



MADE IN NIAGARA

INVEST IN NIAGARA



Business Link
Media Group



PUBLISHER’S NOTE



Dear Readers,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the second edition of “Made in Niagara” magazine. Within the following pages, we aim to guide you through the heart and soul of the Niagara Region—a land of tradition, innovation, and an expanding global footprint.

Our objective in crafting this edition was to provide you with a profound understanding of what sets Niagara apart. Beyond the surface, we sought to reveal the tapestry of industries, cultural heritage, global connections, and collaborative ethos that characterizes this beautiful segment of Ontario, Canada.

Niagara stands as a living embodiment of the harmonious coalescence of various elements. It takes pride in cherishing its history while being open to the opportunities of tomorrow.

This magazine is not just a celebration of Niagara; it’s an invitation for you to celebrate alongside us. As you peruse the pages, we encourage you to immerse yourself in the narratives, insights, and tales that define Niagara. Discover the intersection of tradition with modernity and witness the amalgamation of global influence with local pride. I extend my heartfelt appreciation to our valued partners, advertisers, contributors, and the entire team who have made this publication a reality. Your steadfast support and enthusiasm have been the impetus behind “Made in Niagara.”

To you, our readers, I extend an invitation to explore, engage, and envision the potential encapsulated within “Made in Niagara.” This invitation isn’t just about the magazine; it’s about embracing a collective spirit that goes beyond these pages. Thank you for being an integral part of this endeavor.

Warm regards,

Marilyn Tian, M.B.A
CEO and co-publisher, Business Link Media Group



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Brief Overview of the Niagara Region's Business Landscape

Niagara is a region located on the border between Canada and the United States, which is strategically positioned within the heart of one of North America's business trade corridors. The region has five international border crossings and is within an 800-kilometer radius of 130 million people. Niagara has a strong transportation infrastructure, including road, rail, air, and marine networks.

The Welland Canal connects Lake Ontario with Lake Erie and enables access to global markets through the St. Lawrence Seaway. The Niagara District Airport, located within 100 kilometers of 3 international airports, provides regular commuter service between the GTA and Niagara through Fly GTA Airways.

Niagara is governed by a two-tier municipal structure with responsibilities divided between the Region and 12 local area municipalities (LAMs). The region has a population of 477,941 and is expected to grow by a minimum of 694,000 with 272,000 newly created jobs by 2051. Niagara has 42,328 businesses, with the top five sectors: accommodation & food services, thanks to its proximity to the iconic Niagara Falls, retail trade, health and social Services, manufacturing, as well as educational services driving economic activity in the region.

The horticultural sector is a significant component of the region's economy, known for its expertise in greenhouse production. The manufacturing sector is also a significant contributor to the region's GDP and employs over 17,000 people. Niagara has been awarded the federal designation of a Foreign Trade Zone Point, recognizing its important role in facilitating trade between Canada and the global marketplace.

GREETINGS

2023

"Made in Niagara"

greetings

from

MAYOR JIM DIODATI

&

MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

There is something
for everyone
in Niagara Falls.
We invite you to visit
our buffet of fun
& entertainment.

EXPLORE . ENJOY . REPEAT .



NIAGARAFALLS.CA



The Pillars of Niagara's Economy

Welcome to this comprehensive exploration of “The Pillars of Niagara’s Economy,” a feature in our “Made in Niagara” series. Here, we dissect the vibrant economic fabric of the Greater Niagara Region in Ontario, Canada, showcasing the diverse sectors that form its robust backbone. First, we journey into the heart of Niagara’s thriving tourism industry, underscored by the iconic Niagara Falls and a flourishing food and wine scene that draws millions of visitors each year. Then, we transition into the dynamic manufacturing sector, highlighting its diversity and competitiveness, punctuated by prominent businesses such as Airbus Helicopters Canada and GM Canada. The agricultural sector’s role is integral to this economic mosaic, with a focus on the region’s agri-business triumphs, from lush vineyards to innovative greenhouses. The spotlight then turns to the educational landscape, where institutions like Niagara College are molding both local and International students through cutting-edge programs and research. Additionally, we delve into how Niagara is fostering a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship, catalyzing economic growth. In this exploration, we also bring you inspiring success stories from thriving businesses such as NPG Planning Solutions, the City of Niagara Falls Business Development, and Niagara College. Each section offers an in-depth analysis of these sectors, demonstrating their significant contributions to Niagara’s economy and their potential for future growth. Join us as we unravel these dynamic economic pillars that make Niagara not just a region but a compelling narrative of growth and opportunity.

I. Tourism: Powering Niagara’s Diverse Economy Tourism Destination

Niagara is a truly remarkable tourism destination, offering visitors a wealth of natural beauty, diverse geography, and world-renowned attractions. Perhaps the most famous of these is Niagara Falls, which boasts over 12,000 years of history and attracts around 14 million visitors each year. There are numerous captivating attractions in the Niagara Falls region beyond the renowned waterfalls, making it an enticing destination for visitors of all ages and interests. With over 140 wineries, breweries, and distilleries, Niagara is a paradise for foodies and wine lovers. The region’s culinary scene is truly world-class, with a rich variety of local produce and farm-to-table dining experiences on offer. Visitors can also explore the region’s rich history through monuments, museums, and heritage structures, immersing themselves in the fascinating stories of the past.

Tourism is a major contributor to Niagara’s economy, generating significant business activity, jobs, and other economic benefits. While visitors have traditionally been drawn to Niagara’s natural wonders and assets, the COVID pandemic has created new opportunities for local tourism and outdoor activities. This has given visitors even more opportunities to discover the region’s charming local downtowns, beaches, agri-tourism, and farm-to-table opportunities, providing a new perspective on all that Niagara has to offer. It has also kept residents and visitors safer by implementing contactless services, online booking systems and more home delivery services.

2. Manufacturing: Driving Economic Growth in Niagara

Niagara’s manufacturing sector is a crucial contributor to the region’s economic growth, accounting for 14% of the region’s GDP. The sector is diverse and includes notable employers in the aerospace industry, such as Airbus, the automotive industry, such as GM Canada, and pharmaceutical manufacturing industry like Northernchem. With over 620 manufacturing businesses in the region, the sector provides employment opportunities for over 17,000 people. It also offers several advantages for manufacturers, including its proximity to the US border, lower utility costs resulting in significant operational savings, and resources to support manufacturing companies such as educational partnerships, stakeholder groups, and strategic incentives.

Niagara is recognized as the second most cost-competitive center for business in Ontario and is ranked seventh for manufacturing in North America. These rankings reflect the region’s commitment to creating an environment that is conducive to business growth and development. With its diverse manufacturing sector and favorable business climate, Niagara is well-positioned to continue contributing significantly to the region’s economic growth in the years to come.

3. Agriculture: The Heart of Niagara’s Grape Production

The Niagara region boasts a thriving agri-business sector, a vital contributor to the local economy and quality of life. It is a significant agri-food cluster in North America, with abundant agricultural land and a prime location within key food and farming clusters. Niagara is actively attracting investments and fostering growth in agri-businesses, with a particular emphasis on its strengths in greenhouse cultivation, cash crops, poultry farming, and fruit farming. The region actively supports and promotes its agriculture sector, emphasizing a conducive policy environment and addressing labor force challenges.

The presence of research centers, educational institutes, and ongoing research efforts contributes to innovation and sustainability in agriculture. Looking ahead, Niagara aims to leverage its existing foundation, emphasizing innovation, value-added agriculture, agri-tourism, and strengthening the agri-food supply chain, all recognized and protected by the region’s official plan.

Encompassing an impressive 208,000+ acres of farmland, with over 1,600 farms, 160+ greenhouses, and 108 wineries, the region is a diverse agricultural powerhouse. Its landscape encompasses flourishing cash crop, dairy, and poultry farms, alongside specialized greenhouses dedicated to the cultivation of fresh flowers, fruits, vegetables, and licensed cannabis.

What sets this region apart is the unique synergy between its deep sandy soils and favorable microclimates. These conditions not only support a flourishing winemaking industry but also facilitate the growth of a variety of fruits, including peaches, cherries, pears and plums. Also, Niagara takes pride in being the driving force behind 90% of Ontario’s grape production, solidifying its status as a prominent contributor to the province’s agricultural landscape.

4. Real Estate and Urban Development: Attracting Investment to Niagara

Niagara’s growth is notably reflected in its ever-changing real estate and urban landscape. This section delves into the strategies, visions, and dynamics that characterize the expansion of this region, offering a deeper insight into the numerous transformations occurring in the physical, social, and economic fabric of the area.

Niagara’s real estate and urban development sectors are rapidly evolving, reflecting the region’s growth and transformation. One of the key drivers is the ongoing development of new commercial and residential properties, which is transforming the region’s skyline. This development is being driven by a range of factors, including the region’s strong economic growth, the growing population, and the increasing demand for contemporary, sustainable living and working spaces.

At the heart of this transformation is visionary planning, which is shaping the future of Niagara’s urban landscape. This planning is focused on creating vibrant, livable communities that are designed to meet the needs of residents and businesses alike. Key strategies include the development of mixed-use neighborhoods that combine residential, commercial, and retail spaces, as well as the creation of green spaces and public amenities that promote healthy living and community engagement.

In addition to new development, Niagara is also investing in the revitalization of its existing urban areas. This includes the restoration of heritage buildings and the creation of pedestrian-friendly streetscapes that encourage foot traffic and support local businesses. These initiatives foster a more vibrant and dynamic urban environment that is attracting new residents, businesses, and visitors to the region.

Overall, Niagara’s real estate and urban development sectors are undergoing a period of rapid growth and transformation. With visionary urban planning and a commitment to sustainable development, the region is well-positioned to continue evolving and adapting to meet the needs of its residents and businesses for years to come.





STANLEY HOTEL & CONDOMINIUM



VINELAND GROWERS



VILLAGE CENTRE COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

NPG

PLANNING SOLUTIONS

NPG PLANNING SOLUTIONS INC.

As an innovative land use planning and development firm with offices in Niagara Falls, Hamilton, and Toronto, we attribute much of our exciting success and steady growth to the strong relationships we develop not only with our clients but also the larger community.

NPG's Team is comprised of professionals with ideally diversified skills and experience, by design, so that we can continue to welcome work across the spectrum from working on large community plans to assisting individual property owners or those starting out in the development field.

STANLEY HOTEL & CONDOMINIUM:

NPG Planning Solutions led the planning work for the Stanley Hotel and Condominium development. The development consists of three towers, each over 30 storeys tall.

There are 2 residential towers each with approximately 580 units, and an adjacent third tower hotel with 300 hotel rooms and 13,000 ft² of retail space on the ground floor, situated on a 3.5 acre site in the heart of Niagara's Fallsview area.

Those shopping, enjoying the tourist accommodations, or living in the towers will enjoy an impressive view of the Canadian Horseshoe Falls and Niagara Falls' Queen Victoria Park.

VILLAGE CENTRE COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT:

At the heart of the Garrison Village in Niagara-on-the-Lake is the Village Centre Commercial Development, a mixed residential and commercial community designed on principles of new urbanism – walkable streets, diversity of architecture, a beautiful park network, and an overall design that is sensitive to and integrates with Niagara's wineries and their landscapes. The Village Centre is comprised of new commercial and retail spaces, hotel, medical centre, and is a showpiece for design for public gathering, combining public spaces and private spaces for an attractive and welcoming village core.

NPG worked alongside our client and DPZ CoDesign– the team led by Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, to design and implemented the Commercial Core of Garrison Village.

VINELAND GROWERS:

As the oldest agricultural co-operative in Canada, Vineland Growers has been distributing tender fruit (peaches, plums, grapes, etc.) on behalf of Ontario farmers since its inception in 1913. Vineland Growers has been rapidly expanding and has outgrown its existing 2 owned sites, 3 rented sites, and over 100 storage trailers across the Niagara Region.

With the support and guidance of NPG Planning Solutions on policy work and planning, Vineland Growers was able to secure approvals and support to develop a new 21-acre site on Fourth Avenue, in Jordan Station, in the Town of Lincoln. The new site consolidates many of Vineland Growers' activities in one location.

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Driving Economic Growth: **Niagara Falls' Business Development Initiatives Attract Investment and Foster Success**

Economic growth is a collective effort, and this section highlights the crucial role played by the City of Niagara Falls Business Development Department in propelling the region forward through strategic investments and and the cultivation of a business-friendly environment.

The Business Development Department (BDD) at the City of Niagara Falls is committed to promoting the area as an ideal location for businesses. They provide services such as consultations, site selection and tours, market analysis, business & financial incentive assistance, business retention and expansion assistance, support for company export market development, and the establishment of supplier networks. The BDD also assists with the sale or lease of municipally-owned land, financial structuring, and related business attraction. They work with the Niagara Falls Small Business Enterprise Centre to provide additional guidance and support for businesses with unique needs. Overall, the BDD is a valuable resource for businesses looking to grow and invest in Niagara Falls.

5. Education and Innovation:
A Hub for Learning and Growth in Niagara

Niagara offers several opportunities in education and innovation. Higher education includes Niagara College, which collaborates with the University of Guelph and the Vineland Research and Innovation Centre through its Greenhouse Technology Network. McMaster University also has a Niagara regional School of Medicine campus at Brock University. Additionally, the region has Innovate Niagara, a Regional Innovation Centre, and the Niagara Falls-Ryerson Innovation Hub (NFRIH), formed through a partnership between The City of Niagara Falls, Niagara Falls Innovation Center, and Ryerson University. Niagara Canada is ranked 18th in research and development.

The anticipated arrival of the University of Niagara Falls Canada, operated by Global University Systems (GUS) Canada, aiming to welcome students by 2024, will further enhance the region's focus on technology-oriented education. The region also has local initiatives to explore opportunities for incubation-related support facilities for the agri-food sector in Niagara.

In addition to its thriving post-secondary and innovation sectors, Niagara also offers a diverse range of options for elementary, secondary, and independent schools. With 137 elementary schools, 26 secondary schools, and 11 independent schools, there is a wealth of options for families and students of all ages. Whether pursuing higher education or seeking innovative opportunities in the region's technology and startup sectors, Niagara's educational landscape caters to the needs of everyone.



OPPORTUNITIES FLOW IN NIAGARA FALLS.

The Business Development Department is the first point of contact in the City of Niagara Falls to assist existing businesses, prospective investors, and individuals with business ideas and community development projects. Connect with us and come see all the opportunities that flow in Niagara Falls, Canada.



ACCESSIBILITY

With easy access to over 150 million consumers within a day's drive, Niagara Falls can bring you closer to your global market.



INFRASTRUCTURE

The investment and maintenance of strong infrastructure to support your business growth are among our city's top priority.



WORKFORCE

Niagara Falls has the skilled and technologically inclined workforce to support your short-term and long-term labour goals.



SCAN TO LEARN MORE

NIAGARAFALLSBUSINESS.CA





The Innovative Approach of Niagara College in Niagara's Education Sector

Explore how Niagara College, a hub of educational excellence, is shaping future leaders and fostering innovation.

Niagara College, established in 1967, is a leading global college and one of Canada's top post-secondary institutions. With a mission to provide exceptional applied education and training, the college offers a holistic student experience, academic excellence, global reach, alumni & partner engagement, environmental sustainability, and organizational excellence. Niagara College has over 13,000 students from 95 countries, offering 130 programs including apprenticeships, certificates, diplomas, and bachelor degrees. The college is situated on specialized campuses in the dynamic Niagara region, renowned for its shopping and entertainment options. The Welland Campus focuses on technology, trades, health, policing, and automotive programs, while the Niagara-on-the-Lake Campus offers state-of-the-art facilities for environmental studies, hospitality, business, and winemaking. Niagara College stands out with its on-campus learning enterprises that provide real-world experiences for students. These enterprises are open to the public and allow students to apply their skills in a practical setting. Overall, Niagara College is dedicated to enriching lives and fulfilling dreams through hands-on learning and global opportunities like international study/ work programs.



WHAT WE DO

Niagara College offers programs which immerse students within a highly experiential learning environment, enhanced by digital technologies. Our graduates possess cultural and global competencies; they are innovative, adaptable and entrepreneurial, pushing the boundaries of the possible for industry in Niagara, in Canada and abroad.

WHO WE ARE

We place students at the centre of all that we do.

We act swiftly as innovators to seize opportunities.

We are committed to diversity, inclusivity, and understanding.

THIS IS NC



niagaracollege.ca

6. Health Care, Green Mobility, and Film: Thriving Industries in Niagara



Niagara's economy is being driven by a range of emerging sectors, including healthcare, sustainable mobility, and the film industry. These sectors offer new and growing opportunities for the region, and are being actively pursued by local visionaries, entrepreneurs and business innovators.

In healthcare, Niagara has seen significant investment in recent years, with the completion of a new state-of-the-art hospital, expansion of medical education, and redevelopment of existing hospitals. The broader life sciences sector is also developing, with companies focusing on biotechnology, pharmaceutical manufacturing, pathogen testing, hygiene product manufacturing, and prosthetics and orthotics manufacturing.

Meanwhile, Niagara is looking to capitalize on the growth potential of green mobility, including alternative fuels, artificial intelligence, and electrification of the automotive industry. The region is proactively leveraging its existing strengths in these areas to drive innovation and propel sustainable growth.

The film industry is another promising sector for Niagara, with a base of 259 businesses already established in the region. There has been significant job growth associated with the film industry between 2015 and 2019, and Niagara is hoping to attract even more interest from film companies by streamlining processes and marketing the region as an appealing destination for production. Overall, these emerging sectors are driving growth and innovation in Niagara's economy, and are poised for even more success in years to come.

These pillars serve as focal points where regional leaders and stakeholders work to stimulate economic growth, improve the quality of life, and cultivate opportunities within the Greater Niagara Region of Ontario. Specific initiatives and strategies may evolve with the changing landscape, they encompass a diverse range of sectors including education, advanced manufacturing, agriculture and tourism, making Niagara an attractive and multifaceted hub for growth and innovation.

Niagara:

Where Tradition Meets Innovation in Perfect Harmony

Niagara is a popular tourist destination, known for its main attraction, the Niagara Falls, as well as botanical gardens, museums, art galleries, and haunted houses. In addition to its cultural heritage, Niagara is seeing growth in technical sectors, such as computer systems and design, scientific research and development, architecture and engineering, as well as technology and innovation.

Businesses in Niagara blend traditional and modern practices to create innovative products and services. This approach reflects the overall spirit of Niagara, where tradition meets innovation in perfect harmony. From craft breweries to advanced manufacturing facilities, businesses in Niagara are at the forefront of embracing technology to drive growth and deliver exceptional experiences to their customers. An article explores how Business Link Media Group is an example of a business in Niagara that has embraced modern technologies such as NFTs, an AI chat portal, and the metaverse to enhance its services and stay ahead of the curve. This approach has allowed them to remain competitive in the tourism industry.

Established in 2003, Business Link Media Group is a prominent media conglomerate that offers diverse B2B communication channels in Niagara and Hamilton. Their platform educates, informs and connects businesses, providing local growth opportunities with global exposure. Notable publications include The Business Link Niagara, The Business Link Hamilton, All in the Family, and HWS—Health, Wellness & Safety Magazine. As a testament to their enduring success, Business Link is celebrating 20 years in business.

From Meetup Groups to NFTs: Business Link’s Journey in the Blockchain Industry



Established in 2021, Business Link’s Web 3 Meetup Group has 1053 members as of September 2023

Business Link Media Group has demonstrated its commitment to innovation and technology by founding a meetup group named "Blockchain in Business" in 2021. Through this initiative, the company hosted monthly virtual workshops on a wide array of topics such as Web 3.0 (Metaverse, DAO, NFTs, and Cryptos), attracting over 1000 blockchain enthusiasts from various corners of the globe. This platform allowed for the vibrant exchange of knowledge and ideas, firmly establishing Business Link as a leader in the blockchain industry.

In early 2022, Business Link made waves in the publishing industry by becoming one of the first companies worldwide to mint publications as NFTs (Non-Fungible Tokens) on the EOS Blockchain. This groundbreaking move demonstrated the company’s forward-thinking approach and willingness to explore new frontiers. By leveraging blockchain technology, Business Link opened up new possibilities for digital ownership and distribution of its publications. This innovation not only positioned the company as a leader in the publishing industry but also showcased Niagara as a region where tradition and innovation converge.

Web 3 Innovators: Exploring DAO, NFT, Crypto, and Metaverse

(50)
Niagara Falls, ON
1,053 members · Public group
Organized by Marilyn Tian
[Edit group info](#)

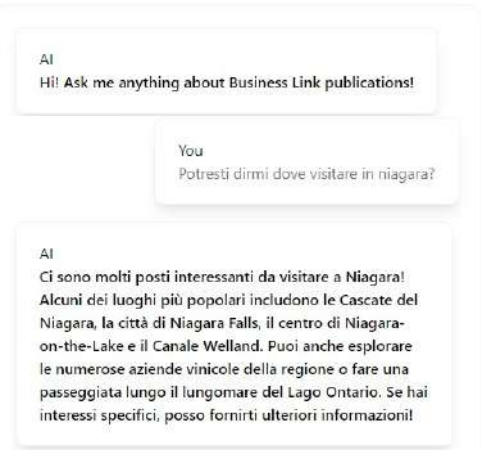
Share:

AI Chat Portal Launching

In September 2023, Business Link developed its very own AI chat portal to adapt to the digital age. This innovative platform allows businesses to connect and advertise accurately and efficiently through artificial intelligence, streamlining processes and improving customer experiences. With the AI chat portal, businesses can provide round-the-clock customer support, handle multiple inquiries simultaneously, and provide various languages to serve a broader audience. By embracing cutting-edge technologies such as AI, Business Link has elevated its services while staying true to its roots. Business Link also provides the AI chat portal customization service to clients, allowing them to tailor the chatbot to precisely align with their unique business requirements. This customization service further modernizes Business Link's services and empowers clients to update their business models. The resounding success of this transformation validates Business Link's unwavering commitment to better servicing its clients with digital solutions, while enhancing its client services.

Business Link Chat Portal Demo

This is a simple demo to showcase the conversational generative AI capabilities that Business Link offers. We can build and deploy a similar chat portal for your business!



Effortlessly switch between languages during inquiries to serve a diverse audience

You
¿Qué es el Canal Welland?

AI
El Canal Welland es una vía fluvial ubicada en la región de Niagara en Ontario, Canadá. Es un canal de navegación que conecta el lago Ontario con el lago Erie, permitiendo el transporte de barcas y embarcaciones a través de las cataratas del Niágara. El canal consta de ocho esclusas que elevan los barcos 326 pies (100 metros) sobre la Escarpa del Niágara. El Canal Welland es parte del sistema de la Autopista H2O del río San Lorenzo y contribuye al comercio y la economía de Canadá.

You
أخبرني عن مصانع النبيذ في نياجرا

AI
وفقًا للمقالات المذكورة، تشير إحدى المقالات إلى أن نياجرا تنتج حاليًا 80٪ من النبيذ والعنب في كندا. ومن المعروف أن نياجرا تعتبر منطقة زراعية قوية وتحتل مساحة 22 مليون قدم مربع من المساحة الزراعية في أونتاريو. وتضم المنطقة العديد من الشركات التي تزرع العنب وتنتج النبيذ، مثل شركة ريديكان في بيلهام وشركة تويد فارمز في نياجرا-أون-ذا-ليك وشركة كانترست في بيلهام وشركة أب كانابيس في لينكولن.

إذا كنت تبحث عن مزيد من المعلومات حول مصانع النبيذ في نياجرا، يمكنك التواصل مع جهات الاتصال المذكورة في المقالات أو البحث عن دليل الأعمال المحلي في المنطقة.

You
¿Qué es el Canal Welland?

AI
El Canal Welland es una vía fluvial ubicada en la región de Niagara en Ontario, Canadá. Es un canal de navegación que conecta el lago Ontario con el lago Erie, permitiendo el transporte de barcas y embarcaciones a través de las cataratas del Niágara. El canal consta de ocho esclusas que elevan los barcos 326 pies (100 metros) sobre la Escarpa del Niágara. El Canal Welland es parte del sistema de la Autopista H2O del río San Lorenzo y contribuye al comercio y la economía de Canadá.

Metaverse Showcase at 40 Under Forty Events

Business Link has been celebrating the next generation of leaders through its annual 40 Under Forty Business Achievement Awards in the Niagara region since 2003 and Hamilton region since 2012. This prestigious program recognizes 40 young professionals under the age of 40 who have demonstrated excellence in their respective fields, including their achievements, leadership qualities, and community involvement.

Business Link Media Group has also embraced the metaverse as a way to enhance its event. At the 40 Under Forty Business Achievement Awards ceremony, Business Link created a virtual experience that allowed attendees to interact with each other and with digital representations of the award winners. This metaverse showcase was a unique way to celebrate the achievements of the winners, while also demonstrating Business Link's commitment to innovation and technology. The metaverse provided an immersive and engaging experience for attendees, allowing them to connect with each other and the award winners in a new and exciting way.

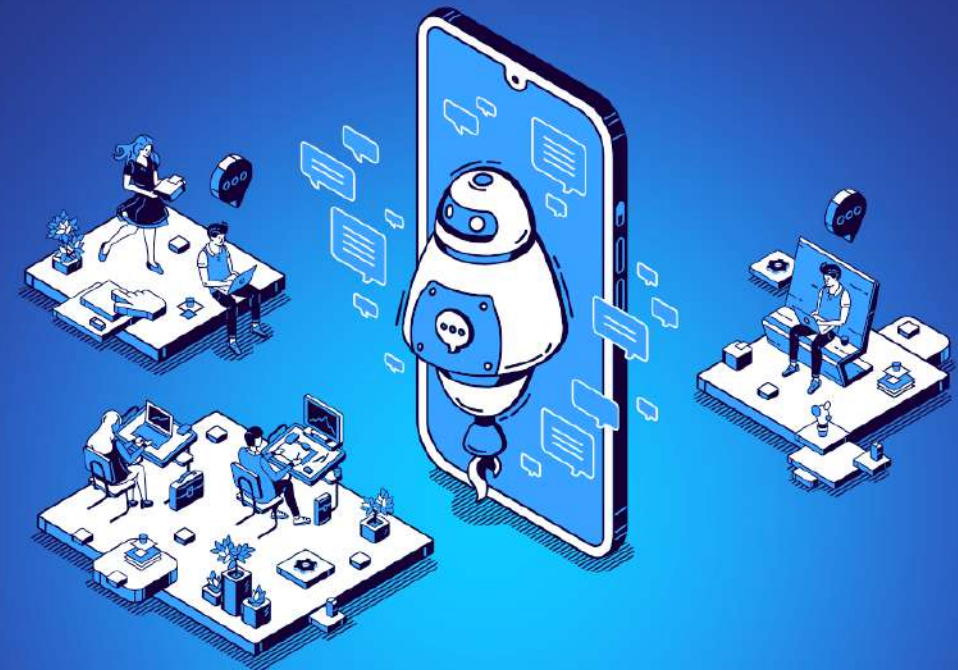


Business Link 40u40 Metaverse Awards Ceremony demo in 2023

Business Link Media Group's innovative approach to technology has positioned it as a leader in the advertising and connectivity industry. By embracing modern technologies such as blockchain and AI chat portals, Business Link has enhanced its services while staying true to its roots. This innovation not only elevates the company's position as a leader but also serves as a testament to Niagara's capacity to foster traditional industries through innovation. As technology continues to advance, Business Link is well-positioned to maintain its leadership role in delivering innovative solutions for businesses in Niagara and beyond.

TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION

WWW.BUSINESSLINKMEDIA.COM



- 40 Under Forty Program
- Digital Publications
- Marketing Consulting Service
- Digital Solutions

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Voices from Niagara Community: Celebrating Diversity, Unity, and Progress

Niagara is a community that flourishes through unity, collaboration, and the power of a collective voice. This article explores the stories and perspectives of remarkable individuals from diverse industries and backgrounds who have made a significant impact on the region's growth and prosperity. Through their voices, we gain profound insight into the unique contributions that render Niagara a dynamic and inclusive community.





1. Tourism

“One of the biggest strengths of the tourism industry in Niagara, and the region as a whole, is the diversity of experiences available here. At the Niagara Parks Commission, we are responsible for 56 kilometers of some of the world’s most spectacular parkland, including the iconic Canadian Horseshoe Falls. Following the Niagara River from Fort Erie to Niagara-on-the-Lake, guests will find natural attractions, locally sourced restaurants, championship golf courses, rich heritage sites and world-renowned public gardens, parks and trails. We take great pride in our role as stewards of this land, protecting and preserving it for the enjoyment of the public since our establishment by the Province of Ontario in 1885. Although Niagara Parks is an organization steeped in history, we are constantly innovating to ensure we are meeting and exceeding the expectations of our guests, from opening a brand-new attraction, the Niagara Parks Power Station and Tunnel to investing in renovations to our facilities.”
-April Jeffs, Chair of the Niagara Parks Commission

2. Agriculture and Wine Production

“I grew up on a small fruit farm in St. Catharines and developed an interest in horticulture, which led me to graduate from the University of Guelph. After returning to the family farm, I focused on the nursery business and co-founded Inniskillin Estate Winery with Karl Kaiser. I had the pleasure of watching and participating in the growth of the Niagara wine industry and helped create an agriculture preserve in the Niagara Region as a member of the Greenbelt Task Force. However, I am concerned about too much development taking place in the tender fruitlands of the Niagara region and believe it’s crucial to preserve the agricultural lands below the Escarpment. I support “buy local” initiatives and encourage people to “Buy local! Buy VQA.” (Vintners Quality Alliance)”
-Donald J.P. Ziraldo, C.M., LLD, Founder of Ziraldo Estate Wines

3. Government Business Services

“Local businesses are often referred to as the heart of the community. These are the people who have taken a risk to build something that they love. They provide employment opportunities for the local community; they sponsor and support local initiatives; and they make Niagara a great place to live and do business. On a personal level it is very rewarding to see a new entrepreneur start their business; or an existing entrepreneur expand their business. We all want to work towards our local economy being one that provides a high quality of living for all residents, with ample well-paying employment opportunities for years to come! This is something I am passionate about.”

-Michael Warchala, Economic Development Officer at City of Niagara Falls

4. Real Estate

It comes as no surprise that the Niagara real estate market is esteemed for its natural beauty and is considered an excellent location for real estate investments in the country, promising meaningful returns on investments.

The constant influx of visitors to the city has led to a burgeoning demand for hotels, motels, and other forms of short-term rental accommodations, adding to the allure of investing in this region. Additionally, the city offers a vibrant social scene with numerous bars, restaurants, and unique entertainment venues that attract both visitors and residents.

Exciting projects are underway, such as a development claimed to be the tallest residential condo tower in Canada is Niagara 77 Condos, an upcoming pre-construction project in Niagara Falls, ON, situated in the heart of the city. This residential area offers unparalleled convenience to residents, providing easy access to various attractions in Niagara Falls, including mesmerizing views of the Falls, vibrant Clifton Hill, GO Transit Services, shopping malls, and more.

-Michael Sommer, Sales Representative, Royal LePage NRC Realty, Brokerage

5. Culture and Arts

“Culture, art, and diversity breathe life into our community. They are the heartbeat that resonates within our society. As the CEO of the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, I have had the privilege of witnessing their profound impact, most recently at the seventh annual *Celebration of Nations event*. This weekend has become a beloved tradition in Niagara, where multiple generations and diverse cultural backgrounds come together to share in the gifts of traditional Indigenous culture and teachings.

At the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre we are proud to present unique programming featuring a diverse array of artists from around the globe, as we believe this contributes to a more inclusive, vibrant and harmonious community. One where everyone’s voice is not only heard, but is also celebrated!”

-Colleen A. Smith – CEO, FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre

6. Startup Capital Investment

“As a passionate investor in the Niagara region's startup scene, I truly believe in the potential of local entrepreneurs to make a difference in their industries.

At FirstOnes Capital, we share this passion for startups and specialize in providing early stage funding to tech startups, even before the seeds are planted. Our commitment to under-represented founders sets us apart from other investors, as we strive to become trusted advisors, confidants, and the biggest cheerleaders to the entrepreneurs we work with.

We understand that traction is more important than revenue milestones, and we take inspiration from successful investments like Docere Health, which was backed by Agostino based on Luka's Lamaj's vision. That's why we're called FirstOnes Capital, because we're the first ones to invest in your journey to success.

If you're a visionary founder with a big idea and the drive to make it happen, come talk to us. We're here to support you and help turn your dreams into reality.”

-Agostino Menna Ph.D, cofounder, FirstOnes Capital

7. Small and Medium-sized Enterprises

“Niagara is a great place to live, do business, and raise a family. It’s not just a “natural wonder of the world” or “honeymoon capital,” but also the fastest-growing business community in Canada.

As a business owner in Niagara, I’ve achieved tremendous growth and received numerous awards, including “Businessman in Niagara,” “Business Achievement Award,” and “Community Spirit Award.” I’m proud to serve on the board of directors for the Niagara Health Foundation and support various charitable organizations.

Representing the SME industry in the vibrant “Made in Niagara” community is an honor. With a wealth of talented entrepreneurs and a thriving ecosystem, Niagara is a hub for innovation and creativity. Collaboration among local businesses is vital to elevate the SME sector and showcase exceptional products and services crafted in Niagara. Let’s celebrate entrepreneurship, nurture local talent, and build a prosperous future for all “Made in Niagara” businesses together.”

- Sunny Halani, Owner: The UPS Store 192 & Zippy Golf Carts. Board of Directors of Niagara Health Foundation.

Sustainability Initiatives Unite Niagara Region Municipalities



Niagara Region municipalities are taking bold steps towards a sustainable future. Niagara Falls has implemented a Pollinator Garden Route along the Niagara Parkway to support pollinating species and sustain ecosystems. Additionally, the city has launched a program called "Greening Niagara Falls" to encourage residents to plant trees and shrubs and to reduce their carbon footprint.

Niagara College is leading the way in prioritizing sustainability by providing education and training that meets current needs while protecting natural resources for the future. They have implemented various sustainable initiatives, such as green roofs, energy-efficient buildings, and waste diversion programs.

The City of Welland is collaborating with Dillon Consulting and Niagara College on a year-long project to create an Atlas Landfill Remediation Concept Plan for a retired landfill site on Woodlawn Road. The project aims to improve the site's ecological function and create a sustainable space for the community.

In St. Catharines, the city has implemented a Climate Emergency Declaration and is working towards achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. They have also launched several initiatives, including a Community Energy Plan and a Green Fleet Strategy, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Niagara Region declared a climate change emergency in 2021 due to the health risks posed by climate change and environmental factors to vulnerable residents. Since then, they have taken significant steps to combat climate change and promote sustainability, including reducing electricity, natural gas, and greenhouse gas emissions.

The region is engaging the community through various initiatives such as the Niagara Climate

Change Action Network, the Corporate Climate Change Working Group, and the Niagara Climate Change Municipal Community of Practice. Furthermore, Niagara Region partnered with the Partners for Climate Change (PCP) program to support businesses in achieving emission reduction goals. The PCP Milestone Framework aims for a 45% emission reduction by 2030 and net-zero status by 2050. Niagara Region encourages residents to embrace sustainable practices such as reducing car usage and consuming locally sourced products.

These examples demonstrate a commitment to sustainability in the Niagara Region. From creating pollinator gardens to remediating retired landfill sites, these initiatives prioritize protecting the environment and preserving natural resources. These efforts will help reduce the impact of climate change and promote a sustainable future for the Niagara Region. The collective efforts of all parties involved showcase the essential role of collaboration in meeting sustainable development goals.

"Oh by the way, I am never too busy for your referrals"



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Major Events in Niagara 2024

Jan 12–28, 2024
Niagara Grape & Wine Festival

May 30, 2024
Niagara 21st 40 Under Forty Business Achievement Awards Ceremony

Apr 8, 2024
The 2024 Total Solar Eclipse in Niagara Falls

June 7–9, 2024
Niagara Falls Convention Centre, Ontario, Canada

July 13, 2024
Nikola Tesla Day International Festival

A Comprehensive List of Niagara Business & Industry Association

Grape Growers of Ontario: <https://grapegrowersofontario.com>
Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce: <https://gncc.ca>
Grimsby Chamber of Commerce: <https://grimsbychamber.com>
Lincoln Chamber of Commerce: <https://lincolinchamber.ca>
Niagara Association of Realtors: <https://www.niagararealtor.ca>
Niagara Business and Industry Associations: A Comprehensive List
Niagara Centre Board of Trade and Commerce: <https://nbotac.com>
Niagara Construction Association: <https://niagaraconstruction.org>
Niagara Home Builders' Association: <https://nhba.ca>
Niagara Industrial Association: <https://niagaraindustry.com>
Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce : <https://niagaraindustry.com>
South Niagara Chambers of Commerce: <https://southniagaracc.com>
Tourism Niagara: <https://www.visitniagaracanada.com>
West Lincoln Chamber of Commerce: <https://www.westlincolinchamber.com>



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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



As we come to the end of this magazine, we would like to extend an invitation to all our readers to discover the wonders of Niagara. This region offers more than just picturesque landscapes and iconic attractions; it boasts vibrant communities and thriving diverse industries. Niagara is not just a destination, but a place to live, work, and invest.

We encourage you to explore, engage, and immerse yourself in the enriching experiences Niagara has to offer. While the pages of “Made in Niagara” magazine have provided a glimpse into the heart of this remarkable region, there is so much more to discover. We invite you to visit Niagara and experience its unique blend of offerings firsthand.

We would like to express our heartfelt acknowledgments and gratitude to all the individuals, businesses, organizations, and contributors who have made this publication possible. Special thanks go to our advertisers whose support and commitment have been instrumental in bringing this magazine to life. Your dedication, insights, and collaboration have been invaluable in shaping “Made in Niagara” into a comprehensive and enlightening showcase of this remarkable region.

Thank you for being a part of this exploration into the heart of Niagara. We hope this magazine has provided you with a deeper understanding and appreciation of the culture, industries, and initiatives that define Niagara—a place where tradition meets innovation, and opportunities abound.

With warm regards,

Elke Porter, Editor “Made in Niagara” Magazine





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