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Magazine



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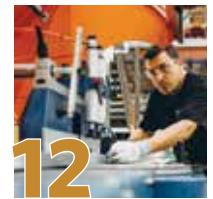
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## In this issue



### The Human Factor: Engagement through volunteering

Employee engagement through volunteering can improve the cohesion of your team, all the while connecting them with people and groups in the community that profit from the generosity of time. Learn how engaging your employees doesn't have to be limited to the confines of your facility.



### The Ties That Bind

Suppliers and customers alike work to ensure timely and efficient performance of the supply chains that keep business humming. Meet some companies facing supply challenges head-on, turning them into opportunities to work more closely together to drive value for all.



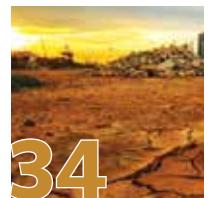
### Thinking inside the box

Meet an Indigenous, female supply chain graduate whose desire to support fellow Indigenous entrepreneurs across the country has led her former basement bedroom business to take off like a rocket! It's a combination of art, science, business, and Indigenous history.



### 5 Questions... with PrairiesCan

They're from the government, and they're really here to help! Meet the new PrairiesCan, the federal regional economic development agency for the Prairies. Learn about some of their successes, how your company can work with PrairiesCan, and how to connect with the folks in the know.



### In conversation with... Dr. David Sauchyn

Climate change is not just some concept in the distant future. It's happening now, and it's impacting our lives and our businesses. Learn what's happening today, how businesses can mitigate and adapt to the changes, and why Canada - and Canadian industry - needs to step up for the world.

## Next issue

### Recreation and play

All work and no play make Jack a dull boy. And if your region is full of workaholic Jacks and/or Jills, well, that's just no fun! Thank goodness the situation on the Prairies is far from that level of awfulness. And that's thanks to the manufacturers who make play and recreation time the focus of their work.

Meet the folks behind the products that make your pastimes just that much more fun, and your rec rooms that much more recreational. It's about making business from the fun and games!

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# It's about connection

By Jeff Baker

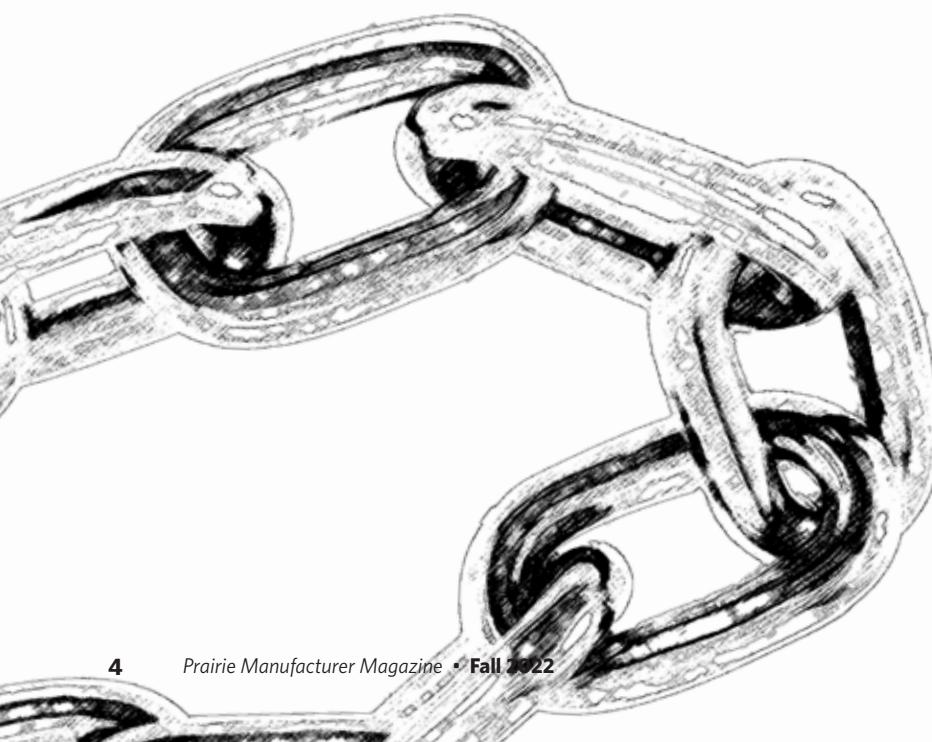
ink. Tie-in. Relation. Bond. Association. Attachment.

Call it what you want, it's all about connection – between people, companies, industries, and regions – and it really comes down to community.

That's what Prairie Manufacturer has been about since day one. We're your magazine, about your industry and your community. And we work every day to ensure the magazine meets that remit.

The entire team comes from a place of community and connection as we build each issue, and we look forward to bringing you the information and insights from industry leaders just like you.

When we sit down to plan out the magazine's year ahead, we look closely at what we've already covered, what stories of interest are out there, and how we can serve the need for industry players of all sizes to connect to others in the sector. And we always have an ear to the ground (or is it eyes on the inbox!) for the story ideas from you, our readers! That's how we learn about the innovative and creative work taking place in plants across the region.



## Connection is crucial

Last November, you might recall the series of powerful storms – atmospheric rivers, to be exact – that arrived in quick succession on Canada's west coast.

Following a summer of extreme heat and wildfires, these storms lay waste to the infrastructure that connects our largest port facilities to the rest of the country, not to mention cutting off more than three million people from easy travel within the country to points east.

The impact of those storms was quick, harsh, and unprecedented. The broken road and rail links seriously affected supply chains across North America and beyond – from stranding grain exports from the Prairies to a massive backlog of imports of raw materials and components. The disruptions were felt across the board and are still making their presence known in some frustrating ways!

In many ways, these storms and their damage have been a wake-up call for industry – at least they should be seen as such. Questions are being raised

about our dependence on imported goods and exports of under-processed goods, and there are discussions about required inventory levels and acceptable lead times.

With everything that has happened (and everything that could still happen!), it's worth our while to examine every opportunity to build durability and resiliency into the networks that keep our country running. Maybe that starts with looking at your own supply chains and looking at opportunities to work with a local or domestic partner who could better serve your needs.

## In this issue

From having that experience of disruption fresh in my head (just-in-time, one might say!) I looked forward to exploring the topic of supply chains and supply networks with folks in the industry, learning more about what it takes to be a supplier of choice and/or to make the decisions to contract work out.

With that discussion of supply chain and the impacts that were felt due

to record-breaking extreme weather events, we reached out to the folks at ClimateWest in Winnipeg and their partners across the Prairies to learn how climate change is already affecting the manufacturing industry and what leaders can do to mitigate and adapt in the face of the challenge.

Even with the certainty of climate change and its effects on our region, there's still a lot of things remaining unknown or uncertain. So, how does a company, an industry, or a region plan for these uncertainties in a way that is responsible and responsive but not over-the-top? Well, there's a process for that!

When the process and the networks are firing on all cylinders, that's when the magic really happens... no one outside the system knows it's working as well as it does!

We're also shining the spotlight on Indigenous Box, a corporate gifting and subscription box service founded by an Indigenous woman supply chain grad

from Treaty 6 Territory. Her passion for supply chain and process improvement are helping her give lift to other Indigenous manufacturers and makers across Canada and share Indigenous People's history of supply chain development and management.

And last but certainly not least... we're connecting you with some timely info about a valuable government resource and service provider for businesses across the Prairies. Formerly known as Western Economic Diversification, you'll definitely profit from learning about the successor organization, PrairiesCan!

## The look ahead

Yes, manufacturing is hard work, but the rewards are worth it, but it's not just about the work. You've got to find some time in there for fun, too!

In the next issue, we'll look at just how much fun manufacturing can be! Whether it's building toys and games or trucks,

boats, and trailers, Prairie manufacturers are helping folks with the creation of their own recreation.

We'll also keep you in the loop on the impacts of inflation as the economy continues its recovery from the worst of the pandemic, and more great info and intel on the people side of the industry.

With that, I issue a standing invite to you, our readers, to send along any story ideas or leads you might have. We're always on the lookout for great stories in all corners of the manufacturing sector across the Prairies. After all, it's the connections between folks and ideas that make for the most compelling content.

So, for now, I bid you 'happy reading' of this issue, and I wish you the best for a safe and productive autumn.

Until we chat again. ↗

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# Engaging your employees through volunteering

*As a passionate volunteer, paid volunteer days support my career development and mental health*

By Eunice Doroni

**T**he COVID-19 pandemic brought a new level of isolation to the world. The adverse effects of physical and social isolation have been so detrimental that it's even been recognized as a public health concern. As restrictions continue to ebb and flow, so does our wellbeing. With the additional stressors posed by working from home, the push for employers to pay attention to and address workers' mental health challenges is even more crucial.

There are some practical ways that organizations are already adjusting to caring for their workers. For example, Spotify announced a "Work from Anywhere" policy that allowed workers to work from home, even in another country if they would like, which gave employees agency on their work environment. Common Future, a non-profit focused on racial justice and economic empowerment, is experimenting with a 4-day work week with no pay cut over the summer to shift their understanding of productivity.

Personally, as a long-time volunteer and employee of the non-profit and voluntary sector, I've continuously found that volunteerism is an important way for me to enhance my work in the sector and my mental and physical health.

While I don't think that volunteerism is the 'fix-all' to improve wellbeing, I hope to provide an insight into the benefits of providing staff with paid volunteer time, and how work across sectors can benefit from on-the-ground engagement with their communities.

## Embodying the "Volunteer" in Volunteer Alberta

To encourage community engagement and to show our commitment to our mission of strengthening and creating pathways for volunteerism and civic engagement in Alberta, each employee at Volunteer Alberta (VA) receives 15 hours of paid volunteer time as part of their benefits package. Our name,

mission and values emphasize what we believe is an essential thread to the fabric of society – getting out there and giving back.

Pre-pandemic, mental health breaks for me meant getting out and exploring the national parks, volunteering and being out in the community, and of course, social outings. As restrictions were easing in Alberta, I knew that the first thing I wanted to do was go back to volunteering as a Conversation Circle Facilitator with the Edmonton Immigrant Services Association (EISA).

In June, I volunteered one hour twice a week in my workdays to converse with newcomers to Edmonton, play games, and share stories to practice their conversational English. Facilitating is a key part of my work; exercising this skill differently and with a diverse group makes me a more well-rounded facilitator. It also provided a way for me to break up my workday. Facilitating the conversation circles allowed me to stay connected to others in my community and avoid feelings of isolation.

While working with newcomers is my personal passion, other VA staff used their hours to volunteer at music festivals, their children's school events, and organizing community conversations on pressing topics. Having days where we get the opportunity to give back to our communities by participating and attending events or providing necessary services with our specialized skills significantly enhances our work as a volunteer centre.

## Three ways paid volunteer time enriches employees' experiences

Volunteering is not just 'paid time off.' Rather, the time spent volunteering can truly enrich employees' experience at work and beyond.

*Mental and physical benefits of volunteering:* While volunteerism benefits the recipients of the direct and indirect services that volunteers provide, volunteers can also benefit. These personal benefits include reducing stress, anxiety or

depression symptoms, building professional skills, trying out leadership opportunities, and finding intrinsic purpose. Especially in the pandemic, finding multiple ways to nourish mental wellbeing is essential.

*Building relationships outside of the work context:* In 2019, I used my volunteer hours to attend an international youth summit in Montreal for my volunteer work with Apathy is Boring. I had the chance to meet youth from all over Canada and Europe and learn different ways of doing from different parts of the country and the world. I maintained these networks and brought them in to advise and support brainstorming around my ideas at work. New connections led to an increase in my creativity and broadened my way of thinking.

*Passion projects can incite motivation in other areas like work:* Spending so much of our waking time at work can often stagnate our personal development and put our personal goals on hold. By allowing employees to work on their passion projects or personal goals through volunteering, they don't have to choose between giving back to their community or taking a pay cut for a day off to participate. It also signals the employers' commitment to the personal development of their employees outside of their direct work. After finishing my volunteer commitment with EISA and hearing about how a lot of resources are not accessible to English Language Learners, I was motivated to find ways to make our youth resources more accessible to diverse populations.

## Find volunteer opportunities in your community

Volunteering opportunities can look different for everyone's comfort levels, and that's perfectly fine. So, where do you find these opportunities to volunteer in your community?

*Group volunteering.* Corporate volunteering is a popular way to build comradery within teams. Group volunteering can look like an organized community cleanup or volunteering together at the local food bank. One thing to note about group volunteering is that it can sometimes be intrusive and stressful to organize. Group volunteering is often short-term and focused on the development of the individuals in the group and not on any long-term benefits to the organization hosting the group. Before planning a group volunteering opportunity, ask: Is this a mutually beneficial exchange?

*Individual volunteer opportunities.* There are volunteer search engines like Charity Village where you can filter your interests and location to find the right volunteer opportunity. Alberta residents can also access Volunteer Connector which is regionally focused. Check with your local volunteer centres to determine the resources available for volunteers. A volunteer centre may be a Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) office or equivalent. You can also check out the Volunteer Alberta website (or Volunteer Canada to find your province's equivalent organization) to explore ways to volunteer, among other resources.

Eunice Doroni is Manager of Youth Engagement with Volunteer Alberta in Edmonton. Since moving to Alberta in 2011, the Edmonton Immigrant Services Association (EISA) has been the nearest to Eunice's heart for the great work they do in the community, and many learning opportunities they've given her. Outside of work and volunteering, Eunice enjoys falling down YouTube rabbit holes, playing '70s hits on her ukulele, and hanging out with her partner in the River Valley. ↗



PHOTO COURTESY: VOLUNTEER ALBERTA

**Corporate volunteering is a popular way to build comradery within teams. Group volunteering can look like an organized community cleanup or volunteering together at the local food bank.**

# Supply Chains are Shifting across Canada and the Prairies: Here's the Evidence

By Jayson Myers

Some pundits refer to it as VUCA. That's short for Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous – the world we live in, and most certainly the business conditions facing manufacturers across Canada, the Prairies included.

Conditions have changed drastically over the past three years: the pandemic; factory closures; shortages of critical materials, components, and finished goods and equipment; logistical disruptions; rising trade- and geopolitical tensions; the war in Ukraine; labour shortages. The risks keep on rising. More than a storm, it's been like a perfect hurricane for manufacturers, not only in Canada but around the world.

Manufacturers are reconfiguring their supply chains in response, but there are longer term trends that are also having a powerful impact on the structure of manufacturers' supply networks. Changing customer expectations, more stringent regulations, stakeholder- and investor expectations, and increasing concerns over the environment and social responsibility are requiring greater degrees of transparency, traceability, and accountability throughout supply chains.

At the same time, the rapid pace of innovation is requiring companies to collaborate more and search around the world for research and technology partners, talent, and new suppliers as they transform their businesses into advanced manufacturing enterprises. Cost structures are changing, too, as inflation weighs in and manufacturers struggle to keep their prices competitive as the costs of doing business rise across the board.

What has this meant for manufacturers in Canada and across the Prairies? Different things for different companies, for sure. However, some general trends are clearly discernible even over the past three years. (Estimates for 2022 are based on performance during the first six months of this year.)

First, Canadian manufacturers are selling relatively more to domestic customers. Across the country, manufacturers' sales have grown by 21.4 per cent since 2019, reflecting increases in both production volumes and selling prices. Sales into the Canadian market, which now account for 47 per cent of total manufacturing output, have risen more rapidly, by 25 per cent.

At the same time, Canadians are buying relatively more from domestic manufacturers. Imports of manufactured goods are now 16 per cent higher than three years ago. As a result, the domestic market share for Canadian manufacturers has increased from 37 per cent in 2019 to 39 per cent this year.

While this indicates a localization of supply chains in Canada, it appears that it has come more at the expense of other North American suppliers than of China. Canadians are buying relatively less from other North American producers. Imports of manufactured goods from the US now account for about 29 per cent of the Canadian market, down from 31 per cent in 2019. Mexico's market share has dropped from four per cent to just over three per cent of total sales of manufactured goods in Canada. Imports of manufactured goods from China, on the other hand, have grown by about 24 per cent while China's share of the Canadian market has increased slightly from 8.8 to 9.1 per cent over the past three years.

Exports of manufactured goods from Canada are also up; however, they have lagged domestic sales, growing by 18 per cent since 2019. Export sales to the United States, which accounts for 81 per cent of total offshore sales by Canadian manufacturers, increased more rapidly than to other regions, rising 21 per cent, whereas exports to China fell by close to 19 per cent.

But are Canadian manufacturers themselves localizing their supply chains and buying more from domestic producers? The evidence shows a slight trend in this direction as well.

Imports of raw materials, components, parts, and equipment used by Canadian manufacturers have increased by just over 18 per cent since 2019, about three percentage points slower than overall factory sales. Here too, though, Canadian manufacturers are buying more from domestic than from North America suppliers. Inputs from China have increased by more than 28 per cent. Canada's manufacturers are becoming less dependent on their North American suppliers and more dependent on those from other countries, most notably China.

## Manitoba manufacturers enjoy strong export and domestic sales growth

In Manitoba, manufacturers' sales are 24 per cent higher this year than in 2019. Exports, which currently account for 59 per cent of manufacturing output in Manitoba, are up 23 per cent while sales to domestic customers have increased by almost 27 per cent. Imports of manufactured goods into the province have lagged, increasing by 18 per cent, with imports from the US and China growing at about that same rate. As a result, domestic market share for Manitoba manufacturers has risen from 26 to 28 per cent.

Behind these numbers, there are significant differences from the country as a whole. There has not been a relative shift away from US suppliers as there has been across Canada, and Manitoba manufacturers have been more successful in sustaining export sales. Exports into the United States, which account for 85 per cent of all offshore sales for Manitoba manufacturers, for instance, have kept pace with sales into the Canadian market. Manufacturers' sales to Mexico have almost quadrupled. Like the rest of the country, however, exports to China are down sharply, falling by almost 44 per cent since 2019.

For Manitoba manufacturers themselves, there has been a slight shift to greater dependence on foreign suppliers over the last three years. Imports of materials, components, and equipment used by manufacturers have increased by just over 26 per cent since 2019 – about two percentage points more rapidly than manufacturers' sales. Purchases of inputs from the US and China have grown at that rate while imports from Mexico are up by more than 36 per cent.

## Global trade propelling manufacturing in Saskatchewan

Sales by Saskatchewan manufacturers have grown at more than twice the rate of those across Canada as a whole, increasing

**Changing customer expectations, more stringent regulations, stakeholder- and investor expectations, and increasing concerns over the environment and social responsibility are requiring greater degrees of transparency, traceability, and accountability throughout supply chains.**

by almost 46 per cent since 2019. Sales into the domestic Canadian market are up by 40 per cent. Meanwhile, imports of manufactured goods into the province have increased by 34 per cent. As a result, the domestic market share for Saskatchewan manufacturers has risen from 53 to 54 per cent.

Exports, which account for three-quarters of the province's manufacturing output, have risen 57 per cent. The United States buys 79 per cent of Saskatchewan's manufactured exports, and sales there have increased by 71 per cent over the past three years. The province's manufactured exports to China have grown by 13 per cent while those to Mexico have contracted by almost 10 per cent.

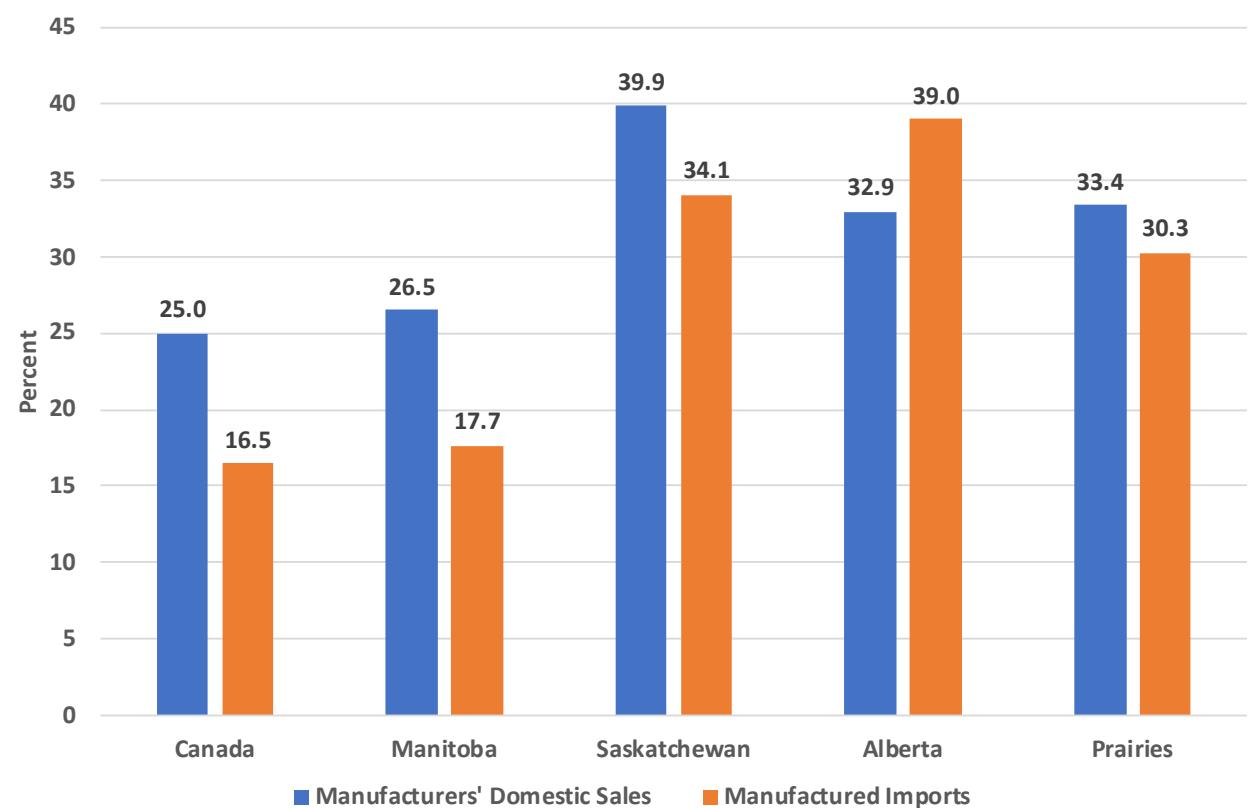
Like their counterparts in Manitoba, Saskatchewan manufacturers have maintained their overall dependence on imported materials, parts, and equipment. Imported inputs have kept pace with manufacturers' sales growth in the province. However, in contrast with other provinces, inputs from China have declined by 17 per cent while those from the US, which now accounts for about 80 per cent of imported goods used by Saskatchewan manufacturers have grown at the same rate as manufacturers' sales, while those from Mexico are up more than 67 per cent.

## Alberta bucks the trend

Alberta manufacturers account for 69 per cent of manufacturers' sales from the Prairies and 18 per cent of sales across Canada. Sales by Alberta manufacturers have increased by just over 40 per cent since 2019, yet Alberta is the only Prairie province where domestic manufacturers have lost share in the Canadian market. Domestic sales have risen by 33 per cent since 2019. Imports of manufactured goods into the province have increased by 39 per cent, driven in large part by imports from the US which account for 63 per cent of the total and have grown by 41 per cent over the past three years – just about the same as imports from China. Alberta manufacturers sell 56 per cent of the goods they produce to Canadian customers. Yet over the past three years, their domestic market share has fallen from 63 to 62 per cent.

On the other side of the coin, exports of goods manufactured in Alberta have grown 52 per cent over the past three years. Exports to the US, which account for 72 per cent of total

**Growth in Manufacturers' Domestic Sales vs. Manufactured Imports  
2019-2022 (Fiscal Years)**



**Canada's manufacturers are becoming less dependent on their North American suppliers and more dependent on those from other countries, most notably China.**

manufactured exports from the province, are up by 57 per cent. Sales to Mexico are eight per cent higher. Sales to China, though, which in 2019 represented 10 per cent of Alberta's exports of manufactured goods, are down by 10 per cent.

As is the case in the other Prairie provinces, there is no evidence of an overall shift in manufacturers' own supply chains. Alberta manufacturers are currently purchasing the same proportion of the inputs they use from outside the

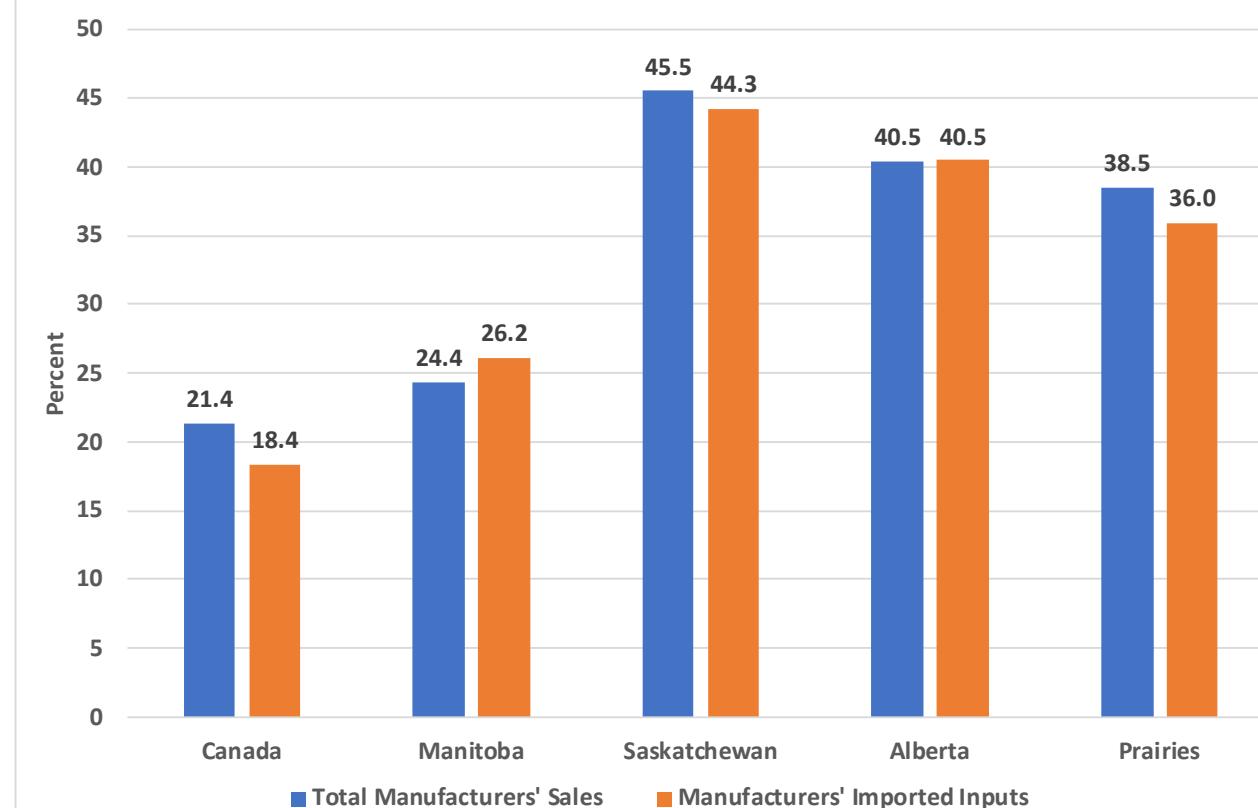
country as they did in 2019. Imports of materials, parts, and equipment used in manufacturing have increased at exactly the same rate as sales by manufacturers in the province. Imports from the US, where Alberta manufacturers source 80 per cent of their imported inputs, have kept pace with sales growth. Manufacturers' inputs from China have grown slightly more quickly by 48 per cent.

### Prairie supply chains depend on open markets

What then of supply chain restructuring across the Prairie provinces? The evidence is mixed, and the trends that do stand out are often at odds with those across Canada as a whole.

First, Canadians are buying relatively more goods manufactured in the Prairies. Except for Alberta, Prairie

**Growth in Manufacturers' Sales vs. Imported Inputs  
2019-2022 (Fiscal Years)**



**What has this meant for manufacturers in Canada and across the Prairies? Different things for different companies, for sure. However, some general trends are clearly discernable even over the past three years.**

manufacturers have increased their share of the Canadian market. However, unlike the rest of Canada, Prairie manufacturers have not reduced their relative dependence on imported materials, components, and equipment. In fact, despite much publicity about reshoring, Prairie manufacturers have become even more dependent on imports from China. They also remain highly dependent on export sales – particularly to the United States.

Are these long-term trends or short-term adjustments to market challenges? Time will tell.

One fact stands out: Access to global markets – for exports as well as for sourcing inputs – is vital to the health of the Prairie manufacturing economy.

*Jayson Myers is CEO of Next Generation Manufacturing Canada – the country's advanced manufacturing supercluster. An award-winning business economist and leading authority on technological change, Myers has counselled Canadian prime ministers and premiers, as well as senior corporate executives and policymakers around the world.*

# THE TIES THAT BIND

*Suppliers and customers working to ensure timely, resilient, and efficient supply chain performance*

By Jeff Baker

**S**upply chains. Often mentioned, often misunderstood, but not often appreciated as much as they should be when working as designed.

Supply chains – sometimes referred to as supply networks due to their interconnected nature – and their constituent suppliers and purchasers are the rivers of materials and goods that flow from, between, and among manufacturing companies and their customers.

When they work efficiently and effectively, it's almost like they're just humming along behind the scenes. When they're not working as expected – or if operations have shifted but the supply chains haven't – that's another story entirely!

## Just-in-time or just-in-case

In a time when the Toyota Motors methods of supply and inventory management have become a 'gold standard' of sort, and just-in-time (JIT) manufacturing has become almost old hat, the COVID-19 pandemic proved that perhaps the pendulum of efficiency, 'leaning out the waste,' consolidation of certain sectors, and offshoring had swung a bit too far.

"What we've seen over the last couple years wasn't the fault of the supply chain," says Richard Reid, Chief Executive Officer of Manitoba & Northern Territories with Supply Chain Canada. "The systems were working exactly as businesses had designed them and as they'd been planned."

"Businesses and their leaders make decisions all the time," Reid says, "and sometimes those decisions aren't so great and there can be real consequences."



PHOTO COURTESY: WEST END RADIATOR



PHOTO COURTESY, SASKPRO INDUSTRIES

Reid related a presentation that he had seen a decade ago warning of potential risks to the manufacturing sector as companies leaned out processes, finding suppliers that were a few cents or a few dollars cheaper, and what sort of impacts global-scale disruption events could have.

"The message was that the longer the supply chain, the more risk you have to be willing to accept," explains Reid, "and that risk is going to be accounted for either in time or price."

"For a system that relies heavily on consistency and predictability, there just wasn't the preparedness for these global events – one of which they'd identified as a global pandemic," says Reid.

And while the continuing COVID-19 pandemic still affects supply chains and manufacturers around the world, other major disruptive forces continue to buffet the systems.

"The storms that hit the West Coast last November (2021) were really – pardon the term – a case of the perfect

storm when it came to supply chains," Reid says. "Everything was hit – ports, rail, roads, marine traffic, production facilities, and the people – so we almost had to start from scratch to get the system moving again."

"Companies are still trying to find the stuff to keep their businesses going, and I think we'll see more decisions being made to re-shore some supplies and shorten the supply chains to reduce the level of risk," explains Reid.

### Suppliers help manufacturers keep their cool

West End Radiator, founded in Winnipeg more than 60 years ago is a company that has shifted its business in a variety of ways over the years, both because of changes in the industry and because of a desire to take more control over their supply chain to better serve their customers.

"When the business first started, West End was one of probably 25 local radiator shops in Winnipeg," explains

Wayne Feeleus, Owner and Director of Sales and Business Development, "and the shop would serve the neighbourhood auto repair garages that used to dot the city. We would pick up and drop off radiators for light trucks and passenger cars, and that was the core of the business."

"Through the years, though, those local garages disappeared, and the company could see the writing on the wall, Feeleus says. "It was in the 1980s when we made the shift to serving the industrial markets – forestry, mining, agriculture, construction, oil and gas – and it was a huge change for us."

Going from light duty automotive radiators to those found in industrial machinery and equipment meant West End Radiator was faced with the task of tooling-up and training-up to tackle the larger, more complex components.

"It's a sizeable market, but there's still only a handful of manufacturers who actually make some of these parts and assemblies," says Feeleus, "so we

**"Taking on the manufacturing tasks meant we took the lead times for our customer's jobs from weeks down to only a few days. It meant we took back control of an important part of our supply system and can better meet our customers' demands."**

would be faced with having to source components from a small pool of potential suppliers."

With a small number of suppliers who were servicing a growing industrial market across North America, customers of radiator shops across the continent – including West End – were facing longer and longer lead times for repairs of copper and brass components, which meant more downtime.

"It didn't matter which shop the customer would call," Feeleus explains, "we were all using the same manufacturers and suppliers, so the timing was almost identical for the jobs."

And that issue of speed and timeliness was a big reason why West End made the leap into manufacturing radiator cores and other parts within its own business.

"It was a steep learning curve, and we were taking a leap" says Feeleus, "but we knew it was going to pay off. Taking on the manufacturing tasks meant we took the lead times for our customer's jobs from weeks down to only a few

days. It meant we took back control of an important part of our supply system and can better meet our customers' demands. It's a huge competitive advantage for us."

With the successful on-boarding of the copper and brass component manufacturing work, West End has recently expanded into aluminum manufacturing to bring a similar level of quality and control to another important segment of the business.

"It's another shift in the market that we had to respond to," Feeleus says. "We could see it coming when we'd attend exhibitions and trade shows and see what the manufacturers were doing with their products. We had to move into this new area."

Today, West End is one of only a handful of manufacturers of aluminum radiator core products and parts in North America. In addition to their original Winnipeg facility, the company has expanded operations to Estevan, Saskatchewan.

Feeleus explains, "we have to keep looking at what's happening out there in the

field. You need to keep scanning and looking where things are going to stay relevant."

"We always look to diversify the business, and we try to ensure that no single customer is going to account for more than about 10 per cent of our total business. It helps us smooth out the ups and downs, and it lets us employ more people in more meaningful ways," says Feeleus.

"Yes, we manufacture," Feeleus says, "but at the heart of it is relationships and building those connections that sets us apart and keeps our customers and suppliers coming back."

"Just this past week, I was blessed to be a part of an online citizenship ceremony for one of our team members, Aly," says Feeleus. "This was a person who literally walked across the Canada-US border, started in an entry-level position, received multiple promotions, and is now one of our accountants.

He's now officially a Canadian citizen who owns a house and is working in a meaningful career. Had we not expanded into manufacturing our own products,



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***"The message was that the longer the supply chain, the more risk you have to be willing to accept, and that risk is going to be accounted for either in time or price."***

we wouldn't have had the opportunity to work with someone like Aly."

"It's extra special to work with people that are motivated to make Canada their new home and learn a new trade."

### **The pro of going with the pros**

In Esterhazy, Saskatchewan, Saskpro Industries – known until their 20th anniversary in early-August as Saskpro Machine Works – has been serving a wide variety of customers in industry sectors including potash mining, construction, agribusiness, and energy.

"We provide a custom machine shop service and custom machining," says Tyler Metz, CEO of Saskpro. "What we're really selling, though, is knowledge and experience, and we use that to help our customers improve their operations."

"A customer can bring in a part or machine that needs work, or it can be an order for something more 'commodity,' and our folks can offer advice and expertise to make those things better or extend the service life of a component," explains Metz. "We want to add value to all our customers."

"We never want to step on the toes of our customers' own in-house metal working shops," Metz says. "We know why some of the work is maintained in-house, and we work to support those operations."

A lot of the work that Saskpro does take on is the custom-type work, whether its on-site at a customer's facility or in the Saskpro shop. The value proposition remains the same, according to Metz.

"We'll never replace those in-house shops or functions, but we can complement them very nicely by helping to improve on current models or getting equipment back up and running faster than might be possible if they only had inside folks doing the work."

Being a partner in their customers' operations and supporting the larger picture has allowed Saskpro to grow as a company and a service provider.

"Companies will sometimes come to us for a one-off sort of project, but we'll look for the opportunities to continue working with them and build the relationship into something more long-term," Metz says. "Sometimes it ends up doing more of the same work, or it might turn into bigger projects over time."

But even as a supplier growing to take on more and different work, Metz says that Saskpro is not an island.

"One of our core values as a company is alliances," explains Metz, "and we believe in building strong relationships with not just our customers, but also our vendors and other businesses in our field. Together, we can offer better solutions with less stress to the customer. That's our main objective."

Asked how those alliances are formed and maintained, Metz says, "it's not just about contracts or formal agreements. It's about ensuring we share values and take a common view to serving the customer – whoever's customer it is."

"We're very clear in our communication with everyone – customers, vendors, alliance partners – and we can set realistic goals and have realistic expectations across the board," Metz says.

"We know what we're great at, and we know who's great at other stuff," Metz explains, "so we're going to invest in training and equipment and people in

those areas and become an even better supplier and partner for our customers."

### **Making it for the team**

For a company that started out as a partnership of a few folks working in the electrical industry servicing clients in pulp & paper, mining, energy, and manufacturing, Team Power Solutions has grown into a supplier of knowledge-driven, innovative solutions for power, automation, and control applications.

"From our start in 2009, we've really worked to fully understand our customers' challenges," says Brook Davis, Business Development and Marketing Manager – and one of the five founding partners – with Team Power Solutions. "We work to offer value-add as a tip-to-tail solutions provider."

"We started in the service space," Davis explains, "and then we added manufacturing, engineering, digital and a digital apps group working in areas including machine learning and vision systems. Every segment complements each other, and it allows for unique and innovative solutions to develop."

Davis says it was an easy decision for the company to move into the manufacturing space.

"Deciding to go down the path was the easy part; the challenges were in the ramping up to actually do the work: finding the space, sourcing the

equipment," says Davis. "It's the same challenges our customers often face!"

With projects and customers across Canada and in the United States, Cayman Islands, and Suriname, Team Power Solutions knows the challenges their customers face are varied and can be complex.

"Our customers were and are looking for equipment in the power, automation, and controls spaces, and they regularly face extraordinarily long lead times," Davis says. "That's where we excel; we can deliver the goods in a very timely fashion, and we can do it with an extremely high level of quality."

As both a supplier to their customers and a buyer from a supply network of their own, Team Power Solutions can see the impact of practices, process, and the people factor throughout the system.

"Across the supply chain, we're all buying and selling, and we're all interconnected, so it makes sense to have a common way of dealing with folks," explains Davis. "We look at both our customers and suppliers through a very similar lens."

Asked what advice he would offer to other manufacturers looking to better serve their customers as a supplier (and customer in their own right), Davis says "engage in the process as early on as possible. That's how everyone involved is going to see the better results."

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# Advancing Advanced Manufacturing: **a look back and ahead**

*Four years in, the future  
for Canadian advanced  
manufacturing has never  
looked brighter*

For the last several years, NGen has been working to scale up and deliver against an ambitious national mandate. With four years passed since the kick-off of the Supercluster program, we have a great opportunity to look back at NGen's progress to date and see what's next for Canada's Global Innovation Clusters.

NGen is dedicated to building world-leading advanced manufacturing capabilities in Canada, for the benefit of Canadians. We aim to strengthen the Canadian economy and create high-value jobs for Canadians while contributing solutions that address some of the world's most pressing challenges in areas like health care, energy and resource management, and environmental sustainability.

NGen works to achieve these objectives by leveraging the research, technology, and industrial strengths of Canada's advanced manufacturing ecosystem. We create new opportunities by combining the capabilities of our country's manufacturers, engineering and technology companies, business services, researchers, academic institutions, innovation centres, business networks, and our high-quality workforce. By enhancing collaboration, NGen aims to improve Canada's industrial innovation performance, connect and strengthen our advanced manufacturing ecosystem, and increase the competitiveness and growth potential of Canada's advanced manufacturing companies.

## A Vibrant Ecosystem

Canada is the home of many technology leaders in advanced manufacturing, world-renown research in the field, and manufacturing companies already active in global supply chains and export markets, but many of the country's advanced manufacturing assets and capabilities are not widely known. Linkages between researchers and technology companies on one hand and manufacturers on the other, are underdeveloped.

Our objective is to build Canada's Global Innovation Cluster for Advanced Manufacturing by expanding and engaging NGen's membership and by networking, supporting, and developing collaborative innovation and commercialization opportunities for members across the ecosystem.

A holistic approach is vital to solve the technical and manufacturing problems facing Canadian industry and tackling many of the bigger economic, social, and environmental challenges confronting Canadians, now and in the future.

Advanced manufacturing is powering many of the solutions that we need, but it takes an ecosystem to achieve success, and to ensure that the opportunities and value of innovation are captured in Canada.

## Collaborating for Scale

Collaboration is at the heart of NGen's strategy. World-leading capabilities in advanced manufacturing cannot be built one company or one organization at a

time. The pace of technological change, business disruption, and emerging market opportunities is simply too fast for any one entity to take all the risks or command all the resources needed to succeed on its own.

Unique manufacturing solutions depend on integrating knowledge, tools, and capabilities that employ a variety of advanced digital, materials, and production technologies and techniques. Deployment, scale-up, and commercialization of those solutions depend on maximizing the potential of shared intellectual property and support from innovation networks, business services, public sector, and investment infrastructures for their success.

Business knowledge and best practices shared across organizations, sectors, and regions are instrumental in enhancing the leadership and management capabilities required to develop and execute new business strategies effectively. Everyone in Canada's advanced manufacturing ecosystem has a stake in developing and gaining access to a highly qualified workforce.

NGen funding provides an important incentive for building collaboration and for strengthening Canada's advanced manufacturing ecosystem. All NGen technology-related projects are expected to make a significant contribution in the form of intellectual property, education and workforce development opportunities, business knowledge, and/or tools and testbeds that can be shared with other NGen members.

**Advanced manufacturing is powering many of the solutions that we need, but it takes an ecosystem to achieve success, and to ensure that the opportunities and value of innovation are captured in Canada.**

NGen also invests in industry-led projects that specifically aim to enhance ecosystem capacity, providing direct support for the development of local innovation clusters, as well as funding for feasibility and pilot projects to help SMEs demonstrate, test, and scale up innovative manufacturing solutions.

## World Leading Projects

NGen co-invests in industry-led collaborative projects that integrate technologies and manufacturing capabilities into transformative solutions or ecosystem supports that improve the competitiveness and growth potential of Canadian manufacturing.

We support the development and adoption of new processes that lead to significant improvements in manufacturing productivity either through significant reductions in costs, materials, inventories, product development, production, and delivery times, defects, physical waste and other non-value-adding activities, through enhancements in agility, flexibility, quality, functionality, reliability, and customization, or by better methods of identifying, predicting, and mitigating market and supply chain risks.

Productivity improvements like these are the basis for building advanced manufacturing capabilities that allow companies to respond rapidly to changing market conditions, pivot to manufacture new products as needed or to take advantage of new business opportunities, compete effectively in global markets, and grow their business internationally. They help to build resilient and secure supply chains in Canada and cement the role of Canadian companies in global supply chains.

Projects that reduce energy and waste because of productivity improvement initiatives have a positive impact on the environment. So, too, do projects that enable the development of biomaterials to replace carbon-intensive

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products and processes, extract and process natural resources in a more environmentally friendly way, or support the development, scale-up, and adoption of new technologies that are critical to addressing the innovation challenges facing the electric vehicle industry and other cleantech sectors that aim to achieve Canada's net-zero economy. NGen has gained international recognition from the United Nations for the impact that one of its projects is having on sustainable development.

NGen fully committed its entire project budget by the end of March 2022. Over the past year we approved \$81.4 million in funding for 75 projects with total projected investments amounting to \$258 million. That brought the total amount of project funding approved by NGen to \$235.9 million allocated among 166 projects with total investments at \$607 million.

### People – Workforce Development

World leading advanced manufacturing capabilities are not built on technology alone. They depend on the development and productive deployment of a highly skilled, diverse, and inclusive workforce.

NGen is working to build Canada's advanced manufacturing workforce capabilities by attracting more young people into the sector, preparing them with the skills they will need for a successful career in advanced manufacturing, helping current workers upskill their technology and digital competencies, assisting more female and

BIPOC workers to find jobs in advanced manufacturing, and encouraging best Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) practices in workforce recruitment and human resource management.

### NGen's workforce development initiatives include:

- Our Careers of the Future Campaign, a multimedia campaign and educational website ([www.careersofthefuture.ca](http://www.careersofthefuture.ca)) aimed at attracting more young people into careers in advanced manufacturing.
- Student outreach initiatives and connections to Work Integrated Learning opportunities with NGen members.
- An Indigenous Manufacturing Entrepreneurship program to educate Indigenous youth about manufacturing and prepare them with the skills required in the sector.
- Support for the Virtual Robotics Training Academy (VRTA), an online platform for students and employees to learn coding and practice with robotics and computer network simulations.
- AMPUP – NGen's open source upskilling program which offers manufacturers easier and lower cost access to modular education and training programs relevant to advanced manufacturing provided by colleges, universities, and private sector training providers across Canada.
- Development of advanced manufacturing micro-credentials

in partnership with colleges and universities across Canada.

### What's Next

Based on indications of interest from our industry consultations and current project pipelines, NGen has identified approximately \$650 million in potential industry investments related to four main streams of activity that will enhance Canada's role as a leading secure and green supplier to the world.

In April 2022, the federal budget allocated an additional \$750 million in funding for the Cluster program. NGen intends to leverage our share to do even more to build world-leading advanced manufacturing capabilities in Canada and position Canada as a leading green supplier to the world. NGen will apply for additional funding from the Global Innovation Cluster program to support strategic projects and ecosystem initiatives in these fields:

- Zero-Emission Vehicles
- Net-Zero Emission Processes and Facilities
- Circular Manufacturing of Materials
- Scale-Up and Adoption of Transformative Manufacturing Solutions

Our network of members, our established systems for efficient and responsible administration of projects and project financing, and our strong pipeline of project opportunities are advantages for NGen to identify and deliver even more funding opportunities from federal and provincial governments in the years to come.

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# Saskatchewan Cleaning Product Manufacturer Finds Formula for Success

EnviroWay vice-president Raj Behari feels intense pride as he looks around the company's Saskatoon manufacturing facility, the centre of operations for the business his family has built over the last 35 years.

"I grew up washing pails in the warehouse, handing out coupons at Market Mall and in high school I would work at flea markets selling laundry powder, so it is a part of me," said Raj Behari.

Raj has been a key part of the EnviroWay's rapid growth. The company started as a one-person operation based in his father Bob Behari's basement and evolved into a major manufacturer and exporter of eco-friendly cleaning products. EnviroWay now has nearly 300 employees and ships its unique products across Canada and abroad to more than 20 countries.

"The reason we have this global reach is the chemistry. Green chemistry is the future," said EnviroWay President and CEO Bob Behari. At the outset of his company's development, Bob saw what he perceived to be a lack of environmentally responsible options in the cleaning product market. He decided to focus on developing and producing safe and sustainable products through the practice of green chemistry, which is a modern approach to designing chemical products and processes based on minimizing or eliminating hazardous substances.

The company's extensive product line features dozens of green items including soaps, laundry detergent and sanitizers. They are all developed and manufactured at the company's Saskatoon facility which houses a fully equipped laboratory.

EnviroWay's longstanding focus on research and development positions it as an innovation leader within and beyond Saskatchewan, said Raj. The company has partnered with several organizations to bring new products to market including the University of Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Research Council (SRC).

"Our collaboration with SRC was really important for the company's foundation," said Raj, referring to a study the company worked on with SRC examining the environmental and financial impact of windshield washer fluid jugs being discarded in landfills. The results of the study helped to inform some of the core principles of the company which include minimizing packaging and offering more concentrated cleaning solutions.

Saskatchewan's robust mining and agriculture sectors have also been a boon for EnviroWay. By-products derived from mining

and farming production are important ingredients in the company's plant-based cleaning products. For example, EnviroWay sanitizers are manufactured using ethanol which comes from wheat extract that is grown and produced in Saskatchewan.

"It is a real benefit to our company to be able to reach out to local producers for the ingredients we need to make our products. It is all available right here," said Raj.

This abundance of local raw materials lowers EnviroWay's production and shipping costs and environmental footprint. Saskatchewan's location in central North America has also been ideal for EnviroWay's transportation needs because it has increased the company's ability to move goods and products within the continent.

EnviroWay's competitive edge depends on its diverse and talented staff, said Raj. "The culture at EnviroWay focuses on employee development. For any company to grow, its people must grow. We have an extremely diverse group at EnviroWay and I think that helps us make better decisions," he said.

The Saskatchewan government's Re-Skill Saskatchewan Training Program has helped the company further develop its employees, while the Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program (SINP) has been instrumental in helping EnviroWay find workers. "SINP has helped us recruit people in technical operations, manufacturing, and sales. Saskatchewan has done a great job of bringing people at different levels to support the local economy," said Raj.

Bob agrees with his son and believes Saskatchewan's competitive business environment has enabled EnviroWay to develop into an innovative force, utilizing cutting edge technology and green chemistry to create better products. "Saskatchewan is the best place to grow your business," said Bob. "The Saskatchewan government recognizes the need to build strong local supply chains and is responsive to the needs of industry."

EnviroWay will soon be launching a new bottling facility in the province, allowing the company to turn damaged packaging into new packaging, further reducing waste. It will be another testament to the success of the family-run company and another accomplishment Raj can be proud of. "What I hope we're able to achieve here is making the world a better place through the way we deal with our team, the way we deal with our customers as well as the technologies that we work with."



## Saskatchewan Leads the Way in Canadian Manufacturing

Saskatchewan has the infrastructure, the workforce and the right incentives to drive manufacturing growth:

- Low corporate income tax rate for manufacturing and processing of 10%.
- Manufacturing and processing exporter hiring tax incentives.
- Qualifying R&D expenses may be eligible for a 10% refundable tax credit for the first \$1 million.
- Saskatchewan manufacturers have access to markets of 270 million people within a two-day drive.

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PHOTO COURTESY: INDIGENOUS BOX

## Thinking inside the box

*Art, science, business, and Indigenous history converge to take on the gifting world*

By Jeff Baker

In the age of Internet commerce, subscription boxes and curated gift boxes have become all the rage. Heck, there's even a genre of YouTube videos garnering millions of views of folks 'unboxing' various subscription boxes and gift packages.

But how do those boxes and their contents come to be? Well, it's through the work of folks like Indigenous Box, an Indigenous woman-led company in Treaty 6 Territory.

### Taking up space, taking on orders

With no shortage of 'stuff' in the world, Mallory Yawnguhe and her company, Indigenous Box, are taking up space for Indigenous manufacturers and makers, bringing their products to consumers across Canada.

"We purchase items from Indigenous businesses across North America, and we buy in large order quantities from both SMEs and fully established companies," explains Yawnguhe.

Since the company's founding in March 2021, over 180 organizations have gifted the curated packs from Indigenous Box to employees, customers, and others.

"The boxes are curated. We put together collections that tell a story that emphasizes and provides an opportunity for folks to learn about who we are as Indigenous people," Yawnguhe says. "Indigenous entrepreneurs are accessing modern forms of commerce, just like everybody else, and we're contributing to a multi-million-dollar Indigenous economy that's expected to triple and more in the next few years."

### Everybody needs a champion

Yawnguhe was already seeking out Indigenous entrepreneurs and Indigenous-led companies to support through her own individual purchasing power, and she discovered just how many incredible products were on the market.

"There were so many great businesses out there, but the awareness in the broader market was lacking," explains Yawng'hwe. "It's one thing to recommend a company or link to their website on social media, but it's another thing entirely to purchase the products."

"We're trying to champion these Indigenous businesses and entrepreneurs, and we're trying to do

that in a sustainable way that actually leads to stronger businesses, stronger communities, and stronger people," Yawng'hwe says. "Every business has a story about wanting to change their community for the better or be role models for folks, and I wanted to help build the value-chain that would keep the businesses going and keep the positive changes coming."

### Filling boxes, opening doors

Word about Indigenous Box and the company's gifting service and subscription boxes has spread so quickly and widely that potential suppliers are now seeking out Yawng'hwe and her team.

"We really work hard to learn about the products and the suppliers, to ensure that everything we buy and put in the boxes is telling a story and complementing the theme or focus of each box," explains Yawng'hwe. "We want to make sure everything is on point."

### Art and science collaborating

A graduate in supply chain management from MacEwan University, Yawng'hwe says there's both an art and a science behind Indigenous Box, the products contained within, and how those products get sourced and packed.

"The numbers have to work, regardless of the contents or the story," says Yawng'hwe. "We're running a very lean team, and we're always looking for ways to improve our processes. We need to know all the details about the box contents - weights, sizes, logistics between our suppliers and us, and more."

"I live and breathe supply chain. It's my jam!" Yawng'hwe says.

For Indigenous Box, figuring out the numbers and processes has been critical in the company's quick trajectory from 'day one' to today, and the team has been relishing the challenge.

"We started just over a year ago in a basement bedroom - about 80 square feet - packing 50 boxes. Today, we're in a warehouse space of about 3,500 square

*"Every business has a story about wanting to change their community for the better or be role models for folks, and I wanted to help build the value-chain that would keep the businesses going and keep the positive changes coming."*



MALLORY YAWNG'HWE / PHOTO COURTESY: INDIGENOUS BOX

**"We started just over a year ago in a basement bedroom - about 80 square feet - packing 50 boxes. Today, we're in a warehouse space of about 3,500 square feet, packing over 25,000 boxes a month, and sending those boxes right across Canada."**

feet, packing over 25,000 boxes a month, and sending those boxes right across Canada," Yawng'hwe explains.

### A rocket ride from the start

"We didn't think we'd scale this fast, but we saw the opportunity, and we jumped on it," says Yawng'hwe. "Our path started to change from what we initially planned, so we made adjustments on the backend to support the scalability - moving into the warehouse, bringing on additional staff, and identifying very quickly where we needed support."

"The subscription box side is limited to Canada right now," says Yawng'hwe, "and we've got subscribers in every province and territory. It's about 15 per cent of the business, while the corporate gifting service accounts for about 85 per cent of the business."

"We're always trying to find the right balance for everything we do, including how far we want to stretch ourselves," Yawng'hwe explains. "We want to make

sure we're handling the demand right now, but we also want to make sure that we're constantly moving to be ready for the next step. The evaluating never ends!"

### Rooted in family

For Yawng'hwe, the essence of Indigenous Box and how she sees the company progressing in the future comes back to words shared by her Uncle Archie, a leader in the Saddle Lake Cree Nation community, when she first started dancing powwow: "Learn to look after your own people first."

Indigenous Box takes those words from Uncle Archie to heart in everything the company does, Yawng'hwe explains.

"We're building the value chains for Indigenous companies, and we want to make sure the businesses and our relationships are sustainable. That's why we're focused primarily on Canada right now," says Yawng'hwe. "We get messages from the States asking when we'll be expanding everywhere there, but

we know we need to first get things right at home."

### Back to the future

For Yawng'hwe, Indigenous Box and the company's practices and aims hearken back to the history of Indigenous Peoples, but that realization came after she started her university career.

"I wanted to study something different, so I went into supply chain at university. I had been working for Toyota and learning lean systems and everything involved there, and I originally thought supply chain was something so foreign to me," Yawng'hwe says. "But what I learned was that Indigenous people are the architects of this vast trading network that spanned the entire continent prior to colonization."

"We're just reclaiming the space, and we're showing to the rest of the world that we're equal players in the market and the game. We can create and build amazing things, and we're already participating in doing good things."

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# Women entrepreneurs face financing challenges

Report highlights issues and barriers facing women seeking business financing

By Lindsay Stewart Glor

**“T**hey wouldn't lend to someone like me."

That was among the moving comments from a recent national survey of more than 1,000 women entrepreneurs in Canada, and it was endorsed by 40 per cent of respondents, across all intersectional groups.

With funding from the department of Women and Gender Equality, the Women's Enterprise Organizations of Canada (WEOC) conducted the study (release date October 2022) to learn more about women entrepreneur's access to business loans, venture capital, and angel investment.

One of the most consequential decisions faced by entrepreneurs is whether to rely on their own funds or look to external lenders to finance business growth. The research revealed that while two-thirds of respondents intend to grow their businesses within the next three years, just 50 per cent had applied for financing in the past three years.

Interestingly, more than 65 per cent of those respondents who had applied for funding (including loans, lines of credit, increased credit card limits and mortgages) from banks did receive full or partial approval.

With a 65 per cent success rate, why are more women entrepreneurs not then seeking funding through banks? For many respondents of our study, the issues lie with the application process itself, including uncertainty around the process, available products, and general eligibility. Respondents mentioned a lack of transparency about what information is required and how an application is assessed, as well as an undue amount of time required to complete the process.

The good news is that the process can be changed. Banks and other lenders can address the barriers head on by reassessing and redesigning their processes. And women entrepreneurs can seek support from other organizations, including WEOC, which is now delivering the WEOC National Loan Program with the help of expert Loan Fund Partners across the country.

WEOC's Loan Fund Partners are committed to following gender-specific principles, have the desire to work with women entrepreneurs at every business stage, and consistently deliver top quality business supports including business advising, training, and loan aftercare.

## Accessing a loan through the WEOC National Loan Program:

Loans up to \$50,000 are available to women entrepreneurs across the country who are Canadian citizens or Permanent Residents. The business can be a sole proprietorship, partnership, corporation, or co-operative. The applicant must be at least 19 years of age and living in Canada. A business plan and two years of financial projections are required.

During the first phase of implementation, Loan Fund Partners are found in the following regions:

- British Columbia/We-BC
- Alberta/Alberta Women Entrepreneurs
- Saskatchewan/Women Entrepreneurs Saskatchewan
- Manitoba/Women's Enterprise Centre of Manitoba

- Ontario/PARO Centre for Women's Enterprise
- Newfoundland and Labrador/Newfoundland and Labrador Organization of Women Entrepreneurs

Other regions are being added, but there is also the option to tap into these resources:

- Evol (Québec)
- Northumberland CFDC
- National Aboriginal Capital Corporation
- Coralus

More information, along with an FAQ for entrepreneurs, can be found at [weoc.ca/loan-program](http://weoc.ca/loan-program)



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# 5

## with PrairiesCan

### QUESTIONS

#### Who is PrairiesCan?

PrairiesCan is the federal regional development agency that helps diversify the economy across Canada's Prairies. PrairiesCan leads in building a strong, competitive Canadian economy by supporting business, innovation and community economic development in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. With a singular focus on Prairie interests, PrairiesCan acts to support and grow regional economies and communities with the unique needs and nuances of the Prairie Provinces built into everything they do.

While the PrairiesCan name is new, the agency has over 30 years of experience in economic development. In 2021, the Government of Canada acted to recognize the specific needs of the Prairies and British Columbia by creating two new stand-alone agencies out of Western Economic Diversification Canada. PrairiesCan is building on that legacy with a new

vision to be a leader in creating a more diversified economy for Prairies communities and supporting strong, competitive, and innovative businesses.

#### What does PrairiesCan do?

PrairiesCan supports economic growth and diversification in the Prairie Provinces. The agency advances the interests of our region's national economic policy, programs, and projects through four key roles:

- as **investor** by creating jobs and growth through strategic investments and targeted initiatives;
- as **convenor** by connecting economic actors to support collaboration and growth;
- as **advisor** by informing economic decision-making and advocating for Prairie interests; and,

- as **pathfinder** by helping people navigate federal economic programs and services.

#### How does PrairiesCan work with industry?

PrairiesCan's approach is to work alongside you, supporting your needs. When the pandemic threatened small and medium enterprises, PrairiesCan pivoted to provide direct support so they could pay bills and keep employees on the payroll. As Canadians now navigate the road to recovery, PrairiesCan maintains relationships with clients and partners, such as the Western Canada Business Service Network, to deliver initiatives that help businesses scale-up and support regional innovation and economic growth.

PrairiesCan core programs, such as the Business Scale-up Program (BSP) and the Regional Innovation Ecosystems (RIE), are strategic ways of supporting high-growth businesses that are seeking to improve productivity scale-up and commercialize technology by offering interest-free, repayable funding to eligible incorporated businesses.

#### What are some examples of PrairiesCan's experience with the manufacturing sector?

PrairiesCan is no stranger to the manufacturing sector. Strategic investments have made a difference for a range of companies across the Prairies, including:

- LyteHorse Labs Inc. – Regina, Saskatchewan
  - Through the Jobs and Growth Fund, received funding to commence and scale-up production of its electric all-terrain utility vehicle. Funding supported LyteHorse to add almost 40 new employees and sell over 1,300 units over the length of the project, bringing \$28 million in revenue to the province by March 2024.
- Diemo Machine Works Inc. in Okno, Manitoba
  - Through the BSP program received funds to support the integration of advanced technologies like fibre laser cutting equipment and a robotic welding cell, making it possible for Diemo to expand manufacturing capacity and improve competitiveness in the machinery manufacturing market. This expansion has meant that Diemo has been able to take on more and bigger jobs, resulting in significant export and job growth.
- ECLabs, in Edmonton, Alberta
  - Funds from the BSP program helped to launch and scale up manufacturing capacity. In addition, funds through the Women Entrepreneurship Strategy, PrairiesCan also invested to support certification and access to export markets. A leader in personal care products manufacturing, ECLabs has become one of only a few certified cosmetics and formulation-manufacturing firms in North America.

In partnership with industry, PrairiesCan strives to create the right conditions for businesses to succeed and for people from our communities to find the types of jobs they can count on to support their families.

#### How can a manufacturer work with PrairiesCan?

If you are wondering about working with PrairiesCan, here are some questions you should consider:

- Are you a high growth business that is scaling up and producing innovative goods, services or technologies?
- Are you all about inclusivity and building a stronger Canada?
- Do you plan to create jobs and support the long-term growth of your community?
- Do you need help to accelerate your growth goals and become more productive?

With the world facing many new challenges as we continue to recover from the pandemic, businesses, manufacturers, and communities across the Prairies can benefit from some support to help them become more competitive, thrive, grow and contribute to Canada's economic growth. In addition, PrairiesCan could help offer your firm the support it needs to innovate and grow.

PrairiesCan is easy to find, with a local presence in each of the Prairie Provinces, and more locations opening this fall and winter. For information on your local office and other available business support, please visit [prairiescan.gc.ca](http://prairiescan.gc.ca) or call 1.888.338.9378. ↗

# In conversation with... Dr David Sauchyn

**Climate change is impacting our lives and businesses right now. Going forward, what can we expect and what can we do to make a difference in the face of the challenge?**

**H**uman-driven climate change is real. It's happening now, and it's making extreme weather events more frequent and widespread.

According to the Insurance Brokers of Canada's 2019 Weather Facts, of the 20 most damaging weather events in Canada since 1983, 13 occurred in the Prairies. Of the top 10 events from the list, six have happened in the Prairies since 2010. And those six events account for nearly \$8 billion in insurable losses (in 2018 dollars).

But that's just scratching the surface of the impact that climate change-driven extreme weather events are having on the region. The costs of the insurable losses are tremendous, but the impacts tend to be limited in scope, both geographically and economically.

It's drought that is the costliest event in terms of loss and damage, as the socio-economic impacts are widespread and reach throughout the economy. In 2002, crop losses alone were in the billions of dollars, meaning negative farm income in Saskatchewan and zero farm income in Alberta.

So, what does climate change mean for the manufacturing sector and the larger Prairie economy, and what can be done to address the challenges posed?

Prairie Manufacturer's Editor, Jeff Baker, spoke with Dr. David Sauchyn, Director of the Prairie Adaptation Research Collaborative (PARC) at the University of Regina, and Partner Lead for PARC's participation in ClimateWest.

*This interview took place July 14, 2022 and has been edited for length and clarity.*

**Jeff Baker (JB): What is the Prairie Adaptation Research Collaborative (PARC), and how is it connected to ClimateWest?**

**Dr David Sauchyn (DS):** Established in 2000, PARC is a university-based research centre at the University of Regina, where we do climate change research. Over the last 22 years, we've discovered there's huge demand for information on climate change.

A few years ago, we were approached by Environment and Climate Change Canada, who asked if PARC would help create an organization on the Prairies that would make our research more accessible. We'd been doing hundreds and hundreds of projects generating climate-related information, but we didn't really have the capacity to make it available to a wider audience, so ClimateWest is the organization doing that on our behalf.

It's a federal-provincial initiative, co-funded by the provincial and federal governments, and there's a board of directors with representatives of the three Prairie provinces.

**JB: Before our chat, I was reading through the Prairies chapter of the Canada in a Changing Climate: Regional Perspectives Report - the chapter of which you were a Collaborating Lead Author - and it was an eye-opening read. I looked at the list of weather-related events and their corresponding insurable losses, and I noticed the Prairies seem to be over-represented on the list and the losses keep getting bigger over time.**

**So, why are the Prairies so susceptible to weather- and climate-related events?**

**DS:** Well, it's part because of the nature of our climate on the Prairies - what we call continental climates. These occur in the centre of a continent and tend to be more variable because the weather comes from the oceans - the water in the system comes from the oceans - and you can't get any further away from the oceans than in the middle of the Prairies or similar

regions like the middle parts of Russia (including Siberia), China, and Kazakhstan.

In coastal regions, because they're closer to large bodies of water that act like buffers, the less variable the climate and weather. The waters tend to protect you from extremes because water will absorb heat when it's hot and release it when it's cold. On the Prairies, we don't have big bodies of water like the oceans or the Great Lakes, so we have an extremely variable climate.

The nature of our industries in this region also means that we're very sensitive to weather events and climate change. Agriculture, food processing, and forestry - just to name a few are very susceptible to climate extremes, and the connectivity between sectors and regions means the effects aren't limited to just those industries.

**JB: What should folks on the Prairies - and by extension their businesses - be expecting in the coming years and decades because of the changing climate?**

**DS:** Well, you hear quite a bit about global warming and global climate change, and that's what you'll see and hear about most in the newspapers and online. But there's also regional climate change that is part of the larger picture, and it's not affecting all locales the same way.

We need to think in terms of what to expect here, and to begin with, Canada is warming two times faster than the global

**Once you've made the decision to explore the impacts, take action, and even disclose your company's or industry's greenhouse gas emissions, you'll have to seek data, information, and advice. That's why PARC and ClimateWest and others like us exist.**

rate, and the Prairies and the North are warming three to four times faster than the global rate.

We also need to know that most of the warming is in winter, not summer. Yes, we're getting more hot days in the summers, but the increases are more pronounced and accelerated in the winters. It means the winters just aren't as cold as they used to be, and while we'll still get periods of -40, it will be fewer of them and they won't be the long spells of super cold temperatures that the old timers might talk about.

Now, I know... who on the Prairies is going to complain about a shorter or warmer winter, but there are going to be adverse effects.

**JB: I know some of these effects include an expanding territory for the Mountain Pine Beetle and the devastation it can have in the forests, and the shortened season for the ice roads to our northern and remote communities. What other adverse effects and impacts might we be seeing?**

**DS:** You named two of the big ones. Another big one is that there are a lot of things - pests, pathogens and diseases, and invasive species - that historically just don't survive a week or two of -30. However, if we're only getting a day or two of that deep cold, then we're going to find those invasive species and pathogens becoming more common in the region because they're able to survive a warmer winter.

The other aspect is that on the Prairies, we depend so much on snowfall - in the mountains to the west and on the plains. Snow is great because it sticks around. It's a natural storage of water, it melts in the spring, and fills our lakes, rivers, and reservoirs.

As winters warm, we'll see more rain - as opposed to snow - and rain doesn't stick around long, rather it runs off quite

quickly. It will be a radical shift in the hydrological cycle for the region, where now we see about a 50/50 split between rain and snow over the year.

**JB: So, if we're going to see a shift to more rain instead of snow over the year, I would guess that could have some impact on how we live and work, won't it?**

**DS:** The impacts will vary between locations and groups of people, but I expect that one of the major impacts is going to be in the disruption of supply chains and transportation.

Just look at the immense flooding in BC last winter and the fires in the summer. The most immediate impact was cutting the Prairies off from the most important marine ports we have for both imports and exports. The effects were felt across the country, and it led to supply chain issues that are still being felt almost a year later.

There's a distinction between what we call slow-onset or incremental changes or rises in temperatures and rainfall, as opposed to these sudden and catastrophic events like floods due to storms. While perfectly natural, these sudden events in a warmer climate are becoming more intense and more frequent.

**JB: Is there a way to plan for the potential impacts of these climate change-related events without necessarily, for lack of a better term, going overboard?**

**DS:** That's a good question. I mean, if you had unlimited resources, you would just over-engineer and over-plan, but we need to be efficient and responsible.

There are two extremes here. One, those people who argue there's a lot of uncertainty - that it's not certain the Earth is warming - therefore we shouldn't waste all the money. The other is people sort of catastrophizing and saying we're already too late.

It's only recently there's been real recognition that the climate is definitely warming and we're having trouble slowing the change, therefore we need to adapt to a new climate. Adaptation is the plans and activities to minimize the impact of climate change; it's preparing and learning to cope and respond so you're not as adversely affected.

Both mitigation and adaptation represent reducing our reliance on fossil

The reasonable approach is somewhere in between the two. You have to practice due diligence, not necessarily go overboard, and you have to be aware of what's coming and plan accordingly. The place to start is what's called 'no regrets' or 'little regrets' - good ideas and actions to take whether or not you think the climate is warming.

For example, if you're in an area prone to flooding - be it on a floodplain or somewhere else - you should probably have some sort of physical protection for your facility or proper flood insurance in place. If the scientists are correct, and these floods will occur more often, then it was a good idea to invest in those things - what we call adaptations. You want to start with activities, infrastructure, or plans that are just good business practices.

**JB: You mentioned adaptation there, and I also in the report that word used alongside the term 'mitigation.' Tell me about the difference between the two and how each plays a role in addressing climate change.**

**DS:** Mitigation is reducing our impact on the climate, mostly by reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and the combustion of fossil fuels that produces carbon dioxide. A lot of the mitigation effort is looking for alternative sources of energy and reducing our greenhouse gas emissions. We can also plant trees which take gases out of the air, we have artificial ways of taking CO<sub>2</sub> out of the atmosphere, and we can convert combustion engines to electric motors.

Most, but not all, of these activities and actions are technical solutions to slow the rate of climate change, and that's where much of the effort has been placed to date.

It's only recently there's been real recognition that the climate is definitely warming and we're having trouble slowing the change, therefore we need to adapt to a new climate. Adaptation is the plans and activities to minimize the impact of climate change; it's preparing and learning to cope and respond so you're not as adversely affected.

Both mitigation and adaptation represent reducing our reliance on fossil

fuels and simultaneously reducing our vulnerability to climate change.

**JB: What would you say to someone - a business leader, for example - who plays the 'What about...' card when talking climate change and the need to address it... you know, the folks who say 'we emit almost nothing and are expected to make changes, but the larger companies and countries aren't doing their share?'**

**DS:** Well, it's a perfectly fine argument, because after all in Saskatchewan, for example, we produce a tiny fraction of the world's greenhouse gases, although on a per capita basis, we're very near the top of the list. People need to heat their homes and businesses, and we burn coal to produce electricity, and that's just normal life, right?

However, the counter arguments are strong. We - not just in Saskatchewan, but across the Prairies and Canada - have the financial resources. We have the intellectual resources. We have the technology to do something about it. So, let's show some leadership - let's show India and China how it's done and sell them the technology, because eventually they'll have to come on board and they can purchase technology developed in Canada.

Even though we don't produce a lot of the world's greenhouse gases, companies here could be at a competitive disadvantage when the rest of the world wakes up and says, 'Oh, we're going to do something about it in a big way.' It's part of why the oil sands are taking up more environmental initiatives and climate change-related work. The industry recognizes they have a terrible reputation and countries will no longer buy Canadian oil unless something is done about it.

**JB: Climate change seems like an area where collaboration is critical between all sorts of groups, including industry, academia, government, NGOs, etc. How can a group of manufacturers or industry leaders come together to do something about this and start down the path of positive change?**

**DS:** Great question! Our organization, PARC, is a collaborative, so even though we're university-based and we do

research, we only do research if there are other partners involved. All our research has that external partner or end user who can act on what we learn.

There are models for what you're suggesting. For example, insurance companies have already come together to form a collaborative, and companies in the financial sector have formed international and national associations there for the greening of the planet.

Just about every industry has already done something of what you're suggesting, and it just takes some will, and it takes some leadership to come together and agree to act. Maybe you're part of an association - local, provincial, regional, or national - and you just have to form a committee or board tasked with addressing the issue.

Once you've made the decision to explore the impacts, take action, and even disclose your company's or industry's greenhouse gas emissions, you'll have to seek data, information, and advice. That's why PARC and ClimateWest and others like us exist.

**JB: Do you have hope for the future when it comes to climate change?**

**DS:** Yes, I think I do. It depends on the day, and there are some days when I don't feel so hopeful, but I get to work with so many young people here at the university and that gets my hope up on those days when it's flagging.

It's the Millennials, the Gen Z's, and younger who are coming into their own, and they've got lots of energy and good ideas that will help make a difference. I read about some of the start-ups and innovative solutions that are being created, and it sounds so exciting!

We have the capacity - financial and intellectual - to deal with this problem, and we have the resources, especially in Canada. As a country, we'll be okay - we'll find our way through this - but it's other much more vulnerable countries and regions that might not survive any more rise in sea levels, and we must help them. Maybe it's helping with financial resources, but it might come down to accommodating the coming climate refugees.

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# Aria's Disney Dream Update - A letter from a Dream Parent



Aria has always been our little princess - we kind of always knew Disney would be her Dream Come True. Aria is non-verbal because of her illness, so she communicates with sounds, smiles, blinks, and other reactions. When we were helping her choose her Dream, we went over things she likes with her. Disney always got the most reaction. When we would talk about Disney princesses, she couldn't stop smiling! We knew Disney was her top choice.

With the help of our amazing team of doctors, we were able to make sure Aria could safely travel. The doctors weren't exactly sure how air travel would go, and there were a lot of medications to organize and special strollers and wheelchairs to prepare. With the support of The Dream Factory, our medical team, and the wonderful folks at the Give Kids the World Village, everything was ready for our trip and when we arrived in Florida!

When we arrived, we knew our week was going to be busy - there was so much stuff we could do! And I mean, it almost got a little overwhelming at some points. You're like, where do I go? Do I want to do this today? Oh my gosh, do I want to do Disney today? Or do I want to stay at The Give Kids the World Village because there's so much to do - like going to the all-day ice cream parlour (that was Brie's

favourite!), the pool, and so much more! Basically, you could have spent the whole week just in the Village doing all the things that they had planned. It was hard to decide where you wanted to go because there were so many options!

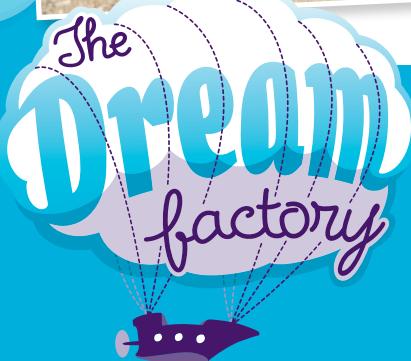
On the days we ventured to Disney, we were amazed by how accessible it was for kids like Aria. So many rides were wheelchair accessible and for many of the other rides, I was able to hold Aria so we could enjoy the attractions as a family. The 'Frozen' ride was one of Aria's favourites, and our special passes allowed us to go right to the front of the lines. The whole family had an absolute blast!

Aria is also a huge fan of Peppa Pig, and between The Dream Factory and Give Kids the World, we were able to get a van rental and venture off to a Peppa Pig theme park close by! Aria was in her element. She was so happy. The Peppa Pig park actually just opened before we arrived, Aria's Dream trip came at such a perfect time for her!

It was so hard to leave, because Disney really is magical. When we're at home, there are constantly different problems that come up with Aria's health. But at Disney, everyone was just so happy. Aria did amazing - there was like never a time where we're like 'oh man like here comes an effect of rare disease'. She truly did perfect - both at the park and during our flights. There really is power in a Dream Come True.

We would have never been able to give her - and our whole family - these amazing memories without you, Give Kids the World, and our doctors. Aria's Dream Trip is something we will never forget.

— Shaleena, Aria's mom



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Manitoba fighting a life-threatening illness.



# Manage the risks, reap the rewards

*Risk is a part of business, but if managed, doesn't need to keep you awake at night*

By Ed Marchak

**A**s a business leader, one of your key responsibilities is identifying, assessing, and mitigating risks. Climate change and its impacts are a risk to businesses around the world, and you need to ensure you can manage or treat the risks to reduce them to acceptable levels that will allow your operations and activities to continue.

Risk can be defined as the possibility of suffering harm, loss, injury, or danger. It's impossible to completely eliminate all risk, but most can be managed or reduced to acceptable levels through proper assessment and planning.

## Types of risk

There are commonly five categories of risks that can be identified for your business. Examples of each are included below:

- Safety and security
  - Property crime – burglary or theft of office equipment, materials, or finished product
  - Illness and injury – COVID-19 or a natural disaster
  - Vandalism – broken windows, graffiti, or damaged vehicles, equipment, or product
  - Harassment – unwanted or annoying words (e.g., racial slurs or offensive jokes) or actions (e.g., unwanted advances), including threats and demands
- Financial
  - Fraud – creating fake invoices
  - Theft – taking supplies or equipment from the facility or customer's site
  - Diversion of funds – using funds from a project account to pay for non-project purchases
  - Financial mismanagement – not paying your bills or writing organizational cheques to yourself
- Legal
  - Contractual – Violation of the terms and conditions of contracts
  - Litigation – the risk of being sued by an employee (e.g., for discrimination or workplace harassment) or a customer (e.g. product liability)
- Compliance
  - Workplace health and safety – non-compliance OH&S standards
  - Environmental impact – improper disposal of toxic or harmful materials
  - Process risks – not adhering to machinery maintenance requirements

### Digital

- Denial of service attacks – your IT system is locked down until you pay a "ransom"
- System intrusion – unauthorized access to your IT system
- Data breaches – unauthorized access to confidential data, like personnel files, contract details, or customer information
- Compromise of sensitive business or personal data – like credit card numbers or bank account details

With the possible exception of digital risk, environmental- or climate-related risk can be a part of the other four categories.

This can appear as a lack of compliance with environmental standards or employees working in increasingly hazardous environments, which can lead to legal risks for the company and its officers and significant financial risk.

## Managing risk

Many risk management efforts involve a mix of the following treatment methods:

- **Avoid** the risk by modifying operations or eliminating certain activities or locations altogether
- **Mitigate** the risk through plans, procedures, and resources to lower the chance it will occur or reduce the impact if it does occur
- **Transfer** or share the risk with another organization by using contract indemnification language or through risk financing (insurance)
- **Accept** the risk, typically after some level of mitigation or other treatment has occurred

### Risk Identification

The first step in effective risk management is risk identification. Consider these key questions to help identify potential risks:

- **Who could be harmed?** This could include staff, customers, community members or other businesses.
- **What might be the impact?** Determine the impact on those immediately involved and how it will impact the ability to continue your business operations.
- **How might the risk occur?** Some risks are immediately apparent, while others may be discovered after the initial occurrence.

Risk	Who/What is impacted	Rating	Mitigation Measures	Revised Rating

An effective way to assess risks and plan mitigation measures is to use a risk treatment table, shown above.

To complete the Risk Treatment Table, ask and answer the following questions:

- What is the potential risk? Describe the risk clearly as a source of potential harm.
- Who (or what) is impacted if this risk occurs (staff, customers, organizations, individuals)?
- Determine the risk rating. This rating is based on the combination of two factors:
  - What is the likelihood the risk could occur?
  - What is the impact if the risk should occur?
- What are measures or actions to prevent or mitigate the risk?
- What is the revised rating of the risk if the mitigation measures are taken?

### Risk Likelihood

There are five descriptions you can use to assess the likelihood of a risk occurring:

- Almost Certain – the risk occurs often or on a regular basis
- Likely – the risk occurs periodically with reoccurrence
- Possible – the risk has occurred but not often or without reoccurrence
- Unlikely – the risk has not yet occurred or may only occur under extraordinary circumstances
- Rare – the risk could conceivably occur based on a change in conditions

### Risk Impact

There are five descriptions we can use to assess the impact of the risk:

- Severe – the potential impact (financial, legal, or environmental) on the organization is extremely high
- Major – the potential impact on the organization is significant
- Moderate – the potential impact on the organization is high
- Minor – the potential impact on the organization is modest
- Insignificant – the potential impact on the organization is low

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Once you have determined the risk rating (or risk level), you can assess the acceptability of the risk and recommended actions to mitigate the risk.

- Low Risk is considered 'Acceptable.' Based on this, no additional risk mitigation may be necessary.
- Medium Risk is considered 'Tolerable.' Based on this, interim risk mitigation measures may be implemented while long-term measures are being established.
- High Risk is considered 'Not acceptable' or 'Tolerated,' but only under specific conditions. Based on this, focus on reducing the high-risk level to at least a medium risk level before proceeding.

### Mitigation measures

In many cases the risks can be mitigated through plans, procedures, and resources. Mitigation modifies the risk by lowering the likelihood that the risk will occur and/or reducing the impact or consequence if it does occur.

Consider these questions when exploring effective mitigation measures:

- Are the resources in place and/or available to mitigate the risk?
- Does the mitigation measure substantially impact the ability to conduct your work?
- Are staff trained to make the mitigation measure effective?

Consider these key questions to help determine mitigation measures:

- Can the organization financially afford to take this measure?
- Is there time to implement the measure?
- Does the mitigation measure introduce additional risk?

Once mitigation measures are determined, reassess the risk rating to evaluate how the likelihood of occurrence or impact has been reduced.

### Summary

Managing risk is about:

- Identifying the risk
- Identifying who is impacted if the risk occurs
- Determining the risk rating
- Determining mitigation measures
- Reassessing the risk rating
- Implementing mitigation strategies

Following these steps will allow you to proactively manage potential risks, rather than reacting to them if or when they occur.

*Ed Marchak is an Edmonton-based independent management consultant who has been working with and advising clients for over 35 years. Ed works with both public and private sector clients in strategic planning, operational effectiveness, performance measurement and evaluation, and project management. Ed holds a Lean Six Sigma Green Belt and has worked with manufacturers large and small on productivity improvement and technology implementation.*

Likelihood	Impact / Consequences				
	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Severe
Almost Certain	Medium Risk	Medium Risk	High Risk	High Risk	High Risk
Likely	Medium Risk	Medium Risk	Medium Risk	High Risk	High Risk
Possible	Low Risk	Medium Risk	Medium Risk	Medium Risk	High Risk
Unlikely	Low Risk	Medium Risk	Medium Risk	Medium Risk	Medium Risk
Rare	Low Risk	Low Risk	Low Risk	Medium Risk	Medium Risk

## EMBRACING EXCELLENCE LEAN CONFERENCE CANADA

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# Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters celebrates success following Lean Conference

By Riley Dunn

**T**his June, Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters (CME) hosted their Embracing Excellence Lean Conference where they welcomed attendees from across Canada. The much-anticipated conference only comes around every three years in Winnipeg, and regularly

attracts upwards of 1000 people from Victoria to St John's to the RBC Convention Centre.

Lean manufacturing, made popular by the Toyota Production System in the 20th century, is a methodology based on limiting cycle times and defining value from the customer's point of

view. The main principles include value stream mapping, problem solving, a flow/pull system and continuously seeking improvement in a people-first environment. The results? Improved efficiency, waste reduction and increased productivity. But most importantly, an engaged and aligned workforce.



ALL PHOTOS COURTESY: STEPHANIE CHAPUT



Richard Sheridan, co-founder, CEO and "Chief Storyteller" of Menlo Inc. delivers keynote address.



Conference delegates attended site tours across Winnipeg to see Lean best practices in action.

### Keynotes, workshops and site tours, oh my!

Part of what makes this conference a can't-miss event is the meticulously planned program. "When we think about our delegates' experience here, we really do try to bring in something for everyone," says CME Manitoba's Director of Operations, Carrie Schroeder. "We organize pre-conference learning opportunities, busses that take delegates to tour facilities across the city and beyond, and plan four different presentation streams so anyone - from operations to HR to frontline supervisors and non-manufacturers - can take something away."

The four-day conference featured an inspiring lineup of keynote speakers, most notably, Richard Sheridan, co-founder, CEO and "Chief Storyteller" of Menlo Inc., and Darril Wilburn,

Senior Partner at Honsha. Delegates participated in hands-on workshops and presentations that dive deep into topics like continuous improvement, leadership, people and culture, plus several special interest sessions to tackle new movements in industry, like advanced technology and sustainability.

The included plant tours were a popular draw; attendees loaded up on buses to see Lean best practices in action at facilities across the city who are leading the industry in their continuous improvement efforts. The spaces filled up on day one.

Above all, attendees regularly credit the culture and networking as the catalyst to their success. "The networking part - when you're talking to people at lunch or in between breaks, you understand that the issues you're having are not just yours... I think that's really the power of coming to an event like this," one attendee said. It's not by accident, either. In fact, a lot of planning goes toward creating a space to build connections and to help new ideas and new conversations emerge.

All the hard work seems to pay off. Several companies across Canada make the trip to Winnipeg every time the conference comes around - including Genoa Design International, a manufacturing company based in Newfoundland & Labrador.

Jim Gosse, Functional Manager at Genoa had this to say about their reason for returning year after year: "I'm sending up people from my team who are in positions where they can influence.



Attendees enjoyed networking breaks and meals - the perfect place for new ideas and partnerships to emerge.



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They can influence up and they can also influence down, and we're going to get a huge benefit from that." Now, Genoa regularly sends a delegation of 10+ employees to join the conference and credits a continuous improvement belief system in part for the company's success since 2012.

### Building a culture of continuous improvement in manufacturing and beyond

Building a culture where continuous improvement thrives is all about empowering managers and leaders to let their employees be the experts they were hired to be. When good ideas are free to become reality, employees have far more reason to believe their contributions make a difference and take ownership – and pride – in their work.

Said Heather Chalmers, President and CEO of GE Canada, "For employees who are curious about learning more and are



Behind the scenes shot of CME staff.

invested in their development, this is a perfect opportunity. It will always, always pay off when you give them the tools to do that." For this reason, the conference has a duty to not only focus on skill development for the workplace, but also focus on individual attendee energy. Lean intrinsically focuses on people before profit. When you engage people first, the benefits will follow.

For the team at CME, this means renewed drive to continually aim higher. Planning a national conference while a pandemic still raged posed its challenges – navigating (quite literally) speakers from across borders was just one of them – but stories like these are sure to spur the motivation to push through and make space for some much-needed memories.

### Thank you to our wonderful staff and supporters

As anyone in event planning knows – it takes a lot of work to get the wonderful

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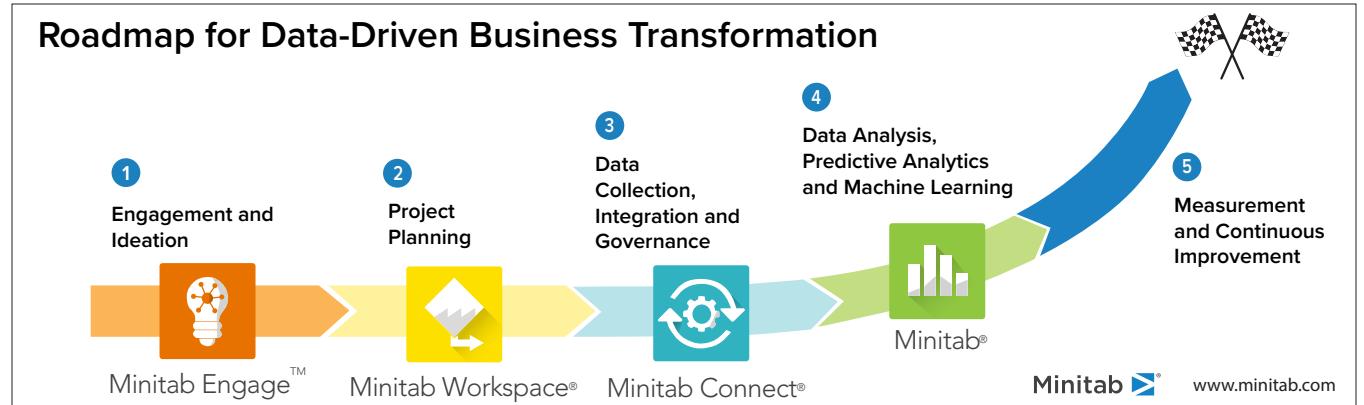
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ideas off the ground and into reality. With that being said, we would like to extend our utmost gratitude to all of those involved to make this event a success:

To our indefatigable event chair, Ian Marshall, and to our program team and manager, whose attention to detail goes beyond what anyone could imagine.

To our CME staff and volunteers who worked furiously behind the scenes to keep each day on track.

To our presenters – thank you for taking the time to share your experience and expertise and deliver so much value.

To the RBC Convention Centre and staff for addressing anything – and we do mean anything! – that came up.

To our sponsors and exhibitors who this conference would not have been the same without. 



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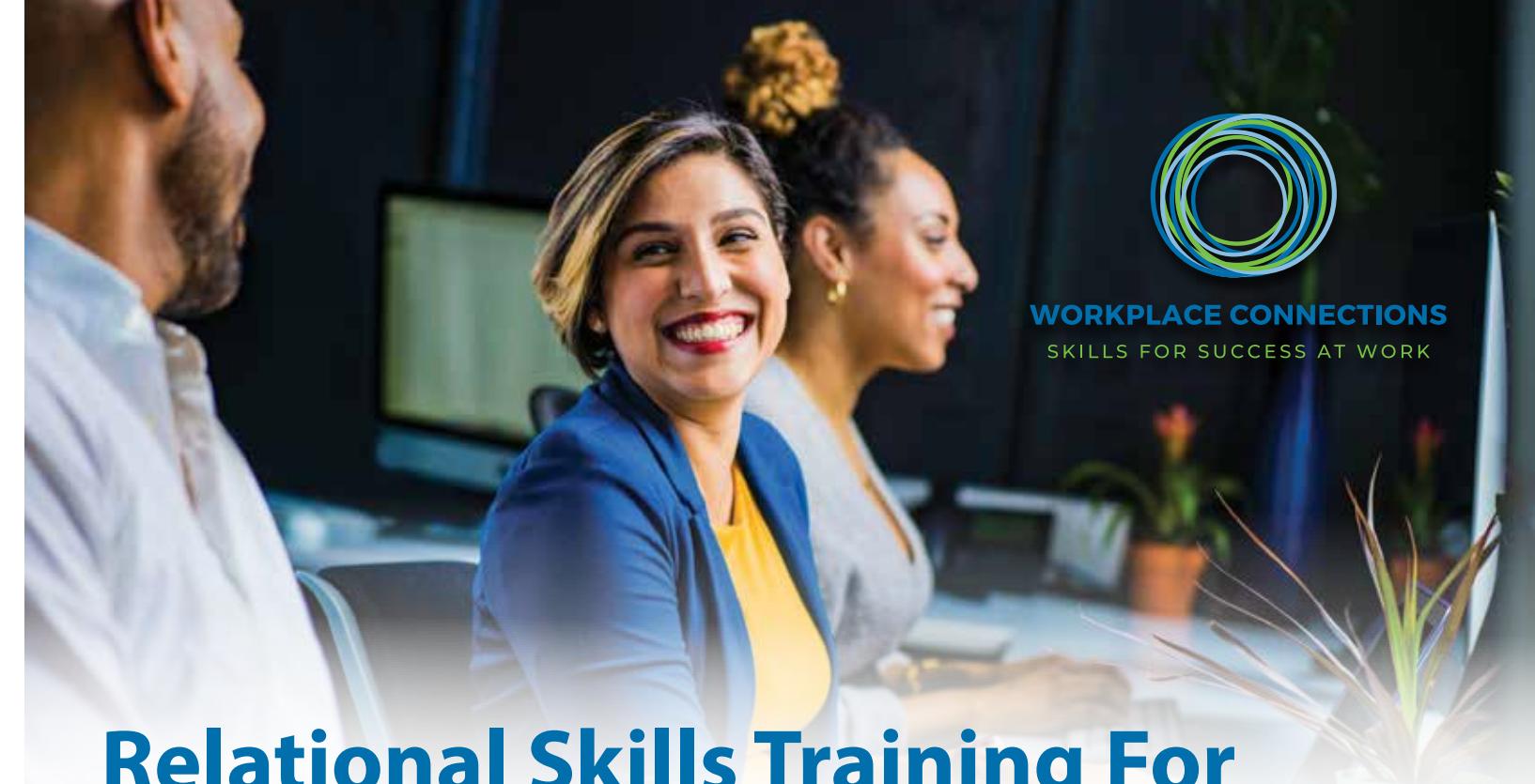
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