



BRITISH COLUMBIA'S  
Small Business Roundtable

# **SMALL BUSINESS** ROUNDTABLE

6<sup>th</sup> Annual Report to Government | October 2011



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# Message from the Small Business Roundtable

British Columbia is emerging from the recent economic downturn with a strong sense of renewal and economic momentum. This is in part due to the innovative and entrepreneurial spirit of British Columbia's small business sector. Small businesses created 13,700 new jobs in 2010, generating 57% of all jobs in British Columbia - the highest rate in Canada. In addition, small business exported over 47% of the total value of goods from the province. Despite uncertainties in Europe and the U.S., small businesses remain the cornerstones of B.C. communities and continue to be our economic engine.

It is within this context that the Small Business Roundtable submits this 6th Annual Report to Government. This report summarizes key Roundtable activities during 2010. The report provides insights to new and continued progress in addressing the issues raised by small business owners during consultations held throughout the province. Based largely on these consultations, the report includes forward looking recommendations to government as well as the small business community on strategies to further enhance the growth and success of small business in the province.

We believe it is not enough for small businesses to survive. For British Columbia's long term prosperity, it is vital that we collectively find ways to ensure our small business community thrives and grows.

Finally, we would like to welcome our new chair, Honourable Pat Bell, Minister of Jobs, Tourism and Innovation, along with the Roundtable's new Co-Chair Kevin Krueger, MLA, Kamloops-South Thompson. We look forward to working together to further the interests of British Columbia's small businesses.

*Small Business Roundtable Board Members*

# B.C. Small Business Success Stories

Small businesses play a vital role in the economic success of communities throughout the Province of British Columbia. To recognize this contribution, eight diversified and successful small businesses (one from each economic region) have been selected to reflect the entrepreneurial spirit and diversity evident throughout this province.

Highlighted throughout this year’s report are:

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## Arbutus Grove Nursery

When Hans Stoffelsma immigrated to Canada from Holland with a dream to grow trees, he couldn’t have imagined what five acres of land would one day become. But within two years of starting their greenhouse business, he and his wife Susan had their first contract to grow 100,000 western hemlock seedlings. Fast forward 32 years and Arbutus Grove Nursery has grown into a progressive business on 25 acres producing over nine million reforestation seedlings annually for their customers across B.C. and the North-Western U.S., with their son, Nathaniel, at the helm.

The company has steadily grown over its history, due to the consistent quality of trees grown as well as the customer relationships fostered. Steady growth has made the transition of the business from father to son a smooth one. “I look at the company now from a distance and I am very satisfied with our life’s work. Nathaniel has taken the reins, making the business his own while still retaining Arbutus’ core values of family, customer service and quality product. It feels good”, Hans says.

Indeed, Nathaniel is keen to maintain the business for generations to come. “We’re making strides to become a better and more efficient business, but our strength will always be the skilful and dedicated people we work with”, Nathaniel shares, “Arbutus is family owned and operated, but ‘family’ doesn’t stop with the last name ‘Stoffelsma.’ ‘Some of our staff are third generation, turning the business into more than just a profitable alliance, it’s an extended family. Our team has truly been the key to our success”, shares Nathaniel proudly.

[www.arbutusgrove.com](http://www.arbutusgrove.com)



# About Us

## What is the Small Business Roundtable?

The Small Business Roundtable was established in 2005 to provide British Columbia's small businesses with a voice to government through:

1. Engaging in a dialogue with small business to identify key issues and opportunities.
2. Developing recommendations to government and small business owners on strategies to enhance B.C.'s small business climate.
3. Advocating small business interests in the province.

Honourable Pat Bell, Minister of Jobs, Tourism and Innovation chairs the Small Business Roundtable Board whose members consist of Co-chair Kevin Krueger, MLA Kamloops-South Thompson, and 18 recognized leaders within their small business communities.

## Who do we represent?<sup>1</sup>

The Small Business Roundtable represents small businesses across British Columbia. Small Business is defined as a business with fewer than 50 employees, or self employed without paid help.

- 98 percent of all businesses in the province are small businesses.
- Small business provides nearly 57 percent of all private sector jobs, employing over one million people.
- Over 41 percent of the total value of goods exported from British Columbia is generated by small business.
- Small businesses are responsible for approximately 32 percent of the province's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

## Number of Small Businesses per Economic Region, British Columbia, 2010

Region	Population <sup>2</sup>	# of small businesses <sup>3</sup>
1. Vancouver Island/Coast	772,309	71,000
2. Mainland/Southcoast	2,667,496	231,200
3. Thompson-Okanagan	536,315	49,000
4. Kootenay	151,821	14,900
5. Cariboo	160,699	13,500
6. North Coast and 7. Nechako	98,320	6,400
8. Northeast	68,247	5,500
British Columbia	4,455,207	391,700

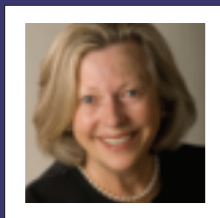


<sup>1</sup>Statistical source: Small Business Profile, BC Stats, 2010

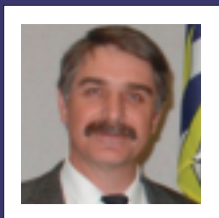
<sup>2</sup>Source: BC Stats, Regional Population Estimates and Projections (2009 data)

<sup>3</sup>Source: Small Business Profile, BC Stats, 2010

# Who are we?



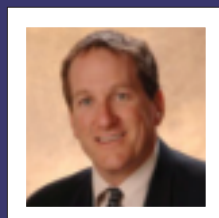
1. **Sue Adams**,  
Managing Partner,  
Bevendale Enterprises  
**WHISTLER**



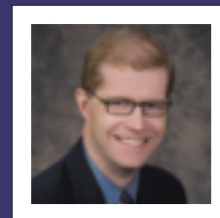
2. **John Cameron**,  
CEO, Rock Solid  
Business Coaching Inc.  
**LANGLEY**



3. **Cindy Choi**,  
Manager,  
Chan & Company  
**VICTORIA**



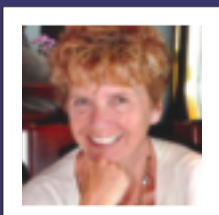
4. **Robert Fine**,  
Executive Director,  
Economic Development  
Commission of the  
Central Okanagan  
**KELOWNA**



5. **Garth Frizzell**,  
Founder and CEO  
Terra Cognita Software  
Systems Inc  
**PRINCE GEORGE**



6. **Laura Jones**,  
Sr.VP of Research, Economics  
& Western Canada, Canadian  
Federation of Independent  
Business  
**VANCOUVER**



7. **Linda Larson**,  
Vice-Chair, Small Business  
Roundtable  
**OLIVER**



8. **David Littlejohn**,  
Professional Campground  
Operator, Living Forest  
RV Park/Oceanside  
Campground  
**NANAIMO**



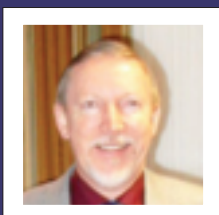
9. **Kelly McCormack**  
Owner, McCormack  
Management  
**BURNS LAKE**



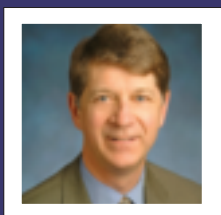
10. **Cybele Negris**,  
President & Co-Founder,  
Webnames.ca Inc.  
**VANCOUVER**



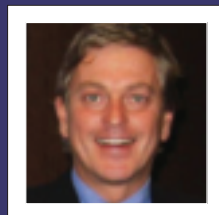
11. **Coralee Oakes**,  
Executive Director,  
Quesnel & District  
Chamber of Commerce  
**QUESNEL**



12. **Murray Presley**,  
Partner, Presley &  
Partners  
**COURTENAY**



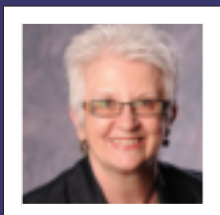
13. **Mark Startup**,  
President & CEO,  
Shelfspace – the  
Association for Retail  
Entrepreneurs  
**VANCOUVER**



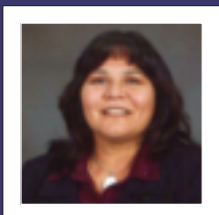
14. **Ian Tostenson**,  
President & CEO,  
British Columbia  
Restaurant & Food  
Services Association  
**VANCOUVER**



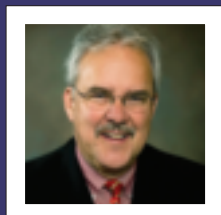
15. **Sonia Virk**,  
Lawyer and Partner  
Joomratty and Virk,  
Barristers & Solicitors  
**SURREY**



16. **MJ Whitmarsh**,  
CEO, Canadian Home  
Builders' Association  
of BC  
**BURNABY**



17. **Chief Judy Wilson**,  
Neskonlith Indian Band  
(Skatsin)  
**CHASE**



18. **John Winter**,  
President & CEO,  
British Columbia  
Chamber of Commerce  
**VANCOUVER**



19. **Kevin Krueger**,  
Co-Chair, Small Business  
Roundtable  
**KAMLOOPS**

For inquiries contact  
[roundtablesecretariat@gov.bc.ca](mailto:roundtablesecretariat@gov.bc.ca)

## JD Farms

JD Farms began as a small commercial egg farm in 1979 and has since transformed into a specialty turkey producer with an on-site bistro, retail store and a wholesale distribution channel.

Described as a “32 year overnight success”, JD Farms is a family-owned and operated business. Jack and Debbie Froese both grew up on farms - he hailed from egg country and she from a dairy farm, and two of their children are active in the business. And with six grandkids to date, the family farm could foreseeably continue for another generation or more!

What sets JD farms apart is the sense of tradition engrained in their specialty turkeys, as well as their business practices. “We have families coming to pick out their Thanksgiving or Christmas turkeys every year. Their family tradition has become ours, and that is very important to us” says Jack Froese proudly.

Indeed, personal relationships have been pivotal for the success of JD Farms. From loyal customers returning for their famous turkey pepperoni, to the number of staff who have been with the farm for over 17 years, JD Farms was built on personal relationships.

Froese advises anyone interested in starting a small business to be aware of the challenges, but don’t be discouraged. “You don’t have to have an MBA to be successful, but having the right business coach and some training goes a long way. We were 25 when we started this - we certainly didn’t have all the answers but we learnt from experience and from the people around us”.

[www.jdfarms.ca](http://www.jdfarms.ca)

## Meeting our Mandate

This section provides highlights of our activities as well as examples of government responses to concerns voiced by B.C.’s small business community.

### 1. Engage in Dialogue With the Small Business Community

Over 48 consultations have been completed throughout the province since 2005 providing small business owners with an opportunity to discuss issues and opportunities with the Roundtable. In 2010, consultations took place in Whiterock, Vernon, Kelowna, Chilliwack, Kamloops, Parksville, Abbotsford, Oliver and the Tri-Cities area, which includes Anmore, Belcarra, Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam and Port Moody. Further details on these consultations can be found at:

[www.smallbusinessroundtable.ca](http://www.smallbusinessroundtable.ca)

### 2. Annual Report to Government

Since the Roundtable’s inception in 2005, the Board has presented a report to Government documenting the highlights of the previous year, including the Board’s activities and forward looking recommendations. This year’s sixth annual report continues to present recommendations to government and small business for the purpose of contributing to small business’ growth and success and the development of government small business strategies.

### 3. New small business friendly [www.gov.bc.ca](http://www.gov.bc.ca) site

There were many drivers behind the development of the new government of B.C. website. However, the single gateway “Business and Investing” tab on the home page is a direct response to the message commonly heard during small business consultations — finding any B.C. Government information for business was very challenging given multiple, evolving sites with no standardization. The new website provides easy access to relevant information from the business users’ perspective. The Small Business Roundtable website, [www.smallbusinessroundtable.ca](http://www.smallbusinessroundtable.ca) was also refreshed this year with small business convenience as a key objective.



## *The Voice of Small Business is Being Heard*

### **4. Provide Recommendations to Promote Small Business Growth**

The Small Business Roundtable Board meets once a quarter to share information about what is happening in B.C. regions and business sectors, discuss ways to better address the needs and potential opportunities for small business and to provide government with advice about proposed strategies and programs. Occasionally, subcommittees are formed to focus attention on specific small business topics by developing recommendations for consideration by the board as a whole. The following are current subcommittees:

- Regulatory Reform
- Small Business Award
- Small Business Roundtable Annual Report
- Building Skills

The voice of small business is conveyed to government by individuals participating in regional small business consultations, by individual board members, by the board's subcommittees as well as by the board as a whole.

### **5. Regulatory Reform**

#### **5.1 10th Regulatory Reform Anniversary in B.C.**

Now entering its 10th year, the Regulatory Reform program was implemented for the primary purpose of reducing red tape and has reduced regulatory requirements by more than 42 per cent. The Roundtable supports this program as it continues to provide small businesses with simplified processes. It has formed a subcommittee whose goal is to ensure the initiative continues to address the needs of small business.

On June 26th, 2011, government renewed its commitment to no net increases to the regulatory count to 2015, and announced it would enshrine regulatory accountability in legislation.

This is a major milestone in B.C.'s regulatory reform program and highlights B.C.'s international leadership in this area.

## sparkgeo

When Will Cadell emigrated from Scotland in 2005, he came in search of mountains of opportunity - literally. He settled with his wife in Prince George, a town which combines their thirst for adventure and the great outdoors with his love of geography and technology. The result was SparkGeo, a geo-web consultancy that provides a way for users to visualize data by putting maps on the internet. "We're about as far north as Silicone Valley gets," Cadell jokes.

The inspiration behind SparkGeo was simple: Cadell wanted a challenge. Previously an Information Technology Manager, he wanted to create his own rewarding job. He saw a gap in geo services industry and filled that niche by becoming a consultant. Initially, sparkgeo supported eco-reserve.org, a non-profit technology start-up by building their webmap. Now, sparkgeo works with mountain communities, iPhone app developers, data providers and Northern B.C. First Nations as well as more "traditional G.I.S's" and mapping work.

In rare moments of downtime, Cadell loves to spend time with his family and mountain climb. Climbing has provided a perfect example for his business: "I'm scared of heights, but that's a good thing in rock climbing! In business, fear keeps you from stepping too far outside of your boundaries. Without it, I wouldn't be where I am today".

So what's the best part of Will's experience as a new small business owner? Getting that first cheque! "Each time it's a moment of revelation. My clients are telling me that my work is valuable." Another highlight is having a client refer him. Cadell says "Word of mouth is important but sparkgeo is primarily online so I rarely have the opportunity to shake hands with a client. Because of our online presence, our clients in San Francisco only have to check LinkedIn and they can view previous client referrals. It works for us".

[www.sparkgeo.com](http://www.sparkgeo.com)



# The Most Small Business Friendly Community Award

This year, the Small Business Roundtable is pleased to recognize those communities making an effort to foster the growth and success of small businesses in the Province of British Columbia through the “Most Small Business Friendly Community Award”.

An award was available for one community within each of the eight economic regions of the province to acknowledge its efforts in supporting small businesses in their communities. Award evaluations were based on locally implemented government measures as they relate to:

- Reducing regulatory barriers.
- Enhancing small business competitiveness.
- Recognizing small business’ contributions to their community.
- Climate action initiatives that support small business.

The winners for 2011 are:

Region 1 (Vancouver Island/Coast)	Ladysmith
Region 2 (Mainland/Southwest)	Surrey
Region 3 (Thompson – Okanagan)	Kamloops
Region 4 (Kootenay)	Rossland
Region 5 (Cariboo)	Quesnel
Region 6 (North Coast)	Prince Rupert

## 5.2 BizPaL

BizPaL is a free online tool that generates a customized list of permits and licences from all levels of government for those looking to open or expand a business in a particular locality in British Columbia. By following an easy step-by-step process, BizPaL reduces the time spent in identifying requirements from a full day to about 15 minutes.

To make this tool more widely available, the B.C. government is in the process of expanding the service to every local government throughout the province. The Small Business Roundtable endorses the expansion of the program. Members promote the service to local governments in an effort to make it easier for business to identify and comply with regulatory requirements imposed by all levels of government. [www.bizpal.ca](http://www.bizpal.ca)

## 5.3 Inter-community Business License

The Inter-Community Business Licence (Mobile Business Licence) allows mobile businesses to operate across participating local governments by purchasing only one licence. Currently, there are five Intercommunity Business License agreements in the province. The Small Business Roundtable fully supports the expansion of the Inter-Community Business Licence in all regions and is advocating their local governments to adopt it as a means of reducing barriers to doing business in the province.

## 6. Improved Trade and Labour Mobility

The New West Partnership Trade Agreement (NWPTA) came into effect in July 2010. The NWPTA is a comprehensive agreement to remove barriers to trade, investment and labour mobility between British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan. Key elements of the NWPTA include: continuing to remove obstacles to labour mobility, ensuring equal treatment for workers and business, treating other provinces’ businesses, investors and workers as fairly as their own, and reconciling unnecessary differences in work standards and regulations. Under the NWPTA, the parties continue to eliminate barriers in the hiring of qualified labour across these three provinces and have opened the labour market to a wider geographic area.

## 7. Competitive Tax Environment

The Roundtable was disappointed with the results of the HST Referendum. However, we are committed to supporting the government and the small business community in transitioning back to the PST. We urge the government to continue to look for ways to ensure British Columbia retains a competitive tax environment.

## 8. Small Business Month

British Columbia continues to dedicate the entire month of October towards recognizing small business' contribution to the province. Events , which provide opportunities to celebrate, learn, and network, take place throughout all regions.

## 9. Small Business BC

The Roundtable supports the work of Small Business BC in delivering programs and services to small business owners.

Small Business BC is a non-government organization, supported by the federal government, the provincial government and the private sector. It is a resource centre which provides small business in B.C. with knowledge-based business products and services. [www.smallbusinessbc.ca](http://www.smallbusinessbc.ca)

## 10. Human Resource Development

Human resource development and support for small business succession continue to be identified as issues during Roundtable consultations. On December 7, 2010 the Province released the Skills for Growth: British Columbia's Labour Market Strategy to 2020 plan. This living strategy focuses efforts on increasing the skill level and success of people currently within British Columbia, improving work productivity, and attracting and retaining skilled labour both nationally and internationally.

Building on the success of the Workplace Training for Innovation Pilot Program developed in consultation with the Roundtable, the Province launched the Targeted Skills Shortage Pilot Program to provide training to low skilled employees in high growth sectors where there is expected to be an increasing demand for skilled workers.

The Building Skills subcommittee of the Roundtable approved partnership funding for a collaborative pilot project to address small business succession. Additional funding for the project was provided by the province, the Island Coastal Economic Trust and the Island Coastal Community Futures Network. The project will link interested business purchasers to small business owners who are in the process of, or thinking about, exiting their business and will offer relevant training and support to both buyers and sellers.

## Oceanwild

When the fishing industry hit a wall in Prince Rupert, Mike and Almudena Miles had to rethink their commercial fishing business. They had their boats and knew every inlet, and in 2008 they started Oceanwild, a small company specializing in nature and diving expeditions. After fishing for many years, the pair realised how few people saw the abundant wildlife common on the north coast. They wanted to share the bears, birds, sea lions and whales with families and other groups. "We wanted to keep the groups small", Almudena Miles says, "that way the experience is more intimate".

With Mike's background in fishing, Almudena's training as a biologist and their shared love of diving, developing a tourism-based business felt natural. They spend each day on the water, doing the things they love. They've added a floating camp of cabins and bunkhouses for overnight accommodation and multi-day kayaking adventure tours to their list of services.

"We love getting up in the morning and heading to 'work'", says Miles. "Sharing sea life and nature with other families and small groups is much more than a job – it's a pleasure. Admittedly we didn't know much about business when we first started, but we followed our instincts and simply did what we love to do", she adds.

And it wouldn't be possible without support in Prince Rupert. "We have a great, small staff and good relationships with the people who are integral to our business. We wouldn't be where we are today without their support".

[www.oceanwild.ca](http://www.oceanwild.ca)



## Cartolina

When Fiona Richards started Cartolina Cards in 2006, she didn't have time to start slowly – she needed to create a job for herself and fast! Moving from Victoria to the Kootenays meant adjusting her lifestyle but it was the best move she could have made. Once there, Richards felt compelled to share her collection of rare vintage ephemera and so created her own greeting card design & paper products company. She started with one store on Granville St. in Vancouver and, with the help of her distributor, quickly spread from there into the U.S. Today, Cartolina has gone global, gracing the shelves of beautiful stores across Australia, New Zealand, North America and Europe. Richards considers each unique vendor a milestone, with locations like Harrods and the British Museum carrying her whimsical designs.

With her collection of vintage imagery and a great eye for colour, Richards has created a niche for herself. She names social media, especially the use of blogging and twitter, as one of the reasons for her success. Vendors hear about Cartolina through social media chatter - and it has paid off. The Cartolina i-phone app, a "three-dimensional e-greeting treasure that shows up in your email", came out last year and became #1 and a staff favourite at the app store.

Being a small business owner has its challenges of course, namely when Kootenay winter weather holds up a large shipment. But Richards says she loves being at the helm and seeing her designs in flagship retailers feels amazing. Richard's advice to small business owners is simple: learn every aspect of your business, from website development to what kind of packaging tape is best. Put the effort in, enjoy the huge rewards of your vision and expect to lose sleep.

[www.cartolina.com](http://www.cartolina.com)

## Aspenware

What happens when three shop teachers and an English teacher brainstorm? Answer: beautiful, strong, compostable wooden cutlery!

The birth of Aspenware dates back to 1997 when one of the three saw wooden cutlery from Europe on a television documentary. As shop teachers, they did what came naturally – they went on a fieldtrip to see for themselves! What they found was definitely made of wood but lacked strength and functionality. They set to work brainstorming ways to improve the cutlery. Late one night, Terry Bigsby, one of the original three, had a "Eureka" moment that led the company to form veneer, designing the world's first "laminated" wooden cutlery.

Aspenware is becoming a common sight in grocery store aisles with a significant, yet completely unintended, benefit. Aspenware cutlery, as well as its packaging, is truly compostable. "We don't consider ourselves a green company," says Bigsby. "We simply want to be known as a company doing good things the best way we know how in a constant effort to improve."

Today, 15 years later, Terry and the Aspenware team continue to apply their skill and ingenuity, building Aspenware's second manufacturing line.

Help for Aspenware came in the form of a grant from Industrial Research Assistance Program, but the ultimate reason for Aspenware's success is the incredible team of great people behind it. "Without them, we wouldn't be in business today", Bigsby says, "We now have twenty team members and believe growth will be exponential as the market becomes aware of Aspenware."

[www.aspenware.ca](http://www.aspenware.ca)



# Recommendations to Government

Our annual roundtable consultations provide business owners with the opportunity to raise their ideas and issues directly with the minister or his representative. The following recommendations reflect what was heard during these sessions as well as submissions from Board members.

## 1. Continue to instill consumer and business confidence

- Continue holding consultations with small business to obtain regular feedback for consideration when developing government policy and programs.
- Encourage communities to acknowledge the importance of small business contributions to local economies, and to consider ways in which they can encourage small business development and growth, such as reducing the regulatory burden.

## 2. Support training and labour market development

- Continue supporting small businesses in recruitment, retention, and succession planning.
- Ensure needs of small businesses are considered under Labour Market and Labour Market Development Agreements while continuing to support them through targeted skills training programs. Renew commitment to include the Roundtable in brainstorming solutions to more effectively administer LMA funds.
- Continue to invest and provide funding for training programs.
- Champion Aboriginal business support service centres such as the First Citizens Fund and Aboriginal business and entrepreneurship skills training programs.
- Continue to modernize immigration practises to meet the needs of the labour market.

## 3. Leverage technology and competitiveness

- Continue encouraging small business to leverage new technologies, innovations and ideas to increase productivity.
- Further enhance the competitiveness of B.C.'s tax structure.
- Continue investing to diversify northern B.C.'s economy (i.e. Bio-energy industry and natural resource extraction industries) and commit to further communication and transportation infrastructure improvements in the North.
- Continue to encourage small business to make use of the LiveSmartBC program to counteract climate change.
- Continue to investigate further ways to help small business reap the benefits from online business development – (competitive/ industry intelligence, expand B2B and customer networks, improve productivity, e-commerce).



# Recommendations to Government

## 4. Focus on factors that stimulate small business growth

- Support small business expanding both their national and international markets by ensuring they play a prominent role in British Columbia's international trade outreach activities.
- Partner with local communities to provide training to more rural areas through video conferencing centres and other remote communication tools.
- Continue to provide annual Aboriginal-focused Small Business Roundtable sessions in partnership with the Community Futures Development Corporation of the Central Interior First Nations as one part of exploring new opportunities to align B.C.'s Aboriginal Economic Development Action Plan for further building of self-reliance, prosperity, and economic stability.
- Assist small businesses in increasing access to capital through funding programs and grants. Different funding should be made available throughout the lifecycle of a small business and include research and development, feasibility studies, business planning, start-up capital, marketing development, bridge financing, and operational capital.

## 5. Continue to reduce regulatory burden on small business

- Recognize other governments for their endeavours to reduce regulations on small business.
- Assist other government levels to continue to implement regulatory reduction through initiatives such as BizPaL, OneStop and the Mobile Business License.

## 6. Further enhance the entrepreneurial culture in B.C.

- Continue to raise the profile of small business and their contribution to the provincial and local government economies through Small Business Month.
- Continue to support Junior Achievement BC in providing business and entrepreneurship programs in our schools.
- Continue to investigate and expand mentorship programs for new entrepreneurs.



# Recommendations to Small Business Community

The economic environment in B.C. has rebounded, however, small businesses must remain vigilant in their efforts to be competitive and invest in opportunities both short-term and long-term.

Given the re-emerging labour shortage, it is vital that small businesses explore new ways to attract and retain employees. They also face the challenge of keeping their delivery of goods and services current with changes in consumer trends and emerging markets.

These recommendations highlight potential actions for small businesses to help them expand and develop.

## 1. Focus on human resources

- Ensure your company's human resource plan accommodates the major changes taking place in the labour market due to B.C.'s aging population.
- Remain competitive by ensuring you and your staff have appropriate skills sets for today.
- Create employee retention strategies.
- Grow the expertise you need by investing in the capabilities of your employees.
- Recruit potential employees from "non-mainstream" groups, such as Aboriginals, seniors, immigrants, and those with disabilities. Three locations to start are:
  - WorkBC's Finding Workers website:  
[http://www.workbcd.ca/employers/finding\\_workers/hire\\_immigrants\\_in\\_bc.htm](http://www.workbcd.ca/employers/finding_workers/hire_immigrants_in_bc.htm)
  - Hiring Persons with Disabilities booklet:  
[http://www.workbc.ca/docs/toolKit\\_Book3.pdf](http://www.workbc.ca/docs/toolKit_Book3.pdf)
  - Hiring Mature Workers booklet:  
[http://www.workbc.ca/docs/toolKit\\_Book2.pdf](http://www.workbc.ca/docs/toolKit_Book2.pdf)
- Investigate better ways to market your company to the young workforce.

## 2. Get involved

- Learn what is happening in your community at the planning level by attending city council meetings, getting involved with local community service groups, and being aware of regional initiatives. This type of engagement can be a source of insights to potential new business opportunities for diversification and development.
- Help shape the future workforce by volunteering your business expertise in youth programs such as Junior Achievement BC.
- Join, online or offline, a business or entrepreneurship group, industry association or local Chamber of Commerce and board of trade to expand your networks.

## 3. Develop your leadership skills and knowledge

- Identify what training would be of greatest benefit to you by identifying your strengths and areas for improvement.
- Participate in management roles or management skills training programs.
- Learn from seasoned entrepreneurs through a mentorship program available through a variety of business associations.



# Recommendations to Small Business Community

## 4. Leverage new technologies

- Increase productivity and improve operations through new ways of leveraging technology.
- Develop and maintain a current web presence. Reap the benefits of social media through judicious implementation. Use it to monitor what your customers are publicly saying about your company.
- Contact the eBusiness Connection to learn how to use technology to attract and retain customers. [www.e-bc.ca](http://www.e-bc.ca)

## 5. Access new markets

- Discover how to benefit your business through export. Note: export is defined as doing business involving revenue flows from outside B.C. into the province.
- Financial services, design and engineering, accounting, computer and data services or coaching and mentorship can be extended by small businesses into larger markets. More information is available at [www.tradestart.ca](http://www.tradestart.ca)

## 6. Take advantage of green initiatives

- Leverage LiveSmartBC's small business program to save money and reduce energy [www.livesmartbc.ca](http://www.livesmartbc.ca)
- Determine the most efficient uses of environmental resources by taking advantage of programs that assess business operations. [www.bchydro.com/powersmart](http://www.bchydro.com/powersmart)
- Investigate how green initiatives can provide a competitive advantage to increase revenues.

## 7. Leverage small business resources; communicate to government

- Use government tools and resources provided such as:
  - Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Innovation – [www.gov.bc.ca/jti/](http://www.gov.bc.ca/jti/)
  - Small Business BC – [www.smallbusinessbc.ca](http://www.smallbusinessbc.ca)
  - WorkBC – [www.workbc.ca](http://www.workbc.ca)
- Ensure you communicate your needs to government through your MLA. A listing of elected provincial representatives is located at [www.leg.bc.ca/mla/3-1-1.htm](http://www.leg.bc.ca/mla/3-1-1.htm)
- Participate in small business consultations taking place in your community and connect with the Roundtable. Visit [www.smallbusinessroundtable.ca](http://www.smallbusinessroundtable.ca) for more information or email us at [roundtablesecretariat@gov.bc.ca](mailto:roundtablesecretariat@gov.bc.ca)



## Chief Louie Paddle Company

Every small business has a unique approach, and the Chief Louie Paddle Company is no different. "Our plan does not include benefit/cost analysis; instead we ask whether Chief Louie, the last hereditary chief of the Cheslatta people, would be pleased with what we are doing. He is our guiding principle", Mike Robertson says.

The inspiration for the company came in 2009, after the local sawmill shut down and left unused lumber behind. The Cheslatta set to work carving paddles out of this lumber and the wood submerged in Ootsa Lake after the flood Chief Louie predicted in 1951. Now, carvers gather to make up to 40 paddles per day, connecting with the Earth and the spirits of their ancestors whose lives were washed away in the flood. "They tell stories as they carve each paddle, ingraining our history into the wood", Robertson shares.

Robertson prefers to keep the company small and sustainable with the focus not on profits, but on employment, culture and resources management. Their paddles have been shipped to Germany, China, New Zealand, Japan, Australia and throughout North America, often presented as gifts to politicians, celebrities and even a Nobel peace prize winner.

International recognition is rewarding, but what drives Chief Louie Paddle Company is community. By staying true to their roots, the company inspires other members and artisans to create. "The wood brings out the best in all of us. Chief Louie would be proud", says Robertson, "and to us, that is success."

[www.chieflouie.com](http://www.chieflouie.com)

## Motion Media

Andrew Tylosky takes meeting customer's needs to the next level. Motion Media, originally a video production company established in 2006, has expanded to become a one-stop shop integrated marketing studio. In addition to video production, they supply the Peace Region with printing, web development, graphic design, marketing & branding services because customer demand led them to diversify. "I noticed that people would ask us if we offered this service, or could fulfill this role for them and I said yes! As requests came in, we adapted", Tylosky adds.

Tylosky saw an opportunity in Fort St. John, where there was nowhere to go for the range of marketing services Motion Media has come to symbolize. Tylosky sees the Peace Region and surrounding areas moving towards a knowledge-based economy and to this end, Motion Media has become a referral house for local businesses.

Tylosky describes his business style as "aggressive but also one which builds on small successes". He is proud to remain a small business. "We're a small and nimble team creating great things. I'm proud to say that we take on big projects with gusto and continually get better at what we do".

Tylosky is heavily involved in his community. In addition to running Motion Media, he serves as President of Fort St John Chamber of Commerce and co-owns two local news websites, [energeticcity.ca](http://energeticcity.ca) and [mile0city.ca](http://mile0city.ca). With all this, he says he keeps his head straight by having people to bounce ideas off. "Good advisors from different backgrounds have been an integral component of Motion Media's success", Tylosky admits, "A different perspective goes a long way".

[www.motionmedia.ca](http://www.motionmedia.ca)



# Our Commitments Moving Forward

The Roundtable will continue to fulfill its mandate across the province by:

- Listening to the needs of small business and act as champion for their interests.
- Providing guidance, support, and recommendations to government.





BRITISH COLUMBIA'S  
Small Business Roundtable

