



Volume 17 Issue 10

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- + CONSIDER MEDIATION
- + YEAR-END TAX SAVING TIPS
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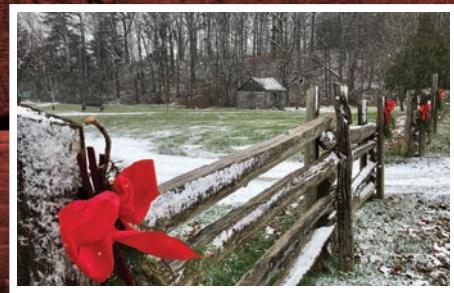




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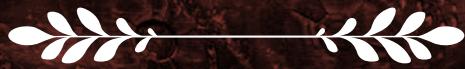
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Let's Get Social



## COVER STORY

# TRINITY CAPITAL INTERNATIONAL



Photo on cover Juan González



## CONSIDER MEDIATION TO SOLVE YOUR DISPUTE



## FEDDEV ONTARIO INVESTS \$13-MILLION

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# PATIENT'S LIFE SAVED BY INNOVATIVE NEW PROCEDURE

PROVIDED BY HAMILTON HEALTH SCIENCE FOUNDATION

The teams at Hamilton General Hospital are world-renowned for innovation, especially when it comes to cardiac care. For some patients, this can mean the difference between life and death. For Verna Ross of Thunder Bay, the cardiac team's willingness to think outside of the box gave her a new lease on life. It began when the 87-year-old experienced shortness of breath, a racing heart rate, a persistent cough and a flickering of vision. Scans revealed that she had a dangerous heart condition that required urgent care.

"I was suffering from mitral stenosis, a build-up of calcium that was preventing my valve from working properly," explains Verna. "This was also causing fluid to build up in my lungs, making it difficult to breath."

Verna had undergone valve-replacement surgery in 2014, and now she was looking at the possibility of undergoing another valve replacement.

In June 2019, Verna was flown by air ambulance to Hamilton General Hospital, the leading cardiac surgical centre in the province. The team at The General determined that a normal valve-replacement procedure was too risky because the calcification of the valve was too severe.

Cardiac surgeon Dr. Richard Whitlock and Dr. Victor Chu, in collaboration with the Structural Heart Team, decided to try an innovative new procedure that involved implanting a new valve into the existing one to restore normal cardiac function. This procedure was so rare it was one of the first times it was tried in Canada.

After different possible procedures were simulated using advanced software, it was determined that this approach was the safest for Verna. Dr.

Tej Sheth of the Structural Heart Team is an expert in the software and he teaches physicians around the world about its use.

"The doctors and staff did a great job keeping me and my family informed about what was going on," recalls Verna. "I knew I was in good hands."

The surgery went smoothly and Verna recovered at The General for the next week. She was flown back to Thunder Bay in July so she could continue her recovery closer to home.

"My breathing is much better, my cough is gone, my heart rate is back to normal and I'm slowly regaining strength in my legs," she says. "I can never thank the doctors and staff enough for the care they provided."

The use of this new procedure is just one example of how the teams at Hamilton General Hospital stay on the leading edge of patient care and continue their spirit of innovation.

*Please make a difference in the lives of patients like Verna today by making a donation at [hamiltonhealth.ca/donate](https://hamiltonhealth.ca/donate).*



Photo by: Donnalynn Ross



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**IT'S VITAL TO CARE**



# CONSIDER MEDIATION TO SOLVE YOUR DISPUTE

BY MALTE VON ANREP

No dispute solving procedure is perfect. The goal therefore is to find the one that works the best for your matter.

After fifty plus years of experience in using the courtroom litigation process, I have concluded that issuing a claim in court and proceeding to trial is the least efficient method to resolve a dispute and should be used only as a last resort.

There are several reasons for this position, the most obvious one being the cost and time involved to reach a result. A trial involves an adversarial process where each party goes to great lengths to point out the faults of the opposing party. The statement of claim and statement of defence or the application and answer are prepared in a meticulous fashion to avoid missing any potential claim or any potential defence, no matter how obscure or how unlikely to succeed. This process has the natural result of inflaming the emotions of the opposing party and escalating the determination to fight to the bitter end, no matter how long it takes or how much it costs.

One of the main difficulties in resolving your dispute through the trial process is the technical rules governing admissible evidence. When is hearsay evidence allowed and what weight is to be given to that evidence by the trial judge? What restrictions are there in trying to have someone recognized by the court as an expert in order to give opinion evidence on an issue within their area of expertise? These are all time consuming and expensive issues that must be addressed.

This can involve the aid of expensive experts' reports where privately owned companies and businesses are involved. The same can be said where the value of property is involved in a volatile and changing real estate market. Before a matter reaches trial a Case Conference, Settlement Conference, and a Trial Scheduling

Conference must be held. Each of these steps need extensive time and expense for each party to prepare, serve and file a detailed conference brief with specific time constraints before the trial date can be set at an assignment court.

Mediation and arbitration bypasses many of the pitfalls of litigation. The parties get to pick the person they wish to use as a mediator or arbitrator. The process requires that both parties have as their objective a reasonable solution to the problem. It requires leaving anger, emotions and an adversarial approach at the door with a willingness to make reasonable compromises in order to achieve an acceptable result.

Mediation refers to a form of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) in which parties in a lawsuit who wish to avoid going to court, meet with a neutral third-party mediator selected by them to settle the matter. If mediation does not produce an agreement, then arbitration is the process for resolving an impasse by engaging a neutral third-party Tribunal who will rule on the outcome.

The parties can agree on the form of evidence and submission they wish to present to the mediator which makes the entire process less cumbersome, less expensive, and less stressful. **BL**

---

*Malte von Anrep is a senior partner at Lancaster Brooks & Welch and is highly experienced in both civil and family litigation. He's available as a mediator or arbitrator and can be contacted in St. Catharines at 905.641.1551.*



**MALTE VON ANREP is a senior partner within the  
Lancaster Brooks & Welch LLP Mediation and  
Arbitration Department.**

**When you need support in resolving a dispute,  
it is good to have someone who can navigate  
the law and represent your interests.**

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# A Minute with the Mayor

*Hamilton Mayor Fred Eisenberger discusses new projects, big challenges and why the City's economy is really hitting its stride.*

At the Toronto Global Forum this September, hundreds of business leaders and elected officials gathered to discuss ways to promote a more inclusive and sustainable economy. Recently, Marilyn Tian, president & CEO of Business Link Media Group,

had the opportunity to speak with one of the attendees – Hamilton Mayor Fred Eisenberger – to discuss the current economic outlook in Steeltown.

**MT: What do you feel are Hamilton's strong points when it comes to attracting investment?**

**FE:** We've got a significant amount of new investment going on. We have two great institutions – Mohawk and McMaster – which are the most research-intensive facilities in the province, if not in the country. We really have high aspirations for the kind of research and technology that's coming from there and leading to new job opportunities through McMaster Innovation Park, and new higher tech industries like Stryker [Canada] expanding in our city. So there's lots on the go. We're also on the horizon of having a major film studio develop in Hamilton on the Barton-Tiffany Lands. There's a lot of active development happening there that will speak to the cultural film industry growth that's happening in the province right now.

**MT: What are some of the biggest challenges facing Hamilton's economy?**

**FE:** The economy is very good right now. We have low unemployment – and we're seeing a lot of new developments and job opportunities. On the down side, many people in our community have precarious incomes. They're possibly working two or three jobs to make ends meet and the increasing price of housing is challenging many in our community to look at how they can make it work in Hamilton or if they should be looking farther afield. So those housing pressures are a big challenge. Having said that it's not Toronto and we're not at the Toronto pricing level so one of our advantages is you can probably get twice the house at half the price. And our city is certainly not experiencing the levels of congestion they're experiencing in parts of the GTA.

**MT: What are a few recent economic developments or accomplishments that've given you the most pride and encouragement?**

**FE:** One of the key factors that's driving much of the residential development is the advent of the LRT – light rail transit. As much as we'd like to have good public transportation, we'd also like to make this a re-development tool that's not only attracting new residential opportunities but attracting businesses to look at Hamilton as a new age city that's taking issues like climate change seriously. Many of the businesses that've come here have pointed to that LRT investment as a key factor in terms of why they're gravitating towards Hamilton.

**MT: How has the city's economic outlook improved of late?**

**FE:** Over the past five years, we've seen significant investments. There's been a turnaround for Stelco which is a significant employer in our community. We're looking to redevelop some currently vacant industrial lands into new employment opportunities. We've identified the airport district as an opportunity for growth – and the advent of the film industry has coalesced this past year. So I'd say it's been a banner year for the City of Hamilton. We're looking at probably \$1-billion in new development in the first eight months and that will probably eclipse last year's numbers. On the commercial and industrial side, we're seeing about a 23% increase which for me is the key factor in terms of future employment.

**MT: Where would you like to see Hamilton's economy improve over the next five years?**

**FE:** Getting the LRT construction happening is a high employment opportunity – and we want to maximize the local employment opportunities through that development. That's a key factor in upholding the market trends we're seeing in Hamilton. We also want to continue to realize and develop our industrial lands into new employment opportunities, whether that's straight commercial, warehousing or other hiring opportunities. Realizing that fully will be the challenge for the next year – and I think we're up to it.

**MT: What do you love most about working in the Hamilton business community?**

**FE:** Well, it's a very interactive community. What we've done is make sure that it's not just a singular city council issue. We need to partner and collaborate with all our major stakeholders including the Chamber of Commerce, the Community Foundation, the major institutions like Mohawk and McMaster and Redeemer University College. CityLAB is an example of that where we've created a partnership between Mohawk, McMaster and Redeemer in terms of young students learning about the challenges and opportunities that the City of Hamilton faces. Collaboration and partnership are key for us to continue moving forward.

**MT: What message would you like to convey about Hamilton to potential international investors?**

**FE:** Hamilton is a great opportunity for them. We've reached out progressively to several countries on our own like Columbia and India to explore crossover opportunities. For those that are looking at Canada and Hamilton specifically, I think we're a stable economy with good solid leadership and a country that's making investments in infrastructure. All of that bodes well for future business opportunities and future employees that want to move here, establish themselves and enjoy a good quality of life. **BL**

# IT'S A MATTER OF CONDITIONING

Sales Advice

BY BRETT MEADOWS

The Barenaked Ladies: What a great band! One of my favorite songs by them has some words that I replay in my mind on a regular basis. If you listen to the lyrics of "Brian Wilson," you might find them as meaningful as I do:

"It's a matter of instinct, it's a matter of conditioning. It's a matter of fact.

You can call me Pavlov's dog.

Ring a bell and I'll salivate. How'd you like that?"

Pretty insightful if you take a moment and think about it. We all know the story of Pavlov's dogs and how he conditioned them. When he rang his bell, the dogs would expect food and start to salivate.

As humans, we can be conditioned in much the same way as the dogs were, hopefully minus the drool. Throughout our "sales" lives, we've become conditioned from either external or internal signals, thoughts, rejections, and price wars. For example, the moment we hear a customer ask, "What's your price?" we look at our pricing and quote the lowest price we can because we've become conditioned to

do so in order to get the sale. We've been conditioned over time from our interactions with our customers that we tend to provide a low quote because getting the sale right away without having to negotiate allows us to remain in a comfortable emotional state. Ultimately, we've allowed ourselves to become conditioned without even knowing or realizing it.

So what if we consciously conditioned ourselves to react in a different way? What if we conditioned ourselves to pay attention to the positive emotional reaction we have when we make a sale with a higher price than we anticipate, instead of letting the uncomfortable feeling associated with negotiating direct our response? What if we started quoting higher and if we are high we work our way down a little at a time? Warning: If you just said, "I can't" or "I will lose my business" or "I'll never get any new business" or "I can't in my territory," you couldn't be more wrong. You're uttering these self-defeating words simply from conditioning. And from me simply saying "start at a higher price," your current self-belief and prior conditioning had you react this way.

You need to start building new conditions

so that when the price bell is rung, you don't shoot to the bottom as fast as you can. Don't worry – you'll still answer quickly and you'll be confident in your price but you'll start higher on the pricing scale, still giving a fair price to your customers and allowing you to make money as well.

So how do you do this? Well, it won't happen overnight and it will take some time. But it'll come if you work at it, little by little, day by day. The best way to retrain yourself is to focus on the specific messaging throughout the day by reading a related sales book 15 minutes in the morning and/or listen to audio books throughout the day on attitude, money and finances, success, etc.

Because, "It's a matter of instinct, it's a matter of conditioning, it's a matter of fact." **BL**

Brett trains, coaches, and speaks to salespeople all over the country. For more information on seminars and training, please visit [www.brettmeadows.com](http://www.brettmeadows.com) or contact the friendly folks at Meadows Performance Sales and Strategy email at [info@brettmeadows.com](mailto:info@brettmeadows.com) or by calling 289.696.3605.



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# ENSURING TOMORROW'S WORKFORCE HAS FUTURE SKILLS



## *How higher education is adapting.*

BY JESSICA POTTS

Global workforce issues are a hot topic in management and business today. At the forefront are growing concerns around un/under employment, skills gaps, technological adoption and disruption, knowledge or "corporate memory" gaps as boomers retire, and the rise of the millennial generation and its shifting values.

When I sat down with Cara Krezek, the director of Co-op, Career and Experiential Education for Brock University and incoming president of Co-operative Education and Work-Integrated Learning (CEWIL) Canada, she shed some light on how higher education is adapting to meet the needs of the rapidly evolving workplace.

Overseeing a team of over 50 dedicated HR, co-op, career development and experiential professionals who work with students, employers, faculty and community members, Krezek is passionate about finding people's passions. She has had a keen eye for innovation, workforce trends, talent development, and upcoming developments in higher education.

Krezek identified three significant trends, challenges and opportunities facing her and her team, and other stakeholders in the workforce development arena:

**1. CAREER OPTIONS UNKNOWN** - Upon entrance into post-secondary, most students are vastly unaware of the breadth of career options available. They are expected to make career choices from a young age. Yet how can they chart a path if they are unaware of the destination?

**2. TRAINING FOR JOBS THAT DON'T EXIST** - Krezek points to the example of a social media manager – 10 years ago that job didn't exist. Today, it's a dedicated role in many organizations. Training for job titles is becoming an outdated approach - even known/familiar classics like accounting aren't necessarily requiring the skillset that they did 20 years ago.

**3. HUMAN SKILLS ARE NEEDED NOW MORE THAN EVER** - Krezek says, "as technology continues to disrupt the workplace, humanity is needed more than ever." Just as much as technology will affect our jobs – relationships will mean even more. As a career shifts into leadership roles, one needs to be able to lean into what has traditionally

been called "soft skills."

In response to these trends, Krezek's vision is to recognize talents – an individual's unique ways of thinking, feeling, and doing – and develop strengths early to help students navigate through the twists and turns of the modern career.

It's a combination of our unique experiences that often determines our complicated, non-linear career paths. Krezek wants to see students working towards their talents, not job titles that can be misleading.

Students who take the approach of knowing who they are and appreciating the unique value they bring doesn't limit them in way that a traditional job title would. Often degrees do not directly correlate to a career path - many of us who have fulfilling careers had no idea what our careers were going to be - but we leveraged our skills, knowledge and experiences to get there.

She, along with many others in the field, want us to adjust the traditional label "soft skills" to core skills or essential skills. Employers assume that a student with a university degree has the core disciplinary knowledge to do the job. But when you ask what they're looking for in their future talent, it's actually "soft skills" that they are seeking.

Skills such as complex problem solving, critical thinking, people management, and creativity top the list of the skills outlined by the World Economic Forum in their Future of Jobs Report. These are essential to our future of work and are definitely not "soft skills."

As our workforce evolves in the fourth industrial revolution, it's not how we transfer these skills from one job to the next – but how we mobilize these skills, learning from them, adapting them, and using our experiences to develop our talents that become the strengths we use to accelerate our careers.

This year's cohort of 1,300 co-op education students marks the first group who will be focused on strengths-based development at Brock University in order to identify and leverage their talents and tailor their experience accordingly. They join an increasing number of higher education institutions adopting this approach to disrupt the workplace and change the world. **BL**

*Jessica Potts is the president of Inspired Strategy Group Inc. and a Gallup Certified Strengths Coach, working with clients to develop leaders, build high-performing teams, sustain stakeholder and employee engagement, and realize their goals. Her approach is rooted in a strengths-based philosophy that maximizing potential happens when we encourage people to become great at what they're naturally good at. For information, visit [www.inspiredstrategy.ca](http://www.inspiredstrategy.ca).*

## Ask the EXPERT



# Year-End Tax Saving Tips

BY ANGIE TELLER

Are you self-employed? Operating your own home-based business? If that's the case, there are several ways you can save on your expenses when tax time rolls around. Here are a few helpful tips I often share with my clients:

**Workspace in the home** – You can deduct a percentage of the costs that relate to your workspace such as the cost of electricity, heating, maintenance, property taxes, water and home insurance.

**HIRE FAMILY MEMBERS** – Pay family members a reasonable salary/wage to help you in your business. This expense will reduce your taxable income amount which results in less taxes owing. If hiring a spouse, the salary/wage paid to them is an expense to your business and yet the money paid will remain in your family. Always be sure the amounts paid to a family member are reasonable for services performed.

**KEEP GOOD RECORDS** – One of the most overlooked ways for small businesses to save at tax time starts at the beginning of each year. It's simple to keep every receipt. Grab a small folder to keep all loose receipts laying around your desk, purse or car. They add up to a lot of deductions against any income earned during the year. Keep track of these monthly expenses in a monthly log.

**MAKE LARGE PURCHASES BEFORE DECEMBER 31ST** – If you're self-employed, you may need equipment for the day-to-day operations of your business. Even if you work for a company, you may need to purchase equipment. If you're working from home, buying equipment can include anything from a laptop to a fax machine.

**DEFER YOUR INCOME** – If you're self-employed or do freelance or consulting work, you have more leeway for invoicing. Delaying billings until late December, for example, can ensure you won't receive payment until the next year. You can also defer income by taking capital gains in 2020 instead of 2019. **BL**

Angie Tellier is the owner of A Tellier Accounting and Bookkeeping on 553 Niagara Street in Welland. For more information, please call 905.732.7555, email [angie@atellier.ca](mailto:angie@atellier.ca) or go to [www.atellier.ca](http://www.atellier.ca).



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# THINKING BIG

*Trinity Capital is a family office committed to supporting business ideas by investing in them.*

By Scott Leslie

If you follow the start-up ecosystem trends worldwide, you know that Canada is a major hub today when it comes to innovation and technology, becoming a very important player in this exciting space. With top-notch incubators, accelerators, co-working spaces, and government incentives, it's easy to see why international companies, family offices and venture capitals are investing more every year in the country.

Trinity Capital is a good example of this fascinating trend. As professional investment managers, they are in the business of promoting entrepreneurs by investing in their idea and have helped countless start-ups at a global scale to reach that next level.

"We're dedicated to managing and investing capital of our own and in some cases from third parties," says Juan González, business director at Trinity Capital in St. Catharines. "We invest in profitable and sustainable businesses that demonstrate high growth potential."

## HISTORY IN THE MAKING

Trinity Capital is relatively new to Canada's shores. In Juan's case, he left his home country of Colombia back in 2008 to look for new opportunities and challenges.

"I wanted to find my own way," Juan says of his momentous decision, "and Canada has a reputation for offering open arms to immigrants. I'm a Canadian citizen now. I hold my passport up proudly."

Several years later, Juan's father, Omar, decided to launch a new family office in Colombia. With the help of sons Santiago, Gabriel and Ignacio, Trinity Capital was born in 2011. With Omar's experience of over 25 years in the financial sector, Trinity Capital has built up a portfolio of over 21 Colombian firms that employ over 4,500 people in different sectors – the most significant one being mining. With Canada's burgeoning mining sector, however, it wasn't long before the González family resolved to expand their operations into Canada – and Juan left his Niagara-based job to launch a Canadian branch of Trinity Capital.

At first, Juan considered establishing their firm in Toronto. But several local and regional authorities helped him decide that Niagara was the best place to get started:

"The City of St. Catharines were extreme-

ly supportive from the very beginning," he says. "The GNCC and regional government agencies were a big help to get us on the right track."

Trinity Capital would officially open its doors in Niagara in April of 2018 – and the company's fortunes began to grow almost immediately.

"We started small," Juan says. "In our first year, we exceeded our expectations and went six times over our original budget of capital deployed."

## HOW TRINITY CAPITAL WORKS

As professional investment managers, Trinity Capital has focused on investing in five key areas: FinTech, health technology, mining, wearables, and renewable energies.

"A strong network and the angel investor groups have been a great source of opportunities," Juan says.

Trinity Capital takes an active role in its investments, providing support and guidance to start-ups in several areas – whether it's strategic planning, market research or corporate governance. This way, Trinity Capital can help start-ups structure themselves in a way that will help entrepreneurs achieve their goals and become more profitable.

"Sometimes entrepreneurs lose sight of

## Photos

Left Page

From left: Gabriel González - CFO of Coquecol, Omar González - President of the Trinity Group, Federico Ochoa - former VP of Citibank and Executive VP of Bancolombia, Martha Uribe - Former VP Private Banking at Helm Bank, Gonzalo Sanín - former President Delima Marsh Insurance and Royal and Sun Alliance Chile, Santiago González - Sales Director of Coquecol.

Right Page

Juan González



**"The best entrepreneurs are the ones who listen to advice. That's where we add value."**

- Juan González

the big picture," Juan says. "The best entrepreneurs are the ones who listen to advice. That's where we add value."

Finding the right company to invest in is a rigorous process.

"Six out of ten start-ups die," Juan explains. "We're very disciplined in our due diligence to avoid mistakes. We have a strong investment committee with a vast experience in the financial sector. They help us filter and analyze opportunities to make better decisions. They're a key part of our success."

In Juan's mind, the most important part is not the financial capital. It's the intellectual capital. That's why Trinity Capital will often finance entrepreneurs that have a successful track record and can bring strong decision-making skills to the table.

"We bet on the founders," Juan says. "It's all about taking an A team with a B idea rather than a B team with an A idea. It's like having a good jockey on an average horse. They can get more out of them."

Juan says the Trinity Capital team likes to invest in ideas that really excite them. When it comes right down to it, however, the González family pays special attention to finding someone who's compatible with their core values. That means demonstrating a

strong work ethic and being accountable and results oriented.

"My father founded Trinity Capital with a very clear message – we're family first," Juan explains. "We bring very strong family values to any partnership. A lack of compatibility in values is a deal breaker."

#### A SOURCE OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Now that they've laid down roots in the Niagara community, Trinity Capital has committed itself to developing a deep bond with its adopted home.

For instance, Trinity Capital is an active supporter of the Niagara Folk Arts Multicultural Centre in St. Catharines where Juan helps with the centre's newcomer programs, making regular presentations to immigrants from very diverse places in the world.

"They need the encouragement that it's possible to succeed in Canada," he says. "It gives them the impetus to start up a business of their own. I'm an immigrant myself. I'm aware of the challenges."

But Juan's commitment to supporting the community doesn't stop there.

"We have some very exciting plans for 2020," he says. "We want to give back to society

and hopefully be able to have a positive impact in a lot of people. We are looking forward to announcing this new project very soon."

Trinity Capital is currently deploying new capital every two to three months, and typically works with entrepreneurs for a period anywhere from three to ten years. Much of Trinity Capital's investments are in the Kitchener-Waterloo and Greater Toronto Areas – but the Gonzalez family also deals with companies as far away as Australia.

According to Juan, Niagara entrepreneurs are catching up fast in that regard. It's a sense of promise that Juan recognized the first day Trinity Capital launched their business in the Garden City.

"We're optimistic and excited about the Niagara Region," he says of Trinity Capital. "We're big fans of the region... We see a lot of potential here." **BL**



For more information, email [info@trinitycapital.co](mailto:info@trinitycapital.co) or go to [www.trinitycapital.co](http://www.trinitycapital.co).



# TEN MINUTE MEETING MAKEOVER

BY TIM ARNOLD

My two kids recently returned to school, and just like I remembered, they each had to do an activity that explained to their teacher and classmates what they did over the summer vacation.

Based on this back-to-school tradition, here's a 10-minute ice-breaker that's sure to bring some life into your next team meeting.

**STEP 1** – Have each person pull out their cell phone. You can joke that it's the first time you want them on their phones during the meeting.

**STEP 2** – Have them scroll to the 10th most recent photo taken, and show/explain it to the person beside them. If they don't like the 10th photo (or it's not appropriate), tell them to simply choose another. If they don't have a cell phone, just tell them to explain a highlight of their summer. Let this happen for about five or six minutes so they can chat with a few people.

**STEP 3** – End the activity and get into your normal meeting agenda.

It could easily seem like this kind of an icebreaker would be a waste of time. However, I bet if you try it, the level of engagement for the rest of the meeting will be much higher than normal. As humans, we all share the need to be seen, heard and understood. Taking time for this kind of teambuilding activity helps us see our teammates as more than their just job descriptions – but instead – as fellow human beings! **BL**

*Tim Arnold is passionate about helping people understand the chronic issues that limit leadership and teamwork so they can thrive. He is the author of the book *The Power of Healthy Tension* and speaks to organizations across the globe on how they can overcome chronic issues and conflicting values.*  
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# FedDev Ontario invests \$13-million in Niagara's future

NEW STRATEGIC INVESTMENTS TO CREATE NEARLY 390 JOBS IN THE GREENHOUSE, BIOSCIENCE AND DIGITAL MEDIA SECTORS.

BY SCOTT LESLIE

The days are getting shorter this fall but for the Niagara economy, things just got a little brighter.

On September 3rd, Vance Badaway, Member of Parliament for Niagara Centre, and Chris Bittle, Member of Parliament for the riding of St. Catharines, announced FedDev Ontario will be contributing nearly \$13-million to establish three new innovative projects in Niagara. The special announcement was made on behalf of the Honourable Navdeep Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development – and Minister responsible for FedDev Ontario.

The recent strategic investments are expected to help create nearly 390 jobs, stimulate the local economy, and enhance Niagara's competitiveness in several key sectors.

To start, approximately \$5-million was earmarked for Niagara College along with Vineland Research and Innovation Centre and the University of Guelph in order to create a Greenhouse Technology Network. This initiative will bring growers and tech experts together to improve the development and adoption of new leading-edge greenhouse technologies. At the same time, the project will help strengthen the competitiveness of Niagara's greenhouse industry, and assist over 130 firms and organizations to promote their latest products and services.

In the case of Brock University, the Government of Canada will invest \$5-million to Brock University to establish the Brock-Niagara Validation, Prototyping and Manufacturing Institute (VPMI). This state-of-the-art facility will help support up to 33 firms in the bioprod-  
uct, bioscience, bioagriculture and chemical manufacturing fields to increase their overall competitiveness. The VPMI will also provide access to scientific expertise, and fabrication and prototyping resources, as well as training to support the adoption of technology solutions.

Dr. Gervan Fearon, president of Brock University, was tremendously grateful for the Government of Canada's support to launch the new VPMI project.

"The VPMI will support applied research and development, innovation and commercialization efforts to help businesses grow and thrive," he says. "It will play an important role in Brock University's strategic priority to partner with business and communities in support the prosperity and vitality of the Niagara region and beyond."

FedDev Ontario will also provide approximately \$3-million to the City of Niagara Falls in partnership with Ryerson University and Spark Niagara to launch the Niagara Falls-Ryerson Innovation Hub (NFRIH). The NFRIH will give promising digital media start-ups the ability to access mentorship services, research and development, and international partnerships to help develop and accelerate their growth. The \$3-million investment is expected to support approximately 85 companies and help diversify the Niagara economy.

Jim Diodati, Mayor of the City of Niagara Falls, says the impact this announcement will have on Niagara Falls is undeniable.

"Youth retention, economic diversification and downtown redevelopment are all priorities of this City Council," he says. "The Ryerson Innovation Hub will elevate Niagara Falls, bring us an esteemed educational partner in Ryerson and bring critical mass downtown again, as we support students, education and young entrepreneurs in our City."

One of Canada's regional development agencies, FedDev Ontario is a core platform of the Government's Innovation and Skills Plan in southern Ontario. Since it was established in 2009, the agency has invested nearly \$2-billion in strategic initiatives and developed partnerships with over 19,500 organizations.

Chris Bittle says the new FedDev investments will go a long way towards making the Niagara Region a real economic force to be reckoned with.

"These projects build on our long history of research and innovation and ensure that we keep pushing the boundaries to benefit the Niagara economy," he explains. "Our region continues to join forces and collaborate with our post-secondary institutions to keep jobs and opportunities local." **BL**

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For more information on FedDev Ontario, please go to [www.feddevontario.gc.ca](http://www.feddevontario.gc.ca).

# Straight Talk

**New laser technology has the ability to communicate with and deter intruders from many miles away.**

By Scott Leslie

Have you ever wanted to get out of a dangerous situation?

Well, military researchers in the U.S. are trying to do just that with their latest invention – “talking lasers.” If you think that sounds too much like science fiction, think again.

Part of a Joint Non-Lethal Weapons Directorate initiative, this new Laser Induced Plasma Effect program is designed to keep people away from a specific area, and acts much in the same way as a loudspeaker. In this case, however, military or law enforcement officials are able to fire a laser that can talk to or ward off intruders without having to kill or seriously harm them.

The device works by transmitting a high-energy laser beam in short pulses which turn the air in its path to create a ball of plasma. At the same time, a second laser beam is used to vibrate the plasma and project clear voice commands on the resulting sound waves. These messages could be something as simple as warning an intruder to stop and turn back or face the consequences.

When it comes to deterrence, the laser devices have the ability to transmit loud blasts of up to 155 decibels – a sound equal to fireworks going off. The resulting noise can then confuse and disorient an opponent. To increase the degree of deterrent, the laser can even be used to heat the target's skin to an uncomfortable level without burning them

In terms of actual field use, the laser devices can be used to control and communicate with crowds, secure perimeters and even beam orders to the ground from an aircraft. Military experts are particularly interested in the technology because the technology is a great way to keep remote areas secure and avoid putting military personnel in harm's way.

One of the biggest advantages of this technology is the laser devices can beam sound over long distances. Current prototypes can transmit over 100 metres, and researchers expect the final product will be able to send out laser beams as far as hundreds of miles.

The technology is still a few years away from being finalized as researchers try to fine-tune the device so it can replicate human speech in the proper wavelength. But once it's ready for action, researchers are hoping this novel technology will help save valuable time and more importantly, precious lives. BL

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# SOURCES

BY DENNIS O'NEILL

What are your sources? (Sources for resources!) Who do you call? Marketing's message boils down to "Who do you call?"

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- WEALTH
- LEARNING
- FOOD
- ADVICE FOR LIVING
- TRAVEL
- LEISURE
- SPIRITUAL WANTS
- NATURAL RESOURCES

Whatever it is, who do you call? Who do people call in your field? Own the spot as the one to call. **BL**

*Dennis O'Neill, The Business Growth Coach is located in Niagara-on-the-Lake. For more information on how to grow your business, please call 905.641.8777, email [dennis@dennisonneillcoach.com](mailto:dennis@dennisonneillcoach.com) or visit [www.dennisonneillcoach.com](http://www.dennisonneillcoach.com).*

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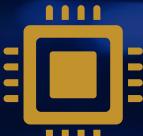
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# INNOVATION INSIGHTS

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## Making Time for Market Research

BY ROB BELCHIOR

Here at the St. Catharines Enterprise Centre, we're always pleased to help small business owners and new start-ups who reach out to us. These entrepreneurs often feel stretched thin, balancing time and budget constraints so market research feels like a challenge.

However, the entrepreneurs who take the time to conduct research are better able to make sound business decisions and find the path to success a faster. When conducting market research, there are a few key areas to prioritize:

### 1. UNDERSTANDING YOUR CUSTOMER

Do you know how your customer makes their buying decision for your product or service? Do you know what their typical budget is? Where do they look and what factors matter to them? What have they bought in the past and would they consider buying from you next time?

To find this out, we ask our clients to survey or interview their potential customers. Ideally, this is done prior to opening the business and with people who don't know you so that no bias comes into the discussion.

### 2. KNOW YOUR COMPETITORS

With all the choices that today's consumers are faced with, you'll need to compete for your customers. The more you know about your direct and indirect competitors, the more likely you are to gain your customers business and loyalty.

Your direct competitors are the businesses that offer the same product or service as yours. An example of this is two rival theatres competing for customers. An indirect competitor, on the other hand, is a business that offers something different that a customer might choose to buy instead. An example of an indirect competitor would be a local sports team competing against a theatre as both are in the entertainment industry.

Put yourself in the shoes of your customer. Where might they spend their budget for your products and services? Next, research those competitors extensively. Read about them, observe them, follow their social media, visit their locations, and talk to people about them. This will help you identify the benefits that you can stress to your customers. This allows you to compete based on benefits, rather than on price.

### 3. INDUSTRY KNOWLEDGE

Develop a plan to stay up-to-date on your industry. You should always be aware of the trends, the threats and opportunities, and the regulations that impact your industry.

Most industries have associations, publications and conferences where you can learn from others in similar businesses and find new suppliers. Generally, there's a cost to join an association and attend conferences. Think of it as investment in yourself and in the success of your business.

Successful businesses stay on top of industry trends and are always learning about their customers and competitors. When you know your customers and competitors, you can offer true value and attract the best customers. And when you are aware of what's happening in your industry, you can adjust for challenges or take the lead on new opportunities that others might miss. **BL**

*Rob Belchior is a small business consultant at the St. Catharines Enterprise Centre (SCEC). The SCEC is one of 47 small business enterprise centres across Ontario. Enterprise centres serve small businesses by sharing information, resources and offering consulting and seminars.*

*Would you like some help in developing a market research strategy? Contact the St. Catharines Enterprise Centre for more information at 905.688.5601 x1767 or [www.stcatharines.ca/smallbusiness](http://www.stcatharines.ca/smallbusiness).*

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# ACCOMMODATIONS

*Offering equity vs. equality for employees with disabilities.*

BY CELINE HARDY-JOHNSON

I once worked with a job seeker with limited math skills, who was interested in a bakery clerk position at a grocery store. He had safe food handler training, past experience in a bakery, an outgoing personality, and an interview. But one question almost ended his promising opportunity. They asked him, "Are you good at math and do you know dates?" This question indicates equality, expecting the same from everyone. The answer was "no" but..

There is a huge "but" because there are agencies specifically trained to work with employees and job candidates with disabilities to find, create and teach accommodations. In this case, a simple date wheel was created to indicate what the date stamp should be for a particular item (i.e. pies were to be put on the shelf for three days before being considered past the best before date). The employee needed to come into work knowing today's date and turn the wheel to see what the date would be in three days. Simple. There was no need to count or know dates. This is called equity, providing the tools to a disabled worker to allow them to be competitive with their non-disabled peers. Another word for it is "fairness."

Here's another example. Julian is a young man seeking his first job – an entry level cleaning position. He uses a wheelchair to get around. Right away, the employer will notice he has a disability. But this is only one of the things the young man brings with him. Along with a shining personality, a sense of humour, a mind for math, com-

passion and a desire to work, he brings his own vacuum cleaner. He's willing to start at the bottom and with the support of Jobs Niagara, brings with him, a specially attached vacuum so he can clean and vacuum like the other student workers. Now, he just needs to find an equal opportunity employer willing to provide him with equity – a fair shot at a chance to prove himself.

Jobs Niagara wants fairness for all. The job seeker with a disability wants a chance to prove they can be a valuable employee. Employers need to be willing to look beyond the disability and accommodate the employee. There are so many examples. Job seekers and employers are not alone in trying to navigate the many accommodations available or waiting to be created. There are agencies out there that have expertise to help – at no cost.

Jobs Niagara believes in fairness in every situation and making work enabled. Ask us about our many success stories due to the introduction of accommodations. **BL**

*Celine Hardy-Johnson is a manager at Jobs Niagara which has locations in St. Catharines and Port Colborne. For more information, please call 905.835.8941, email [celinehj@clpcw.com](mailto:celinehj@clpcw.com) or go to [www.jobsniagara.org](http://www.jobsniagara.org).*

*To see a short video of Julian's job seeking experience, just go to <https://youtu.be/-SCy83Y1ICg>.*

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## BUSINESS LINKS TO NIAGARA'S EVENTS

Your guide to the region's business events.



**South Niagara Chambers of Commerce - Joint BA5 & Vendor Showcase**  
**October 9th, 5 p.m.**  
**Roselawn Centre**  
 296 Fielden Avenue,  
 Port Colborne

**Small Business Month Lunch Workshop - Ways to Go**  
**October 16th, 12 p.m.**  
**Rockway Vineyards**  
 3290 Ninth St,  
 St. Catharines

**Small Business Month Workshop - Ways to Get Out**  
**October 23rd, 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.**  
**St. Catharines Club**  
 77 Ontario Street,  
 St. Catharines

**Bookkeeping Errors Which Cost You Money Workshop**  
**October 24th, 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.**  
 4551 Zimmerman Avenue,  
 Niagara Falls

**BizConX Niagara**  
**October 30th, 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.**  
**Strada West**  
 7805 Lundy's Lane  
 Niagara Falls

**Niagara Economic Summit - 2019**  
**November 1st, 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.**  
**White Oaks Conference Resort and Spa**  
 253 Taylor Road,  
 Niagara-on-the-Lake

**Celebrate Niagara 2019**  
**November 6th, 5:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.**  
**Greg Frewin Theatre**  
 5781 Ellen Avenue  
 Niagara Falls

**2019 Women in Business Awards**  
**November 8th, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.**  
**Niagara Falls Marriott**  
 6755 Fallsview Boulevard,  
 Niagara Falls

**Selling on the Spot Marketplace - Niagara**  
**November 26th, 10:00 a.m.**  
**Courtyard by Marriott**  
 5950 Victoria Avenue,  
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# Colombia – the only risk is you wanting to invest

BY MAURICIO ZULUAGA

During the past 17 years, the number of international visitors traveling to Colombia grew from 600,000 in 2002 to 4.2 million last year. In order to increase the number of tourists, the country had to improve its security conditions and start promoting its tourist offer to the international community. The campaign was titled: "Colombia – the only risk is you wanting to stay." Now, with a dynamic economic and several potential markets to invest in, the country looks like an opportunity for the companies based in Niagara.

With its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growing by 3% at the end of this year, Colombia leads the economic growth in the Pacific Alliance (Mexico, Peru, Colombia, and Chile). According to the projections made by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the average rate of growth in Latin America will be just around 0.6% in 2019. This means that in the middle of a complex business atmosphere that's affected by the trade war between China and the U.S., Colombia has been managing its challenges, and the country will grow five times more than the whole region.

The Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) arriving in Colombia has grown by 24% during the last six months. The interest around potential sectors such as renewable energies, the creative industry, and medicinal cannabis, among others, has influenced the investors' decisions.

Companies from different latitudes are taking part in the Colombian market in several projects. With two Canadian companies (Northland Power and Grand Tierra Energy) included in the top 10 of the investments made in Colombia this year, Canada is playing a very important role.

## ORANGE ECONOMY

The Orange Economy, also known as the creative industry, is the main sector the Colombian government has focused on. After the tributary reform approved by the Congress last year, every company investing in this segment will have tax incentives, such as seven years of income tax exemption. Through this tributary benefit, plus the human talent located in Colombia, the government expects that the creative sector will increase its participation in the GDP up 7% in the next ten years.

## RENEWABLE ENERGIES

Colombia is the first non-European country to appear in the world's clean energy superpowers ranking made by the World Economic Forum. The large supply of natural resources gives the country the potential to become one of the greatest clean energy suppliers in the world, which is a very important asset considering the necessity to mitigate climate change.

Today, the total investments made in the Colombian renewable energy segment sums up \$500-million U.S. but the amount could increase much more in the coming years. La Guajira, a province located at the northeast end of Colombia, is a unique desert with potential to produce over 15,000 megawatts. With winds between 11 to 13 metres per second, and an average solar radiation of 6 kilowatts per square metres (a rate 66% higher than the world's average), La Guajira could double the Colombian energy production, making the country a net exporter of clean energy.

## MEDICAL CANNABIS

After Colombia approved medical cannabis growth for the national market in 2016, different researchers have concluded that Colombia has the potential to lead this market. A recent research made by three Colombian former ministers agrees with this statement and has concluded that the current potential of the medical cannabis market in the country is over \$6-billion U.S., but could increase up to \$17-billion U.S. in the next decade.

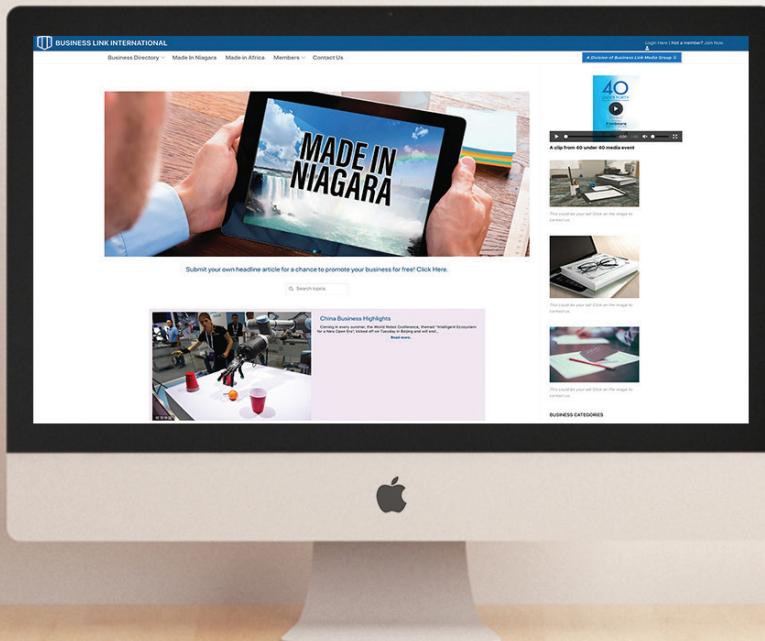
The cannabis production is highly dependent on environmental conditions, and Colombia is located on a very privileged place on the equatorial line where the crops can receive 12 hours of sunshine during the whole year. This atmosphere makes it easier and cheaper to produce medical cannabis. Today, companies based in Colombia (some of them from Canada) are exporting to the U.K. and Canada.

With a free trade agreement between Colombia and Canada since 2011, and the high possibility that by the end of this year Canada joins Colombia, Mexico, Peru and Chile as a member of the Pacific Alliance, the Colombian market looks like an invitation to grow for those companies based in Niagara that want to invest in a very vibrant emerging market. Institutions such as Procolombia, the Colombian Embassy to Canada and the Bogota Chamber of Commerce can provide all the information you need to guide your investment towards the land where the only risk is you wanting to invest. **BL**

*Mauricio Zuluaga is a Colombian financial journalist*

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