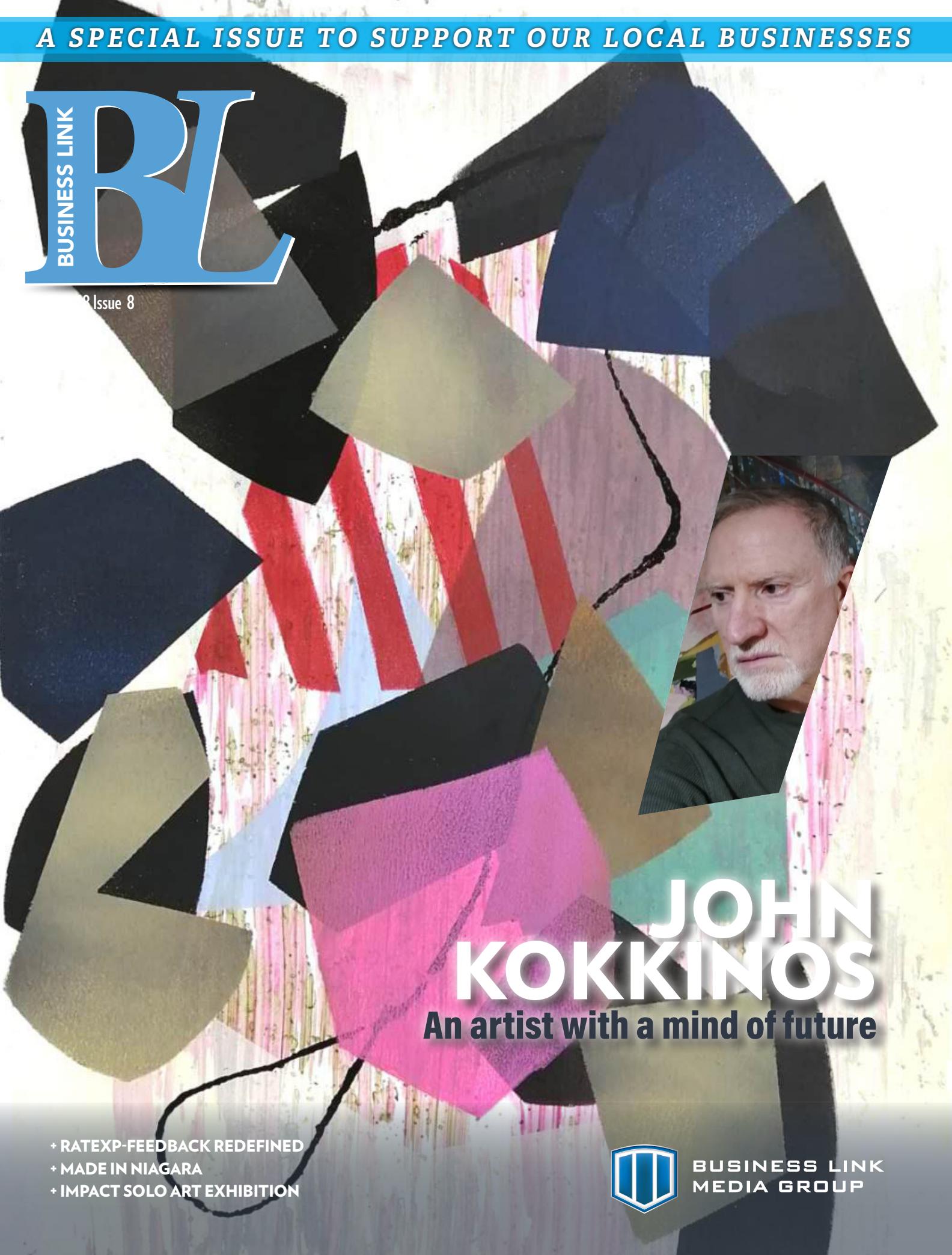


A SPECIAL ISSUE TO SUPPORT OUR LOCAL BUSINESSES

BUSINESS LINK

BC

Issue 8



# JOHN KOKKINOS

An artist with a mind of future

- + RATEXP-FEEDBACK REDEFINED
- + MADE IN NIAGARA
- + IMPACT SOLO ART EXHIBITION



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# PUBLISHER'S NOTE

VOLUME 18 ISSUE 8 //

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## A WORD FROM MARILYN

### Dear Business Link Readers,

The weather is getting cooler and cooler, and I hope you enjoyed summer.

I am very surprised to hear friends in Toronto that they have not known lots of destinations in Niagara. In August, I had a group of sixteen people coming from Toronto wine tasting in a winery, showed them the smallest church and then taste the delicious Cow ice cream. They were so happy and grateful for the trip.

There are more than six million people in GTA, majority of whom have not known Niagara well enough to really enjoy the trip to Niagara.

Therefore I started to make short videos (no more than 60 seconds) two weeks ago introducing Niagara in Mandarin, targeting Chinese Canadians in GTA. I gave an overview of Niagara, the history of Niagara Falls in glacier Ice Age, the legend of Niagara Falls, the overview of Niagara-on-the-Lake, the story of movie star Marilyn Monroe etc. I published

the videos on social media; surprisingly I had thousands of views on every single video. They were so happy and told me that they have been to Niagara many times and never knew the history and stories behind Niagara's attractions. Now with the stories in Niagara, they are more intrigued to see these places from a different angle.

One video production a day to promote Niagara is not an easy task, but it is a meaningful thing to do to provide more stories about Niagara to make Niagara a more attractive place for them to explore.

If you have a good Niagara story, please share it with me.

People love stories!

Yours in business,

**Marilyn Tian M.B.A**

President & CEO

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**John Kokkinos**

**An artist with a mind of future**

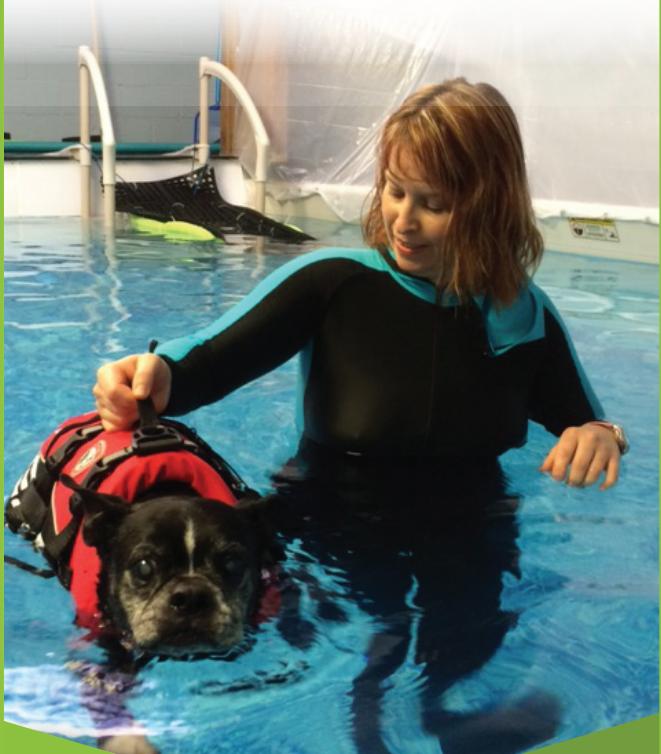


John's immigrated to Canada in 1963 from Greece. His interest in art began early in his life with drawing and painting from the great masters.

Over the years his work has evolved from figurative to abstract. Since 2010 the subject of digital air waves transmitted by computers, has inspired him, as they are moving in all directions, speeds, and size. His approach to painting is complex, very similar to the subject.

In 1977 he had his first Solo exhibition in Toronto, of paintings and sculptures. Since then he had many group and solo exhibitions in Canada, the United States, and China. His work is found in many corporate and private collections, and most notably by the Canada Council Art Bank, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, and at the Lingnan Museum of Art in Dongguan.

**Improving quality of life for Niagara's dogs and cats through rehabilitation therapy, fitness and swimming.**



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**D**id you know that Niagara has its own rehabilitation therapy clinic for dogs and cats? The Niagara Canine Conditioning Centre is the first and only full-service rehab-only facility for pets in our region. It provides the same services and equipment you would find in any human physiotherapy clinic. The Centre has a veterinarian and a physiotherapist, both certified in canine rehab therapy, to provide assessments, set goals and create treatment plans for the patients. There is a rehab technician to design and implement fitness programs for overweight pets. Dogs and cats alike benefit from the expertise and collaboration of therapists from all sides of the field and a facility which enables them to exercise year-round.

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- Weight Loss Programs

# A WORLD WITH NO BUSINESS TRAVELERS

BY MAURICIO ZULUAGA

The COVID-19 pandemic has completely changed our daily lives. Our mobility has become severely restricted, and face to face meetings were replaced by video calls. As a consequence, air travels have dropped by over 70%, and Zoom – the most popular video conferencing platform - now worth more than the seven biggest airlines together. According to the projections made by Statista, the global business travel market is predicted to see a loss of \$810.7 billion. But, what does mean to Canada and its trade partners around the globe?

Ricardo Hausmann, a Venezuelan economist - Director of the Growth Lab at Harvard's Center for International Development -, claims that the world is benefiting enormously by mobilizing the knowhow in brains through business travel, and a permanent shutdown of this channel would probably imply a double-digit loss in global GDP. "Business travel, which used to represent \$1.5 trillion a year – about 1.7% of world GDP –, has slowed to a trickle. But the economic impact will extend far beyond lost jobs at airlines and in the hospitality industry, because it will also lead to a substantial decline in the transfer of knowledge", wrote professor Hausmann.

A recent research, made by Hausmann's team at Harvard University, found a direct link between a country's incoming business travel and the growth of new and existing industries. The academic paper explains that the impact of stopping business travels from Canada would affect the world's GDP more deeply than if United States corporations do it. The global economy would drop by 1.23% if Canadians suspend their trips abroad permanently; meanwhile, the index would decrease by 1.07% if Americans would make the same decision.

Canada's relevance in the travel business segment is explained by the country's free trade culture. Canada is now the only G7 country with free trade agreements with all G7 members. Besides, the open policy towards immigration makes this nation the first country at attracting entrepreneurs. Once newcomers establish their businesses in Canada, their international expansion is easier due to the proven link between immigrant's risk aversion and entrepreneurship.

While Canadian businesses are notoriously risk-averse and concentrate their exports to the United States for ease of doing business, the link between immigrant's risk aversion and entrepreneurship makes newcomers more likely to seek out new markets beyond our southern neighbor. Immigrant entrepreneurs take advantage of their background and previous to export far more than other businesses.

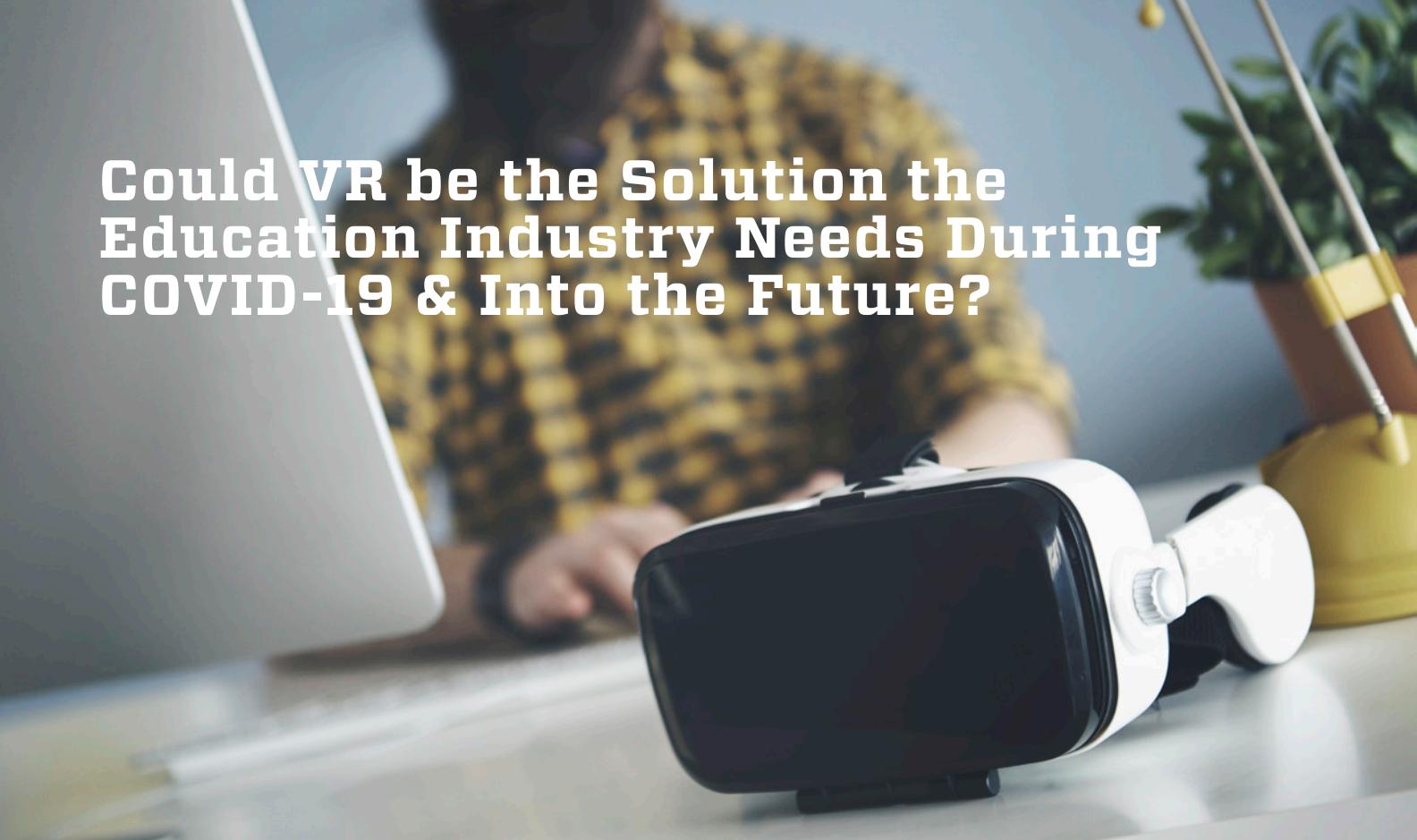
Those facts make Canada a top source of know-how flows. For now, webinars and video conferencing are the main way to transmit knowledge, but even when is cheaper for companies, and may provide more access to information, human interaction is not there. Travelers' expenses cannot be replaced by Zoom or Microsoft Teams. The world needs more Canada, and Canada wants to play a main role in the world. A planet with no business travel may affect that goal.



Mauricio Zuluaga is a Colombian financial journalist.



# Could VR be the Solution the Education Industry Needs During COVID-19 & Into the Future?



Over the past century, many industries have benefited from innovative technology, including the education industry. Although computers can be seen in most North American schools, they are often left to be used as a tool to do work and less as a tool to learn. However, with COVID-19 disrupting the options available for students to learn, the industry has been forced to adopt technology and look at where they should head in the future. With these thoughts in mind and listening to students' experiences around video conferencing classes, we'll look at how the academic world is adopting virtual reality (VR) in all applications related to learning.

## In the Classroom

In the classroom, VR has begun to see early adoption in courses that are hands-on in nature as it offers a safer and more immersive learning experience. Two great examples of this come from Georgian College and Career Labs VR. At Georgian, paramedic students are able to enter a high-stress virtual environment that mimics real-world scenarios. At Career Labs VR, those looking at a career in the trades can try a wide range of jobs and explore possible careers. Outside of schools, these types of simulations have also become popular for private businesses as it's safer and more cost-effective to train employees in VR before putting them on to the job site.

Beyond hands-on simulations, institutes like Brock University have seen success in using VR for soft skills training and to hold regular lectures. This has been successful in the COVID-19 world because VR allows students to interact like they normally do while also adding features like going on virtual field trips or practicing conversation skills with virtual avatars.

## In Research

Moving past the in-class learning benefits of VR, there are also advantages of using VR in the academic space for research. A great example of what has come out of COVID-19 is XpertVR's latest product, The Research Access Portal (RAP). XpertVR's RAP allows researchers to launch virtual research studies in a matter of minutes. First, this saves researchers hours of work and significantly lowers the cost of doing research, allowing graduate students with lower budgets to conduct research that would have otherwise been out of reach. Beyond the cost/time savings, RAP allows users to reach participants around the world and collect more robust data.

With remote tools such as the RAP and educational simulations coming out of COVID-19, it will be exciting to watch how the education industry evolves over the coming years. At XpertVR we hope this technology will create a world where students are immersed in their education and researchers can solve world problems in record time.

---

Evan Sittler is the Co-founder and CEO of XpertVR, a Niagara based start-up bringing imaginations to life through Extended Reality. XpertVR's latest product, the Research Access Portal, allows researchers to design and launch complex virtual research studies in minutes. You can contact Evan at [info@xpertvr.com](mailto:info@xpertvr.com), connecting on LinkedIn or by calling at (519) 741-7778.

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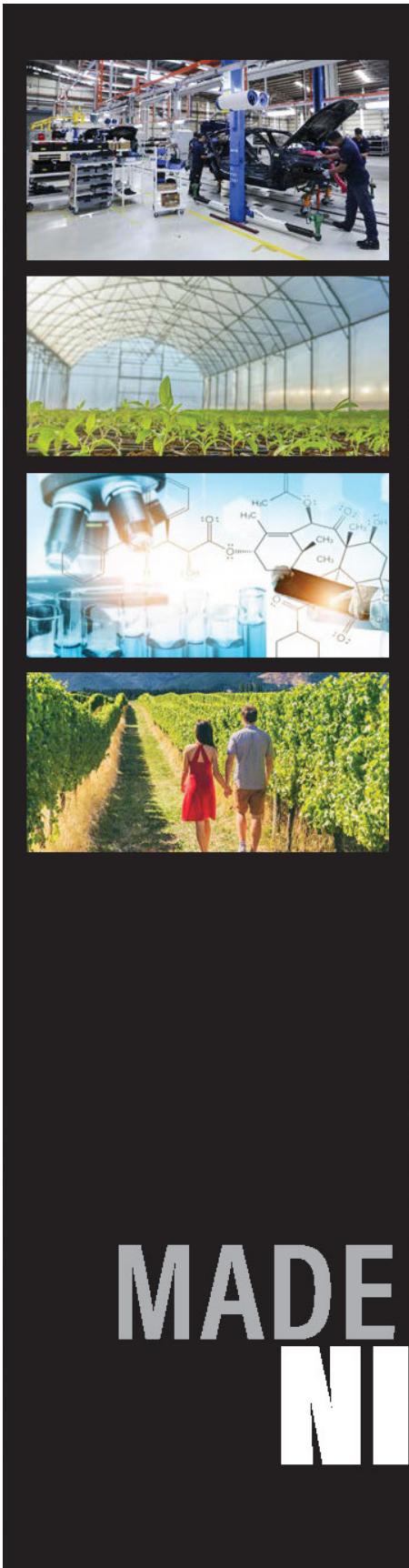
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## IMPOARTANT DATE

**Submission Date**

October 30th

**Issue Date**

November 15th

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# Why you don't see Blockchain in your Everyday Life...yet

Blockchain is a huge buzzword. Even now it's still a vague concept which is hard to grasp, and many people don't understand it. How blockchain can impact our day-to-day life? Blockchain can help to increase transparency in the supply chain and provide consumers proof of where the products are coming from. Blockchain can also help people digitally store physical documents and transfer them internationally. Another example, blockchain can help us get back control of our data and give access to whoever we want when we use tons of applications in this digital world. It seems like blockchain improves all these areas of our daily life. Why don't you see blockchain in your everyday life yet? There are 6 reasons block blockchain adoption.

## Challenge 1: Consortium set-up and governance.

In the supply chain, multiple companies get involved: production facility, logistics company, warehouse, retailer, and other companies. Blockchain can help them chase the product and increase the transparency by creating a digital memory. However, it is not easy for every company to make an agreement and adopt blockchain. There are lots of questions around here: who has the intellectual property, who governs upgrades in this software, and how we kick off misbehaved members or take on new members.

## Challenge 2: Every blockchain project is also a digital project.

For now, many enterprises and governments are still stuck in digitization 1.0. If they want to get into the blockchain, the first thing they need to do is get rid of paper. However, in today's world, we still heavily rely on the paper and block our next step to fully digital world.

## Challenge 3: Legacy systems are complex and hard to integrate with.

If the enterprise moves to the next step. Great! Most of the enterprises store their data in mainstream ERP systems like Oracle, SAP, and other systems. The challenge is that blockchains were never designed to be integrated with those ERP systems. Blockchain needs to find ways to bridge the old world of legacy systems and the new world of blockchains. Also, in the legacy system, processes are tie to each other. Lots of processes are impacted when modifying one process in this system.

## Challenge 4: Regulation.

Use digital blockchain-based vehicle lifecycle management as an example. A lot of parties involved in the digital registration of a vehicle such as the producer of your car, the bank you have insurance, and the police department. If you want to have a 360-degree view of your car, you need to go to each of these systems to get the data. Blockchain can help you solve this problem once those parties want to share and exchange their data, but each party has their regulations.

## Challenge 5: Immaturity of blockchain technology.

Blockchain is fairly young and new technology, and it still needs lots of work to be done in order to make it production and enterprise ready. In the supply chain, maybe you don't want your manufacturer to get all information about the product. Blockchain was designed for transparency, but in this case, blockchain needs to ensure that it can selectively grant access rights to information to particular parties. This is a very important part for blockchain to move into enterprise space.

## Challenge 6: Blockchain makes sense in a world we "might" move into, which takes time.

We can learn from the Internet that adoption takes one generation. Blockchain is at the year of ten but for the first five years, people only viewed blockchain as Bitcoin instead of technology. In recent years, people realize that blockchain can be used for other fields and benefit for our life.

---

Ricardo Garcia - Helping Developers Deploy Blockchain Proof-of-concepts, Platforms & Applications at BigchainDB

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JOHN KOKKINOS



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# 5 TIPS TO HANDLE POLITICAL TALK IN THE ONLINE WORKPLACE

BY ANGELA CIVITELLA

If you thought the last four years was difficult trying to keep politics out of the workplace, get ready for the next few months. The race to the November election is heating up, and you can bet that discussions about politics will bleed over into the workplace, especially online if your employees are still working remotely.

What's more, is that even if you manage to successfully avoid those dreaded political discussions with your colleagues, it may very well still come up with customers, vendors and especially when you least expect it.

Discussions about politics in the workplace have proven to reduce productivity, decrease quality, increase difficulty in getting work done on time, increase negative views of coworkers, add to job stress, and make employees dread coming to work even if that's working virtually.

Talking politics at work equals a toxic work environment. If you think you're safe because you don't see people face-to-face right now and are working from home, think again. Political talk can easily invade the online workspace, too.

Here are five ways you can keep political talk (and tempers) in check at work during this election season.

## Establish ground rules

Some companies will decide to implement a 'political free work zone' and take this very seriously whether in-person or working online. The other way to approach it is for a company to make a statement about the general discourse about what is playing out in the political field. Let everyone know it's ok to have emotions about what is taking place, but not to lose site of the greater picture of the business, your team members and customers. It's a decision that each company will have to make for itself.

## Separate your online personal and professional life

At some point, a coworker or customer may very well check you out on social media. If you are someone who tends to post your political views online, or talk about other controversial topics, consider

adding some form of privacy settings such as only allowing your direct connections to be able to see your content, or going private altogether. Remember that anything you post to social media always has the potential of being discovered by others. Be smart about what you post and remember: sometimes it's best just to remain quiet.

## Don't fan the flames

A lot of business is being done on Zoom calls, but don't let your guard down because you never know when someone might start talking about politics. If the tone of the conversation starts to rise, it's time to end things. Acknowledge what the other person is saying, make a vague comment, and then change the subject to a work-related topic. This allows you to acknowledge a differing point of view while keeping things civil and professional, and agreeing to disagree.

## Keep your background professional

When talking to coworkers, managers or customers on Zoom or Skype, remember that with these video platforms not only can they see you, but they can see your background. Keep it professional. Reframe from backgrounds that display political banners or pictures. Keep attire professional and avoid political shirts, hats and buttons that can start a confrontation.

## It's always your right to decline comment

If a coworker or customer really pushes you to discuss politics even in an online setting, remember that it is always your right to not comment. Simply say, "I'd rather not discuss my political views at this time. I wish you the best with your political decisions." Or, "I'm still evaluating the issues and would rather focus on getting the best results on this project." Always remain calm and don't lose your cool even if they push you to discuss.

## Find common ground if you do discuss

There is always a common ground in politics. You just have to find it and focus on it. Even coworkers with differing political views can find topics they see eye-to-eye on. If you do decide to engage in political talk, even in an online setting, focus more on the topics you agree on and avoid the areas you completely disagree on for another forum outside of work.

## The Takeaway

The dreaded anticipation of talking politics at work can leave us all feeling more than a little unprepared. However, handling political talk isn't something businessowners and leaders need to be afraid of. With a little preparation ahead of time and a plan to disarm the situation if needed, you can rest easy that this time leading up to the November election can go smoothly.

The reality is political conversations are an inevitable part of life. At the end of the day, remember what's most important: coming to work should feel like choosing to be part of a team—not picking a side.

---

Angela Civitella is a business leadership coach and founder of Intinde. [www.intinde.com](http://www.intinde.com)



## COVID-19 Business Update From the GNCC: September 2020

- Today, the Competition Bureau signed a new competition enforcement framework with the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, the New Zealand Commerce Commission, the United Kingdom Competition & Markets Authority, the United States Department of Justice and the United States Federal Trade Commission. The Multilateral Mutual Assistance and Cooperation Framework for Competition Authorities (MMAC) will improve the Bureau's ability to cooperate with these five counterparts in an increasingly digital and global economy. The MMAC will enable its signatories to cooperate more effectively on investigations, share their experiences and work on joint projects, including inter-organizational training initiatives. The MMAC also includes a template that agencies can use to establish bilateral or multilateral cooperation instruments focused on investigative assistance, like sharing confidential information and cross-border evidence gathering.

- The Ontario government is partnering with public transit operators across the province to implement measures aimed at ensuring that transit workers and passengers can safely and confidently take public transit. The government has distributed comprehensive health and safety guidance documents and is providing significant funding to cover lost revenue, enhanced cleaning and other costs incurred because of COVID-19. The Ontario and federal governments are providing up to \$2 billion to 110 municipalities with transit systems as part of the Safe Restart Agreement.

Stay safe and be vigilant. The GNCC is here to support you. Contact us with any questions you have.

[gncc.ca/covid-19](http://gncc.ca/covid-19)

# FASHION WITH AN AFRICAN RISING DESIGNER REBECCA ZORO

First of all, let's have a very short summary of the outbreak. WHO says Africa's figures should be treated with caution as they may be affected by changes in testing capacity and strategy, and delays in reporting data. It's safer to not delve into that topic.

I want to take you to what's drawing attention to Africa: Arts, and this month like in Paris, it's fashion design! That's the time to meet with:

Rebecca Zoro, fashion designer from Cote D'Ivoire who is dressing Beyoncé.

Shall we celebrate Arts, creations, here is Africa! It's making me think of those lines of one of Maya Angelou's poem, Phenomenal Woman:

" Does my sexiness upset you?

Does it come at a surprise

That I dance like I've got diamonds

At the meeting of my thighs? "

That's how you feel while wearing Rebecca Zoro's dresses. She is celebrating Women.

Rebecca is the founder of the brand YHEBE DESIGN is pretty and a talent 33 year-old African woman, absolutely amazing, who is dressing Beyoncé, yes the very Queen B, as well as other artists, like the famous Nigerian female singer Ayo, celebrities and anonymous are every day more and more celebrating her talent, from Paris to Johannesburg. I had the pleasure to spend an afternoon with her, becoming her model along with her beauty queen Amandine, and finally when she did sat down, to interview her.

**Jeannine Oollo-Servat:** Who are you Rebecca, what's your background?

**Rebecca Zorro:** I was born in Côte d'Ivoire and grew up in a classic family, surrounded by loving parents and brothers and sisters, that's the Zorro family. It's my real name.





CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



As much as I can remember, I am making clothes. Very impressed by my elegant mother's, as a child, something inside me wanted to participate to enhance her natural beauty. I have started to wrap her and my dolls with any material I could find in the house. When arrived at the age of college, I have been studying at a reputable design school in Cote d'Ivoire, then working for designers. It was in 2015, I thought that I was ready to leap of faith. I decided to take a sabbatical year to find my Identity. I have traveled in Sub-Saharan Africa and North Africa. My family name is Zorro, YHEBE DESIGN's first model was a cap. I have been lucky, the Nigerian female singer wore it on the stage, and that's how it's going. Guerlain (Paris) for, " la petite robe noire"...

**J.O-S:** Rebecca, can you tell us more about your inspirations?

**R.B:** It is coming from the day to day life. I already told how much I am in love with materials. I like sculpture, painting, architecture, and music. I am using them. For example, I like the blue color, some traditional African material are blue, for my blue collection from which I have taken some models for this article are coming from that. For the other models presented coming from my collection, " L'important c'est la Rose" ( what is mindful is the Rose), that was a message...

**J.O-S:** Rebecca, to end up this afternoon, you know what I went ask you? How did it happen with Queen B?

**R.Z:** In the most simple manner. For Nelson Mandela '100 years of birth celebration, Beyoncé was due to attend as well as other artists, also featured performances from Jay-Z, Ed Sheeran, Eddie Vedder, Pharrell Williams, Chris Martin, Kacey Musgraves, and Usher, in front of powerful people as the former American President Barack Obama. Beyoncé has selected African designers. My agent has been contacted by her staff. Can you imagine? Now I am followed by Queen B, on Instagram and Tweeter! I am also following her...

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Written and translated from French to English, by Jeannine Ollo-Servat.



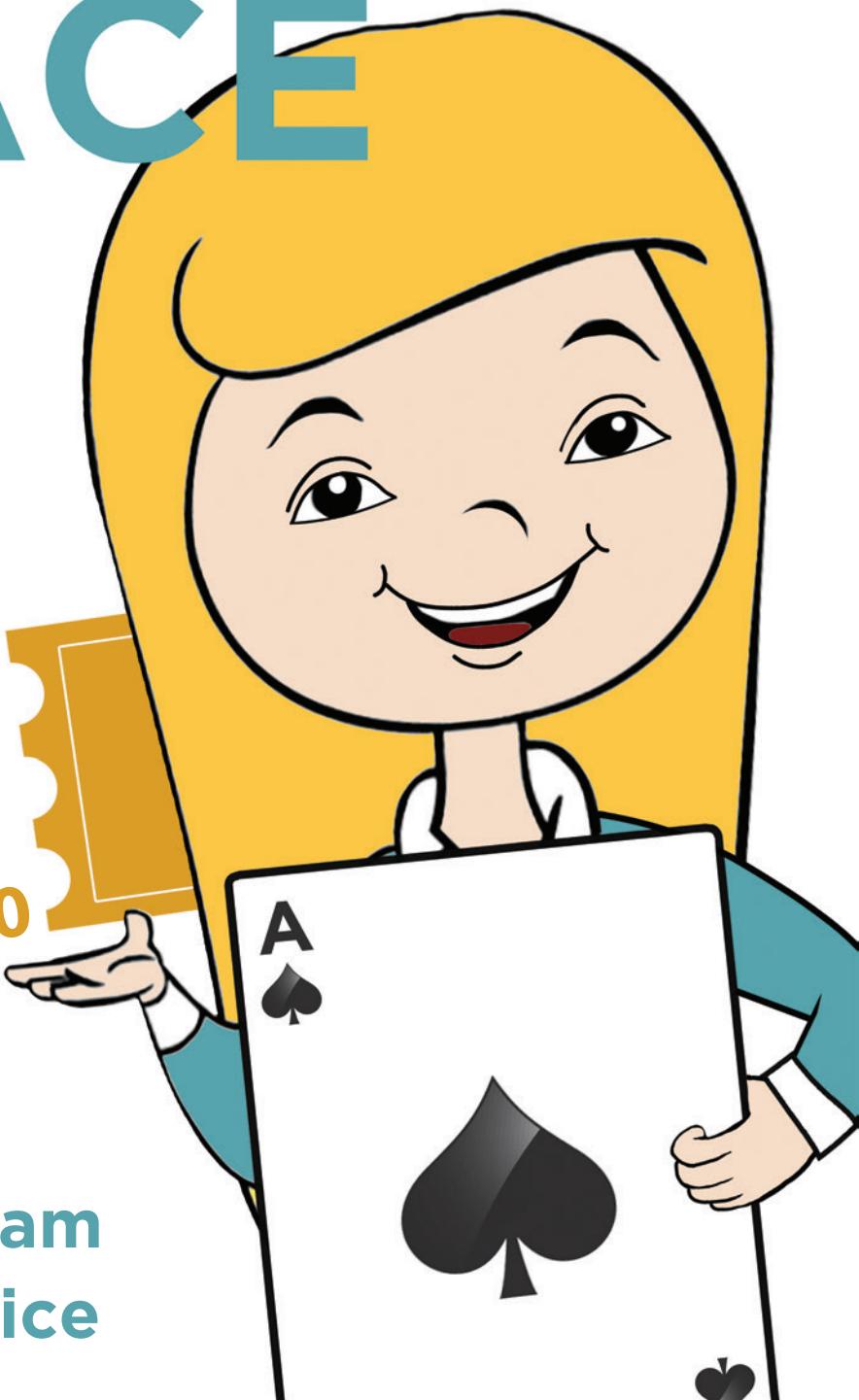
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