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Magazine

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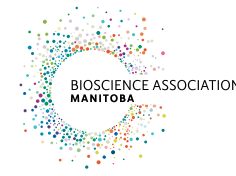
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# Meet Colten



Dear *Prairie Manufacturer* Reader,

My name is Darrell Poirier. On November 14, 2014, my wife Melissa and I, along with our son Liam were very excited to welcome our newest addition to our family, Colten. Or as we call him, Coco.

As Melissa was snuggling our beautiful new baby, she noticed a small scab on the back of his head. Little did we know, this would be the start of his battle with the ever so stubborn and rare Langerhans Cell Histiocytosis (LCH).

At three months old, he was off to CancerCare for the first of many visits. They continued to monitor him closely with ultrasounds and x-rays. Time went by, and his skin cleared up. We were out of the woods — or so we thought.

At roughly one year old, we learned that Colten now had two LCH tumours in his head. One on the side of his skull, and one in his eye socket. The disease was no longer just in his skin and, for our family, this was terrifying. It's been three years, and Colten has since undergone many, many treatments.

It was during one of those treatments that we first learned about The Dream Factory. Excited as could be, we contacted them immediately, and WOW. Words cannot explain what they have meant to us! Their team took us under their wings and made us feel like family.

Colten loves Paw Patrol, zoo animals, and roller coasters. It was no surprise that his dream was to visit Disney World to meet the characters, ride the coasters, and see all of the animals! To learn that Colten's dream was going to come true after such a difficult couple of years was more than we ever could have asked for.

During Colten's dream we spent seven magical days at the Disney Parks, and celebrated his third birthday at the happiest place on Earth!

But for me, the most special moment was going swimming. As simple as it sounds, it's something that we have never been able to do because of Colten's treatments. Right before we left, Colten's central line was removed, which allowed him to be completely submerged for the first time in his life! He had so much fun splashing away. As a Dad, I couldn't be prouder to see him swimming after everything he's been through.

No words can describe what it feels like to have your child become sick, and no words can describe how amazing it feels to receive support like we did from The Dream Factory. They helped us forget about the tough times and remember what it feels like to be together as a family, and just let our kids be kids.

Thanks to The Dream Factory, we have photo albums full of huge smiles and a four year old boy that loves to share how he visited Mickey Mouse at his castle in the sky. For our entire family, this was nothing short of a dream come true.

**Please – consider supporting The Dream Factory today to make more dreams come true for kids like Colten. Kids that live right here in our community, are fighting some incredibly tough battles, and could benefit from the joy of a dream come true.**



# Our Industry. Our Community. Our Dream Kids.

*Prairie Manufacturer Magazine* is thrilled to be supporting The Dream Factory in their mission to bring dreams to life for kids right here in Manitoba battling life-threatening illnesses — but we need your help!

We are asking our wonderful manufacturing community to join us in our effort to make more dreams come true for our Dream Kids in Manitoba. Please consider lending your support however you can: Sponsor a dream, host an event, or just get involved!

We will be reaching out with more information about how you can get involved in the months to come. Together, we will bring dreams to life!

*Ronda Landygo*

Ronda Landygo, Publisher

*Prairie*  
**Manufacturer**

## A Message from The Dream Factory:

Since 1983, The Dream Factory (formerly the Rainbow Society) has brought over 700 dreams to life for kids in Manitoba battling life-threatening illnesses.

From our very first dream (a Wayne Gretzky meet and greet!), we have asked our kids to DREAM BIG. Since then, we have been busy working on princess makeovers, incredible trips around the world, shopping sprees, and so much more. We are so lucky to have been part of some truly magical moments.

Today, we are working with more families than ever and need your help to ensure we can keep bringing dreams to life for kids like Colten, who celebrated his third birthday in one of the world's most magical places.

## Thank you for making dreams come true!

For more information or to get involved, visit [www.thedreamfactory.ca](http://www.thedreamfactory.ca) or call Andrew at (204) 989-4010.





In this issue



Looking back on 50 years, and what lies ahead

There are few business leaders as synonymous with Manitoba as Peter Nygård. The clothing icon shares some of the most valuable lessons he's learned through five decades of meticulous growth, and where he plans to go from here.



Are you creating certainty in an uncertain world of trade?

Disruptions in global trade are underscoring the importance of supply chain management, customs compliance, and border risk mitigation. Many executives are even re-engineering business processes to stay ahead of the competition.



Manitoba, manufactured

With a population of only 1.34 million, spread across a landmass more than two-and-a-half times the size of the entire United Kingdom, Manitoba does not exactly fit the mold of a global manufacturing hotbed. Yet, here we are — thriving.



Welcome to the age of disruption

From cars made out of food to the latest in 'smart factory' technology, the future of manufacturing in Manitoba isn't on the horizon — it's already here. Laurel Johanson speaks with some of the province's foremost experts leading the charge.



Manitoba's path to safety success

Industry-based safety programs, or IBSPs, are making a big difference on Manitoba's safety performance. Between 2013 and 2017, sectors with established IBSPs saw loss-time injuries drop 15.3 per cent — and manufacturing by 25 per cent.



My manufacturing story, three generations in the making

CME Manitoba Operations Manager Carrie Schroeder recounts how she became immersed in manufacturing, and harkens back to the innovative, entrepreneurial spirit first instilled by her grandmother.

Next issue

**Spotlight:** The business of agriculture has changed more in the past 30 years than perhaps any other Western Canadian industry. Farms are larger, production processes are more scientific and intense, and equipment is almost unrecognizable by comparison. This revolution has been the underpinning of Prairie manufacturing.

**Special feature:** Indigenous Peoples play a pivotal role in the economic and social health of Western Canada. And manufacturing is quickly asserting itself as the common ground to chart a new path toward reconciliation.

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**Publisher**  
Ronda Landygo  
ronda@prairiemanufacturer.ca  
877.880.3392

**Editor**  
Derek Lothian  
editor@prairiemanufacturer.ca  
306.380.3765

*Special thank you to our editorial advisory committee.*

**Creative Director**  
Dana Jensen

**Sales**  
info@prairiemanufacturer.ca

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# A century of lessons learned or forgotten?

By Ron Koslowsky

One-hundred years ago, in 1919, Winnipeg was home to the infamous General Strike, which would change the future of the city, the province, and, arguably, the entire country. It was also the same year as the formation of Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters (CME) — or Canadian Manufacturers Association, as it was known at the time. It is likely that strike was a catalyst.

Opinions on why events unfolded in that fateful year have varied, but we do know that after a few weeks of a broad-based work stoppage, including by many non-unionized workers, violence erupted, and several strikers were killed in a clash with the Royal North-West Mounted Police.

In Canada's vigorous expansion after 1897, the West was in the vanguard, and Winnipeg was its capital with a bright future. But the Great War that disproportionately affected Western Canadians and the opening of the Panama Canal led to tough times and depressed wages. Another worry was that the communist revolution in then-Soviet Union would encourage similar uprisings around the world. Finally, many business leaders treated their employees poorly, resulting in the rise of unions, worker dissent, and, ultimately, the strike.

A lot has changed in the last 100 years.

Communism, though appealing in theory in its claim to represent workers, has, in fact, led to lower economic benefits and, ironically, less freedom for workers wherever it has been implemented. Business leaders generally now hold a positive and respectful view of employees, inviting participation in decision-making.

Safety and positive workplace culture now form a core part of company philosophy. And, customers in a social media world demand a high standard of corporate practice.

Government has also changed markedly from a century ago, having shifted from a relatively small mandate and reach to an all-powerful level of involvement, with a hand in virtually every aspect of society through taxation, funding, ownership, or regulation. The explosion of wealth for everyone over the past 200 years due to freedoms and limited government is now threatened by government manipulation undermining the freedom of individuals, the marketplace, and the future prosperity of its citizens.

Other changes from a century ago include advanced digital manufacturing technologies and the related need for a new approach to skills development, increased wealth and ownership by the average citizen of company shares through their investments, and an increasing tendency to discount the need for facts and truth in favour of ideologies and stories when making decisions.

So, what can we learn from our history and how can we protect our future growth and standard of living for our descendants? What strategic issues need to be addressed?

We need to take a hard look at the appropriate role of government and scale back significant areas of involvement that are an unnecessary drag on the economy.

The Government of Canada now owns a pipeline (paid for by your taxes and mine) but cannot or won't likely develop it, dealing a major blow to our economy. Further, through the imposition

of additional taxes such as the carbon tax, the government continues to increase the amount of money it pulls from its citizens (and the private wealth-creating sector), all the while continuing to spend even more than it already collects, incurring higher future costs.

Where government is genuinely needed, services should be customer-focused, and supported by competitive service standards and KPIs. Outcomes, not inputs, are the critical success measures. Public policies, regulations, and programs where there is a demonstrated need should be certain, smart, clear, simple, and efficiently delivered with regular reviews to validate ongoing need and effectiveness. Vested interests of any group should not be allowed to dictate public policy or to use government power to limit competition or entrepreneurial innovation.

One of the loudest alarm bells these days is personal debt. The level of personal debt is simply far too high — and an often-overlooked cause is the level of taxation. When all factored in, taxes account for almost half of a family's annual budget — more than \$50,000 on average, and by far the most expensive line item. Yet, there is little discussion about how taxes contribute to financial distress. Even as Canadians have become wealthier in terms of gross income, tax growth has far surpassed inflation and productivity growth. That means household spending has slowly trended proportionally toward taxes and away from housing, food, and clothing.

People must educate themselves on sound economic and policy principles to better evaluate the promises or performance of political leaders. The

foundational positive values of a free market, profits, private ownership, choice for citizens, competition, and a healthy connection between risk and reward gave us the incredible wealth we have today.

But, with these values under attack, we risk falling back to lower standards of living. People are inundated with simplistic calls for income equality and more taxation of the rich without understanding the negative consequences for all citizens. Free people are not equal, and equal people are not free. Political equality is essential; however, economic equality is only achievable by making everyone poor.

The planet faces *not* a population bomb, but a population bust. In roughly three decades, the global population will begin to decline, according to Darrell Bricker and John Ibbitson in their new book, *Empty Planet: The Shock of Global Population Decline*. A dwindling population

will also lead to massive economic upheaval, with fewer people available each year to buy houses and cars and baby strollers, and fewer taxpayers available to support the healthcare needs of an aging population and to service massive government debt.

In a world where postmodernism rejects a scientific approach to truth and objectivity, and where a social justice theory views class conflicts based on classes of people (gender, race, religion, etc.), honest and balanced discussions and decisions are increasingly difficult to hold. People are becoming more polarized — and more extreme — in their views and their imposition on others.

And, we have not yet even touched upon the impact of these issues on the future of manufacturing in our region. But, rest assured, these changes will

impact us — and CME, as the business association for manufacturers, will be here to support you in your efforts to grow.

History is clear: We cannot become complacent. We ignore lessons learned at our peril. *✍*



Ron Koslowsky is the vice president of Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters in Manitoba.

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# Looking back on 50 years, and what lies ahead

By Peter Nygård

When I look back over the last five decades, I wonder how I got here. Where did this all start? I surely never imagined I would have all these beautiful buildings and my name in lights in Times Square.

What I *did* want was to do the best job and rise to the top. Everything was, and still is, a competition with me — in sports or anything, the 'medal' is the ultimate goal.

This company got built because we were dedicated to being the best. We paid very close attention to every detail and didn't waste our time reaching for over-optimistic goals. We did anything we could to get the job done, and we did it just a little bit better every single day.

It also included vision. But *vision* without *execution* is just hallucination. Anyone can have vision — the difference really is execution, and the big difference for our company is that we have been executing to translate our vision into reality.

My focus has always been about learning how to *make* money, how to *keep* money, how to *spend* money, but — most importantly — how to *share* money. So, a lot of our recent planning has been about rebuilding and re-establishing our Winnipeg

Inkster Office as a true landmark, like Toronto, New York, and Los Angeles. Inkster's Gallery 50 and Park 50 are visual symbols of our commitment to returning back home and reinvesting into Inkster, Winnipeg, Manitoba, and Canada. The symbolism of incorporating the 13' x 15' shed from Deloraine (that our family lived in) as a permanent exhibit at Inkster really highlights how a person can rise from rags to riches.

A large contributor to my success is *sisu* — the part of my Finnish culture meaning guts and perseverance. But it is extremely important to note that I have not done it alone. The most critical agenda for any leader is to build a strong team.

When I look at my success, it was because I was able to build such a communicative, united, and harmonious team, consisting of associates who had complete trust in each other. Our company has always had the team mentality. There are no lone wolves here — it doesn't work.

In your own business, make sure your employees function as a cohesive unit, that they like each other, that they share the same goals and values, and that they are loyal to each other. We have always developed our 'A





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teams’ and have then built people around those teams no matter what their level. For 50 years, I’ve been continuously encouraging teamwork. Every summer, I invite my associates to Falcon Summit Centre at Falcon Lake, Manitoba. We use the time together to enjoy each other’s company. We talk about business, we play sports and cards and sing, we dive off cliffs into the lake, we laugh and cry together, and we bond as friends.

One of the biggest areas of success — that is shared by every single successful person I have studied, from Steve Jobs to Bill Gates) is the ability to correct your mistakes and concentrate fully on your projects through execution and onto completion. This has been a huge part of my pursuit, and it’s significant. We are continuing to focus on training as an integral part of our culture and our best people are our teachers.

I sometimes get criticized personally for never being satisfied — “He’s never satisfied. Why doesn’t he recognize the good things we do?” Bill Gates once made a very interesting comment: “It’s good to focus on successes, but it’s far more important to focus on your lessons of failure.” Every time there’s a problem, I go into the *why*, and I always focus on the lessons of failure. Anyone can do it well. We can always do it *better*. Eliminating mistakes is such a critically important issue, and if you study the characteristics of all the great leaders, they say the same thing: *Learn from your mistakes!*

That emphasis has been perhaps more noticeable in our operations because of how meticulous we are when it comes to attention to detail. The quality of our products has been consistently our claim to fame. Not only do we produce the best product out there, but we have the right manufacturing, and the right marketing.

Our business, though, is in transition. We’ve done a lot of work this past year reprogramming and refocusing ourselves. I’ve been intensely committed to this building initiative. The world has changed dramatically, as it should, and therefore our business has changed dramatically along with it.

But, in change, there is always new opportunity. It’s our mission to embrace that change and envision that opportunity. For example, embrace social media — it’s the new marketing tool. The biggest growth area is through the web, so our plan is to do half our business there. Bricks and mortar business is tough. You saw it with the fall of department stores worldwide. They were 75 per cent of the retail business but have shrunk down to 20 or 25 per cent. Thankfully, brand loyalty is an area we can count on. We’ve always had it. So, we need to convert our customer into a different type of shopper.

At our 50th Anniversary Gala, I was deeply honoured to receive such heartfelt tributes from the greatest medical minds in the world, recognizing me as a forerunner for my research work in regenerative medicine. Dr. Neil Riordan, founder and chairman of Medistem Panama Inc., said, “[Peter] is one of the most extraordinary human beings on the planet. He has really put his heart and soul and money behind regenerative medicine to figure out what the best ways are for people to retain health and get over health challenges to hopefully live a longer, healthier life. First and foremost, Peter is a world leader in regenerative medicine and is working on things that are going to change the world.” Meanwhile, Dr. Evan Snyder, director of the Institute for Stem Cell Biology and Regenerative Medicine at Stanford University said, “As a scientist physician and stem cell biologist, I regard you and your work as one of the leading lights in our field. Your vision, commitment, creativity, and energy is inspiring. The world is recognizing what a great contribution you have made to our field.”

And now I am bringing that acquired knowledge and expertise to all my associates. It’s really no different than what I have been doing for the last 50 years. I have always provided our associates with the healthiest environments to work in. I have seen sweatshops first-hand, and I knew I would never subject anybody to those kinds of conditions. I was a world leader in ensuring the working conditions for our sewing machine operators were the best, by having the first air-conditioned facilities. I was a pioneer in banning smoking from our facilities, and I want my employees to eat healthy food, so I made sure we offer it. There are no dangerous carbs or sugar in our buildings. I want them to lead a healthy lifestyle, so I provided exercise facilities, and all these health initiatives were part of the visionary aspect of my life.

This year of celebration hasn’t just been about ‘Peter Nygård’s success.’ This celebration is about my associates’ success. I am so fortunate to have been surrounded by the most valuable people in my life — people who have really made these 50 years of unbelievable success and this incredible company possible.

Because *that* is what this company is — it’s about people. My associates really and truly are my family. ♡

*Peter Nygård is the founder and chairman of Winnipeg-based Nygård International — one of Canada’s leading women’s clothing brands.*



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# Are you creating certainty in an uncertain world of trade?

By Rick Riess

Several years ago, the state of international trade was in a very different place. Still powering back from the financial crisis of 2007-09, the United States was leading the way in forging a new generation of ambitious trade deals — one with the European Union and another involving nearly a dozen Pacific Rim countries. The World Trade Organization (WTO) was likewise working to eliminate trade barriers, both through a sweeping global trade facilitation agreement designed to help cut through the bureaucratic ‘red tape’ associated with moving goods across borders, as well as the biggest update to a worldwide deal on free trade in information technology goods in nearly 20 years.

The direction of things, however, suddenly changed in 2016 when, fuelled by a widespread backlash against globalization and an upsurge in populism, the British electorate voted to exit the E.U., coupled with a change in U.S. trade priorities. Among other effects, these two pivotal events have assisted to create the greatest level of uncertainty for traders in living memory.

With a new administration in Washington, the U.S. embarked on an ‘America First’ trade policy that included pulling out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership, renegotiating the North American Free Trade Agreement, and initiating a range of protectionist trade enforcement actions. These have had the effect of escalating tariffs and the cost

of doing business with many of its major trading partners, including Canada, China, Mexico, and the E.U.

While the outcome of *Brexit* still remains to be seen, many experts see a growing likelihood that Britain will ‘crash out’ of the E.U. block without a deal, thereby putting a complex web of international supply chains into turmoil. At the same time, the role and utility of the WTO has become more challenging to help create fair trade amongst nations.

The disruption caused by this abrupt change of course in global trade is underscoring the importance of supply chain management, customs compliance, and border risk management to senior manufacturing

and exporting executives. These executives attempt to make sense of the situation, mitigate potential liability, and create certainties for their businesses in an increasingly uncertain world.

Identifying opportunities to minimize impacts and potentially re-engineer your processes is critical as you review the call-to-action below to turn risk into opportunity.

## How to create more certainty in your supply chain

The first step in coming to grips with the ‘new normal’ of trade uncertainty involves making a comprehensive assessment of your existing situation. Companies need to work through different scenarios, modelling the impacts of tariffs when sourcing products, planning future moves, and seeking ways to mitigate their effects.

Look at whether dutiable values can be reduced, considering options for duty deferral, such as utilizing free trade zones (often referred to as FTZs) or bonded warehouses. Make sure to take advantage of all available methods of reclaiming any of the duty paid

***“The disruption caused by this abrupt change of course in global trade is underscoring the importance of supply chain management, customs compliance, and border risk management to senior manufacturing and exporting executives.”***

through various refund and drawback mechanisms. Petition for exemptions or relief — whether on an individual basis, or as part of a broader industry-wide effort, through participation in your relevant trade associations.

Review closely the tariff classifications and origins of all your imported goods and collaborate with trading partners — not just to determine the current impact of duties being paid, but also to help identify areas of potential exposure to future surtaxes. Request data reports from your Certified Trade Compliance Specialist, which can be an invaluable resource in this regard, and usually can be customized in various ways or imported in digital form for use in your own spreadsheet or enterprise application. When applicable, even consider the possibility of ‘tariff

engineering’ — the legitimate process of designing or structuring products to achieve more favourable duty treatment when imported. Tariff engineering has a long history and is used by many high-performing companies to gain a competitive advantage.

Armed with this information, you will be better positioned to evaluate different scenarios for sourcing products deliberately in order to avoid punitive import tariffs. Rather than take a ‘wait and see’ approach, you can be proactive in creating certainty in your supply chain. ☞

*Rick Riess is the president and CEO of Winnipeg-based GHY International. Established in 1901, the company is widely hailed as a pioneer in customs brokering and cross-border trade solutions.*





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# Culture first, tools second

By Brent Timmerman

I've watched organizations and teams try their best to incorporate lean into their fabric and face many frustrations as they struggle to make lean an integral part of how they operate.

Sometimes I wonder if these organizations really know why they want to adopt lean. Is it to improve efficiency? Is it to save money? Is it because they want to 'be like Toyota?' Before an organization starts a lean journey, the leaders need to understand their rationale, and they need to recognize that the wrong rationale will cause problems.

We recognize the Toyota Production System as the origin of many of today's lean practices; however, the last word, *system*, is crucial. That is how Toyota views lean — as a *system* for leading, managing, and operating every day. Toyota doesn't see lean as a collection of tools, but as an integrated ecosystem they have developed through learning over many decades of experience.

This ecosystem has many attributes — some that are visible to outsiders, and many that are hard to see. Many people that visit and observe Toyota see the visible attributes and think that if they copy those pieces, they can become a lean organization like Toyota.

In many cases where companies are striving to adopt lean, they are trying to do so through the use of lean tools: *Kaizen* events, huddle boards, A3 reports, key performance indicators (KPIs), standard work, and so on. Yet, these companies often find they struggle to sustain the benefits of their improvements. They just can't seem to obtain the full performance advantages they envisioned when they selected lean as the next thing to try on for size.

Do we really believe that pushing the tools will force the culture shift that is desired? We lose the 'system' aspect of the ecosystem when we adopt selective pieces and expect to receive the benefits of the whole.

Perhaps the word *system* confuses many people in North America, because we think that we can buy systems off the shelf, like software. But what if instead of the word *system*, we substitute the word *culture*?

In North America, we appreciate that changing culture is not easy. Culture takes years to develop and years to change. Culture speaks to the concept of a complete ecosystem, the necessity for everything to 'fit together' in a complementary way. Culture produces patterns of repeatable and predictable behaviour within a group of people. Culture shapes the responses of a group of people to a problem or a crisis. Culture guides the performance and efforts of a group of people when they work together. Maybe, just maybe, we need to instead focus on shifting the culture of our people, and have the lean tools available to support innovation as the culture shift happens.

But who shapes the culture of an organization? I believe that the staff of an organization don't have nearly as much influence on the culture as the leadership. The leaders of a company demonstrate what behaviours are rewarded and celebrated, and the leaders show what behaviours are unacceptable. With this type of control, the leaders really shape the culture of the organization. As Simon Sinek says in his book, *Leaders Eat Last: Why Some Teams Pull Together and Others Don't*, "So goes the leadership, so goes the culture."

When an organization is beginning a lean cultural transformation, I've found the first thing it needs is to strengthen trust between the leadership and the staff. The leaders need to get their people to believe that things are going to be different now, because it is very likely some leaders aren't currently modeling all the behaviours required to support a lean management culture.



**"When an organization is beginning a lean cultural transformation, I've found the first thing it needs is to strengthen trust between the leadership and the staff. The leaders need to get their people to believe that things are going to be different now, because it is very likely some leaders aren't currently modeling all the behaviours required to support a lean management culture."**

In the Department of Families, within the Government of Manitoba, we have taken a longer view of our transformation towards an innovative culture, and we have developed a training program intended to support the cultural shift within our leadership. This training program is entitled *Leadership Principles for Effective Innovation*, and takes place over a six-week period, with one half-day session per week. As the developer of this program, I currently facilitate each session, where we spend more than three hours talking as a group of leaders about topics that really matter to our desired culture shift, such as:

- Demonstrating respect for people at all times, while also actively correcting misconduct in the workplace;
- The importance of 'modeling the way' — of having our actions match our words and principles every day;
- Eliminating competition within and between our teams;
- The best ways to provide individualized and regular feedback to our people;
- Identifying our strategic direction, our 'true north,' and how we lead our people towards embracing KPIs as informative guides for innovation;
- Diagnosing the root cause of the problem when one of our people makes a mistake, and the importance of the leader recognizing their own possible role in performance problems; and
- The role of the leader as a coach, rather than the lead decision-maker or answer-giver.

But most importantly, we discuss the importance of reflection, of *hansei*, for leaders to truly be able to challenge their own biases, beliefs, and mistakes, with the goal of being productively self-critical. If we, as leaders, cannot reflect ourselves, we cannot lead our teams in *hansei* exercises after an innovation.

In the Department of Families, we do use the 'typical' tools of lean, but we prefer to introduce these tools after the leaders are in a better position to understand how they can behave to support the use of these tools in a truly innovative team culture.

Our focus is on culture first, and tools second. Our journey will take longer with this approach, but we believe that this is the difference between a fad diet and a true lifestyle change — the lifestyle change being the one that will stick around to become a part of who we truly are. ☞

*Brent Timmerman is the chief innovation officer with the Government of Manitoba's Department of Families. A former private sector leader and COO of Manitoba Housing, Timmerman is championing the deployment of a lean transformation strategy within the department that focuses on leadership and employee engagement. He is an accredited professional engineer, and is certified as both a Project Management Professional (PMP) and Lean Black Belt.*



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# It's lonely at the top

By John Graham

It's often said 'it's lonely at the top.' Studies indicate up to 40 per cent of all employees claim they feel lonely at work, and none more so than the individuals responsible for leading our manufacturing companies.

Most people believe life at the top of an organization is relatively glamorous and easy. Senior business leaders, however, must keep their focus on all aspects of their companies. They often feel they have few, if any, trusted advisors. Larger organizations may have a board of directors, from whom regular input, feedback, and mentoring is obtained. But what about smaller manufacturers? Who can help them? What can they do? Where do they go?

Today's marketplace is extremely competitive. In most cases, Canadian manufacturers must export abroad to find new customer markets and grow their businesses. This requirement to be competitive on the *global* stage means manufacturers must strive to continually learn more about the industry, customers, and competition; constantly invest in and improve their day-to-day operations; attract, train, and grow the very best people; and, maintain the highest level of business flexibility to adapt to the constantly changing landscape in which they compete.

In addition to facing increased competition, manufacturers must adapt to changes in government legislation related to environment and sustainability, labour, trade agreements, and financial reporting. Changing social trends also affect a company's ability to attract and retain talent in a work environment, where employees can and will vote with their feet. To do all of this, and maintain profit margins, requires a never-ending focus on the key business aspects needed to ensure their success.

Most importantly, manufacturers need a fully engaged workforce, which uses shared decision-making, and remains flexible and agile in the face of any change thrust upon them. People want to know they work for

innovative, ethical companies doing work to benefit consumers *and* society. In addition, a keen focus is required to enable the culture needed to maintain this workforce. The evolution of continuous improvement thinking and lean manufacturing methods has helped, but this maniacal focus must

be ingrained within every employee. Sustainability is very important. Without the people's understanding and shared commitment to continual improvement, an organization runs the risk of falling and staying behind competitors.

Many senior executives such as owners, presidents, CEOs,



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***"All successful business leaders are learners. Lifelong learning in our rapidly changing, technology-driven business world means leaders must stay current on the latest trends and market influences."***

entrepreneurs, and general managers realize they may need some help. They may lack some of the necessary expertise and they may have little or no access to like-minded business leaders willing to help them.

Having access to peer groups can assist with the discussion of business and manufacturing issues. Unless senior leaders have one or more people on whom they can rely for candid feedback on strategy, direction, and next steps, they essentially act alone. If the manufacturer has a board of directors or advisors, then much better discussion and debate will occur. But, without that formal organizational support, with whom does the executive discuss new ideas, business strategies, key employee moves, and other related business issues?

Many senior leaders may not have trusted relationships or business colleagues with whom they can share important business and personal issues. Many leaders will seek outside assistance through family members, other business leaders, mentors, coaches, and consultants, each providing its own set of benefits and possible concerns. Another effective method of addressing both the executive's business isolation and their personal sense of loneliness is to join a peer group of similar executives with whom to share their experiences and challenges.

Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters (CME) created several peer groups of non-competing senior manufacturing executives to serve that exact need. Dubbed *Manufacturers'*

*Executive Councils, or MECs, these groups of 8-10 senior manufacturing leaders gather monthly to interact with like-minded leaders, discuss manufacturing-related business issues, and obtain peer-mentoring support.*


Trust and confidentiality are paramount. Through non-disclosure agreements, the privacy and confidentiality of all MEC discussions is maintained. Ensuring a safe MEC meeting environment for all members to speak openly and honestly is critical in creating value for all. CME provides an experienced business executive to facilitate the discussion (I am one of those facilitators). Initially, new MEC members may be cautious; but, after listening to the business discussions from existing MEC members, they become comfortable and are then willing to open up.

This 'rawness' builds a willingness to share business problems. It follows a 'from my experience' response approach. As members share their business experiences and perspectives, the requesting MEC member often may find a suitable path to their issue resolution. In addition, members revisit the requester's issue at future meetings to see what happened or, if required, to offer additional feedback.

No one is obligated to follow any specific advice. The group member feedback helps the requesting member realize others are interested in their mutual success, and knows they are trying to help. Members understand it is in their best interest to help, as next month it may be *their* issue which calls for member feedback. Thus, a

mature, professional, experience-based body of knowledge is shared, and the participating executive appreciates the peer-mentoring.

All successful business leaders are learners. Lifelong learning in our rapidly changing, technology-driven business world means leaders must stay current on the latest trends and market influences. The MEC represents a community of leader learners, who often point each other to relevant reference materials, books and articles, external resources, market developments, and financial information. This framework, coupled with the flexibility to dive deeper into any relevant topic that month, provides both formal learning opportunities and ad-hoc business insights for all.

If joining a MEC is of interest to you, you owe it to yourself to learn more. Participating with a dynamic cohort of successful manufacturing business leaders has proven many things: No businessperson is an island; many minds are better than one; and, we are capable of learning something new each day. If a MEC is right for you, please reach out to CME for more information and to get your name on a MEC waiting list. 

*John Graham is an experienced manufacturing executive, with an extensive background in leadership, management, and strategic planning. He currently facilitates Manufacturers' Executive Councils, as well as the Leadership Development Program, for Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters in Manitoba.*

# Preparing today for the customer of tomorrow

Disrupt or be disrupted. Digitally driven transformations and changes in our markets are reshaping business models and erasing industry boundaries. In the Transformative Age, the only market certainty is change. Those who want to succeed will embrace it.

Manufacturers shouldn't fear disruption. Instead, they should look at it as an opportunity to innovate, evolve and thrive. Learn how you can disrupt yourself as well as the competition, collaborate to compete, make purpose-led transformations and seize the upside of disruption. No one can predict the future exactly, but if you can imagine it, you can help shape it.

So how can the manufacturing industry in Manitoba and across Canada prepare for the world of tomorrow?

**Imagine.** You need to understand what your future customer looks like, including their pain points and needs, so you can design products that are fit for purpose and effectively scale your business to meet this need. To properly meet the needs of your future customers, you need to have the right talent to keep up.

**Collaborate.** The manufacturing industry will need to access a wider pool of talent across job functions that might not even exist yet. You should be assessing your current skills shortage,

identifying future skill opportunities and where you can source the right skills to help you innovate the business and achieve a competitive advantage. A competitor may soon become a partner to take advantage of a new revenue pool, meaning agility is key to being able to transform your business.

**Transform.** As you look to expand your operations and take on local and global markets, you need to make sure your business model and technology platform are fit for the journey. This will involve prioritizing investments for years to come, which will mean getting buy-in from the C-suite and the board from the outset.

"Manitoba's manufacturers need to be agile to adapt to a rapidly changing environment that will be driven by evolving consumer demands. Understanding your customer — and sometimes your customer's customer — is a critical success factor in this dynamic environment." Joe Healey, Winnipeg Managing Partner, EY.

At EY, we help manufacturing companies make better decisions to grow and succeed. To find out what's possible in the Transformative Age, visit us at [ey.com/ca/private](http://ey.com/ca/private).



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# Manitoba, manufactured

*Meet 15 local companies helping  
to redefine modern manufacturing*

By Martin Cash

**W**ith a population of only 1.34 million people, spread across a landmass more than two-and-a-half times the size of the entire United Kingdom, Manitoba does not exactly fit the mold of a global manufacturing hotbed.

Sure, the province has coastal access — albeit through the isolated Port of Churchill, which is in a deep freeze eight months of the year — and its capital, Winnipeg, is a short, 80-minute drive to one of the busiest commercial U.S. border crossings west of the Ambassador Bridge, but its isolation in the geographic centre of Canada, coupled with the fact it has no major resource development sector to serve as a catalyst, has stacked the odds against it.

Yet, Manitoba endures. Home to one of the most diversified regional economies in the country, Manitoba's manufacturing base accounts for \$19.8 billion in annual sales — a 23 per cent increase over a decade ago — as well as 61,700 jobs. That's roughly one out of every 10 throughout the province. It also plays host to Canada's third-largest aerospace sector, North America's premier bus manufacturer, and an agricultural ecosystem that spans food processing to farm implements, including the nation's last remaining tractor assembly plant.

If you jump in a car, however, you don't need to drive far to see that Manitoba manufacturing is much more than the 'usual suspects.' In fact, it is leading the new manufacturing revolution — a hub for value-added innovation, technological advancement, global commerce, and industrial entrepreneurship.

Here are 15 local enterprises — some new, and some that have been around the block once or twice — that are leading the charge:



### Pollard Banknote

Winnipeg, MB

Unless you live in Barrhead, Alberta or Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario (where the company has two other Canadian production facilities), chances are not too many folks outside of Manitoba have heard of Pollard Banknote.

Listed on the TSX and still family-run since its inception, Pollard Banknote is the second-largest instant win lottery ticket printer on the continent. It services 60 lotteries worldwide, with 1,300 employees operating out of five locations — approximately 600 of which are headquartered in Winnipeg.

In 2018, the company made a couple of strategic acquisitions, including a ticket vending machine company, and is now working to expand its digital lottery ticket offering.

### Conviron

Winnipeg, MB

If you look at it the right way, Conviron can tell you a lot about how the Manitoba economy functions.

There is an obvious agricultural underpinning to the business's target market: Agronomical research activities. Now in its sixth decade of operation, Conviron has developed specialized, niche technologies that facilitate optimized plant growth in controlled environments. Its equipment is used by agri-food companies and university-based scientists in 60 countries.

In 2013, Conviron acquired Argus Controlled Systems in Langley, B.C., which — as it turns out — has become a market leader in technology for the burgeoning cannabis industry.

### Canada West Boots

Winnipeg, MB

This 40-year-old, third-generation Winnipeg footwear manufacturing business has few peers in the country. It had a brief growth spurt making boots for the Canadian Armed Forces last decade, but has successfully transitioned from work boots to casual wear, and now its 50 employees stitch and stamp out about 200 pairs of boots per day.

It is the largest company of its size in Western Canada and one of the only around using the 'Goodyear welt process' of sewing the upper materials to the sole rather than gluing.

### GORP Clean Energy Bars & Mixes

Niverville, MB

Colleen Dyck could be the poster child for do-it-yourself entrepreneurialism in manufacturing.

From her family farm, the former triathlete designed an energy bar that worked best for her training. Then, her peers, neighbours, and many others started asking for it. Without originally intending to, it has grown into a thriving enterprise, and Dyck has become a charming advocate for women entrepreneurs across the country, as well as a rising star amongst a new crop of Manitoba food processors.

In 2016, Dyck was honoured with the *Momprenneur Award of Excellence*.

### RTDS Technologies

Winnipeg, MB

This is one of those companies that operates 'below the radar' locally, but punches above its weight class in the international arena.

RTDS stands for *real-time digital simulator*. In this case, RTDS makes specialized computer hardware and software that allows electrical power system operators to simulate system performance and interactions before, during, and after an electrical system event.

Developed by the Manitoba HVDC Research Centre in the early 1990s, the technology was licensed by the five engineer-partners who have created a highly specialized success story that now boasts 400 installations across 40 countries, with a staff of roughly 70 that has generated \$500 million in revenue.

Its iconic headquarter building sits on stilts over a retention pond at the Smartpark on the University of Manitoba's Fort Garry campus.

### MSPrebiotic

Carberry, MB

With its obvious advantages in proximity to the agriculture industry, there has been a long-standing recognition that there is a massive opportunity in Manitoba in the field of nutraceuticals and functional foods.

MSPrebiotic is an example of that potential. The company, founded by potato farmer brothers Earl and Derek McLaren, has developed a patented process to produce a natural digestion-resistant starch from locally grown potatoes.

MSPrebiotic, with the clever marketing tagline *Healthy is a Gut Feeling*, is a flavourless, single-ingredient prebiotic fibre supplement that leads to improved gut health, and is gluten-free, caffeine-free, and contains no GMOs.

### Friesens Corp.

Altona, MB

Friesens has been successfully competing with global printing companies from Hong Kong to New York for more than 110 years.

The Altona-based business prints about 20 million books annually, including best-selling works such as the Harry Potter series and the beloved children's classic

*Love You Forever* by Robert Munsch.

Friesens is now entirely owned by its 600-plus employees. Constant investments in efficiency and diversification have propelled the company to nearly \$100 million in revenue each year, including from relatively new sources such as school yearbooks.

Clearly, the death of the book has been greatly exaggerated.

### North Forge Technology Exchange

Winnipeg, MB

Okay, okay — this one isn't necessarily a *manufacturer* per se, but it does play a unique and mounting role in the sector.

In addition to operating as an economic development agency focused on growing start-ups, North Forge runs the largest fabrication lab in North America. The non-profit organization has built a workplace, open to all with a small membership fee, jammed with an

array of 3D printing, laser-cutting, CNC, plasma-cutting, and vacuum-forming equipment that has become the breeding ground for future manufacturers and current prototyping.

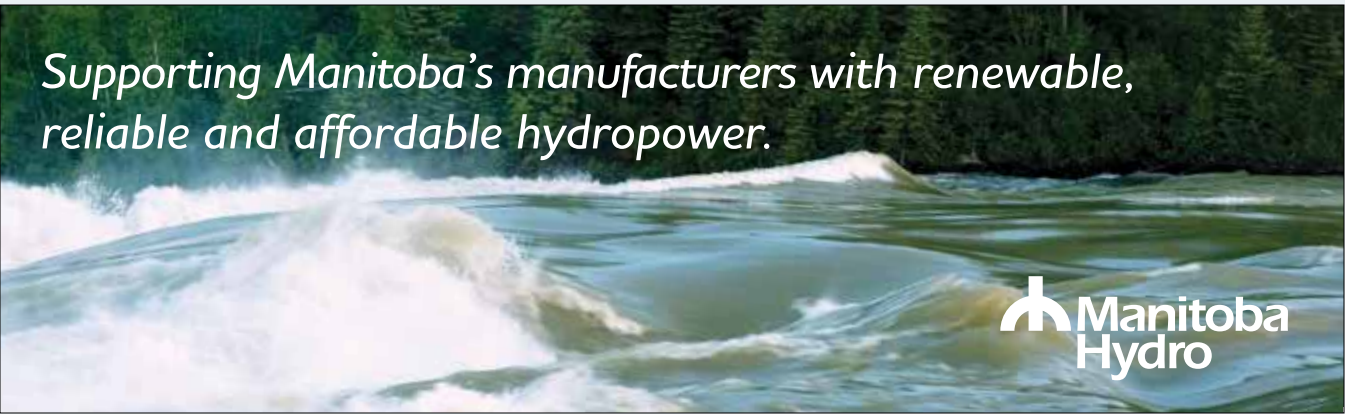
This past October, North Forge received the *Community of the Year Award* from Startup Canada.

### Fort Garry Fire Trucks

Winnipeg, MB

Canadian towns and cities may only buy approximately 600 fire trucks a year, but Fort Garry Fire Trucks makes sure it is in the bidding for each one, shipping about 125 annually.

The largest manufacturer of fire-fighting apparatus in the country, the 100-employee firm makes 20 different models, offering 5,000 different options. It has been in the business for a century, and will be here for plenty more after building a brand new, multimillion-dollar production facility five years ago.



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## Ubisoft

Winnipeg, MB

Much has been made of French, triple-A video game maker Ubisoft's decision to open a studio in Winnipeg. While it is only one of many it operates in roughly 30 countries, Ubisoft has been adamant that the choice of Winnipeg as its newest locale was because of a competitive need to access a stable, loyal workforce. It intends to hit 100 employees in five years, and believes its \$35 million investment will form the bedrock for a growing game development industry in the province.

Ubisoft's value-added products, created by transforming inputs using

both digital and manual processes, is a significant departure in considering the traditional definition of what is and isn't 'manufacturing.'

## FXR Racing

Oak Bluff, MB

Over the past 23 years, adventure enthusiast Milt Reimer has built what is now the largest global brand in snowmobile apparel. Most recently, FXR has also conquered the motocross world, with some of the top riders in North America now featuring the bold colour-block FXR designs that are incorporated into the most functional technical garments the sport has ever seen.

With several years of high, double-digit growth, and around \$50 million in sales, FXR has embraced a 'value comes home' business model, whereby much of the production is migrated overseas, but where the high-value careers — from distribution and logistics control to marketing and management — remain local.

## Bee Maid Honey

Winnipeg, MB

BeeMaid Honey has arguably attained the level of public awareness most successful consumer brands can only dream of. The Winnipeg-based Prairie producer co-op is the largest honey company in Canada.

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*"Home to one of the most diversified regional economies in the country, Manitoba's manufacturing base accounts for \$19.8 billion in annual sales — a 23 per cent increase over a decade ago — as well as 61,700 jobs. That's roughly one out of every 10 across the province."*

With producer-members in all four western provinces, it runs its sales and marketing operation out of Winnipeg, where it also operates one of two

packaging centres (the other in Spruce Grove, Alberta). In 2019, Bee Maid turns 65 years old and is now responsible for 30 per cent of all honey produced nationwide.



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**HyLife Foods**  
*Neepawa, MB*

This locally-owned, private company could be one of Manitoba's largest benefactors of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) that Canada has entered into with 10 other countries. HyLife recently completed a \$176 million expansion and renovation of its Neepawa pork plant, where it processes more than 1.75 million hogs per year. The investment was to ensure it will be able to produce the kind of fresh chilled pork cuts that are exploding in demand across Japan, China, Mexico, and South Korea.

**MicroPilot**  
*Stony Mountain, MB*

Talk about flying amongst the clouds. With a client list that spans 85 countries and includes industry giants like NASA, Raytheon, and Northrop Grumman, MicroPilot is a global pioneer in the development of autopilot systems for unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), or *drones*. The company is situated on a 40-acre test facility a short, 30-minute drive from Winnipeg James Armstrong Richardson International Airport. This past June, MicroPilot announced it had received a \$2 million contribution towards a \$5 million project aimed at demonstrating a level of software reliability that allows regulators to permit UAVs to operate safely over populated cities and towns.

**Bausch Health**  
*Steinbach, MB*

Bausch Health is Canada's largest publicly-traded pharmaceutical company. Its 24-hour, five-day-a-week production facility in Steinbach is the company's most expansive in North America, and is responsible for the manufacture of all its controlled-release products. Each year, the facility produces and packages approximately 1.2 billion tablets or capsules of 12 different kinds of medications, which are sold worldwide to treat pain, high blood pressure, and depression.

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**For 15 years, Research Partnerships & Innovation (RPI) at Red River College has been a major player in Canada's research and innovation sphere.**

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Red River College is meeting the changing needs of industry and the community while building on the accomplishments of the past. Our efforts will continue to grow with the addition of several new facilities that contribute to RRC's cutting-edge student learning and research partnerships.

Construction has begun on the Innovation Centre, a 100,000-sq. ft. facility that will be a hub for collaboration. The Innovation Centre (shown above) will keep RRC students ahead of the curve in an atmosphere of discovery and development, focused on applied research, entrepreneurship and social innovation. Large businesses and organizations will also have the opportunity to work with students, instructors and researchers on individual projects, training and product development.

Also slated to open soon is the MotiveLab™, a vehicle test facility unique to Western Canada. MotiveLab™ features a climatic chamber that can reach temperature highs of +50° C and lows of -40° C (within + or - 3° C) while the vehicle is under load (650 HP continuous, 1,000 HP peak). The climatic chamber – which is large enough for a bus or Class-A truck – will allow manufacturers to test the performance of alternative fuels, emission reductions, new materials and components under full loads (torque or power) of the vehicle being tested.

In Fall 2018, RRC opened the Skilled Trades and Technology Centre, which features an applied research and technology space called the Smart Factory. Opening soon, the Smart Factory will support the robotics, automation, additive manufacturing, high-speed robotic inspection and industrial networking industries. The Smart Factory will also provide Manitoba companies with access to state-of-the-art equipment, instructors, researchers and students, in order to test and prepare their technologies for incorporation into their own operations.

The needs of the food and agricultural industry will be met with RRC's new Culinary Research Kitchen, opening later this summer. This new culinary idea and innovation lab will enable researchers, companies, faculty and students to collaborate on the creation of new products and services – strengthening the work of the already well-established Culinary Research & Innovation department.

The success of RPI would not be possible without significant contributions from a community of supporters such as the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), the National Research Council - Industrial Research Assistance Program (NRC - IRAP), Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI), Research Manitoba, Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD), Strategic Innovation Fund (SIF), and the Province of Manitoba. The College looks forward to even greater achievements in the years to come as the result of these partnerships.

For more information or to engage with our researchers, please visit [rrc.ca/research](http://rrc.ca/research).



# Welcome to the age of disruption

*From cars made out of food to the latest in 'smart factory' technology, the future in Manitoba is already here*

By Laurel Johanson





A car made of flax and a motorcycle made of hemp: If these sound like inventions from the mind of a science fiction writer, think again. These products and others like them are actually the creations of the Composites Innovation Centre (CIC) in Winnipeg.

At the CIC, almost anything goes when it comes to the types of products they generate. Anything that has material at its core, really, is fair game. Take the flax-based Kestrel Car, for example. The car was a pilot project with an Alberta company that looked at the applicability of using flax in woven and unwoven states to see if it could be formed into car parts. As it turns out, it *could*.

Though it didn't go into the commercial production stage, the Kestrel Car managed to demonstrate that agriculturally-based composite materials could be viable alternatives to traditional automobile parts. CIC Chief Executive Officer Doug McCartney says the applications behind the Kestrel Car are still being put into practice at the CIC for future ideas.

"One of the things that our organization is best positioned to do is to take ideas like the Kestrel Car and, through the innovation and capabilities that we have in-house, look at how to apply those ideas in a real-life situation," says McCartney.

The CIC does most of its design, testing, and prototyping in the same facility. Many of the organization's prototypes are produced in partnership

with smaller businesses that may lack the means or funding to bring their products to life. These models, including the Kestrel Car, are on display in the centre's lobby for public viewing — and inspiration. Even the furniture in the centre's lobby is made of composite materials.

Thanks to this spirit of innovation, the CIC is just one of a few entities in Manitoba's manufacturing ecosystem that are edging ahead of the curve when it comes to Industry 4.0 and the arrival of a new age in digital manufacturing.

### Industry 4.0 and Manitoba

Industry 4.0 is a broad term to describe the technological revolution that's shaking the global manufacturing industry to its core. In a nutshell, it concerns nine transformative technologies:

- Big data and analytics;
- Autonomous robotics;
- Advanced simulation and modelling;
- Horizontal and vertical systems integration;
- The industrial 'Internet of Things';
- Cybersecurity;
- Cloud-based computing;
- Additive manufacturing; and
- Augmented reality.

The term entered onto Bob Hastings' radar when it was first published in an article by the German government in 2011.

Hastings is the CEO of West Canitest R&D (WestCaRD), an economic

development corporation in Manitoba, funded by GE Aviation, that promotes jobs and economic growth in the aerospace sector — one of the province's largest manufacturing subsectors. GE Aviation itself has a world-class, \$80 million facility at the Winnipeg airport, and a Pratt and Whitney/Rolls Royce JV have another similar facility in Thompson Manitoba.

About 85 per cent of all the world's new commercial aircraft engines make their way through one of these two facilities as part of their certification processes. All jokes aside, Manitoba is evidently the ideal place to conduct 'cold weather and winter testing.'

Hastings says he encourages others to embrace the changes that Industry 4.0 is bringing, especially when it comes to robotics and automation.

"People say, 'How many jobs will automation take away from human beings?'" says Hastings. "Automation isn't something that takes jobs away. It is something that makes it possible for us to do business."

Hastings and his team are constantly working with the latest digital technologies that are at the heart of Industry 4.0. Additive manufacturing is a large part of that focus — and for good reason.

"We have the only metal 3D printing company in Western Canada right here in Winnipeg," he muses.

Hastings is referring to Precision ADM, a metal additive manufacturing company that caters to the medical,

aerospace, industrial, and defence sectors. In 2018, the 3D printing industry exceeded \$7 billion, according to the annual Wohlers Report. Sales of 3D printers surged nearly 80 per cent in 2017 alone.

### The way forward

So, what's next for the future of Manitoba manufacturing? It truly is the million-dollar question.

Back at CIC, McCartney believes the challenge is going to be channeling all the impressive individual activity within separate organizations into a unified push to advance the sector as a whole.

"The future is going to be an amalgamation of a lot of factors," he says. "It needs the collective will to get there. That is what's going to be the difference between staying comfortable where we are and growing beyond what we have now."

McCartney adds there is tremendous opportunity for manufacturers in medical devices, exploring clean technologies, and honing in on infrastructure development. Exploring these new opportunities and continuing to push boundaries is what will push Manitoba forward.

"You don't skate to where the puck is," says McCartney, echoing the famous quote from hockey legend, Wayne Gretzky. "You skate to where the puck is going to be. We need to be focused on what new opportunities and new industries we can be creating that aren't yet defined. I don't think we should limit ourselves by just looking at what we have now."

Hastings, meanwhile, takes this theme of collective action even further.

"It's not just collaboration between different companies," says Hastings. "We need government, academia, and industry to work together."

The boundaries between work and academia are going to get more and more blurred."

The idea of collaboration as a key to the future isn't a new one. Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters (CME) established Manitoba's Coalition for Advanced Manufacturing (CAM) in 2017 for precisely that reason — to promote the exchange of information on advanced manufacturing processes. CAM operates with five 'priority pillars' in-mind — all of which borrow from both McCartney's and Hastings' narrative:

- Establish Manitoba leadership in advanced manufacturing research, innovation, and technology;
- Develop an advanced manufacturing workforce;
- Take a multi-sector approach to continuous improvement;



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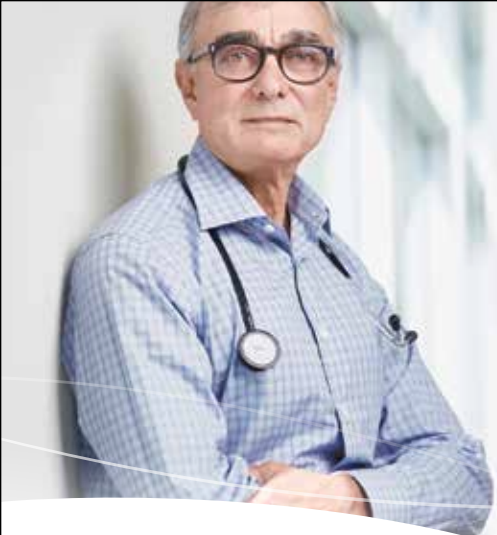
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*"We need to be focused on what new opportunities and new industries we can be creating that aren't yet defined. I don't think we should limit ourselves by just looking at what we have now."*



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First step: Education

In Manitoba, the lines between manufacturing and education are becoming increasingly integrated with each passing day.

Red River College (RRC) recently opened a 104,000-square-foot Skilled Trades and Technology Centre that will see 75,000 trained workers pass through in the carpentry, electrical, mechanical, and manufacturing sectors by 2020. The centre is home to a new 'smart factory' chalked full of robotics, automation and additive manufacturing equipment, and high-speed robotic inspection technologies.

Another facility at RRC — the \$95 million, 100,000-square-foot Innovation Centre — will also open its doors in the Exchange District by 2020. This facility will focus on applied research and entrepreneurship, and will aim to provide students with the same systems and tools they will encounter in industry, further narrowing the gap between shop floor practicality and academic preparedness.

And, finally, there's the National Research Council's \$60 million advanced manufacturing research facility, slated for construction in Rosser, Manitoba, beginning in March 2019. The facility will reportedly have space for 100 of its own staff, along with employees from other companies, as well as college and university students to boot.

It's the latest step in Manitoba's strategy to embrace industrial change — a change that, according to Hastings, is already on our doorstep. "Industry 4.0 isn't coming. It's here." f



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# An introduction to *Hoshin Kanri*

## The tool for keeping your New Year's business resolutions

By Erwin Matusoc

On a year-to-year basis, many organizations leverage various strategic planning processes to formulate their best and most competitive strategies to stay on top of the market.

Often, these processes take on a very 'top-down' approach, where the executive team sets and cascades goals, usually based on financial metrics. It is then up to front-line management to address problems and deploy appropriate methodologies to make it happen. The result is, almost always, a disconnect between the *how* and the *why* — where the interpretation of priorities and directives become detached to the purpose of the strategy. That has wide-ranging and detrimental effects, from weak performance and stifled employee development to a breakdown in organizational morale.

Through my years guiding senior manufacturing leaders and conducting lean assessments, I can say with confidence that most businesses have too many priorities, insufficient detail and a lack of clarity around execution, and a poor system of accountability. When I ask about their strategic plan, what I routinely see is a thick manual, broken out into multiple tabs and sections. As a rule of thumb, the number of pages in a strategic plan is inversely proportional to its clarity and focus.

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***"As a rule of thumb, the number of pages in a strategic plan is inversely proportional to its clarity and focus."***

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According to a survey conducted by CFO magazine, companies showed the lack of value in the planning process can be explained by the absence of well-defined strategy, as well as the absence of a clear linkage connecting strategy to operational planning. Only 27 per cent of those studied integrate strategy with tactics. Without that alignment, each level of the reporting structure is like another cliff that the strategy is plummeting down from — starting with top executives, onto their direct reports, onto their lower-level managers.

If you are one of the organizations experiencing the resulting symptoms, like project failures, long lead-times for improvement, missed budgets versus forecasts, or separation between corporate vision and organizational activities, then you need to consider implementing *Hoshin Kanri*.

### What is *Hoshin Kanri*?

Originating in Japan, *Hoshin* means 'a methodology for strategic direction-setting,' while *Kanri* means 'execution.' Other names — *Hoshin Planning*, *policy deployment*, and *strategy deployment*, to riddle off three — are used widely as synonyms in North America.

*Hoshin Kanri* became the management system that Japanese business leaders used to align the work

of their front-line staff to the strategic direction of the organization. It provides a step-by-step planning, implementation, and review process for managed change. Specifically, it is a systems-based approach to change management in critical business processes.

Bridgestone Tire Corporation was the first company to adopt *Hoshin Kanri* in 1965. Yokagawa Hewlett-Packard (YHP) followed in 1976 as part of its pursuit of the Deming Prize. By 1982, YHP had leveraged *Hoshin Kanri* to oversee a strategic shift that took it from the least profitable Hewlett-Packard division to the most profitable. Three years later, Hewlett-Packard introduced *Hoshin Kanri* to the rest of the company as a lesson learned from the YHP Deming Prize journey.

### Why *Hoshin Kanri*?

For every business system, there are measures of performance and a desired level of performance. What *Hoshin Kanri* provides is a planning structure that will bring selected critical business processes up to that desired level.

An organization implementing *Hoshin Kanri* manages 3-5 long-term, breakthrough objectives. The reality is that 70 per cent of most organizations are attempting more than they can reasonably handle. Everyone is being

pulled in different directions and, at the end of the year, not even one of the many priorities the organization set has been accomplished because of the division of resources and lack of clarity, focus, and alignment. *Hoshin Kanri* establishes a synergy between top-down and bottom-up processes through continuous and systematic management, rigorous application of the plan, do, check, act cycle, emphasis on cause-and-effect relationships, and enhanced employee engagement.

*Hoshin Kanri* operates at two levels. The first is the 'breakthrough management' or the strategic planning level. The second revolves around daily management, or on the more routine or fundamental aspects of business operations.

Organizations that truly embrace *Hoshin Kanri* focus on the method rather than the result. This may, for example, manifest itself in the writing of an A3 problem-solving proposal, followed by an interactive brainstorming session where staff members are encouraged to express their problems and are then empowered to fix those problems immediately as they are revealed.

Having seen first-hand how both low-performing and high-performing organizations strategize and execute, I no longer believe in putting numbers and results first. Having the right processes will produce the right results — *if* you trust in both your people and your strategy. Planning, training, and people development, however, are fundamental to success.

*Hoshin Kanri* is an open-minded method. It is not just about management by means or results — it works under a system of self-deployment and motivation. It does not encourage random business improvement. Instead, it prioritizes organizational advancement along the strategic direction. <sup>1</sup>

*Erwin Matusoc is a certified Lean Master Black Belt and Hoshin Kanri Champion with Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters in Manitoba.*

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***Having seen first-hand how both low-performing and high-performing organizations strategize and execute, I no longer believe in putting numbers and results first. Having the right processes will produce the right results — if you trust in both your people and your strategy."***

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# just ask... Gender dynamics

By Kimberley Puhach

As promised in the last issue of *Prairie Manufacturer Magazine*, let's start another conversation that explores diversity and inclusion — specifically, *gender dynamics*. It is only a starting point to continue the dialogue. Hopefully, you will find some value in the information and continue your own learning journey with a few new thoughts and ideas on how to engage respectfully.

No matter what your level of knowledge or understanding in the area of gender dynamics and its role in our workplaces and society at-large, I am sure you already have thoughts, ideas, or firm opinions. You may even be confused and full of questions. How you view gender roles, how you have been socialized, and your beliefs on what the interaction and relationship between genders should be are factors.

The progress in gender dynamics came about through changing ideas on gender roles. It is not a new topic. Modern feminism and every aspect of the spectrum has been alive and well since the early 1800s and is at the core of what is still evolving. It started as a rights-based movement and, yes, it was about the balance of power between men and women. It was about how men and women interact

and the relationships that society entrenched as what was 'appropriate.'

Fast-forward two centuries and where are we now? The answer is your own; but, what we can all agree on is that it is an important subject. It's on the agenda locally, nationally, and globally — fueled by world events like the #MeToo and #NoMore movements. It can be sensitive and challenging to discuss outside a safe space, and with those that will listen earnestly and have open conversation without judgement.

With that as the backdrop, here are some things to consider as we talk about women, men, equality, and how we can respectfully engage, support, and advance the opportunity for all of us:

First, one must understand the overarching concept of *gender roles*. While there are many definitions, the World Health Organization describes them as "socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women." In other words, they are established expectations of social inequality.

That in itself should be cause for reflection. Why wouldn't we want to be a part of a society where everyone is equal?



The truth is: We all have — to some degree — unconscious biases. Project Implicit, a not-for-profit organization located within Harvard University, has a free online tool you can use to assess how rooted they are in your own psyche. By learning more about yourself, your thoughts, and ideas that shape how you interact with other genders, you may begin to answer the question about what gender dynamics means to you and why you ought to care.

The next question revolves around what we should know about appropriate interaction. For this topic, I went to an expert, Dr. Lew Bayer, CEO of Manitoba-based consulting firm, Civility Experts. Dr. Bayer remarked:

“From a civility perspective, the general guideline is avoid labels of any kind where possible and, instead, focus on the person and simply use the person's name. Gender, generation, age, and cultural background should not be the first thing we note or highlight.

“Words like *gals, guys, chicks, old men, ladies, boys*, and so on are not appropriate. Instead of saying, ‘hey ladies,’ you would say something like, ‘good morning, friends.’ Use building and bridging terms. One specific example of references we now teach people not to use is honorifics such as Miss, Misses, and Mister altogether. Using the honorific is contrary to labour law and, in some cases, creates divisions or supports stereotyping.

“As an example, when I say ‘Miss Bayer,’ I have implied the person is a young, unmarried female. When I say ‘Mrs. Bayer,’ I have implied the person is an older (likely at least 30, which is the average marrying age in North America), married, straight, and a woman — and the next assumption is that a 30-plus-year-old married woman likely has kids or will have them soon.

“Now, if I say ‘Mr. Bayer,’ there is a clear double standard, as I have only implied the person is a man, but not given any hint at age, marital status, or whether he has children. Given that employers are not allowed to ask about age and marital status, and given that the options for honorifics do not include LGBTQ2S titles, makes it inappropriate to use them altogether.”

Do you still address people in this way or use these terms? Does this perspective compel you to question your own approach?

So, how might we advance together? This was where I asked colleagues for their thoughts on what our opportunities are and what must happen to support success. I could feel the passion in their remarks and, if this is a sample of the interest and enthusiasm, the projections for gender parity are entirely possible.

Beverlie Stuart, associate vice president, business development and strategic initiatives at the Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology, reinforced the importance of gender parity. Stuart said, “Young women, as well as the parents and teachers who guide them, need to recognize that gender-neutral learning paves the way for careers in all sectors and positions, from the front lines to leadership roles.”

Kathy Knight, CEO of the Information Communication and Technologies Association of Manitoba, agreed. “Achieving gender parity is good for everyone,” she exclaimed. “From every perspective — societal, economic, and cultural, removing barriers to women’s economic success will elevate our country on many levels. This is our time. Let’s use it to make a difference.”

Mark Alexiuk, meanwhile, chief technology officer at Sightline Innovation, added, “Creating and maintaining psychological safety in the workplace is a key enabler to increase diversity and will promote gender parity. Problem-solving is a creative process that involves calculated risk-taking. To allow yourself to be vulnerable, you must be safe.”

This is quite the value proposition and certainly supports why we need to continue efforts to advance collectively.

As we conclude and examine what respectful engagement looks like as the recipe for success, what else do we need consider? Is it appropriate to hug, or should you shake hands only when greeting? When it is appropriate to do one or the other — or is it appropriate at all? Does the setting play a role — for instance, professional versus social? What about compliments?

When I asked one senior leader’s advice, he responded only on the condition of anonymity, which may very well be an indicator of the risk he felt he was taking by voicing his position on the issue. He replied, “I am not confused about any of the behaviours appropriate in a professional setting. I would never compliment or make any suggestive comments to avoid any risk in misinterpretation. In a social setting, I let the situation dictate [the approach], especially if it excludes any work-related gatherings. Consent is a minimum standard.”

I followed it up by asking if, conversely, a woman is not showing the same reciprocal standard, if his approach would change. He chimed, “I don’t think a man’s behaviour or conduct should be dictated by a woman’s individuality. Men need to be accountable for their conduct and need to know where those lines are and not have women draw it for them. If the conversation is focused on what appropriate communication between us is, then conduct, like genders, must be equal.”

What do you think? Do these parameters for appropriate

communication and conduct between genders seem reasonable and actionable?

This is just the start of the conversation. I hope you are full of curiosity — the possibilities are exciting! Let’s keep the dialogue going by exploring more together and remember: When in doubt, just ask! 🐘

## Have a question? Just ask.

Conversation is a powerful tool. It has the potential to break down barriers, dispel stereotypes, build understanding, and strengthen relationships.

Sometimes, however, the sensitivity around a particular topic can result in those conversations not taking place, regardless of how important they really are. That’s why, in 2019, we here at *Prairie Manufacturer Magazine* are committing to steps to improve the dialogue.

Each of our four issues this year will feature a *Just Ask* column that explores diversity and inclusion, and the terms we use in our everyday lives. The next three editorials will focus on **Indigenous inclusion** (Summer 2019), **LGBTQ2S** (Fall 2019), and **workplace diversity** (Winter 2019).

I hope you will join us and be a part of the conversation.

**Ronda Landygo**  
Publisher, *Prairie Manufacturer Magazine*

**Kimberley Puhach**  
*Just Ask* Guest Columnist

**“Creating and maintaining psychological safety in the workplace is a key enabler to increase diversity and will promote gender parity. Problem-solving is a creative process that involves calculated risk-taking. To allow yourself to be vulnerable, you must be safe.”**

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# GO Productivity's 2019 GO B2B Marketing Challenge

In February 2019, GO Productivity held the GO B2B Marketing Challenge finals, where the top ten finalist teams competed for cash prizes of: first place \$20,000, second place \$12,000, and third place \$7,500. Finalists came from the University of Alberta, the University of Regina, the University of Saskatchewan, and the University of British Columbia.



In today's business climate characterized by uncertainty surrounding commodity prices and trade agreements, business owners are often reluctant to spend time and money on projects with uncertain returns. All businesses and their employees can benefit from increased productivity & innovation, but both can be difficult to see in day-to-day operations or to measure in tangible short-term results. **The GO B2B Marketing Challenge** stimulated fresh and innovative thinking by university teams to explore productivity as a business solution. Each team developed a marketing and sales strategy and pitch to inspire small-to-medium business owners across Western Canada to invest in productivity improvement and build innovative capacity. The results were brilliant! Congratulations to all who participated!



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# Manitoba's **path** *to safety success*

By Jamie Hall



The workplace safety landscape in Manitoba looks much different today than it did even five years ago. A comprehensive strategy for workplace injury and illness prevention, released in 2014, has led to a significant decrease in the number of injuries on the job, more productive partnerships with industry, and greater employer and worker access to services related to workplace safety and health.

The effect of these changes has been significant — not only to workers themselves, who are now less likely to be injured, but to colleagues, family members, and friends, who are less likely to face the loss of a loved one or the repercussions of a life-changing injury. For many employers, the changes have meant a healthier, more productive workforce and a reduction in overall WCB costs.

These changes began with the creation of SAFE Work Manitoba as a separate arm of the WCB and the public agency dedicated to workplace injury and illness prevention. It was charged with carrying out the new prevention strategy. From the start, its leaders recognized that one organization alone could not produce the desired impact on the state of workplace safety and health in the province. This effort would need to include those most familiar with the needs of their industries. That's why the

first element of its three-pronged approach was to support existing industry-based safety programs (IBSPs) and expand the number of IBSPs throughout the province, making IBSP services available to as many employers and workers as possible.

### Industry-based safety programs

Over the last four years, SAFE Work Manitoba has helped to create five new IBSPs. These programs are for the manufacturing, trucking, service, agriculture, and self-insured sectors (two long-established safety associations serve Manitoba's construction industry). Working in partnership with SAFE Work Manitoba, all these IBSPs have played a vital role in increasing workplace safety and health.

Made Safe is the IBSP for Manitoba's manufacturing industry. Its members turn to Made Safe for services that include training courses, access to events and resources, consulting, and safety certification. Neal Curry, executive director of Made Safe, says having a program geared specifically to manufacturing has made all the difference.

"The significance of industry-based safety programs cannot be overstated. Programs that are run by and for a specific industry — which, in the case of Made Safe, is manufacturing — have a

*"Industries with established IBSPs saw time-loss injuries drop 15.3 per cent between 2013 and 2017. In the manufacturing sector, the decrease was even greater — 25 per cent fewer time-loss injuries over the same period."*

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*"The significance of industry-based safety programs cannot be overstated. Programs that are run by and for a specific industry — which, in the case of Made Safe, is manufacturing — have a solid track record of injury reduction. IBSPs are closer to their industries and have a good grasp of the hazards that are unique to that industry."*

solid track record of injury reduction," says Curry. "IBSPs are closer to their industries and have a good grasp of the hazards that are unique to that industry. Guided by a manufacturing safety council made up of executives and safety professionals from manufacturing companies, there is a trust factor with manufacturers that cannot be duplicated by organizations that are external to the industry."

#### **Substantial decrease in time-loss injuries**

Collaborative efforts between SAFE Work Manitoba and Manitoba's IBSPs have led to a

significant decrease in time-loss injuries — those that cause employees to be absent from work. Industries with established IBSPs saw time-loss injuries drop 15.3 per cent between 2013 and 2017. In the manufacturing sector, the decrease was even greater — 25 per cent fewer time-loss injuries over the same period.

#### **SAFE Work Certified**

The second major component was the development of a certification program. At the start of 2017, SAFE Work Manitoba launched a workplace safety certification program called SAFE

## SAFE Work Certification is a good thing – but why should we?

Made Safe is the manufacturing sector certifying partner for SAFE Work Manitoba Certified. The SAFE Work Manitoba Certified standard is based on best practices in international, national and provincial standards and legislation. Made Safe works with member companies to assess their readiness, provide support and help members achieve certification, which includes both the standard guidelines for SAFE Work Manitoba certification as well as the manufacturing-specific, Element N.

### Benefits of being Certified:

- 1.** Upon certification, members become eligible for the greater of a 15 per cent rebate on their WCB premiums or \$3,000. It can also lead to a long-term reduction in WCB premiums
- 2.** Safer, healthier workplaces and improved employee engagement and productivity
- 3.** Greater confidence in compliance and legislative

Every day, more and more Manitoba manufacturers are making the decision to pursue certification. Talk with a Made Safe Advisor to start your certification journey today!

### UPCOMING EVENTS

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June 5, 2019

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***"It's proven that safety certification makes a difference — certified employers have fewer time-loss injuries, higher levels of employee engagement, and lower overall costs. More than 1,250 companies in the province are now certified (including those already COR-certified) and another 115 companies have applied to become certified."***

**Work Certified.** Developed with industry partners, it built on the successful COR program used in the construction sector and is available to Manitoba employers in *any* industry.

To become certified, employers must complete courses, undergo a gap assessment, develop or expand their safety management program, and successfully pass a certification audit. Certification is valid for three years, provided employers pass an annual maintenance audit. After three years, a re-certification audit is conducted.

Made Safe has been a strong supporter of **SAFE Work Certified**, and Manitoba's manufacturing companies are reaping the benefits. It's proven that safety certification makes a difference — certified employers have fewer time-loss injuries, higher levels of employee engagement, and lower overall costs. More than 1,250 companies in the province are now certified (including those already COR-certified) and another 115 companies have applied to become certified.

### Prevention rebate

At the start of 2018, the final phase of **SAFE Work** Manitoba's three-pronged approach was implemented. Employers meeting the **SAFE Work Certified** standard became eligible to receive a prevention rebate.

Certified employers receive a rebate equal to 15 per cent of their WCB premium or \$3,000 — whichever is higher — to a maximum of 75 per cent of their premium. To receive this rebate, employers must have maintained their certification for the eligibility period (12 months from their certification date) and not have any administrative penalties or convictions during the eligibility period.

### Looking ahead

One of the goals of Manitoba's injury prevention initiatives is for the province to become a leader in workplace safety and health. We are investing more in safety because we know our efforts will have wide-ranging benefits — for workers, employers, and all Manitobans. We hope to serve as an example of what can be accomplished when we all work together for safety. If you'd like more information, please visit [safemanitoba.com](http://safemanitoba.com).<sup>6</sup>

*Jamie Hall joined SAFE Work Manitoba as chief operating officer in May 2014. A former Manitoba Hydro executive, Jamie has also served on the board of directors of Safety Services Manitoba and is a sessional instructor in the University of Manitoba's Asper MBA program.*

## Risk Reduction Case Study: Monarch Industries



Across Canada, companies working to reduce risk are discovering **WESguard** — the machine safety web application.

One of those companies is Monarch Industries — a Manitoba manufacturer of hydraulic cylinders and custom iron castings. Headquartered in Winnipeg with foundry operations in Winkler, Monarch employs roughly 500 workers, and, last year, achieved its Safe Work Certification through Made Safe — the industry safety association for manufacturers in the province.

### Why WESguard?

Monarch Industries has long been a leader in safety and is dedicated to ensuring its machinery meets all standards and regulations. Continuous improvement has been an important part of its success. So, managers asked for a third-party review from Workplace Engineering Solutions using **WESguard**.

The company wanted to understand what issues it may have and, more importantly, how best to address them. **WESguard** allowed Monarch to have a central hub for all its information, and enabled users throughout the company to access it.

Wayne Brylikowski, health and safety manager says, "We wanted to have better visibility on risk, and **WESguard** allows that." **WESguard** gave Monarch the power to efficiently access machine hazard information and manage risk with minimal resource expenditure.

### What did they do?

Monarch started with a baseline audit. This established where the company stood with the hazards on all equipment. It provided a single place to keep all audit information for individual pieces of equipment. Team members then worked on the strategy of attacking the machines that had the highest risk.


By having all the equipment in front of them, they could also look at what could be replaced or removed. They verified they met compliance with all equipment and did a deeper dive into the risk assessments for each piece. By having a clear view of their current state, they were able to make informed decisions on how to proceed and where to focus, thereby maximizing Monarch's investment.

### How are they doing it?

Monarch understands that this needs to be a *continuous improvement* approach to safeguarding. The company is constantly looking at its risk assessments for opportunities, and is now working to close the loop and secure regular supervisor involvement with the process.

This can be a layered approach and puts more focus on continuously improving. Traditionally, the focus on machine safety can lessen after an audit shows compliance, but Monarch believes it needs to increase its efforts to ensure that it stays on top of its game.

**WESguard** allows them to efficiently collaborate and get machine safety buy-in from all levels of the organization. Wayne sums it up well: "It tracks and shows improvement, working to reduce risk."



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# My manufacturing story, three generations in the making

By Carrie Schroeder



**TAGGING EVERY LYNX** taken in Central District is rule of Registered Trapline System, and every animal caught must be recorded. Mrs. Gertrude Calcutt, who keeps one of Herb Lake's two general stores, puts a metal tag on lynx pelt.

*"Prairie women have been pioneers in their own right for more than a century. In 1916, women in Manitoba were the first in the country to gain the right to vote in provincial elections, followed later the same year by Saskatchewan and Alberta. That was five full years before women could vote and run for office in a federal election, and 13 years before women were formally recognized as persons under the law."*

I first became involved in manufacturing 30 years ago. It wasn't something I planned to do, but once I started, I was hooked. Every day was different. I had the opportunity to setup processes, and try my hand in a variety of areas, from purchasing and scheduling to sales and operations. Each added responsibility came with greater personal and professional accountability. There were no lessons more valuable than those earned by doing.

I was fortunate to have an employer that generally supported me in my role; and I was consequently very comfortable being the only woman in the room during meetings. That said, I also enjoyed the camaraderie on those seemingly rare occasions when I crossed paths with other females in the same industry. I remember meeting up to swap stories after-hours and share insights on how to progress in a predominantly male environment.

There is no denying that manufacturing has provided me with a

lucrative career and endless opportunity for growth. As with any sector, it has presented its challenges, absolutely — but none that, to me, fully explain why the manufacturing workforce has not been able to attract more women.

Especially here in Western Canada. Prairie women have been pioneers in their own right for more than a century. In 1916, women in Manitoba were the first in the country to gain the right to vote in provincial elections, followed later the same year by Saskatchewan and Alberta. That was five full years before women could vote and run for office in a federal election, and 13 years before women were formally recognized as persons under the law. Tales of Louise McKinney, Emily Murphy, Irene Parlby, Nellie McClung, and Henrietta Edwards all provide inspiration and are indicative of that unique and determined spirit.

My own inspiration comes from another Prairie woman who persevered to provide for her young family. My grandmother, Gertrude Calcutt, was

widowed in the early 1930s. She had three young children, lived out on the farm in the Roblin, Manitoba, area, and did what she could to make ends meet. She took in laundry, ironed, and often cleaned houses.

Though, she didn't stop there. My grandmother started to look at ways she could use her domestic skills to improve the lives of herself and her family. So, she established a store in the small mining community of Herb Lake in Northern Manitoba. Her store not only served as a depot for the trappers to have pelts tagged and shipped south, it was also a supply centre providing basic necessities. To differentiate her store from others in the area, she would rise early every morning to bake bread. She stocked her store with handmade candles and knitted items as well.

She would have never identified herself as a *manufacturer* per se; but, in the very rudimentary definition of the word, she was one — processing raw materials to create new, value-added

## Women on Boards

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products. I am certain it was not an easy life, but she met each day with a commitment to make it better than the last.

Manufacturing needs to attract women — like my grandma — who are entrepreneurial and innovative, who can see past the barriers and who want to seize the opportunity for a rewarding career.

The sector truly depends on it. To overcome the hurdles of tomorrow, we need to embrace diversity and inclusivity as the engine of better ideas and more resilient companies. A rapidly aging labour pool means jobs are already going vacant. Women must be part of the solution.

Yet, only 28 per cent of manufacturing jobs in Canada are occupied by female employees — 20 percentage points lower than the national average for

all industries. How do we change this statistic? How do we attract more women into manufacturing?

Through extensive consultation and a nationwide survey, Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters produced a summary paper entitled *Untapped Potential: Attracting and Engaging Women in Canadian Manufacturing*, which concluded, “Women need to see other women succeed. In the same way that Olympic champions inspire children and young adults to work hard and achieve their goals, female leaders in manufacturing inspire other women to follow in their footsteps.” Nearly 37 per cent of all respondents in the study said that one of the most effective ways to buck the trend is for businesses to have more visible female role models. Women under 35 were considerably more likely to say that female role models would help

attract more girls into manufacturing professions.

In response to this finding, the Women in Manufacturing (WIM) initiative is launching *HERstory* — a new initiative to spotlight some of the sector’s most inspiring female leaders. Join me in sharing these stories. For some, doing so may be a business imperative. And for others (myself included), there is perhaps a greater sense of responsibility.

Together, we can help change minds and make a real difference. ♡

*Carrie Schroeder is the director of operations for Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters (CME) in Manitoba, and is one of the driving forces behind CME’s Women in Manufacturing initiative. To learn more, visit [www.womeninmanufacturing.ca](http://www.womeninmanufacturing.ca).*

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## HERstory: Heidi Reimer-Epp

Heidi Reimer-Epp was a student working a marketing job at Standard Aero when she first fell in love with manufacturing.

“I loved walking through the plant and seeing the engines hanging there, waiting for repair, and the different things happening to them,” she recalls. “Growing up, I’d always been a person that loved doing things with my hands.”

Reimer-Epp returned to her program at the Asper School of Business at the University of Manitoba in search of courses related to manufacturing, only to be told that the manufacturing course she was interested in hadn’t been offered in years. That was around 1993.

Fast-forward 25 years, Reimer-Epp is now one of the successful founders Botanical PaperWorks in Winnipeg — an innovative stationery company that integrates herb, vegetable, and wildflower seeds into various types of ‘plantable paper,’ from product packaging to wedding invitations.

Getting to this point in her career, however, has not been a linear path.

After university, Reimer-Epp took a marketing job for a company that manufactured plasma blood products. She says that even though she was relegated to the office, she would often don the sanitary medical gloves and booties to visit the area where the blood was being made.

Around the same time, Reimer-Epp’s mother, Mary Reimer, was working as an elementary school teacher. Reimer was having trouble finding something to do with

her students that wouldn’t waste a lot of paper. Students would often grab a sheet and scribble once on it before throwing it in the trash.

Then, one day, Reimer had an epiphany. “She came up with this idea to teach the kids how to do hand paper-making from the waste paper,” says Reimer-Epp. “They would bind that paper into a book and write stories on it and would have a little keepsake.”

When Reimer-Epp got married, her mother also made the wedding programs.

“People kept asking, ‘Where did you get this?’” says Reimer-Epp. “And we just said, ‘Well, we made it.’”

The inkling to get into the paper business was ‘planted’ (excuse the pun) then and there. Reimer-Epp says she and her mother would go back and forth for years about whether they would take the plunge together and start a company.

“At a certain point, we figured we just need to give this a try,” says Reimer-Epp. “I said, ‘I’m going to quit my job.’ I was young enough that if it was a total failure, I could’ve found another job. But I’d always regret not trying.”

And so Botanical PaperWorks was born. The early years were a challenge as Reimer-Epp and her mother self-developed the manufacturing processes. Reimer-Epp would often keep a copy of *Fast Company*, an American business magazine, with her to keep up with industry trends. When the tech crash happened in the early 2000s, Reimer-Epp pulled out her copy of *Fast Company* and saw a surprise on the cover.

“I remember getting my copy and on the cover was Boeing,” says Reimer-Epp. “I felt so excited because I thought, ‘manufacturing is back.’”

The idea for seed paper — the foundation of the company today — came not too long after.

“We were working on the plant chapter of one of our books, working with different parts of the flower, and we thought ‘why not put in some seeds?’” says Reimer-Epp. “We knew we had something pretty unique, but it took us three years to commercialize it so we could manufacture it on a large-scale basis.”

Reimer-Epp partly credits her and her mother’s complimentary skills for the success of Botanical PaperWorks in those formative years.

“She was really good at saying to me, ‘Heidi, this is your thing.’” remembers Reimer-Epp. “We have a really good relationship, and we were able to morph that from a mother-daughter relationship into business partners.”

Today, Reimer-Epp has been running Botanical PaperWorks for more than 20 years. Being considered a ‘woman in manufacturing’ is something that Reimer-Epp admits she doesn’t put too much thought into, but she still sees the value in sharing her experiences.

“I find there are opportunities to share those stories and there is an appetite for people to hear them,” says Reimer-Epp. “We have avenues and a responsibility to encourage other businesspeople — often women — to pursue similar paths.”

### Join the movement.

Be a part of the *Women in Manufacturing* initiative by celebrating the important role women play in advancing the industry, and by championing inclusion and diversity in your own workplace.

*Prairie Manufacturer Magazine* is committed to doing its part. In each of the next three issues, you will find a featured column or article shining a spotlight on that very topic:

**Summer 2019:** *Workplace culture: Is your team as welcoming as you think?*

**Fall 2019:** *Enough talk — let’s get this done*

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To learn more, or to become involved, contact [info@prairiemanufacturer.ca](mailto:info@prairiemanufacturer.ca).



# Preparing for the future: Are you ready?

By Jayson Myers

Manufacturers across Canada face a whirlwind of change. Whether measured in terms of customer demand, competitive pressures, government and stakeholder expectations, political risk, skills requirements, or technology, the business environment in which manufacturers are operating is being rapidly transformed. And, manufacturers themselves are responding by introducing new products, new production and business processes, as well as new marketing practices, organizational models, and business strategies.

Prairie manufacturers are no exception. A recent survey by Statistics Canada shows that a higher percentage of manufacturers in Western Canada are introducing innovations than across Canada as a whole. Given the thousands of companies surveyed, the results are significant. According to the report, 85 per cent of manufacturers coast-to-coast and 88 per cent of Western Canadian manufacturers have introduced some form of innovation in their business over the past three years.

The survey blows away many preconceived notions that Canada's manufacturers are risk averse and slow to innovate. Manufacturing is, in fact, the second most innovative sector in Canada — only in the information technology sector has a greater percentage of companies introduced some sort of innovation in their products, processes, or business models.

In Western Canada, 47 per cent of manufacturers have introduced new or improved products, and 25 per cent new or improved services to increase customer value. Just over 54 per cent have introduced new or improved production processes, 22 per cent have improved logistics practices,

and 48 per cent have undertaken improvements in their information and business management systems. Almost a quarter of Western Canadian manufacturers have developed new partnerships with other organizations. And half have initiated new marketing or product pricing strategies. 'Business as usual' has certainly not been the option.

It hasn't been an easy journey, though. Six out of 10 manufacturers in Western Canada report they face significant obstacles in innovating. The most frequently cited hurdles are the uncertainty and risk involved in implementing new technologies and business practices, lack of appropriate skills, and internal cash flow pressures. These obstacles are far from surprising. But, some of the survey responses are. There are, for instance, proportionately more manufacturers that report these obstacles nationally and across Western Canada than in any other business sector.

About a quarter of manufacturers across the country, and similarly across Western Canada, report that internal financing challenges have put a drag on their innovation activities. After-tax cash flow is the primary source of financing for innovation in business, so a healthy bottom line in a sense sets the limits on every manufacturer's innovation and growth potential. What is a little surprising is that far fewer companies — 16 per cent both nationally and regionally — say that the availability of external financing is a problem. Either financing has become much easier to obtain from outside sources or constraints on internal cash flow mean that fewer companies are looking for external financing options.

Lack of skills is a no brainer (sorry about that!). It's top-of-mind for manufacturers everywhere. Just over 28 per cent

of manufacturers in Western Canada say that skills shortages are a major obstacle when it comes to their innovation efforts. This, however, is much lower than the rest of Canada. More than a third of manufacturers nationwide say they are being held back as a result of skills shortages. Western Canadian manufacturers may be benefitting from weakness in other industrial sectors, like oil and gas.

Nevertheless, it's a high number — and a real problem that needs to be addressed. Demand for qualified personnel is increasing around the world. The real challenge may not be the supply of skilled personnel, but in recruiting and retaining employees, and in upgrading their skills, to make a difference in manufacturing.

The most common obstacle to innovation is the challenge of managing the risks and uncertainties arising from the adoption of new technologies and business practices. More than 37 per cent of Canadian manufacturers cite this as a significant hurdle. The number climbs to 46 per cent in Western Canada. Conclusions can be drawn from this with respect to business strategy as well as public policy — both need to focus on how to minimize and manage the risks involved in adopting advanced technologies.

Let's start with business strategy and management practices. After all, it's hard to ask government to step in and solve industry's problems if manufacturers themselves are not prepared to take the lead.

One of the surprising findings of the survey is that between 35 to 45 per cent of manufacturers across the country that have invested in various advanced technologies have not achieved the business objectives that motivated

their investments in the first place. That has very little to do with technology itself. It has more to say about management capacity. Either the objective was too ambitious, the technology was inappropriate, the manufacturer did not have the skill sets required for successful deployment, or the company could not manage the technology once in place.

Unfortunately, it appears that many Western Canadian manufacturers lack the strategic and management practices required to get the most out of innovation. Fewer than five per cent do any competitive benchmarking on a regular basis. Only 22 per cent say they employ lean practices, and less than a third have a quality management system in place. Fewer than half have implemented employee training or performance management systems for employees.

Apologies for all the statistics. But, they do tell an interesting story. While Western Canadian manufacturers are focusing on improving performance through innovation, they face significant challenges. Where they lag behind is not in their ambition, but in their capacity to manage and execute innovation.

Unless manufacturers significantly improve their ability to manage change, they are unlikely to reap the benefits of the improvements they want to make. ¶

*Jayson Myers is the 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.*

*"One of the surprising findings of the survey is that between 35 to 45 per cent of manufacturers across the country that have invested in various advanced technologies have not achieved the business objectives that motivated their investments in the first place. That has very little to do with technology itself. It has more to say about management capacity."*





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## APRIL 2019

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## MAY 2019

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May 1, 2019  
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# 5

## QUESTIONS

# about safety in manufacturing

With Neal Curry, executive director of Made Safe

### Why is industry safety so important?

Safety is a central aspect to our daily lives. Workplace health and safety are important for the wellbeing of both employees and employers, because a serious workplace injury or even death can change lives forever and impact a business immensely.

All people want to work in a safe environment and return home safely at the end of the day. Everyone in the workplace has a responsibility to make that happen. All industries, including manufacturing, have safety risks, but companies should be dedicated to creating and maintaining a plan to ensure the safety of their employees.

### Why should leadership care about safety?

Having a safe work environment not only ensures the safety of employees, it also benefits you as a business owner. By developing and supporting a safety program, you are creating a productive work environment, which then leads to increased profitability, as well as employee and customer retention.

When a workplace is safe, employees can feel comfortable and confident to do the job they need to do. By investing in a safety program, absenteeism drops and morale increases. Companies also benefit financially through a decrease in workers' compensation insurance claims and premiums. You will have a higher employee retention rate and have an easier time attracting skilled workers into a safe workplace.

### How do I start taking steps to improve safety?

Contact the local industry-based safety program (IBSP) in your province (such as Made Safe for manufacturers in Manitoba) to learn about the benefits of becoming a member. Data shows that companies engaged with an IBSP report improved injury reduction and employee retention.

Make your employees or employer aware of the existing opportunities to enhance the safety culture in your workplace. Whether it be through safety consulting services or training programs, there are options available for all levels of engagement.

### A formal safety program sounds great, but I don't know if we have the budget available. What does it cost?

As a business owner, you need to ask yourself: *Can I put a price on someone's life?* Safety shouldn't be seen as an added expense, but rather as necessary part of running a business. By investing in a safety program, you are investing in your success. In some provinces, like Manitoba, the majority of manufacturing companies are already paying into an IBSP through their workers' compensation premiums, which means your company is able to access the resources and training available at virtually no additional cost. In fact, investing in a safety program will save you money by lowering your workers' compensation premiums over time, and even going so far as receiving a rebate on your premiums by becoming certified.

### What does success look like for a safety program?

Success is measured by a number of factors. The standard metric is a significant reduction in the frequency and severity of injuries, but there are others, such as:

- *Employee satisfaction:* A safer environment will encourage employees to come to work and be satisfied with their jobs.
- *Employee engagement:* Having a safety and health committee committed to ensuring the standards are met will increase morale within the company.
- *Increased productivity:* Your profit margins will increase, and your customer satisfaction will rise if your employees are able to focus on the job they are required to do, rather than focusing on potential risks.
- *Raising safety awareness at all levels of a company:* From front-line workers to presidents and CEOs, having employees invest in the safety culture is the greatest measurement of success.<sup>1</sup>

*"Turns out we'd been under-forecasting."*

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