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AUGUST HIGHLIGHTS: CELEBRATING LOCAL TALENT, ROWING CHAMPIONSHIPS, BLOCKCHAIN INNOVATIONS AND MORE

**OLYMPIANS, RISING STARS, AND NEWCOMERS SET TO
COMPETE AT THE 2024 WORLD ROWING CHAMPIONSHIPS**

**IGNITING THE SPIRIT OF MULAN
A DAZZLING DANCE DRAMA EXPERIENCE WITH LOCAL TALENT FOR A GOOD CAUSE**



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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the August edition of Business Link, where we celebrate innovation, community spirit, and the latest industry developments.

This month, we are thrilled to feature "Igniting the Spirit of Mulan," a dazzling dance drama that showcases local talent while supporting a worthy cause. It's a testament to the power of art in bringing communities together.

In regulatory news, Ontario has introduced new licensing standards for temporary help agencies and recruiters, aiming to enhance accountability and transparency in the workforce sector.

We also turn our attention to the sporting world as Olympians, Rising Stars, and Newcomers prepare to compete at the 2024 World Rowing Championships. This event promises to be a showcase of talent and determination on a global stage.

On the business front, a recent study reveals that AI labeling may inadvertently hurt sales, highlighting the complex relationship between technology and consumer behavior.

Lastly, we explore how the California DMV is revolutionizing vehicle ownership through blockchain technology, a significant step forward in combating fraud and enhancing security.

We hope you find this edition informative and inspiring. Thank you for your continued support of Business Link.

Yours in Business
Marilyn Tian, M.B.A
President & Co-Publisher



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IGNITING THE SPIRIT OF MULAN

A DAZZLING DANCE DRAMA EXPERIENCE WITH LOCAL TALENT FOR A GOOD CAUSE

By Ryan Li, Vancouver



"My Mulan Fantasy Dance Drama" is a groundbreaking production that masterfully blends Eastern and Western artistic traditions, reimagining the timeless legend of Mulan. This captivating 90-minute dance drama features an exceptional cast of musicians, dancers, and stage artists from China, the United States, and Canada, alongside talented young dancers recruited from the local community. Together, they deliver a fresh perspective on a beloved story while imparting powerful messages of growth and resilience.

The Narrative

At the heart of the drama is Michelle, a modern girl grappling with a crisis of confidence during a pivotal dance audition. Her journey of self-discovery parallels the ancient tale of Mulan, who defied societal norms by disguising herself as a man to take her father's place in the army. As Michelle delves into Mulan's story, she finds renewed inspiration and strength to overcome her own challenges, illustrating the timeless relevance of Mulan's courage.

The Vision Behind the Production

Li Lin, the producer, emphasizes the importance of presenting Mulan's story in a contemporary light. "*Mulan is a cherished figure in both Chinese and Western cultures,*" Lin states. "*I wanted to present her story in a way that resonates with contemporary audiences, particularly young girls and women, by showcasing her qualities of love, courage, and confidence.*" By reimagining Mulan's journey within a modern context, Lin aims to inspire viewers to embrace these virtues in their own lives.

Cultural Fusion and Inclusivity

The deliberate blend of Chinese and Western elements reflects our increasingly multicultural world. Lin elaborates, "*Our world is increasingly multicultural, and I wanted 'My Mulan' to reflect this global context. By setting Mulan's story within a Canadian multicultural framework, we ensure that the themes of perseverance and self-discovery are accessible to a diverse audience.*" The expanded prologue features various dance styles and musical genres, highlighting the richness of cultural diversity and making the narrative more inclusive and relatable.

Empowerment Through Strong Female Characters

The inclusion of strong female protagonists like Michelle and Mulan challenges traditional gender roles. Lin explains, "*Featuring strong female characters is vital for highlighting the empowerment of women. Mulan's decision to take on a male role in the military and Michelle's personal growth both serve as powerful examples of breaking societal barriers.*" This focus on female empowerment resonates deeply, encouraging audiences to reflect on their own journeys.

Lessons for Young Audiences

The play delivers essential lessons about overcoming obstacles. Lin underscores the importance of resilience: "*The play underscores that challenges are an inevitable part of growing up. It's important for young people to understand that obstacles are opportunities for growth.*" By embracing qualities like love and courage, young people can transform difficulties into milestones of personal development.





Audience Reactions

The enthusiastic reactions from viewers highlight the performance's emotional resonance. Mayor of Niagara Falls, Jim Diodati, praised the show, stating, *"The inaugural show here in Niagara Falls at the Niagara Falls Convention Center was outstanding. This should be at the top of the list of things that you want to see and do once you see that fall."* Deputy Lord Mayor/Councillor Erwin Wiens echoed this sentiment, saying, "It was a wonderful show. I highly recommend it for everybody to come and see. It was a terrific time, and it was so enjoyable."

Tony Baldinelli, Member of Parliament for Niagara Falls, highlighted the production's unique fusion of elements: *"My Mulan dance performance is a combination of martial arts, dance theater, music, and it all brings together the story of Mulan to life."* Audience members were equally moved, with one noting, *"They were really cute. Feel the magic, you know, in the dance moves, in the step, in the way the dancers move. It gives me goosebumps."* Another expressed gratitude, stating, *"I feel very lucky to be here in Niagara Falls and have the opportunity to see the Mulan show. Please come here and follow all on social media."*

"My Mulan" is not just a performance; it is a transformative experience that weaves together cultural traditions and universal values while supporting the local community. With upcoming performances at the Fallsview Theatre on August 16th, 17th, and 18th, this captivating production invites you to witness the inspiring journey of Michelle and Mulan. Don't miss the chance to be part of this extraordinary event and experience the magic for yourself!

Catch My Mulan at the Fallsview Theatre with the following showtimes:

- Friday, August 16th at 7:30 PM
- Saturday, August 17th at 2:30 PM & 7:30 PM
- Sunday, August 18th at 7:30 PM

Use code **tourism2024** for 20% off your tickets at mymulan.ca/tickets

**Special Offer for 40U40 Alumni: Enjoy one free ticket to the show!
To redeem, contact info@businesslinkmedia.com.**



11TH ANNUAL

40

A large, stylized number '40' in dark blue. The center of the '0' contains the text '2024' on top and 'Hamilton' below it, all in white.

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ONTARIO'S NEW LICENSING STANDARDS FOR TEMPORARY HELP AGENCIES AND RECRUITERS

By Sandra Stokes CIPD M.Ed

Starting July 1, 2024, Ontario's Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training, and Skills Development will implement new licensing requirements for temporary help agencies, recruiters, and their clients.

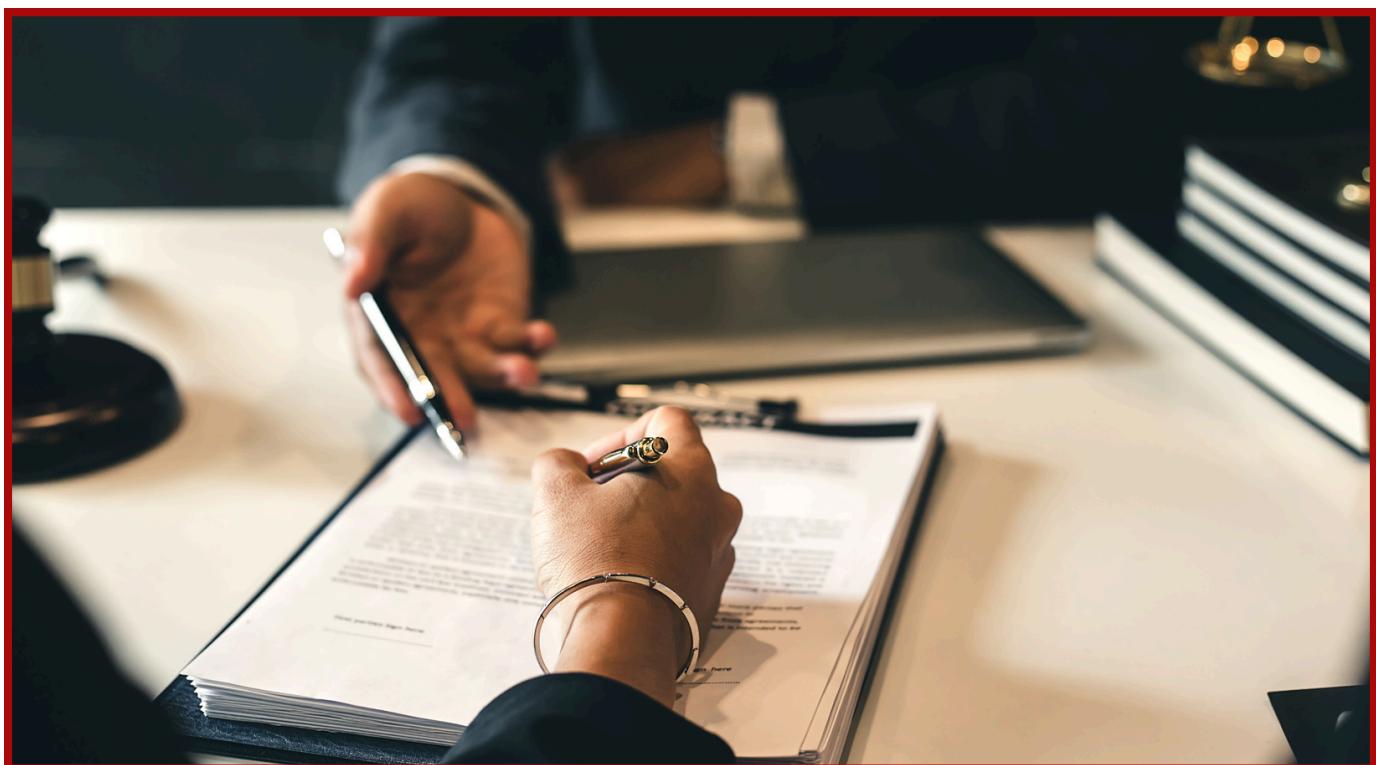


Who is required to have a licence?

Description automatically generatedAll temporary help agencies, staffing firms, and recruiters must obtain a non-transferable license under the Employment Standards Act, 2000 (ESA) and renew it annually. Any business involved in staffing or recruitment must be licensed to operate legally in Ontario.

Licence Renewals

All temporary help agencies, staffing firms, and recruiters must renew their licenses annually to ensure continuous adherence to Ontario's updated employment standards. This renewal process is critical for maintaining compliance with the Employment Standards Act, 2000 (ESA) and demonstrates a commitment to upholding high industry standards and worker protections.



Employer Requirements

- Verify Licensing Status:** As an employer, you must only engage licensed temporary help agencies, staffing firms, or recruiters. If you knowingly use the services of an unlicensed agency, firm, or recruiter, you could face legal repercussions. Ensuring your staffing agencies are licensed protects your business and supports fair and ethical labor practices.
- Review Contracts and Agreements:** It's essential to review and update contracts to include clauses that require them to maintain a valid license throughout the term of the agreement.
- Monitor Compliance:** Ensure regular monitoring to ensure ongoing compliance with licensing requirements. This can involve periodic checks of the online registry where you can check the licensing status by selecting the "Check licensing status" button on the licensing page and requesting updated proof of licensing from temporary help agencies, staffing firms, or recruiters.

For a detailed overview of Ontario's new licensing requirements for temporary help agencies and recruiters, visit <https://www.ontario.ca/document/your-guide-employment-standards-act-0/licensing-temporary-help-agencies-and-recruiters>

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OLYMPIANS, RISING STARS, AND NEWCOMERS SET TO COMPETE AT THE 2024 WORLD ROWING CHAMPIONSHIPS

With the Paris 2024 Olympic Games just concluded, the focus now turns to St. Catharines, Canada, where the 2024 World Rowing Senior, Under 23, and Under 19 Championships will take place from August 18 to 25. For the first time since 2016, these three events will be combined into one, featuring non-Olympic and non-Paralympic boat classes for the Senior Championships alongside the traditional Under 23 and Under 19 competitions.

A total of 1,183 athletes will compete at the historic Royal Canadian Henley Rowing Course, which last hosted a World Rowing event in 1999. This world-class facility, located in the historic waterfront village of Port Dalhousie, has undergone significant renovations for the 2022 Canada Summer Games and the 2015 Pan American Games. The course, originally constructed in 1903, features a fully buoyed, 8-lane, 2000m stretch of water sheltered by tree-lined shores, offering both competitors and spectators an ideal setting for world-class rowing.

Eligibility for the event is strict, with participants required to be authorized by their Member Federation and hold citizenship in the country they represent. They must also submit a signed commitment form according to Article 56 of the World Rowing Rule Book. The competition is open to all competitors who meet these requirements, ensuring that the event showcases the best of international rowing talent.

Despite just having competed in the Olympics, some medalists have decided to continue their pursuit of glory in Canada. Among them is Ireland's Paul O'Donovan, a two-time Olympic Champion in the lightweight men's double sculls, who enters as the favorite in the single sculls event. His main competition includes Paris 2024 bronze medalist Antonios Papakonstantinou of Greece, along with Olympians Sid Ali Boudina of Algeria, Alexis Lopez Garcia of Mexico, and Hin Chun Chiu of Hong Kong, China.

In the lightweight women's single sculls, Olympic silver and bronze medalists from the Paris Games, Zoi Fitsiou of Greece and Ionela Cozmiuc of Romania, will face off once again. This event will mark Cozmiuc's final international appearance. Other strong contenders include Sioban McCrohan of Ireland and Aurelie Morizot of France, both of whom secured World Cup victories earlier this year.

The World Rowing Under 23 Championships will see the return of Greece's reigning World Champions in the lightweight women's double sculls, with Dimitra Kontou, fresh off a bronze medal in Paris, defending her title. The women's single sculls will feature an exciting rematch between Aurelia-Maxima Janzen of Switzerland and Alexandra Foester of Germany, the last two Under 23 Champions, both of whom recently competed in the B-Final at the Olympics.



At the World Rowing Under 19 Championships, reigning World Champion Bianca Camelia Ifteni of Romania will aim to defend her title in the women's single sculls. Greece's Panagiotis Makrygiannis, last year's silver medalist at just 16, will be looking to upgrade to gold. For many competitors, this will be their first international event, marking the beginning of their rowing careers.

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Leadership Niagara

This is a promotional graphic for the 2024-25 Community Leadership Development Program. It features the logos for Leadership Niagara and ncCommunity. Below the logos is a large image of a young woman in a graduation cap and gown, holding a diploma. To the left of the image, text reads "PRESENT THE 2024-25 COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM" and "LIMITED SEATS AVAILABLE". At the bottom, there is a red button with the text "APPLY NOW" and a right-pointing arrow. The background has a red and yellow diagonal striped pattern.

The competition kicks off on Sunday, August 18, with the first medal races scheduled for Thursday, August 22. All eight days of competition will be [livestreamed on worldrowing.com](#)

Article source:

<https://worldrowing.com/2024/08/07/olympians-upcoming-champions-and-newcomers-ready-to-compete-at-the-2024-world-rowing-senior-under-23-and-under-19-championships/>

SCHEDULE _____ **EVENTS FOR AUGUST 16-SEPT 15**

16
FRI

18
SUN

22
THU

24
SAT

14
SAT

MY MULAN FANTASY DANCE DRAMA

Friday, August 16, 2024 - Sunday August 18, 2024

Niagara Falls Convention Centre, Niagara Falls, ON

"My Mulan" premiered successfully at the Fallsview Theatre on Aug 9, marking its first performance outside the GTA after five rounds of 12 shows. The production received a positive response, captivating the local audience and sparking a 'Mulan phenomenon' in the region.

Tickets: <https://mymulan.ca/>

2024 WORLD ROWING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Sunday, August 18, 2024 - Sunday, August 25, 2024

Royal Canadian Henley Rowing Course, St. Catharines, Ontario

Join at the historic Royal Canadian Henley Rowing Course for the 2024 World Rowing Senior, Under 23, and Under 19 Championships.

Event: <https://stcrowing2024.com/en/>

GNCC WINSPIRATION

Thursday, August 22, 2024 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM

Flack Rock Cellars in Jordan Station

Join for an intimate and inspiring talk show-style event featuring Chandra Sharma, CAO and Secretary Treasurer of the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority — all in the middle of Niagara's beautiful wine county.

Event: <https://gncc.ca/events/events2024/#id=156&cid=1185&wid=1010601>

NIAGARA IRISH FESTIVAL 2024

Saturday, August 24, 2024 , 11:00am-11:00pm

2275 Dorchester Road, Niagara Falls, ON

Come celebrate Irish music and culture in beautiful Niagara Falls Ontario. The Niagara Irish festival 2024 will feature local Irish musicians, Irish dancers and performers, artisan market and more!

Tickets: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/niagara-irish-festival-2024-tickets-817356965687>

MAYOR JIM'S CHARITY COMMUNITY BBQ

Saturday, September 14, 2024 , from 12:00 - 4:00 pm.

St. George Serbian Orthodox Church - 6085 Montrose Road, Niagara Falls, ON.

Mayor Jim is bringing the community together for an afternoon of outdoor activities for all ages to spread awareness about the importance of delivering the highest quality medical and senior care in Niagara Falls.

Event: <https://niagarafalls.ca/news/696-mayor-jim-s-charity-community-bbq-and-fire-truck-pull.news>

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MADE IN NIAGARA

Discover the best of Niagara's industries, including agriculture, manufacturing, and attractions. Our 2024 edition features an AI-powered chat portal, offering a comprehensive business directory to promote your products and services.



MADE IN NIAGARA Discover Niagara's Wonder 2024

 Business Link Media Group



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Ads Deadline: End of August **Release Time:** October **Distribution:** Niagara Region, GTA and International Tradeshows



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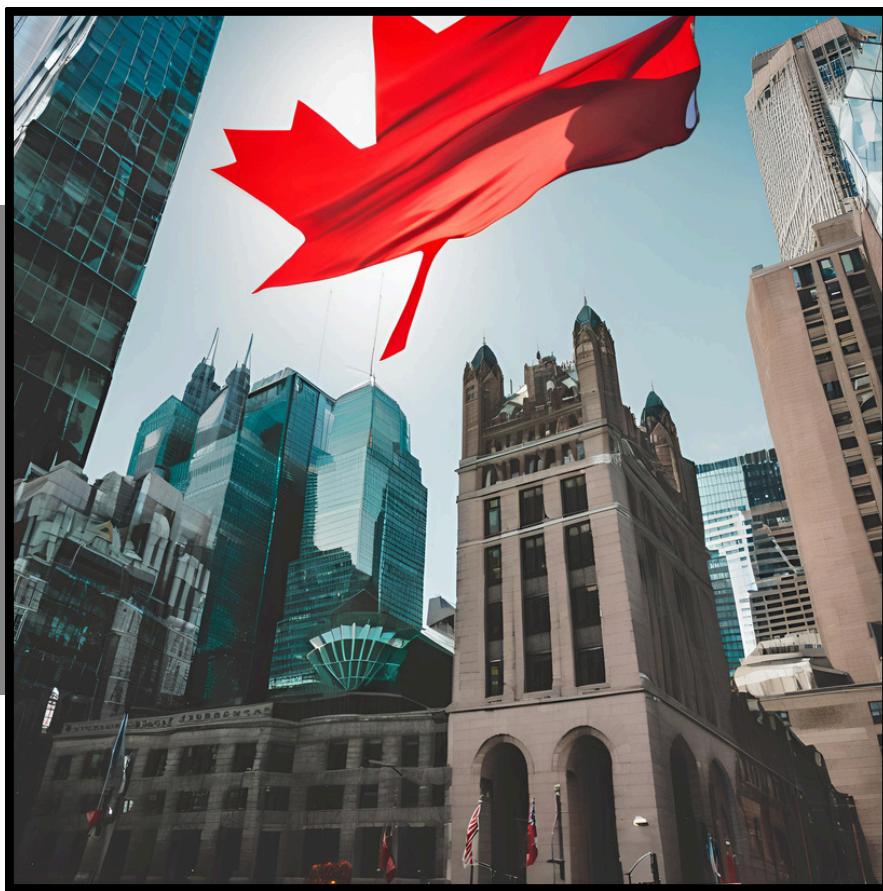
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HOW POLITICS SHAPE MARKET TRENDS INSIGHTS FROM FISHER INVESTMENTS CANADA

In the complex world of financial markets, understanding the influence of politics on stocks is crucial for investors. Fisher Investments Canada offers a unique perspective, focusing on the potential impact of policies rather than the politicians or parties involved. This approach helps investors navigate the often-turbulent waters of political rhetoric and its real-world implications for markets.



The Importance of Policy Over Politics

Political figures often grab headlines with their rhetoric, whether it's their charismatic style or grand promises on divisive issues. These can range from pledges to lower corporate taxes to proposals for price controls. While these promises may sound significant, Fisher Investments Canada emphasizes that words alone do not translate into immediate market realities.

The real question is: How likely are these politicians to deliver on their promises?

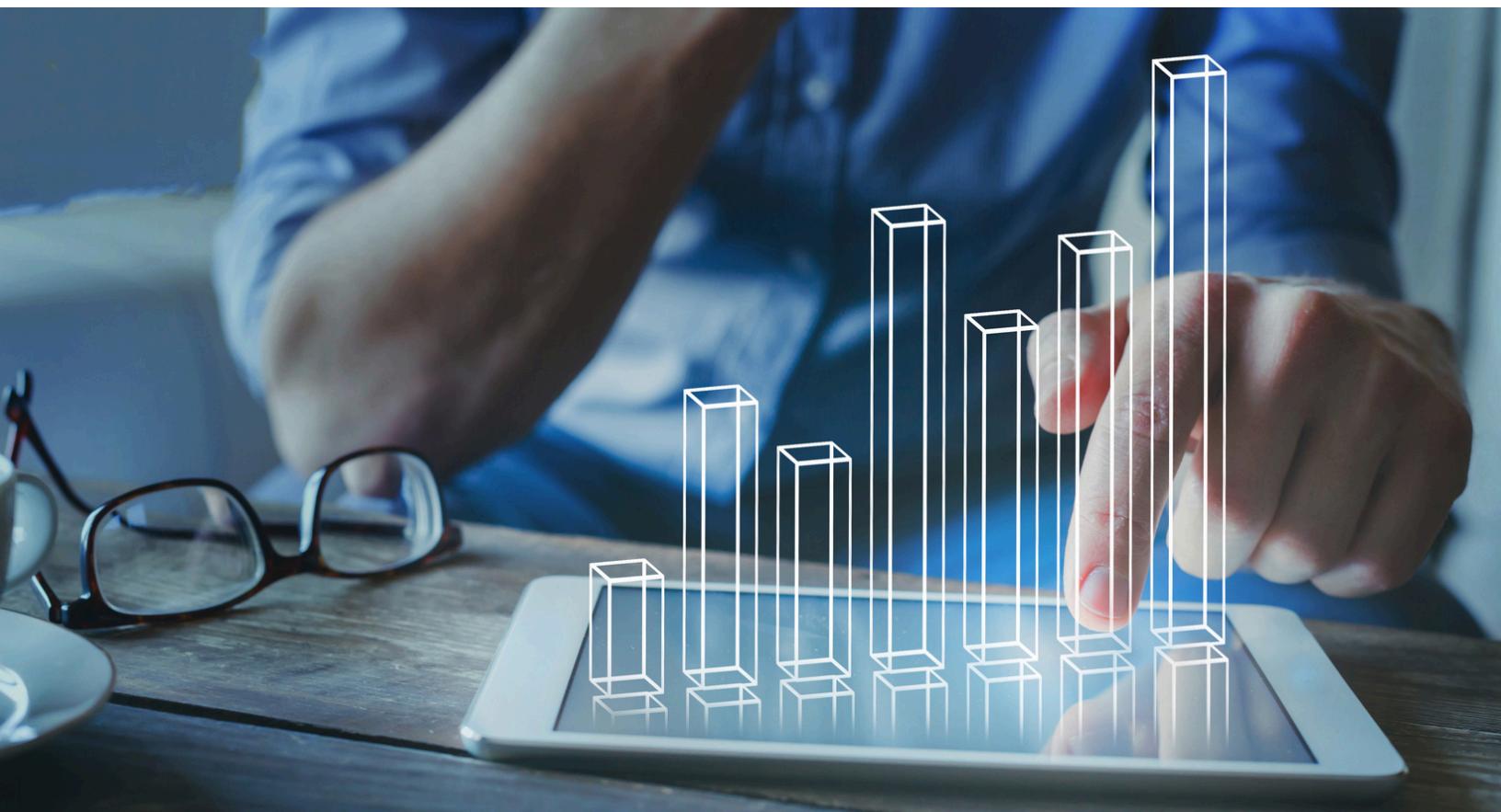
The Complexity of Policymaking

Policymaking in developed countries is a complex process. Governments typically divide power among a legislature, an executive office, and a judiciary, making it challenging for any single group to enact sweeping changes without compromise. Campaign promises are often designed to win votes rather than reflect actual policy plans. Even if a policy becomes law, its details and implementation can significantly impact its effect on markets.

What Really Matters to Markets

Fisher Investments Canada's research indicates that markets are more concerned with how policies affect business operations than with political rhetoric. Key factors include:

- Property Rights: Can businesses trust that their investments and potential profits are secure from arbitrary government intervention?
- Intellectual Property: Are proprietary products protected, encouraging companies to invest in innovation?
- Policy Creation Process: Is the process transparent and systematic, or can politicians make abrupt changes with little oversight?
- Tax Stability: What is the tax burden on companies, and is the tax policy stable or subject to frequent changes?



Reducing Uncertainty

The overarching theme is uncertainty. Policies that create uncertainty or make business planning difficult can deter investment and harm markets. However, no single type of policy is inherently good or bad for stocks. For example, high taxes alone do not necessarily derail markets, just as low taxes are not a guaranteed boost. The broader economic conditions and industry trends also play critical roles.

Looking Beyond the Headlines

Investors can benefit from looking beyond political headlines and examining the likelihood and potential impact of policies. For instance, if an opposition party wins an election on a platform of tax cuts and investment incentives, it's essential to consider whether they have a majority to implement these changes or if they will need to compromise. The specifics of the policy, its economic impact, and the timeline for implementation are all crucial factors.

By focusing on policies rather than political figures, Fisher Investments Canada helps investors gain a clearer understanding of what truly influences market trends. This approach can help cut through political noise and provide a more stable foundation for long-term investment decisions.

Investing in financial markets involves risk, and there is no guarantee that any capital invested will be repaid. Past performance is not indicative of future returns. Fisher Investments Canada advises consulting with professional advisors for personalized investment or tax advice.

Article Source:

<https://financialpost.com/sponsored/business-sponsored/fisher-investments-canada-reviews-how-politics-impact-stocks>



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Sept. 21 - Badger Brunch
Sept. 22 - Virtual Brock Trivia

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Phone number: 647-395-9669



VANCOUVER'S FIRST NATIONS: PIONEERING REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT IN CANADA

Vancouver's First Nations have emerged as powerful leaders in Canadian real estate, driving some of the country's most ambitious development projects. At the forefront is the Squamish Nation's Señákw village, a historic initiative that will bring 6,000 rental units across 11 residential towers to a 10.5-acre site near downtown Vancouver. Scheduled for completion in 2030, this project is expected to generate up to \$13 billion for the Nation, reclaiming land where their ancestors once lived before being forcibly removed in 1913.

Señákw is more than just a housing development—it's a cultural revival. "We've been out of sight and out of mind in our own village for 100 years," says Wilson Williams, a Squamish Nation councilor. "Now we have a generational plan to bring everyone home." This project integrates Squamish culture and heritage into Vancouver's urban fabric, marking a significant shift in how Indigenous communities are represented in the city.

The Squamish Nation is part of a broader movement led by Vancouver's First Nations, including the Musqueam and Tsleil-Waututh Nations, who together oversee the MST Development Corporation. This joint venture manages several large-scale projects, such as the Jericho Lands and Heather Lands developments, which will introduce thousands of homes, retail, and office spaces across 160 acres of prime real estate.

These developments are reshaping Vancouver's urban landscape, addressing the city's housing shortage and setting new standards for sustainable building practices. For instance, Se'nal̓kw aims to become Canada's first large-scale net-zero housing development, featuring mass timber construction and an energy system that repurposes waste heat.

These projects also highlight a shift in urban planning, where Indigenous leadership and values play a central role. The partnership between the Squamish Nation and developer Westbank, which secured a record \$1.4 billion federal loan for Se'nal̓kw, exemplifies how Indigenous-led initiatives can attract significant investment while retaining control over their lands and narratives.

Beyond economic impact, these developments are revitalizing Indigenous culture in urban spaces, with traditional art and design elements planned throughout. The MST Development Corporation's projects, such as the Indigenous House of Learning at Jericho Lands, further underscore this cultural resurgence.

Vancouver's First Nations are leading a new era in Canadian urban development, where reconciliation, economic empowerment, and cultural revival are intertwined. Through their visionary projects, they are not only transforming Vancouver's skyline but also ensuring that their stories and legacies remain integral to the city's future.

Article source: <https://www.fastcompany.com/91159025/how-vancouvers-first-nations-became-canadas-biggest-real-estate-developers>



AI LABEL HURTS SALES: STUDY REVEALS SURPRISING CONSUMER REACTION

Companies aiming to boost sales of their tech-enabled products might want to reconsider the inclusion of the term “artificial intelligence” in their product descriptions. A recent study led by researchers at Washington State University (WSU) reveals that mentioning artificial intelligence (AI) can inadvertently reduce consumer purchase intentions.

The study, published in the Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management, involved experimental surveys conducted with over 1,000 adults across the United States to explore the impact of AI disclosure on consumer behavior. The consistent finding: products labeled as using artificial intelligence were notably less popular.

The research showed that mentioning AI tends to lower emotional trust, which in turn decreases purchase intentions. Emotional trust plays a critical role in how consumers perceive AI-powered products.

During the experiments, participants were presented with identical product descriptions, with the only variation being the inclusion or omission of the term “artificial intelligence.” For instance, in one scenario, participants evaluated smart televisions; those who saw the AI label indicated a lower likelihood of purchasing the product.



The study's findings were even more pronounced for high-risk products and services—those where consumers typically feel more anxious or uncertain, such as expensive electronics, medical devices, or financial services. For these categories, the potential risks associated with failure, including monetary loss or physical danger, heightened consumer wariness when AI was mentioned.

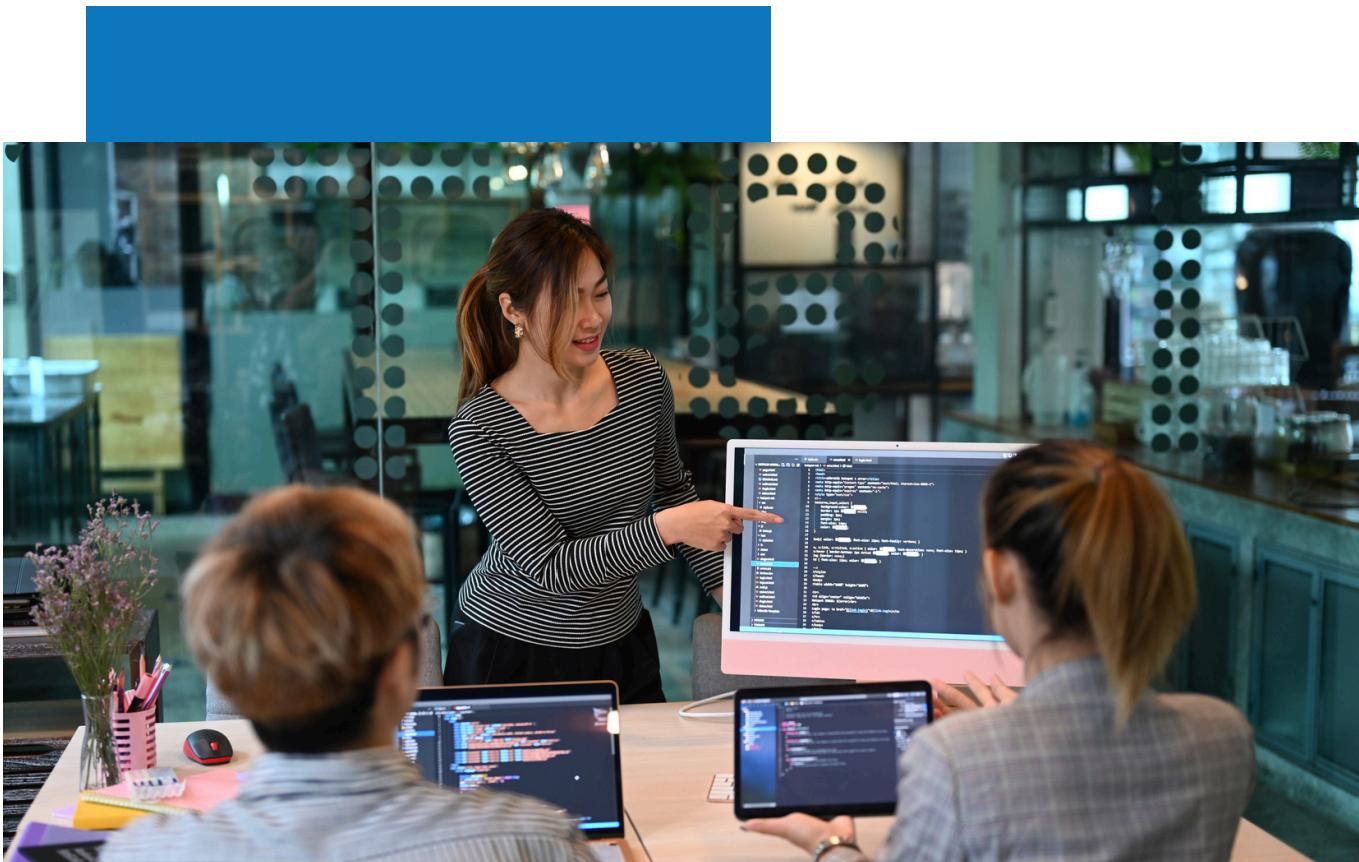
The research tested the effect across eight different product and service categories, and the results consistently showed a disadvantage to including the term "artificial intelligence" in product descriptions.

The implications of this study are significant for marketers and companies integrating AI into their products. Marketers should strategically consider how to present AI in product descriptions and develop strategies to increase emotional trust. Emphasizing AI may not always be beneficial, particularly for high-risk products. It may be more effective to focus on describing the features or benefits and avoid AI buzzwords.

This research was a collaborative effort, with contributions from Dogan Gursoy, professor of hospitality at WSU, and Lu Lu, associate professor at Temple University's Fox School of Business and Management. The study offers valuable insights, urging companies to rethink their marketing strategies to better align with consumer perceptions and trust levels.

Article Source:

<https://news.wsu.edu/press-release/2024/07/30/using-the-term-artificial-intelligence-in-product-descriptions-reduces-purchase-intentions/>



CALIFORNIA DMV REVOLUTIONIZES VEHICLE OWNERSHIP WITH BLOCKCHAIN TECHNOLOGY TO COMBAT FRAUD

In a groundbreaking move, California's Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) has digitized 42 million car titles using blockchain technology. This pioneering initiative, in collaboration with tech company Oxhead Alpha on the Avalanche blockchain, was exclusively revealed to Reuters on Tuesday. The project marks the first such implementation in the United States and aims to detect fraud while streamlining the vehicle title transfer process.

California's over 39 million residents will soon be able to claim their vehicle titles through a mobile app, significantly reducing the need for in-person DMV visits. By leveraging blockchain technology, the DMV seeks to create a transparent and unalterable record of property ownership, thus serving as a powerful deterrent against lien fraud.

John Wu, president of Ava Labs, explained, "The first step was creating the 42 million titles associated as tokens on the Avalanche blockchain, which the State of California DMV has already accomplished. The next phase involves developing a mobile wallet for consumers to access these digital titles."

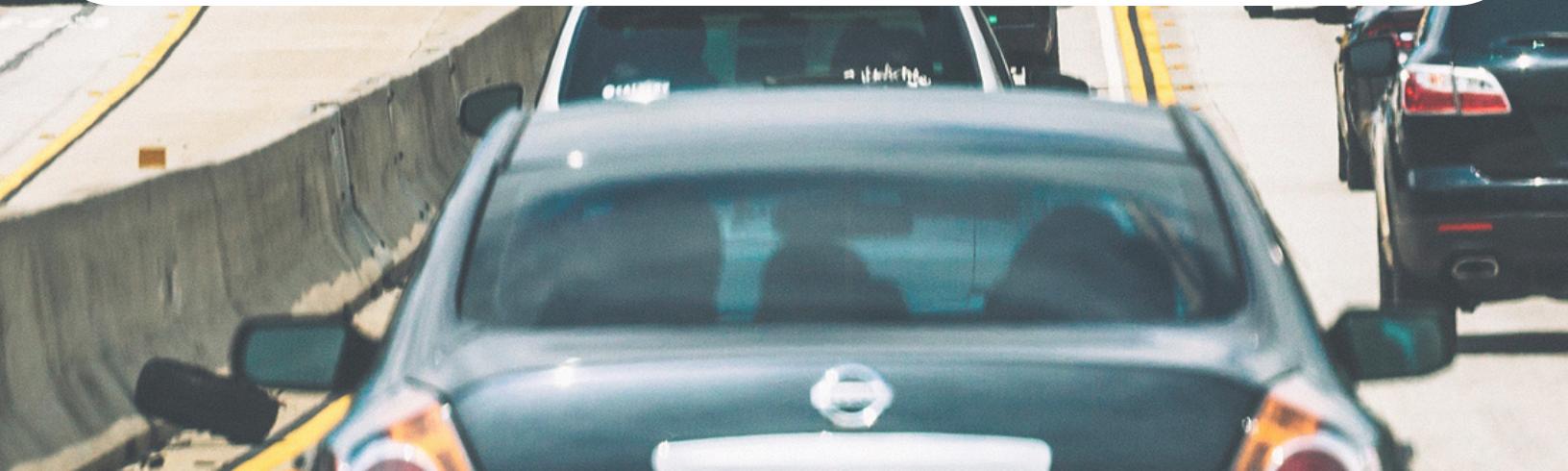
Residents can expect to access their digital car titles starting early next year as the DMV continues to build out the necessary app and infrastructure. This move not only simplifies the title transfer process but also represents a significant step towards digitization in government services.

In addition to the DMV project, Deloitte has partnered with Ava Labs to enable a new disaster recovery platform. This platform is designed to help the U.S. government streamline disaster reimbursement applications to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), highlighting the versatile applications of blockchain technology.

As technology continues to advance rapidly, it is anticipated that more government sectors will explore and adopt blockchain solutions to enhance efficiency, transparency, and security in their operations.

Article Source:

<https://www.reuters.com/technology/california-dmv-puts-42-million-car-titles-blockchain-fight-fraud-2024-07-30/>



NEWS

WORLD

World's leaders meet today to discuss global warming and terrorism issues. Among other things will also discuss new measures on global security. Last time this meeting was very productive and has brought major changes on Earth. We will visit several places of strategic interest and will discuss possible collaborations nationally.



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BUSINESS NEWS

ECONOMY • INVESTMENTS • CORPORATION • STOCK EXCHANGE

Economic Growth

The economic situation is growing after the most recent changes are tax system. Last time this meeting was very productive and has brought major changes on Earth. We will visit several places of strategic interest and will discuss possible collaborations nationally.

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AUGUST GLOBAL NEWS HIGHLIGHTS





State Officials Demand Musk Correct Election Misinformation on X's Chatbot

Five secretaries of state have requested Elon Musk to update X's chatbot, Grok, after it disseminated false information about the 2024 presidential election. Grok incorrectly informed some X users that Vice President Kamala Harris had missed the ballot deadline in nine states, including Michigan, Minnesota, and New Mexico.

More:

- In a letter, the secretaries from Minnesota, Pennsylvania, Michigan, New Mexico, and Washington stated that Grok erroneously advised users that ballot deadlines for several states had passed following President Biden's withdrawal from his reelection campaign.
- Contrary to Grok's assertions, ballots are still open in the nine states, and upcoming deadlines permit changes to presidential and vice-presidential candidates, as outlined in the letter.
- The secretaries urged Musk to update Grok and direct users to a nonpartisan website from the National Association of Secretaries of State for accurate voter registration and polling information.

Article source: <https://www.socialmediatoday.com/news/us-secretaries-of-state-call-on-x-to-address-election-misinformation/723362/>

Meta Eyes Hollywood Stars for AI Voice Project: Judi Dench and Keegan-Michael Key in Talks

Meta is in discussions with renowned actors, including Judi Dench and Keegan-Michael Key, to lend their voices to its AI initiatives, notably a digital assistant named MetaAI. The company aims to integrate these voices across its suite of platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, Messenger, WhatsApp, and its Ray-Ban Meta glasses.

More:

- According to the NY Times, Meta is negotiating with leading Hollywood talent agencies and may offer substantial compensation to secure these voices.
- While SAG-AFTRA has reached an agreement with Meta, ongoing negotiations with actors' representatives are focused on establishing stricter usage limits.
- Currently the agreement limits how long Meta can use recorded voices, with possible renewals or extensions when their contracts expire.
- Meta hopes to finalize the deals before its September Connect conference, where it plans to showcase the new voices and other AI tools.

Article source: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2024-08-02/meta-is-offering-hollywood-stars-millions-for-ai-voice-projects>



HIGHLIGHTS

UK Watchdog Investigates Amazon's \$4B Stake in AI Startup Anthropic for Competition Concerns

The U.K.'s competition watchdog **opened a probe** into Amazon's investment in AI startup Anthropic. The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) will investigate whether the partnership qualifies as a merger and, if so, whether it could harm competition.

More:

- The CMA has until Oct. 4 to refer the deal for a deeper review or clear it of competition issues.
- Amazon's **\$4B investment** in Anthropic included an initial \$1.25B stake in September and \$2.75B in March.
- Amazon also features Anthropic's LLMs on its Bedrock platform. Anthropic uses AWS data centers and chips.
- Amazon **argued** that the partnership doesn't raise competition concerns, noting that it has no board seat or decision-making power at Anthropic.

Article source:

<https://www.aboutamazon.com/news/company-news/amazon-anthropic-ai-investment>

Meta's Soaring Ad Revenue Fuels AI Ambitions, Reports \$39B in Q2

Meta's Soaring Ad Revenue Fuels AI Ambitions, Reports \$39B in Q2

Meta's strong ad revenue can continue to support its heavy investments in AI, CEO Mark Zuckerberg said during the company's earnings call. In its Q2 earnings report, the Facebook parent reported a 22% revenue increase year-over-year to \$39B. Ad revenue also rose 22% from the year prior.

More:

- Zuckerberg said Meta's AI investments have improved targeted ad sales by using algorithms to optimize ad placement.
- He said Meta's strong ad performance can help offset its AI investment costs.
- In its Q2 earnings report, Meta raised its capital expenditure plan to \$37B-\$40B this year, up from \$35B-\$40B, to help support AI

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