in robotics and aviation.

**What has been the biggest challenge to being a small business?**

Certainly it has to be educating and demystifying drones. As a small business that started near the grassroots level of a new industry, we have struggled many times to influence prospective clients that the technology and services we provide can provide tremendous value to their business. Second to that would be raising capital. Many banks and private lenders still see the commercial UAV industry as high-risk but we are starting to see a positive shift with that perspective.



### BLUELIGHT ANALYTICS

**What has been the biggest challenge to being a small business?**

As a small business, we are often limited in our time and resources. One of the biggest challenges of being a small business with a small team is allocating our time and resources to have the greatest impact. Everyone tends to wear many hats and is required to constantly reassess what they are prioritizing and how it will help the company move forward and be successful in the long run.

**How is your business contributing to making Halifax a better place?**

BlueLight is based in Halifax but primarily works with clients across the globe and in doing so, we hope we are helping create a more global awareness of the city and the talent it possesses. We are heavily involved in the startup ecosystem in Halifax and try to hire recent graduates to help retain bright young talent in the province. At the same time, we work with our enterprise partners to ensure that checkMARC tests are being carried out at dental clinics around the city so that people don't need to worry about the outcomes of their fillings when they visit a dentist in Halifax.

**Does your business engage youth and/or immigrants? What does that bring to your business?**

At BlueLight we tend to hire for fit rather than role and one way that has manifested is in hiring recent graduates and young talent, giving them substantial responsibilities right off the bat. Alongside providing mentoring and training, we try to create opportunities where they can learn new skills and explore their professional interests.



## QUANTUM COMMUNICATIONS

### What would you say is your organization's proudest achievement?

Quantum Communications was founded so that we could offer personal and professional service to clients. We know we've achieved our goals when clients continue to come back and when we don't just provide a service, but establish a relationship. The quality of our work is critical to this and we are proud to be one of a handful of companies and organizations (including Best Buy and the Saskatchewan Roughriders) featured in a national book that looked at highly successful public relations initiatives.

### How is your business contributing to making Halifax a better place?

For us, business is about being part of the community and that means we must put our money, our time and our hearts into giving back. We are actively involved in supporting numerous community groups. That may mean turning up to do yoga with bunnies or being the major sponsor in a capital campaign. It always means our role is about so much more than our bottom line.

### What has been the biggest challenge to being a small business?

Learning to breathe. As a business owner, I feel a personal and profound connection to clients, employees, colleagues and contractors. We work together on issues and initiatives that matter to us and to our community. It can be tough to find the balance between work and everything else. I would like to tell you I've gotten much better at this over time, but I'm not really sure I have.

### Why did you choose Halifax?

I'm not sure I chose Halifax; I think it chose me. Halifax is home. It's where I grew up. My roots are here — I have friends today I went to primary school with. Opportunities to work elsewhere never matched up to the joy of working and living here, a place where people do have time for a cup of coffee, where they share ideas and insights, where they know your name.



## TWIRP COMMUNICATIONS INC.

### What would you say is your organization's proudest achievement?

Helping Spring Loaded Technology and Souls Harbour Mission each win a \$100,000 prize through social media campaigns were definitely high points for me. It was validation of my ability to set out a strategy, implement it and meet a goal. And it felt pretty amazing to help both organizations receive the prize, but also the added publicity and awareness for them that came with winning.

### Where do you see your organization in five years?

Twirp is diversifying. Social media is changing and I'm trying to keep up just like everyone else. I've got plans for apps that will help small businesses manage social media and plans for programs to help train people to manage social media themselves. In five years I see Twirp more as a resource hub and less a manager of client accounts.

### How is your business contributing to making Halifax a better place?

My vision sees a time when all small businesses can manage their own social media. We're getting there. As younger generations come into the workforce and start businesses, there is less and less of a need to outsource social media management. To encourage this, a large part of my business focuses on teaching small business owners how to use social media. I'm doing that with courses through the Department of Labour and Advanced Education, speaking at professional development conferences and of course, through my educational blog, newsletter and social media profiles. I have also advised several local non-profit organizations and charities to help them win contests, sell tickets and collect donations to help their clients. All of this helps to make Halifax businesses more competitive in the local, national and global marketplace.



## WEUSTHEM

### Where do you see your organization in five years?

We are a growing, diverse team and plan to expand our team organically over the next five years. We see ourselves in a couple of different markets over the years to further our growth in the regions that need us there the most locally. Clients require agencies in-market for a variety of services and we intend to provide the same in-markets that serve our continued growth and our clients' needs mutually.

### What has been the biggest challenge to being a small business?

The biggest challenge? We are small! Small is defined as being nimble and quick to react, but in our industry, small is also looked upon as being not capable of handling large accounts. We have however, surpassed these challenges a few years ago and are currently serving blue chip clients, along with a variety of governmental agencies taking over from what was this year's number one PR agency and what was last year's number one creative agency internationally.

### What brings customers back to you?

We thrive on building relationships, not clients. Unlike most in our industry we aren't in it to bill each hour, but we are in it to ensure our solutions have longevity and are sustainable. Clients come back because they trust us. They do because we have earned that through our first interaction which leads to the second, and a third and so on, furthering a relationship that lasts for years to come. We have not had a situation where we have had to break ties or walk away from a client, project or account and we have never given them a reason to do so either.

### Why did you choose Halifax?

Halifax is home, and it will be for the foreseeable future for WeUsThem. We may have outposts as far as the U.S., Europe, Asia and the Middle East, but we will always have a foothold here on the East Coast. As long as Halifax is willing to have us, we can't imagine being anywhere else for our base of operations.



# EXPORT BUSINESS of the year finalists



Sponsored by:



## Export Business of the year finalists

L-R: *Chris Oldham of InterTalk Critical Information Systems, Andy MacLellan of VERB Interactive, Peter MacLaren of BlueLight Analytics and Saar Fabrikant of B4Checkin. Not pictured: Sara Liu, World Link Food Distributors Inc.*

## b4checkin

### B4CHECKIN

#### What inspired your company to become involved in export?

We never considered we wouldn't be exporting; we never really had a choice. Our software was aimed at independent hotels with more than 75 rooms and with the limited market in Halifax, the easiest place for us to start was in larger cities within Canada and the U.S.

#### What is your organization's biggest achievement to date?

We have created the hotel industry's first integrated payment solution, which eliminates the need for hotels to send paper forms to their clients to get credit card information.

#### What do you feel is your biggest contribution to the local business community?

All of our staff is local (with the exception of one employee based in the U.S.), and most of our recent hires have been students fresh out of local universities, so we encourage young grads to stay here rather than seek opportunities in other cities.

#### What do you think Halifax needs to do in order to grow?

Halifax's greatest strength is its opportunity to grow. Halifax is a city where young people want to live, play and work. With thousands of students graduating each year, governments of all levels need to ensure that they have programs geared so that these graduates can take advantage of opportunities to make Halifax home. In doing so, they will make Halifax grow.

## BlueLight Analytics™

### BLUELIGHT ANALYTICS

#### What do you enjoy most about working with international markets?

Working with international markets offers insights into diverse ways of conducting and growing a business. As a small company, working with international markets has given us the opportunity to develop our products to respond to the needs of different markets and generate value for our customers. It also facilitates exposure to new customers that can have the confidence that BlueLight has the ability to overcome obstacles related to cross-cultural or regulatory challenges.

#### What is your organization's biggest achievement to date?

Through our technologies, we have collected more than one million unique data points, allowing us to continue to grow our one-of-a-kind database, while enhancing our ability to provide an analysis and custom recommendations to our clients. The data we have, which is collected by clients using our technologies, is enabling us to develop better industry relationships, expand into different verticals and offer better data-driven solution to our clients to ensure success.

#### Why did you choose Halifax?

Being located in the Atlantic Time Zone allows BlueLight to easily communicate with customers from as far away as Europe and Australia throughout the day. With Halifax being a natural port, BlueLight has been able to develop a strong customs and logistics network, which has been essential in getting our products to market within strict deadlines. Additionally, Halifax's sophisticated research and academic community allows BlueLight to leverage and hire local expertise to refine and develop new product offerings.



**INTER TALK CRITICAL INFORMATION SYSTEMS**

**What inspired your company to become involved in export?**

Necessity breeds opportunity, and that is quite true for us given our industry. The long life cycle of our products means that once a system is in place, it can be 10 to 15 years before it may need to be upgraded. Public safety is a fundamental service all over the world, and as there are only so many public safety agencies in Nova Scotia and Atlantic Canada — we cast our net as wide as we can.

**What do you enjoy most about working with international markets?**

The nuances of conducting business in different areas are always enjoyable to learn — even in markets as “local” as the U.S., things are as different between Pennsylvania and Oregon as they are between Nova Scotia and Alberta. Adapting tone, verbiage and our general business approach to suit the market is a fun task.

**What do you think Halifax needs to do in order to grow?**

Halifax needs to fully embrace its emerging reputation as a technology center — with the strong, young, capable workforce grown from our many local universities and with so many transcendent technology companies doing such great things in international markets, we can no longer afford to be known as a “fisheries and lumber” province. The future of Halifax and Nova Scotia is in technology and we need to become immersed in changing the perception people may have about Halifax and what is being accomplished here.

**What has been the biggest challenge you have faced as an exporter?**

The ebbs and flows of politics is always something to keep an eye on — not only is our industry heavily influenced by political agendas, but also the impacts to trade and financial markets plays a role in determining the course of our business.



**VERB INTERACTIVE**

**What is your organization’s biggest achievement to date?**

We’ve done business all over the world, but our proudest achievement is employing more than 100 people in Halifax, building a gorgeous office for our team downtown and knowing that we are providing local youth with an opportunity to work with amazing brands outside of Nova Scotia. There is a sense of pride knowing we live in Halifax, but build strategies that connect with travelers around the world — and we did it without spending any money on marketing. That will always be more rewarding than revenue targets to me.

**What do you feel is your biggest contribution to the local business community?**

The fact that we have grown revenues 25 to 30 per cent, year after year, consistently and continue to employ more and more Nova Scotian talent every year. We like to take care of our people and our community, and that includes reinvesting in downtown Halifax. Call me old-fashioned, but I get a certain sense of pleasure from knowing we put food on the table for more than 100 families in our city.

**Why did you choose Halifax?**

Halifax is home. Halifax is where I was born and Halifax is where I wanted to build a business. We are growing our business in other regions, but Halifax will always be home to me, and the headquarters of VERB.



**WORLD LINK FOOD DISTRIBUTORS INC.**

**What is your organization’s biggest achievement to date?**

Growing the business to the point where we have been able to create more than 40 direct jobs in Nova Scotia and raise the profile of this region internationally.

**What has been the biggest challenge you have faced as an exporter?**

The biggest challenge has been raising the capital necessary to purchase enough products to generate profit on the razor thin margins that exist in the seafood industry.

**Do you have any advice for other businesses that want to start exporting?**

The most important aspect of exporting is based on relationships. You need to know both your customers and your suppliers, so you can make sure you are delivering what the customers wants.

**What do you think Halifax needs to do in order to grow?**

Halifax needs to improve its infrastructure, including transportation and transit, while still maintaining the small town feel that makes it such a great place to live.

**What do you feel is your biggest contribution to the local business community?**

The direct and indirect jobs created by doing business in the city.

**LOOKING FOR A CHANGE OF SPACE?**



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# INNOVATIVE BUSINESS of the year finalists



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FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT  
Rowe School of Business

## Innovative Business of the year finalists

L-R: *Hana Nelson of Afashionado Fishmongers, Peter MacLaren of BlueLight Analytics, Oliver Scotland of Squiggle Park, Steve Davies of Third Wave Consulting and Kevin Rodgers of Nautel.*

### AFISHIONADO FISHMONGERS

#### How can Halifax become leaders in innovation?

I think we need to tackle the serious conversation about government regulations in the natural resources sector in Nova Scotia. There has been a real lack of innovation because the “ship it raw” model has worked so well in the past. We have an opportunity to add more value here in Nova Scotia, which would create economic returns and more jobs, yet current regulations make it very difficult for any other model to emerge. I’d like to see our leaders make the steps to show their commitment in this area.



#### How can we engage youth to become innovative leaders?

I’m proud to say that we have three employees working with us who are a part of the provincial Graduate to Opportunity program. Their enthusiasm, skill-sets and knowledge help propel us forward. We have amazing post-secondary institutions in Nova Scotia and by engaging in research projects and hosting internships for students; we’re able to make ourselves known to students and recent graduates. It’s given us a great pool of talent to reach from.

#### Why did you choose Halifax?

Since the traditional fisheries sector is focused on export models, the local market in Halifax was primed for a disruption in the seafood space. Locals also want access to our highest quality seafood before it’s exported. With all our post-secondary institutions finding great people who share your passion has made making it a reality a lot more fun.



### BLUELIGHT ANALYTICS

#### What inspired your company’s innovation efforts?

BlueLight’s dedication to innovation was fostered early through initial research and development at Dalhousie University, which is where BlueLight’s MARC Patient Simulator was invented. This innovative spirit did not diminish as BlueLight transitioned into a separate company and it continues to be a cornerstone of the business. It has enabled the company to develop a suite of proprietary technology that provides crucial insight to dental manufacturers, researchers and clinicians.

#### What advice would you give to another business that wants to embrace innovation?

Innovation should not be static — it should be responsive to the dynamic problems and issues of the world around us. This involves more than just a new idea, it means investing in research and development, embracing failure and being prepared to adapt and evolve, all the while being mindful of the needs and wants of the customer.

#### What is your definition of innovation?

Innovation is a byproduct of hard work, vision and belief. It isn’t enough to have a great idea, you need to have a great idea and a vision of what that will look like, belief that you and your team can achieve it and you must put in the hours to turn your vision into a reality. Creating an innovative solution that has a transformational impact on its users requires working smartly and constantly strategizing what your next steps are going to be and how you are going to get there.



## NAUTEL

### What inspired your company's innovation efforts?

Innovation was the genesis of Nautel's original success, dating back 48 years ago, with the invention of the world's first solid-state navigational beacon. That success was quickly followed by the world's first commercially successful AM radio transmitters and then solid-state FM radio transmitters. We compete in an extremely competitive global market and innovation has been key to our success. Today, all 10 of the top 10 revenue-producing broadcast companies in the U.S. now use Nautel.

### What is something new that's happening at your company?

The world's most powerful radio transmitter. Nautel recently designed and built a garage-sized high-power combiner that adds the outputs of five separate Nautel 400kW transmitters to achieve the world's most powerful AM radio output. At two megawatts, this power presented a considerable engineering challenge and an innovative approach. Transmitter expertise has been passed to a new generation of designers, thus continuing our heritage of innovation and drawing on the lessons learned in the preceding four decades.

### If you had the resources, what is the one thing you would change about your business?

The nut that feeds innovation at Nautel is power electronics research and development. This work is somewhat speculative in nature because it means pursuing technology paths that may or may not pan out. More resources would let us pursue more of these paths, some of which might be riskier approaches, but with higher potential rewards.

### How can Halifax become leaders in innovation?

We have all the ingredients. Our resourceful mentality, universities, a vibrant entrepreneurial sector and our world outlook give us the foundation. I'm great believer in the *Ivany Report*. We need to make sure that we keep that thinking alive.



## SQUIGGLE PARK

### What inspired your company's innovation efforts?

Our business was founded on innovating the way children learn to read. After being in the classroom as a volunteer reading teacher I quickly realized how critical it was that kids loved the content they were learning. Julia had a similar experience with her kids. But each child is different, and the educational tool available must support those differences, and technology has the profound power to do just that.

### What is your organization's proudest moment?

When Indigo's Heather Reisman invested in us, it was a proud day. It reinforced to us that great leaders understand how critical it is to improve literacy, and that great strides can be made in that area through technology like Squiggle Park. That said, the first time we watched children use our program and saw them learning in front of our eyes, that has to be the greatest accomplishment to date.

### How can Halifax become a leader in innovation?

There are three things. Firstly, I think it's critical that we continue to fund organizations like Volta and CDL. Second, make it extremely easy for companies to hire immigrants and keep them in Halifax. Thirdly, continue to foster relationships between universities and entrepreneurs to collaborate and commercialize their innovations, facilitating more funding and more opportunities to connect.

### How can we engage youth to become innovative leaders?

I think there is a fundamental change that needs to happen in education to foster an ecosystem of ideas that keeps children's imaginations strong. Investing in activities that encourage curiosity, as much as logic and reason, is critical. To ensure we don't curb wondering and daydreaming.



## THIRD WAVE CONSULTING

### What is your organization's proudest accomplishment?

Third Wave is a boutique consulting firm in an arena with some heavy-hitters. The fact that we continue to hold our own, grow our team and geography and be part of key conversations with the big industry players, is something we celebrate.

We are incredibly proud to be known as North America's leading implementer of Salesforce for the energy sector. We have worked with the "A-listers" in this arena and love partnering with these key players and helping them optimize their businesses. We have also been recognized as the Most Promising O&G Technology Solution Providers by *CIO Review* in 2017.

### What advice would you give to another business that wants to embrace innovation?

As a consulting company, no advice is ever free, but this is something we are happy to share: Don't be scared of innovation — embrace it! It's exciting and will bring out the best in you. Be open to the new ideas and fun that innovation brings to the table. Don't spin your wheels on analysis paralysis. Making the decision to be innovative is the easy part. Having the conviction and commitment to be able to constantly pivot is the key. Be ready to handle setbacks, but don't overanalyze. Focus on your specialty. Don't try and be everything to everybody. Play in your arena, and you will generate success from focusing on your area of expertise.

### What is your definition of innovation?

Innovation is being aware of the opportunities and having the courage to tackle them. You must have an awareness of a specific situation, a need or a problem that requires a solution. From there, you force yourself to think differently about solving it. There has got to be a better way. This is where innovative thoughts come from. Then you find the courage to take risks to develop new and innovative solutions and ideas. Being observant in all situations allows you to innovate. Finding the right problem to solve and looking at problems as opportunities — that's innovation.



# BUSINESS of the year finalists



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## Business of the year finalists

L-R: *Victoria Foulger of Pavia Gallery - Espresso Bar & Café, Tony Nahas of Mezza Lebanese Kitchen, Chris Oldham of InterTalk Critical Information Systems, Natalie Smith of Home Instead Senior Care and Gina McFetridge of Archway Insurance.*



### ARCHWAY INSURANCE

#### Why did you choose Halifax?

I've always believed in Halifax. It's a vibrant place with so much to offer. It's a beautiful location, with a unique culture, a well-educated workforce and so much potential. We're now seeing real growth and investment in the future happening in the area. I'm optimistic that the positive energy will continue and there will be even more opportunity for businesses to launch and develop in Halifax.

#### What is something new that's happening at your company?

In the past year, our company has more than doubled in size. Beyond Halifax, we have 22 locations across Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, employing more than 150 professionals. With expansion has come new opportunities for upward mobility and career growth for our employees. It's incredibly exciting to be able to support employee ambitions through career advancement and have new opportunities open up as a result of our rapid growth.

#### What is one thing people may not know about your business?

Insurance is actually all about people. We're an incredibly curious bunch with insight on what's going on in the community. Our true purpose is helping individuals succeed. We protect businesses against loss so that owners can focus on growing their companies without fear of financial ruin if something goes wrong. It's incredibly rewarding to be able to play a role in helping companies secure financing required to expand to a new location. We take a lot of pride in the success of our clients.



#### Why did you choose Halifax?

Halifax has a great business community full of supportive and inspiring leaders such as Janet Knox, Dale Godsoe and so many more. There are so many opportunities for networking and occasions to learn from other business owners. Halifax is a dynamic city that welcomes newcomers, promotes and encourages an entrepreneurial spirit, and it was something we wanted to be a part of.

#### How have you helped Halifax grow?

Recruiting talented homecare workers is challenging, especially with a growing aging population. Beginning in 2013, Home Instead Senior Care introduced skilled Jamaican caregivers to Halifax through the temporary foreign worker program, contributing to the growth of the labour market. It has been incredibly gratifying to watch as the workers we invited to Canada become permanent residents or Canadian citizens. They have invited family members to Canada and are also starting their own families in Halifax.

#### What is something new that's happening at your company?

We are moving! Staff at Home Instead can work long hours when the day-to-day routine gets hectic or when new clients need our help. Our new office in the Halifax Professional Centre will feature a "chill zone" for hard working staff to unwind in the middle of a long day and will serve as a place to crash when snow storms take over the city. Either way, minimizing stress for our staff while being available for vulnerable senior clients, is a top priority.



**INTER TALK CRITICAL INFORMATION SYSTEMS**

**What would you say is your organization’s biggest achievement?**

We work in an industry that is “behind the scenes.” Public safety and the service first responders provide seems to come to the forefront only when there is an emergency, or when you find yourself in need of help. However, there is never a lull even at the most mundane of times. InterTalk helps these agencies perform at their best by ensuring communication is always available. We have become known within our industry as an innovative and extremely capable systems provider, providing province and state-wide dispatch systems across North America — all from right here in Halifax. To say that a small Halifax company is providing the radio dispatch system for the world’s sixth largest economy — California and the California Highway Patrol — speaks to the level of success we have achieved.

**How have you helped Halifax grow?**

Halifax is our home, and we strive to provide a place to showcase the talents of homegrown professionals to work on the world’s stage. We have doubled our workforce in the past four years, with the majority of staff being local Haligonians. We also are active participants in university co-op programs for computer science, engineering and business, providing real opportunities for students to learn through “baptism by fire” and contribute to projects we are actively working on. We hope to continue promoting Halifax as a leading technology center in the years to come.

**Why did you choose Halifax?**

We are proud Haligonians and Nova Scotians who work all over North America and the world, yet we cannot imagine being anywhere else. We see ourselves and Halifax as having much in common — we share an emerging, innovative outlook toward our future. When the time came to decide on a location for a new company headquarters this past year, we quickly dismissed the notion of moving away — even though all of our work is outside Nova Scotia — because of the common fit between our paths toward the future.

**MEZZA LEBANESE KITCHEN**



**What would you say is your organization’s biggest achievement?**

It would have to be the success of our recent effort to begin franchising. Within the past year we have developed a robust plan and have successfully franchised four locations: Sydney, Upper Tantallon, Dalhousie’s Student Union and Cole Harbour. Each of these locations exceeded our expectations and we’re incredibly proud of our franchise owners. Hopefully we can keep us this momentum as we move into the new year and continue bringing Mezza to towns across Nova Scotia — even across the border into other Maritime provinces.

**Why did you choose Halifax?**

My parents immigrated to Halifax in the 1960s, so while my family’s roots have always been in Lebanon, I was born in Halifax and it has always been my true home. I couldn’t imagine working or growing my business anywhere else. I have been serving great food to the Halifax community since I was 16-years-old and I have no plans on stopping.

**What is one thing people may not know about your business?**

People may not know that our chicken comes from Berwick, Nova Scotia, and our beef comes from Prince Edward Island. We’re extremely proud to support local farmers. In addition to offering local meats, we also prepare all of our sauces in-house with our generations-old family recipe, which means that they’re fresh every time.

**What one piece of advice would you give to a new business?**

My one piece of advice to any new business would be to never stop innovating. Risks have to be taken to try something different or new. The moment you stop innovating your business, someone else is getting ahead of you. It is crucial to be pushing the envelope and exploring new technologies to stand out from the crowd.

**PAVIA GALLERY - ESPRESSO BAR & CAFÉ**



**How have you helped Halifax grow?**

We are not a local company looking for global or international growth — instead we are company looking for global recognition for being an example of a truly local and sustainable business, which has a real impact on the local economy. By working hard to use local suppliers (such as Meadowbrook Farm, Coldspring Farm, Abundance Acres Farm, Rousseau Chocolatier) we are ensuring that the money spent at PAVIA fuels our local economy.

**How can we continue to build a vibrant downtown core?**

Our city has some incredibly strong corporate leaders who understand what it takes to be great. We need to invest in each other’s strengths. We need to not lease our spaces to the highest bidders from Multinational chains, which do nothing to contribute to our overall landscape. We need to work in partnership with local businesses that are going to make our community stronger. In doing so we ensure that Haligonians, by default, use our downtown to directly invest in an infrastructure that nurtures our local economy.

**What is one thing people may not know about your business?**

Most people don’t realize the lengths we go through to source our ingredients and make our food. We produce everything from scratch in our kitchens and bakery. Not only are we sourcing almost entirely from local farms (produce, meats and cheeses) and using free-range eggs, we recently made the huge shift to fairly-traded sugar, cocoa, coconut and chocolate chips in all of our baked goods. As well, we now use biodegradable “to-go” containers, bags, straws, coffee cups, lids and sleeves, with the goal of reducing our use of disposable plastic products and becoming a part of the vital global movement to reduce waste, which ends up in our oceans and landfills.



# BUSINESS LEADER of the year finalists



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## Business Leader of the year finalists

L-R: Joe Metlege of Templeton Properties, Martina Kelades of Shattered Silence Mental Health Support, Tony Nahas of Mezza Lebanese Kitchen, Dave O'Connor of Glow - The Event Store and Ross Argante of Integrated Staffing Ltd.



**ROSS ARGANTE,**  
CO-OWNER AND GENERAL  
MANAGER OF INTEGRATED  
STAFFING LTD.

### What would you say is your biggest accomplishment to date as a business leader?

Being part of a company that has helped to employ nearly 4,000 Atlantic Canadians is my greatest accomplishment to date. My partner, Greg White, and I feel very blessed to have been able to build and continue to grow a successful business, which helps put good Haligonians to work each and every day. Whether it's helping someone in transition, a newly landed Canadian, an apprentice, student, young professional or recent grad, we feel very proud to have been able to help several thousand people find work in our community. We are proudly local and wear this stamp as a badge of honour. In less than four years we have opened three offices

across three cities, in two provinces in Atlantic Canada — with a fourth location expected in a new market in early 2018.

### If you weren't in this line of work what would you be doing?

I truly believe that I'm now doing what I was destined to do. My mother always said to me that my ambition and energy would either get me in a lot of trouble or make me successful. To date it has done a bit of both. But in all seriousness, I think if I wasn't doing what I'm currently doing, I'd be involved in emergency services. I've always felt compelled to help people and for a short period of time was even an auxiliary member of the RCMP. I come from a hardworking, blue collar, Italian-immigrant family and it was constantly drilled in to my head that you need to put in a hard day's work to earn an honest day's pay. My sister and I make up a very small handful of members in my family who have a post-secondary education. It was important to my parents that we take the skills we obtained from our education and apply them in the real world but at the same time never forgetting our roots and understanding that hard work pays off, whether you're a blue collar worker, white collar worker or business owner.



**MARTINA KELADES,**  
CO-FOUNDER OF SHATTERED  
SILENCE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

### What leadership advice would you give an up and comer?

Believe in your mission and go for it. Whatever type of business you operate, it's important to remember your sole purpose. I believe it's what guides our business decisions, it's what motivates our development and most importantly it's what strengthens community development. You do not need to be a certain age, have a specific type of education or wealth — we can all be leaders. Leadership is within each of us, and is having a vision and putting it into action.

### Why did you choose Halifax?

Halifax is our community and where we first want to create positive change. Halifax is huge on supporting local — we eat local, shop local and we feel it's important that we also support local.

That's not to say we won't support outside of our region, however our campaigns and projects will take place in HRM as we work to help build and strengthen our mental health community. We are an online social network, so we will also have reach across the world.

**What's your favourite part about Halifax?**

Halifax is a beautiful and unique city. It's a city of innovation and creativity, which makes it the best environment to start a new business. From our experience people have been open and receptive to the creation of our organization and very encouraging. We have a diverse population which can strengthen our community and increase more access to a variety of supports and services.



**JOE METLEGE,**  
PRESIDENT OF TEMPLETON PROPERTIES

**What's the best business advice you've ever been given?**

Do what you love. If you love what you do, your passion will be infectious to anyone you meet, be it employees, clients, or stakeholders. Producing results is imperative and will gain you the credibility needed, but it will be the passion that will capture the loyalty and commitment from those you wish to lead.

**What steps does Halifax need to get to the next level?**

As a city we need to celebrate success in our region. There are so many amazing businesses and industries being started and operated by our neighbours and fellow Haligonians and there needs to be a mind shift by government and citizens to understand that these entrepreneurs need to be supported and encouraged.

**If you weren't in this line of business what would you be doing?**

I would be a stay-at-home dad. I love children (mainly mine) and I would love to be able to spend more time with them.

**What's your favourite part about Halifax?**

I love the big city feel with the small town safety. To be able to have the amazing restaurants, shops and entertainment like we live in a big city, but enjoy the safety we have here is truly a hidden benefit that we should all recognize and be thankful for.



**TONY NAHAS,**  
PRESIDENT AND CEO OF MEZZA LEBANESE KITCHEN

**What's the best business advice you've ever been given?**

My father has been my biggest inspiration as a mentor. He has instilled a number of values in me that I reflect on every single day. He taught me that things are worth doing the hard way because it's the right way. There's always going to be opportunities to cut corners, but we won't take the easy way out because we will never sacrifice quality.

**What leadership advice would you give an up-and-comer?**

It would be to work alongside your employees and do the same jobs that they're doing. It's important that you never lose sight and think you're too important for even the smallest task. When my staff members see me doing dishes or jumping out front to serve customers, it helps them get an insight into the passion and pride I have for my restaurants. I hope it instills the same values in them.

**Why did you choose Halifax?**

My parents chose Halifax when they immigrated here in the 1960s. I was born in Halifax and I can't imagine being anywhere else. The support from the community has been overwhelming and I'm really proud of what my family and I have been able to accomplish here in Nova Scotia.



**DAVE O'CONNOR,**  
PRESIDENT AND OWNER OF GLOW – THE EVENT STORE

**What leadership advice would you give an up-and-comer?**

Mistakes will always be made, just don't make them twice. Business leadership is a life-long learning process — your success is measured in education and research, which ultimately prepares you to take smart and calculated risks. Use that burning desire to know your market better than anyone. By becoming a product or service expert in your area of business, you build intellectual capital that leads to higher profitability and brand awareness.

**What steps does Halifax need to get to the next level?**

Strong political leadership, which I'm happy to acknowledge, exists today through the work of Mayor Savage and CAO Jacques Dubé. Competitive tax rates, red tape reduction, inclusive workplaces, respect for all ethnicities and genders and stronger mentorship from current business leaders. Halifax is the business heart of Atlantic Canada and being on top means we have to adhere to our growth plan, but also adjust to new and emerging industry trends.

**What's something new that's happening at your organization?**

The events industry is always changing, so at Glow we strive to be ahead of the curve. If we're not finding efficiencies within the company, we are using our collective creativity to bring new ideas to clients. Glow recently opened a 35,000 square-foot complex that houses a stunning showroom, bustling event retail store, thousands of decor and lighting props for weddings, corporate events and fundraisers, and more games and inflatables than any store east of Montreal. Our goal is to truly be a one-stop event destination shop.



L to R: Christine Krochak, Communications Specialist and Sue Coulet, Store Manager at IKEA Canada in Halifax.

Paul Darrow

# Opening the doors

IKEA Halifax brings careers, sustainability and better living to Nova Scotia **By Erin Elaine Casey**

*Business Voice* writer Erin Elaine Casey asked Sue Coulet, Store Manager, and Christine Krochak, Communications Specialist, all about the new IKEA Halifax store and what it brings to the community.

**The excitement surrounding IKEA's return to Halifax has been off the charts. What was behind IKEA's decision to come back?**

**SC:** We've been thrilled with the excitement and reception to our store opening. The community has been great and we're happy to welcome so many new and returning customers to the store. In 2015, IKEA Canada announced that we would be doubling in size by 2025. As the largest city in Atlantic Canada, with

an existing customer base that shopped in Montreal or online, Halifax was long considered a key market for expansion.

**Why do you think people are so fired up about IKEA coming back?**

**SC:** We offer a fun day out for the whole family. We have nearly 10,000 products, 50 inspirational room settings, model home interiors, a supervised children's play facility and a 450-seat restaurant. Customers can browse the showroom for inspiration, shop for accessories in our Market Hall area and pick up their flat-packed furniture in our self-serve warehouse before checking out. Our restaurant serves the iconic Swedish meatballs and a wide variety of other dishes, including vegan and

vegetarian options. We also have great family-friendly features such as a baby-care room and play areas throughout the store.

**What kind of career can you build working for IKEA?**

**SC:** Working at IKEA is inspiring, fun, and fast-paced and the career opportunities are endless. We believe in our people and that our growth comes from giving our co-workers the opportunity to contribute and develop. I'm thrilled that half of the jobs at IKEA Halifax are full-time — and part-time co-workers receive guaranteed hours every week. Additionally, all co-workers have access to our Total Rewards package, which includes the One IKEA Bonus, TACK

“IKEA is keen to improve life at home and to understand the needs and dreams of Canadians in Atlantic Canada.” — Sue Coulet, Store Manager, IKEA Halifax

program, subsidized meals, a co-worker discount and RRSP matching. We're proud that our store is contributing more than 300 direct and indirect jobs to the local economy.

**I understand your building is highly innovative. Can you tell me a bit about it?**

**CK:** IKEA's commitment to sustainability is a natural extension of our vision to create a better everyday life for people. IKEA Halifax was constructed to be the most sustainable IKEA store in Canada and will also be the first LEED-certified IKEA store in Canada. Sustainable features include electric vehicle charging stations and preferred parking for hybrid and electric vehicles, free lightbulb and battery takeback services, rooftop solar panels and a geothermal energy system that provides roughly 50 per cent of the building's heating and cooling. This store is the first IKEA store in Canada with a living wall, featuring live plants fed with natural light at the entrance to the restaurant area.

**How does IKEA give back to the community?**

**CK:** IKEA wants to have a positive impact on people and the planet and be a partner for positive change globally and locally. We partner with organizations including UNICEF, Save the Children and UNHCR. Each IKEA store in Canada also chooses local partners to support.



In November, IKEA donated \$1 from every breakfast sold to the Breakfast Club of Canada, which helps provide school children with a daily breakfast. Locally, we have a focus on Admiral Westphal Elementary, Ian Forsyth Elementary and Caledonia Junior High — and we're planning a co-worker event to pack breakfasts. IKEA Halifax co-workers and local Tree Canada staff also planted 107 trees and shrubs in Birch Cove Park, in May. Since our opening, we have donated \$5,000 in products to Phoenix Youth Programs and \$1,000 to Alice Housing.

**Is there anything else you would like to share?**

**SC:** IKEA is keen to improve life at home and to understand the needs and dreams of Canadians in Atlantic Canada. We're excited to bring to Nova Scotia what people know and love about IKEA. Our new store is full of ideas and inspiration, so customers can experience our product range and see what works best for them. I hope as you explore our new IKEA store you'll recognize Atlantic Canada in our room settings and homes.



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On November 9th we hosted more than 700 Chamber members at our Annual Fall Dinner, Travis McDonough provided us with an informative and exciting evening!

Thank you to our Presenting Sponsor: Stewart McKelvey who supported KidSport.

And thank you to our partners: Advanced Systems Audio Visual Services, Discover Halifax, eSource Event Registration Ltd., glow, Harvest Wines and ZedEvents great productions for helping us pull off a fabulous event.

We look forward to seeing you next year on November 1st, 2018.



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### Day 2: Beijing

Arrive in Beijing, the Capital of China by midnight. You will be met at the airport by your tour guide and transferred to the hotel.

### Day 3 - 4: Beijing

Visit the **Tian An Men Square**, the largest square in the world, the **Palace Museum**, also known as the **Forbidden City**, home of 24 emperors with a total space of 9,999 rooms, and the **Summer Palace**, featuring the Long Corridor with painted gallery, Kunming Lake and Longevity Hill, Seventeen Arch Bridge and the Marble Boat. Tour to the **Lama Temple** and the **Temple of Heaven**, built in 1420 A.D., where the emperors prayed to the heavens for a good harvest.

### Day 5: Beijing

Bus excursion to the **Great Wall**, the 4,000 mile long and 2,000 year old construction is said to be the only man-made structure visible by the naked eye from the moon. Visit the **Ming Tombs**. One of the 13 Ming Emperors' Tombs is fully excavated and open for exploration.

### Day 6 - 7: Beijing/Shanghai/Suzhou

Fly to Shanghai, followed by a bus trip to Suzhou for the **Lingering Garden**, **Tiger Hill**, **Hanshan Temple** and the **National Embroidery Institute** to see silk embroidery, a local craft with thousands of years of history. Dinner this evening will include a show featuring traditional Chinese music.

### Day 8: Suzhou/Hangzhou

Morning tour bus excursion to **Hangzhou** for a visit to the **Economic Development Zone** and the centuries-old **Lingyin Temple**, featuring a 64.3 foot high camphor-wood carving of Buddha.

### Day 9: Hangzhou/Shanghai

Morning boat cruise on **West Lake** with relaxing stopover at jewellike pagodas and tea houses. Afternoon tour bus trip to Shanghai.

### Day 10: Shanghai

Visit the **Yu Garden**, a maze of marvelous pavilions, ponds, rocky works and overarching trees. Also visit the **Bund**, Shanghai's famous waterfront park. Tour the **Pudong Economic Development Zone**.

### Day 11: Shanghai/Beijing/YYZ

**Free time in the morning.** The afternoon flight will depart by 1:30pm for YYZ where you will arrive at 10:30am on the same day.

Learn more at the orientation meeting: **February 26, 2018**  
**12 - 1:30 pm & 4:30 - 6:00 pm**  
**Halifax Chamber, 32 Akerley Blvd.**

- Price reflects double occupancy
- Add \$500 for single occupancy
- 11-day all inclusive tour package plus all the air travels (from Toronto)
- Includes everything on the itinerary
- Add \$200 to take Terra-Cotta Warriors Itinerary
- English speaking tour guide on every tour bus
- Valid passport and visa required

## HALIFAX CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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# How did we do last year?

Anecdotal information only gets you so far, data tells the whole story

@mark\_fraser



**MARK FRASER**  
CHAIR OF THE BOARD

As is tradition in January, we celebrate the strength, diversity, ingenuity, leadership, success and risk-taking initiatives of our business community. We kick off the New Year with the Halifax Business Awards, where out of a couple of hundred nominees, six gold medals are awarded that honour risk taking (new business), global impact (export), serious brain power (innovation), entrepreneurialism (small business), results (business of the year) and leadership (business leader).

For these organizations, we know 2017 was a great year, and they have the data to prove it. But outside of awards celebrations, how do we really know if our business community is thriving?

We've heard a lot of anecdotal evidence that our community is indeed thriving, if the cranes dotting the skyline are any evidence. Immigration continues at a pace that we need. Provincial budgets are balanced, and for anyone that has driven around the city in the last six months, the road construction and repair business is firing on all cylinders. This is great — but we need more than anecdotes to make smarter decisions moving forward.

Some of the best minds in our region delivered the *Now or Never Report* and challenged all of us to act now, to improve our long-term economic and demographic future. The *Now or Never Report* became a rallying cry for change, and although it's not part of the daily news cycle anymore, many in the business community continue to frame conversations about the long-term around

**“**It is now 2018, and business does not evaluate performance based on something that happened up to 24 months ago. We can do better.”

the goals presented in this report.

To their credit, the One Nova Scotia Collective has been tracking our progress against these goals through a dashboard of “objective, reliable data on our collective progress,” which you can see at [www.onens.ca](http://www.onens.ca). Unfortunately, the adjective “recent” is missing from the dashboard description, and without a better kind of data, we will always be playing catch up.

This is classic DRIP: Data Rich, Information Poor. If the business community is expected to make changes so these goals can be achieved, then direct and as close to immediate feedback on their progress is essential. We have a time imperative in front of us, and as a result, we need to know at a much faster rate if our actions are having the expected, or at least intended, impact.

Of the 19 measures that the dashboard tracks, only nine have data that is what I would call “somewhat recent.” This is generally 2016 data. It is now 2018, and business does not evaluate performance based on something that happened up to 24 months ago. We can do better.

Of the remaining 10, the data is even older, or completely absent. Four of the goals have no measure at all — its status is “Metric Under Development.” We can do way better.

To be specific, there are goals that we are not even measuring: New business startups, employment rates for First Nations and African Nova Scotians, research and development partnerships and lead long-term planning process.

In my experience, inquires about why we have such old (or non-existent)

data sources are met with a familiar, “The data doesn't exist” or “The report that we use is not published yet.” If that is the case after almost four years, what should we use?

Well, I would like to call bull on that. Data drives business today. Data-driven decision making is what is allowing some businesses to thrive over their competition. Decision making without data is guessing. Companies live or die by getting the planning right, which means they remove as much guessing from the process as possible.

The data that's needed to tell the OneNS Collective story is available. We just need to be creative about getting it into our hands. We need to change which reports we rely on. We need to ask our business leaders and citizens for help. We need to react and change what we are doing to move the results forward.

We can do a much better job of finding out how we are doing, and we need to do it much quicker. The demographic challenges that the *Now or Never Report* present to us are here, and we can't rely on old data to guide us on our plan adjustments. We need data that tells the now story, otherwise it might as well be never.

Let's do better. Let's look to our award finalists for inspiration and validation. Something tells me they will agree. ■

Mark Fraser is Chair of the Board of Directors of the Halifax Chamber of Commerce and Executive Vice President at T4G Limited. Follow Mark on Twitter at @mark\_fraser

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