ASPER SCHOOL OF BUSINESS | THE ASSOCIATES

SPEAKER'S BUREAU

2026-2027



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ASPER SCHOOL OF BUSINESS THE ASSOCIATES

SPEAKER BUREAU
TABLE OF CONTENTS

NAME	COMPANY	PAGE
MICHAEL ANDERSON	365 TECHNOLOGIES INC.	5
MANNY ATWAL	POLLARD BANKNOTE LIMITED	6
CHIP BATTEN	COLOR AD PACKAGING LTD.	7
GARY BELL	CALM AIR INTERNATIONAL LP	8
GARY BERNARD	HSBC	9
JUSTIN BOONEN	PIMCO CANADA	10
ANDRE BRIN	WORLD TRADE CENTRE WINNIPEG	11
BRIAN BROWN	BEST JOB IN THE COMPANY CONSULTING SERVICES	12
EMILY BURT	CARDINAL CAPITAL MANAGEMENT	13
BREVAN CANNING	PEOPLE CORPORATION	14
SCOTT CRICK	INTEGRA CASTINGS INC.	15
DOUG DARLING	TRIPWIRE MEDIA GROUP INC.	16
JAIMIE DAWSON	ERNST & YOUNG LLP	17
SILVIA DE SOUSA	THOMPSON DORFMAN SWEATMAN LLP	18
BEN DUECK	CANTERA LEADERSHIP	19
PHILLIP DUNPHY	NEPTUNE PROPERTIES LTD. / TRUE NORTH FOODS	20
MICHELLE DUPUIS	ACCESS CREDIT UNION	21
TIM FEDUNIW	CITY OF SELKIRK	22
ELLIOTT GARFINKEL	MCW CONSULTANTS LTD.	23
BRENDA GIBSON	RED RIVER MUTUAL	24
MELISSA GILLER	THE MINDFUL BOSS ACADEMY	25
BENJAMIN GRAHAM	MANITOBA BLUE CROSS	26
JAMIE HALL	HABITAT FOR HUMANITY MANITOBA	27
ADAM HANSON	JOHNSTON GROUP INC	28
SHAUN HAUSER	WELLINGTON-ALTUS PRIVATE WEALTH	29
DALE HAWTHORN	BCV ASSET MANAGEMENT INC.	30
ROSANNE HILL-BLAISDELL	HARVARD DEVELOPMENTS	31
CANDACE HODGINS	ROYAL BANK OF CANADA	32
ANDREW HODGSON	H. TALLMAN INTERNATIONAL	33
SANDRA HODZIC	SORELLA STRATEGIES LTD.	34
CHRIS ISFORD	AIR CANADA	35

ASPER SCHOOL OF BUSINESS THE ASSOCIATES

SPEAKER BUREAU
TABLE OF CONTENTS

NAME	COMPANY	PAGE
DEREK JOHANNSON	NEW WORLD TECHNOLOGIES	36
EVAN JOHNSTON	THE WAWANESA MUTUAL INSURANCE COMPANY	37
DEBRA JONASSON-YOUNG	STU CLARK CENTRE FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP	38
JAMIE ALYCE JURCZAK	TAYLOR MCCAFFREY LLP	39
DUSTIN KARSIN	STANTEC	40
TERENCE KARACSONY	MNP LLP	41
KRISTEN KENNEDY	BMO BANK OF MONTREAL	42
DEREK LACHAINE	TRANSX GROUP OF COMPANIES	43
ZHEN LIU	SILEX FIBERGLASS WINDOWS & DOORS LTD.	44
SHAWN MACDONALD	ROYAL BANK OF CANADA	45
ANTHONY MAROS	BMO PRIVATE WEALTH	47
NAN MARQUES	MACKENZIE INVESTMENTS	48
MELANIE MCCREATH	MEDOCare Pharmacy	49
NANCY MCCUAIG	IGM FINANCIAL INC.	50
MARTIN MCGARRY	CUSHMAN & WAKEFIELD | STEVENSON	51
JENNIFER MULLEN-BERUBE	CUSHMAN & WAKEFIELD | STEVENSON + MMI	52
AMY OLIVER	AMY OLIVER + CO	53
GAVIN RICH	TOUGH DUCK	54
NOLAN PLOEGMAN	CONCORD PROJECTS LTD.	55
CALVIN POLET	NEPTUNE PROPERTIES INC.	56
JOHN PROVEN	NFI GROUP INC.	57
PAUL PROVOST	6P MARKETING	58
DEREK ROLSTONE	STONE HR STRATEGIES	59
SCOTT RUSSELL	AMIRON VENTURES	60
COLIN RYAN	WELLINGTON-ALTUS PRIVATE WEALTH	61
REUBEN SABA	MEDICURE, INC.	62
SOMIA SADIQ	NARRATIVES INC.	63
SUSANA SCOTT	BREMATSON & ASSOCIATES INC.	64
BLAINE SHEWCHUK	CANADA LIFE	65
SCOTT SHIPPAM	SHIPPAM & ASSOCIATES INC.	66

ASPER SCHOOL OF BUSINESS THE ASSOCIATES

SPEAKER BUREAU
TABLE OF CONTENTS

NAME	COMPANY	PAGE
BRAM STRAIN	BUSINESS COUNCIL OF MANITOBA	67
KIM ULMER	RBC	68
AVI VASERMAN	SYTEX LTD.	69
SHAUN VINCENT	VINCENT DESIGN INC.	70
LARRY WANDOWICH	RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF ROSSER	71
GRANT WHITE	ENDEAVOUR WEALTH MANAGEMENT	72
DENISE ZAPORZAN	ASTERIA GLOBAL INC.	73
GRANT ZIPURSKY	MD INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES LTD.	74
JOANNE ZUK	JOANNE ZUK LEADERSHIP AND STRATEGY	75

Michael Anderson

Founder & CEO
365 Technologies Inc.



Industry:

IT Services

Topics of Interest:

Cybersecurity
Leadership
Entrepreneurship
Startups

Michael Anderson is the founder and CEO of 365 Technologies Inc. Operating out of Winnipeg. 365 Technologies has forged a reputation as a trusted Managed IT Services Provider, offering unparalleled outsourced IT support to a roster of over 2,000 end users spanning 60 companies and serving a variety of business verticals across the province.

Michael's academic credentials match his industry standing. He holds an esteemed MBA from the I.H. Asper School of Business, and the globally recognized Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP) designation. Additionally, he has received credentials from both Harvard Business School's Executive Education program and York University. His business acumen and cybersecurity expertise not only contribute to the success of 365 Technologies, but they also make him a sought-after thought leader in the field.

Michael's expertise isn't restricted to just cybersecurity. He is a seasoned leader who understands the complexities of business and the nuances of marketing. As an entrepreneur, his role at 365 Technologies combines these skills, contributing to the company's growth and development in an ever-changing market.

At the heart of 365 Technologies' success is a versatile staff who adapt to the rapid changes in technology, conjuring creative solutions to complex problems. Michael's leadership instills in them the value of agility, innovative thinking, and continuous learning. His expertise in spearheading startups has propelled the company to new heights, setting benchmarks in service delivery and customersatisfaction.

Michael lives in Winnipeg with his wife, Bronwen, and their 5 children.

Manny Atwal

Executive Vice Present, Global Lottery and Business Development
Pollard Banknote Limited



Industry:

Entertainment, Retail, Sales

Topics of Interest:

Strategy
International Business
Leadership
Marketing
MIS / Business Technology

Manny Atwal joined Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries in November 2019 and is responsible for the corporation's annual business performance, daily operations, and the achievement of strategic goals. All members of the Executive Management Committee report to him.

Manny was previously the Vice-President of Helicopter Programs at StandardAero in Winnipeg, Canada. Over the past 20 years, he has held various Executive positions within StandardAero including Vice-President of Turboprop Programs, General Manager of PT6 and PW100 Programs, and Director of Marketing and Business Development. Manny has extensive experience in management of international businesses within the Aerospace sector.

Manny graduated from the I.H. Asper School of Business in 1994 with a B. Comm (Hons) degree. He has been an active member of the Young Associates including over 10 years as a Board Member as Vice-Chair, Chair, and Past Chair of the organization.

Chip Batten



President and Chief Executive Officer
Color Ad Packaging Ltd.

Industry:

Packaging

Topics of Interest:

Supply Chain / Logistics
Strategy
Leadership
Marketing

Chip Batten has worked in the North American packaging industry for almost 35 years. After graduating from University of Waterloo with an Honors BES degree, Chip began work at Batten Graphics, his family's graphic arts business. From 1978 through to 1989, Chip significantly built and developed the packaging gravure engraving market for the firm, learning the business from the ground up. He eventually became plant manager and then sales manager for the business unit.

As the family business chose to refocus its attentions on its more profitable publications business and away from its packaging interests, Chip moved to work for Roto-Tone Engravers as its Sales Manager. In early 1993 Chip teamed up with a number of industry contacts to establish Southern Graphic System, Canada. From its initial sales volume of $280,000, Southern Graphics, Canada grew to posting sales of over $75,000,000 in 2007 when Chip stepped down after eight years of service as Executive Vice President of Canadian Operations.

Chip joined Color Ad in early 2008 to head up and re-focus the sales team with the goal of driving Color Ad's sales through exemplary customer focus and a clear market focus. Color Ad Packaging is a high-end food products, flexible packaging manufacturer. Operations include gravure and flexographic print, multi-layer laminations, as well as bag, pouch, and roll stock converting capabilities. Chip has been successful in his role by securing key accounts in the boutique market segments that set Color Ad apart in the market. In 2012, Chip succeeded the interim CEO, brought in to restructure the organization, and took over the position of President and Chief Executive Officer. Since then, Chip and his team have grown Color Ad Packaging Ltd. from a 30 million dollar business to this year topping 82 Million.

Gary Bell

President & CEO
Calm Air International LP



Industry:

Airlines / Aviation

Topics of Interest:

Marketing
Finance
Supply Chain / Logistics

Gary Bell was one of the first employees of Exchange Income Corporation in 2006, serving as Vice President Corporate Development being responsible for acquisitions. Two years after being part of the team that acquired Calm Air into the EIC group in 2009, he was selected to lead the company. Since that time, he has modernized and consolidated the fleet to one aircraft type, while refocusing on Calm Air's Kivalliq operation, on-time performance and customer service. Anchored by a Bachelor of Commerce in Finance, Gary has built a strong management team that has made significant strides towards achieving and refining those goals.

Prior to joining EIC, Gary spent six years in commercial banking with TD Commercial Bank and Roynat Capital.

Active in the community, Gary serves on the Royal Aviation Museum, the Charleswood Baseball Association and coaches amateur sports.

Gary Bernard

Head of Commercial and Corporate Banking, Manitoba
HSBC



Industry:

Banking

Topics of Interest:

Finance
Leadership
Entrepreneurship

Gary Bernard is a graduate of the University of Manitoba with a BA, majoring in Economics. In 2001, he completed his Securities License. He has 21 years of banking experience, including fifteen years in business, commercial, and corporate banking roles - spending the last seven years in management roles.

Gary has worked for the financial institutions RBC, CIBC, and HSBC. He is currently serving as a board member of Manitoba New Home Warranty and volunteers with United Way as an Agency Liaison. Gary's strengths include business development, relationship management, credit writing, and financial analysis.

Justin Boonen

Vice President, Account Manager
PIMCO Canada



Industry:

Financial Services

Topics of Interest:

Finance
Entrepreneurship
Leadership

PIMCO

Justin Boonen is an Vice President, Account Manager with PIMCO Canada with over 15 years of professional experience, who takes great pride in his values, service and pursuit of excellence. Voted as a top wholesaler by Environics, Justin is a sales and leadership expert who delivers engaging presentations that inspire and empower advisors and clients alike to navigate their financial wellbeing. Justin is dedicated to his lifelong quest of knowledge to continue his passion of helping clients achieve their objectives.

Justin completed his Bachelor in Management and Organizational Studies (BMOS) with a double major in Finance and Accounting and a minor in Astronomy from Western University in London, Ontario. After Western, Justin completed a one year Carpentry program through Durham College in night school while working as a financial advisor. He later moved to Winnipeg and completed the Masters in Business Administration (MBA) program from the Asper School of Business with a double specialization in Finance and Accounting. Justin has completed several industry credentials, such as the Certified Financial Planner Designation (CFP), Chartered Investment Manager Designation (CIM), Chartered Professional Accountant Designation (CPA), and is a Fellow of the Canadian Securities Institute (FCSI). Most recently, Justin completed the Board Dynamics for Executives program through the Rotman School of Management at the University of Toronto.

When Justin isn't helping advisors succeed in their goals, he can be found spending quality time with his wife Jill raising their three young daughters Lila, Charlotte and Audrey in the great city of Winnipeg!

André Brin

Chief Executive Officer
World Trade Centre Winnipeg



Industry:

Business Services

Topics of Interest:

Sports Communications
Exporting
Business Advisory Services (start-ups, new entrepreneurs etc.)

WORLD TRADE CENTRE® WINNIPEG
Serving all of Manitoba
Au service de tous les Manitobains

André Brin joined WTC Winnipeg on September 7, 2021. As Chief Executive Officer, he works with the Board of Directors and the leadership team to develop plans and strategies to drive the organization's goal of supporting economic growth in Manitoba, specifically through international trade.

He returned to Manitoba after working in Alberta for most of 1999-2021 with the NHL's Edmonton Oilers and Hockey Canada, based in Calgary.

André worked over 15 years with Hockey Canada, Canada's national sporting body, leading all corporate and hockey communications for the organization for his final five years. Over his time with Hockey Canada, he notably worked with many of Canada's National Teams at world championships, four Olympic Winter Games and one Paralympics.

André was executive director of the Conseil Jeunesse Provincial of Manitoba from 1994-1999, and executive director of the 2005 Jeux de la francophonie canadienne in Winnipeg. He also worked as a sports journalist for over ten years in Manitoba, with Radio-Canada, Envol91 FM Radio, on a part-time basis with MTN (now CITY TV) and La Liberté.

Born in Emekuku, Nigeria to Canadian parents, and a father working as a language teacher for the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), he proudly calls Winnipeg his hometown, but also spent parts of his youth in Nigeria, Yellowknife, NWT, Sydney, NS and Algeria.

Brian Brown



Principal
Best Job in the Company Consulting Services

Industry:
Consulting Services

Topics of Interest:
Internal Audit
Fraud
Governance
Risk Management

Brian Brown possesses a unique combination of senior-level private, public, and non-profit sector experience in governance, internal audit, risk management, fraud, and internal controls. Since retiring in 2019, he now provides independent consulting and professional education services in the areas of governance, internal audit, risk, and other related topics.

Brian is a recognized leader in the internal audit profession, with over 30 years of experience collaborating with and supporting Boards of Directors and Audit Committees. Brian has also led internal audit activities with The Canadian Grain Commission, The Great-West Life Assurance Company, Agricore United and its predecessor, UGG, and with Sears Canada Inc.

Within the non-profit sector, Brian has played a leading governance role in many organizations over the past 30 years. He is currently Vice-Chair of the Board of the Canadian Centre for Child Protection and serves on the Board and chairs the Governance Committee of Marymound. He also serves on the Manitoba Chapter Executive of the Institute of Corporate Directors.

He is a founding faculty member of The Directors College and a Distinguished Faculty Member for the Institute of Internal Auditors. He also serves as faculty for the Institute of Corporate Directors, the Caribbean Governance Training Institute, and the Aboriginal Financial Officers Association.

Brian is a graduate of the University of Manitoba with a Bachelor of Commerce degree and holds the Certified Internal Auditor (CIA), Chartered Professional Accountant, Certified Management Accountant (CPA,CMA), Chartered Director (C.Dir.), and Certified Fraud Examiner (CFE) designations.

Emily Burt

Executive Vice President
Cardinal Capital Management



Industry:

Capital Management

Topics of Interest:

Investments
Finance
Women in Finance
Women in Leadership
ESG Investing
CFA Designation

Emily Burt is the Executive Vice-President and Chair of the Board at Cardinal Capital Managment. Based in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Cardinal manages nearly $4B in assets and is a signatory of the UN-PRI. Emily leads the business development and operations teams at Cardinal. Working with institutional and private clients across Canada and the United States, she assists clients in building and managing investment portfolios.

Prior to joining Cardinal, Emily gained a number of years of financial services experience in Toronto. Emily has a Master of Business Administration degree from Schulich School of Business, holds the Chartered Financial Analyst designation, and has completed the CFA Institute Certificate in ESG Investing.

Emily currently servces as the President of CFA Society Winnipeg and also sits on the Board of CFA Societies Canada.

Brevan Canning, BSC, BBS, ACCA, CPA, CFA Level 1

President & CEO
People Corporation



Industry:

Group Benefits & Insurance

Topics of Interest:

Finance
Entrepenuership
Leadership

Brevan Canning has been with People Corporation since the beginning, and has been instrumental in developing People's company foundation, mission, and growth strategy.

As President and Chief Executive Officer of People Corporation, Brevan is responsible for providing leadership and overall strategic direction to our corporation and its subsidiaries. He oversees the company's operations, policies, procedures, and strategic initiatives set out by the Board of Directors.

As a co-founder of the company, Brevan has been with People Corporation since its inception in 2005, playing a critical and influential role in the strategic and operational growth of the organization. Brevan has held a variety of essential roles: leading acquisitions prior to the company creating a corporate development function, leading the finance function when the company was taken public, running various back office and client services functions, and ultimately leading the Administration, Consulting, Brokerage, and Shared Services business units which culminated in his appointment to President and then President & Chief Executive Officer. Throughout this time, Brevan has furthered his commitment to the company's mission of helping clients recruit, retain, reward, engage, and care for their employees and plan members. Before joining People Corporation, Brevan held corporate development, finance, and project management roles at CanWest Global Communications and prior to that, at Band-X Ltd., which provided him significant international financial and accounting experience.

Scott Crick

CEO - CFO
Integra Castings



Industry:

Manufacturing

Topics of Interest:

Leadership
Entrepreneurship
Strategic Planning
Manufacturing
Telecommunications

Scott Crick has been a business and finance leader for over 28 years, with much of it spent in entrepreneurial SMEs undergoing business and cultural transformation. This has led to many success stories - including successful M&A, building scalable corporate frameworks, and developing leadership teams.

Scott has worked in agriculture, transportation, and manufacturing. He retains a passion for companies that do "good things", through offering products or services that are needed and make peoples' lives better. In his current role as CEO-CFO at Integra Castings, Scott has driven continuous improvement initiatives, leading to approval as a supplier to world-class organizations such as Caterpillar and John Deere.

After achieving his CGA designation in 2003, Scott acquired his MBA from Laurentian University in 2009. He is also passionate about how professionals can contribute to their communities though public engagement and volunteer work. Scott was successfully elected as a Town Councillor in Morris in 2010, won the election as the communities Mayor in 2018, and was acclaimed to a second term in 2022. During his tenure, staff and Council have successfully completed may initiatives for the long term benefit of the community.

Doug Darling

CEO and Executive Creative Director
TripWire Media Group Inc.



TRIPWIRE
MEDIA GROUP

Industry:

Video Production and Animation

Topics of Interest:

Storytelling in Corporate Communications and Sales
The Science of Storytelling
Video Production for Companies
Media Entrepreneurship
Entrepreneurship (using EOS and Scalling Up Tools)

As CEO and Executive Creative Director of TripWire Media Group Inc, connecting people more through storytelling and understanding how people work, think, and react is Doug Darling's forte. Doug's passion for understanding and connecting people has contributed to, and shaped, his vast knowledge and confidence in the industry. Since starting the company with a friend back in 2009, he has developed a strategic storytelling process and full-service video production team to further tell stories.

Doug is also an instructor in the Digital Film and Video Production Program at Red River Polytechnic. He is also on the Board of Directors at On Screen Manitoba, as well as the Gala Committee for the Alzheimer's Society of Manitoba.

Jaimie Dawson, CPA, CA

Partner, Assurance
Ernst & Young LLP



Industry:
Financial

Jaimie Dawson is the managing partner of the EY Winnipeg office and the Assurance Services practice of EY with over 27 years of experience.

He has spent most of his career serving privately held companies, and his clients include many private equity and large family office investee companies who operate in a variety of industries including manufacturing, health care, energy services, and retail

Jaimie has deep experience in business acquisitions and divestitures, and currently serves as auditor for a number of health care consolidators

He works closely with his clients as a trusted business advisor, delivering the connections and insight required to build and grow their businesses. With a strong understanding of internal controls and accounting systems, Jaimie has assisted clients under numerous financial reporting frameworks, including ASPE and IFRS.

Silvia de Sousa

Partner
Thompson Dorfman Sweatman LLP



Industry:

Business Law

Topics of Interest:

Intellectual Property
Business Law

Silvia de Sousa is a partner at TDS with a practive concentrated in business law and an emphasis on intellectual property law and technology law. Her practive also includes intellectual property transactions, cannabis advertising and marketing, intellectual property protection, trademarks, copyrights, patents, and licensing matters. Silvia is a trademark agent.

Called to the Manitoba Bar in 1994, Silvia has spoken on many occasions to professional organizations and industry groups on intellectual property matters and technology law matters. She has also taught intellectual property law, solicitor transaction matters, licensing, and international law as a sessional lecturer at the University of Manitoba, Faculty of Law, and the Asper School of Business.

Silvia served as past Chair of the National Intellectual Property Law Section of the Canadian Bar Association, and is a former Chair and current member of the Technology and Intellectual Property Law Section of the Manitoba Bar Association. She has volunteered her time with numerous community organizations, including the Associates, the Legal Help Centre, the Health Sciences Foundation, the Mantioba Chambers of Commerce, Branch Council of the Manitoba Bar Association, and the American Bar Association IP Section.

Silvia was recognized nationally as a Women of Influence by the Women of Influence Inc. and has been recognized annually by her peers for inclusion in The Best Lawyers in Canada directory for Technology Law since 2016. Silvia's services are provided though Silvia de Sousa Law Corporation.

Education:
- University of Manitoba, LLB, 1993
- University of Manitoba, Bachelor of Arts, 1990

Ben Dueck

President
Cantera Leadership



Topics of Interest:

Leadership
Team Development
Strengths-Based Development
Communication
Conflict
Organizational Culture
Strategy Development
Behavioural Change
Time Management

CANTERA
LEADERSHIP

Ben Dueck is passionate about leadership development and helping people grow their impact. His experience includes entrepreneurship, non-profit leadership, fundraising, and church involvement. He is a Gallup Certified CliftonStrengths Coach, has a Master of Arts in Leadership degree, and is the President of Cantera Leadership and Crestcom Manitoba. Ben is a born and raised Manitoban who grew up in a family of entrepreneurs, where his interest in leadership development was born. For over 20 years he has worked with leaders in both the business and non-profit world to help them be more successful. He currently lives in Niverville with his wife and three children.

Phillip Dunphy CPA, CA

Corporate Controller
Neptune Properties Ltd. & True North Foods



Industry:

Real Estate, Private Equity & Agri-Processing

Topics of Interest:

Accounting
Finance
Tax

Phillip Dunphy, CPA, CA is a respected leader in the finance and real estate sectors. Phillip is well-known for his strategic decision-making abilities and extensive community involvement.

Phillip has spoken at charity dinners with guests including the Mayor of Winnipeg, Deputy Premier, and Lieutenant Governor on topics such as rebuilding the voluntary sector, investments in the Food & Beverage sector, and clean energy adoption.

In his current role as Director of Finance at Neptune Properties and True North Foods, Phillip is instrumental in shaping the strategic direction of both organizations. His sharp financial acumen and business insight have facilitated the expansion of Neptune Properties' commercial real estate portfolio in the United States and the doubling of capacity at True North Foods. As an advocate for clean technology, Phillip has often pushed for adoption of clean technology within the businesses he is involved in. Notable examples include a portfolio wide adoption of EV charging stations at Neptune Properties and the development and acquisition of a carbon negative waste disposal system at True North Foods.

Aside from his corporate accomplishments, Phillip's dedication to his community is evident in his roles as Chair of Volunteer Manitoba and Treasurer at Food & Beverage Manitoba. These key positions allow him to work with those organizations to advocate, recognize, and develop industry participants within the Voluntary and Food & Beverage industries.

With a diverse background in public speaking, Phillip has spoken at and chaired numerous events in the not-for-profit sector and frequently leads meetings and presentations in a professional setting. His ability to engage and inform audiences, combined with his industry expertise and community service, make him a compelling and sought-after speaker.

Michelle Dupuis

VP, Strategy & Governance
Access Credit Union



Industry:

Financial Services

Topics of Interest:

Finance
Leadership
Strategy
Project Management

Michelle Dupuis is the Vice President, Strategy and Governance at Access Credit Union, Manitoba's largest and Canada's seventh largest credit union. In her current role, she is responsible for corporate governance, strategic planning and execution, and enterprise project management. Michelle has a reputation for resolving urgent situations and implementing rapid change. She skillfully untangles and brings order to immensely complex and dynamic situations, all while enhancing transparency, creating structure, setting priorities, fostering alignment between management groups, and facilitating trust amongst broader stakeholders.

Prior to joining the credit union system, Michelle worked for 15 years at a global aerospace company where she gained valuable experience in program and project management, regulatory compliance, risk management, internal audit processes, lean manufacturing practices, quality control protocols, and proposal development. Preceding this, Michelle held call centre training and financial services data analysis roles.

Michelle earned an MBA from the University of Manitoba, and has certifications in strategy execution, leadership, and internal audit. Michelle is invigorated by new challenges and opportunities and continually seeks to expand her knowledge through formal education and self-directed learning.

Tim Feduniw

Director, Sustainable Economic Development
City of Selkirk



Industry:

Municipality

Topics of Interest:

Actualizing a Sustainable Future

Born and raised in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Tim Feduniw is the Director of Sustainable Economic Development for the City of Selkirk, Manitoba. As part of the municipality's senior management team, Tim is responsible for planning, economic development and establishing Selkirk's municipal land bank. With decades of experience across Western Canada, he has held senior economic development roles in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Tim has been a part of numerous boards and committees at national, provincial and regional levels covering a range of interests that include business, the environment, economic development, healthcare and community. Values driven and outcome focused, Tim successfully applies a broad based, pragmatic, multidisciplinary, and collaborative approach to economic development embracing the principles of interdependence, transparency and regionalism.

Tim is a frequent speaker, having presented before organizations that include Decentralized Energy Canada, QUEST Canada, The International Economic Development Council, Saskatchewan Professional Planners Institute, the Manitoba Planning Conference, and multiple others.

The City of Selkirk's quest to be a leader in sustainable development has necessitated the introduction of fundamental changes in how it defines, plans, and delivers its programs and initiatives. By holding a steadfast belief and commitment to defining and living its brand as a means to control its own destiny, Selkirk derives its direction from a set of core values and principles articulated in its corporate strategic plan. This strategic plan forms the basis for decisions resulting in a consistent and measured suite of policies, practices, programs and initiatives.

Elliot Garfinkel, P.Eng., MBA

Managing Partner
MCW Consultants Ltd.



Industry:

Mechanical and electrical consulting
Professional engineers

Topics of Interest:

Strategy
Human Resources
Leadership
Marketing
Consulting engineers
Industry Trends
Organizational Behavior
Business Development
Client Relations
Strategic planning

Elliott Garfinkel received his B.Sc. in Electrical Engineering from the University of Manitoba in 1985. Since then he has gained over 30 years of award-winning electrical engineering experience for clients in public and private sectors, coupled with over 20 years of experience in effective management in the field. Elliott's success as an engineer and leader in the industry has helped him become a Managing Partner at the Winnipeg office of MCW Consultants Ltd., a leading electrical and mechanical engineering consulting firm with offices throughout Canada.

His MBA degree, which he earned from UofM in 1997, has been an invaluable complement to his expertise, having enhanced his skillset as a leader in his office and as a mentor to his engineering staff. Elliott's business savvy mindset has also equipped him with the tools to provide comprehensive management support for several large, complex, and innovative projects.
Some of the projects involved innovated energy efficient design and numerous sustainable and environmentally friendly measures.

As a Managing Partner at MCW, Elliott's day-to-day responsibilities include project and client management through all phases of a project. He works closely with other engineers, contractors, architects, and owners to ensure the best design solutions and client satisfaction are achieved. Elliott attributes his success in these areas on his foundational knowledge in business administration.

Brenda Gibson

President & CEO
Red River Mutual Insurance



Industry:

Financial Services

Topics of Interest:

Accounting
Finance
Entrepreneurship
Leadership

Red River Mutual

Brenda Gibson was appointed as President and CEO of Red River Mutual, a Manitoba-based Property and Casualty Insurance Company, in 2023. She is a graduate of the University of Manitoba with a Bachelor of Commerce (Honours) and holds the designations of Chartered Professional Accountant (CPA, CA) from the Institute of Chartered Accountants and Chartered Insurance Professional (CIP) from the Insurance Institute of Canada.

With over 19 years of experience in the insurance industry, Brenda has held various senior roles, including VP of the British Columbia Region, VP of Financial Planning and Analysis, VP of Life Insurance Products, and VP of Canadian P&C Personal Insurance Products. Her extensive background spans both corporate and operational roles, equipping her with the expertise to strategically lead Red River Mutual through its next chapter.

Since joining Red River Mutual, Brenda has been instrumental in executing the company's strategic plan, focusing on major advancements in technology, data, and innovation. She is committed to profitability and leadership, working collaboratively with a disciplined approach to achieving company objectives and strategic alignment. Brenda is excited to continue building on the company's strong foundation through growth and diversification.

Melissa Giller

Founder & CEO
The Mindful Boss Academy



Industry:

Consulting / Coaching

Topics of Interest:

Marketing
Entreprenuership
Leadership
Women in Business
Communication Skills
Energy Management
Mindfulness / Stress Management

Melissa is the Founder and CEO of The Mindful Boss Academy, a consulting and coaching agency dedicated to empowering female entrepreneurs and executives through energy management, business strategy, and life coaching. Before launching her own venture, Melissa was a Senior Consultant in the Human Capital service line at Deloitte LLP, taught Business Communications at the University of Manitoba, and gained extensive corporate experience across higher education, healthcare, and financial services industries.

Passionate about helping individuals and organizations achieve joy, ease, and a sense of balance while pursuing their purpose, Melissa specializes in stress reduction, mindful business strategy, and people-centered practices. With a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, a Master of Business Administration, and certifications in Life Coaching and Change Management, she offers a unique perspective on women in leadership and entrepreneurship.

Melissa is also the co-founder of The Alliance, a local women's business development group in partnership with the Winnipeg Women's Conference & Community. Married to a fellow business owner (Smack Pet Food), she has a deep understanding of balancing family and personal development with the demands of working within or leading an organization.

Benjamin Graham

President & CEO
Manitoba Blue Cross



Industry:

Insurance

Topics of Interest:

Insurance
Leadership
International Experience

MANITOBA BLUE CROSS®
THECOLOUROFCARING®

A native of Australia with a Master of Risk Management (Business and Economics) from Melbourne's Monash University, Benjamin Graham brings a global perspective to his position as President & CEO of Manitoba Blue Cross which he commenced in October 2020.

Before arriving to Manitoba in 2018, where he made his first imprint in the local business community as President & CEO of Manitoba Public Insurance, Benjamin held Executive positions as Regional Chief Risk Officer QBE Insurance Asia Pacific in Hong Kong and Abu Dhabi National Insurance Company and Deloitte in the United Arab Emirates (Dubai and Kuwait). Both industry roles in Hong Kong and Abu Dhabi had responsibility for enterprise risk management, regulatory reporting, underwriting, and capital modelling.

While Benjamin's strong business acumen and expertise in medical underwriting models, insurance and risk management have helped shape his career, his transparent and inclusive leadership style are contributing factors to his continued success leading business transformation and growth.

Benjamin has developed roots in the province and is committed to the community, both as a business leader and a citizen. He's a member of the Winnipeg Humane Society Board of Directors and is working hard to become as comfortable in hockey skates and ice fishing as he is in golf shoes.

Jamie Hall

Chief Executive Officer
Habitat for Humanity Manitoba



Industry:

Not for Profit, Construction, Retail

Topics of Interest:

Leadership
Ethics
Safety & Health
Not for Profit
Public Sector
Housing and Other Social Issues

Habitat for Humanity® Manitoba

Jamie Hall joined Habitat for Humanity Manitoba as Chief Executive Officer in 2023. He is proud to be part of a community of staff, volunteers, donors and other stakeholders who work to make home ownership a reality for hard working, low income families. Prior to joining Habitat, Jamie served as Chief Operating Officer of SAFE Work Manitoba for nine years. He was part of a team that changed the landscape of safety in order to realize significant improvements in safety performance in Manitoba. Jamie also brings 26 years of experience from Manitoba Hydro.

Presently, Jamie is a sessional instructor in the University of Manitoba's Asper MBA program, delivering a course on executive responsibility and ethics. Jamie served on the United Way Cabinet and as Chair of the Board of the Better Business Bureau Foundation, and represented Manitoba on the Council of Governors for the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety.

Jamie holds a B.Sc. in Electrical Engineering and an MBA with a specialty in Human Resources.

Adam Hanson

Vice President, Finance
Johnston Group Inc



Industry:

Insurance

Topics of Interest:

Accounting
Finance
Leadership

Adam graduated from the Asper School of Business in 2003 with a double major in Accounting and Finance. He has since earned designations in accounting (CPA 2007) and finance (CFA 2016) and has worked at PwC Canada (5 years), Canada Life (9 years) and Johnston Group (7 years), where he is currently part of its five-person executive team as the Vice President, Finance.

Johnston Group is a growing company that employs 450 people, mostly in Winnipeg, and is well-known for its philanthropic endeavours in the community. The company provides health insurance coverage to over 35,000 different businesses across the country and over 660,000 unique Canadians.

Adam is currently a member of the Associates, Board Chair of the Manitoba Children's Museum and the Treasurer of the Winnipeg Folk Festival.

Adam lives in Winnipeg with his wife and four children.

Shaun Hauser

Founder & CEO
Wellington-Altus Financial Inc.



Industry:
Financial

Topics of Interest:
Finance

WELLINGTON-ALTUS
FINANCIAL

After graduating with a B.Comm (Honours) from the University of Manitoba, Shaun began his career gaining valuable experience as an analyst for Loring Ward Investment Counsel. Shaun then went on to work in sales for a Canadian Mutual Fund company. Shaun co-founded an independent mutual fund company – which was later sold to Industrial Alliance – and proceeded to co-found Wellington West Asset Management.

Wellington West sold to National Bank Financial (NBF) for $333 million in 2011. Shaun was appointed to create practice management group for advisors across the country before being promoted to the management committee as vice president of advisor strategy and support at NBF.

In 2017, Shaun co-founded Wellington-Altus, where he is part of a group of pioneers who work hard in supporting advisors with first-class support and tools while also overseeing the selective, high-caliber recruitment strategy to attract top talent. Shaun believes the strongest executive teams lead by example, placing high importance on working directly and regularly with investment advisors in the "trenches" to gain information that yields the best business results.

Passionate about making a difference in people's lives, Shaun is committed to giving back to the community as:
- Director for the Winnipeg Blue Bombers Football Club
- Foundation Investment Committee Member for the Children's Hospital of Winnipeg
- President of the Tuxedo Community Centre
- Past Co-Chair of Major Donors and Cabinet Member for the United Way of Winnipeg

Shaun and his wife Gillian live in Winnipeg with their children Gemma, Harry and Charlie.

Dale Hawthorn

President & Chief Operating Officer
BCV Asset Management Inc.



Industry:

Portfolio Management/FInancial Services

Topics of Interest:

Marketing
Accounting
Finance
Leadership

Dale Hawthorn has over fifteen years of diverse business experience, working in public practice, the oil & gas industry, and the asset management industry. Prior to joining BCV Asset Management Inc. in 2018, Dale served as Vice-President, Finance & Administration at Tetrem Capital Management Ltd., a prominent Winnipeg-based portfolio management firm that managed portfolios for high-net-worth clients and institutions, including one of Canada's largest mutual fund companies. Previously, he worked as Controller for a Winnipeg-based oil and gas company, Red Beds Resources Limited (a wholly owned subsidiary of Tundra Oil and Gas Partnership) and as an Audit & Assurance Manager with PwC (formerly PricewaterhouseCoopers) after graduation. Dale is also actively involved by volunteering his time at charitable and sports related organizations outside of his professional career.

Education and Professional Affiliations:
- University of Manitoba, Bachelor of Commerce (Honours), 2006
- Chartered Professional Accountant, Chartered Professional Accountants of Manitoba, 2009
- Chartered Professional Accountant, Chartered Professional Accountants of Canada, 2009

Rosanne Hill Blaisdell

President & CEO
Harvard Developments Inc.



Industry:

Real Estate

Topics of Interest:

Marketing
Strategy
Leadership
Corporate Culture
Real Estate Development

HARVARD Developments
— A HILL COMPANY —

Rosanne Hill Blaisdell is the President & CEO of Harvard Developments Inc., a long-standing full service real estate company headquartered in Regina, Saskatchewan.

After working in commercial banking and investment management for a number of years, in 1997, Rosanne as the fourth generation of the Hills, joined the family business. Today, she oversees the Corporate Head Office for The Hill Companies and the company's Canadian real estate operations with portfolio holdings of 10 mil.sq.ft. She is currently leading several mixed-use and transit-oriented development projects, totaling 2.5 mil.sq.ft. in Western Canada.

Rosanne holds an MBA, and a CCIM real estate designation. She is a past Business Advisory Board member for SaskPower and Regina Economic Development. She currently serves on the Regina Exhibition Association Futures Committee and St. Mary's University College Board of Governors. She is a member of NAIOP, the Regina Chamber of Commerce, IWF, YPO and ICSC.

Candace Hodgins, CPA, CA, MPAcc

Vice President, Commercial Financial Services
Royal Bank of Canada



Industry:

Business Financial Services

Topics of Interest:

Accounting
Finance
Leadership

As RBC Vice President Commercial Financial Services for Winnipeg, Candace has the privilege of leading a talented team of Commercial Account Managers who support the dynamic and inspiring entrepreneurs of Winnipeg in the industries of health care professionals, business professionals, retail, franchise, knowledge based, media and entertainment, and not for profit. The team is committed to supporting clients through innovative and strategic ideas, partnering, and a commitment to excellence.

As an executive business partner, with a CPA, CA and Masters of Professional Accounting, Candace has had the opportunity to work in a broad range of industries developing and supporting complex business strategies, driving market results, governance and risk management practices, change management initiatives, and human resource management. The team strives to be proactive, solutions focused change agents, working to earn the trust of client's by supporting their goals and aspirations.

Born and raised in Winnipeg, Candace is a passionate Manitoban who believes in her community and the importance of creating opportunity for all of the dynamic and thoughtful future leaders. Serving the community is of great importance to Candace and she is inspired by the leaders of tomorrow. Candace values creating an inclusive employee culture welcoming diverse and creative talent. As a parent to a young child, she is fortunate to serve the community through RBC's commitment to helping youth prepare for the future world of work. Candace is particularly passionate about supporting young women, which has led to her involvement in Athena changeleaders and lending a voice at SHEDay.

Andrew Hodgson

Senior Vice President, Corporate Finance
H. Tallman International



Industry:

Family Office, Investment Company

Topics of Interest:

Finance
Leadership
Entrepreneurship
M&A
Family Business

Andrew is the Senior Vice President, Corporate Finance for H. Tallman International Corporation, where he oversees all aspects of the family office. In this role, he works closely with shareholders to manage a diverse portfolio of investments, operating companies, and philanthropic initiatives. H. Tallman International Corporation is the 100% owner of Princess Auto Ltd. and holds interests in several wholly owned subsidiaries across real estate, hospitality, retail, and passive investments.

Andrew began his career at Deloitte as an articling student, earning his Chartered Accountant (CA) designation. He later joined Richardson International Limited, where he worked in Corporate Development with a focus on acquisitions and large-scale capital projects.
Andrew is a graduate of the Asper School of Business.

Sandra Hodzic, MBA/mpa

Founder and Managing Partner
Sorella Strategies Ltd.



Industry:

Professional Consultancy, Government, Industry Relations

Topics of Interest:

Leadership
Entrepreneurship
Trade
Government
Political Intelligence

SORELLA STRATEGIES

Company: Sorella Strategies is a boutique strategy firm that is based in Winnipeg, Canada and operates world-wide. We specialize in smart, purpose-driven solutions for governments, public institutions, and mission-focused organizations. We help clients navigate complexity, design better policies and programs, and move from insight to impact. Our work is grounded in deep public sector experience, systems thinking, and a commitment to outcomes that serve the greater good. We help clients navigate government, tackle a cross-sector challenge, and secure resources/funding through analysis, strategic clarity, and implementation-ready plans. Our services include: Public sector strategy & planning Policy development & analysis Stakeholder engagement & facilitation Social innovation & systems design Government relations & advocacy support Impact-driven program design Research Political consulting We work with integrity, agility, and an unwavering focus on what matters most: public value. Let's build better together.

Me: Sandra Hodžić-Falk is the founder and Managing Partner of Sorella Strategies Ltd., a Winnipeg-based government relations, political intelligence, and strategic communications firm based on Treaty 1 Territory but operating worldwide. She holds a Master of Public Administration with a business administration stream through the Asper School of Business, with a focus on business and government relations. Sandra brings fifteen years of practical government experience and has worked with governments in Canada, the US, EU and the Middle East, advising at the highest political levels.

Chris Isford, CPA CA

Vice-President Finance & Controller
Air Canada



AIR CANADA

Industry:

Air Transportation

Topics of Interest:

Accounting
Strategy
Finance
Leadership
MIS / Business Technology

Mr. Chris Isford is Vice President Finance & Controller of Air Canada. He was appointed Controller for Air Canada in October 2006, responsible for the airline's controllership functions, financial planning, analysis and reporting. Mr. Isford previously held the position of Senior Director, Financial Reporting with Air Canada and has been involved with numerous of the airlines financing and corporate transactions over the years. Prior to joining Air Canada in 2000, Mr. Isford had been with a major accounting firm as a manager of audit services. Chris holds the CPA, CA designation and is a graduate of the University of Manitoba.

Chris is also responsible for the Corporation's passenger sales accounting function, including payment card processing, where the accounting team works closely with the commercial distribution and technology functions of Air Canada to implement innovative and customer centric payment acceptance solutions in the Corporation's global sales channels.

Derek Johannson

CEO
New World Technologies Inc.



Industry:

Technology Consulting Services

Topics of Interest:

Marketing
Entrepreneurship
Leadership
Resilience in Difficult Times

After 40 years in the office technologies industry, Derek has moved from an operational role to a consultive one at NWT (New World Technologies). His operational expertise was hone through his involvement in 7 start ups and growing two of them into mature market leaders. His M&A expertise was strengthened with the buying and selling of 5 companies in the past 4 decades. Derek's involvement on over 20 boards has developed his leadership skills within organizations with revenues from a million to $3 billion.

Recognition achieved:

- Top 40 Under 40
- Top 50 Private Managed Businesses
- Regional finalist for the Entrepreneur of the Year
- Distinguish Toastmaster
- Institute of Corporate Director designation

Evan Johnston

President & CEO
The Wawanesa Mutual Insurance Company



Industry:

Insurance

Topics of Interest:

Finance
Leadership
Law

Evan began career as a corporate lawyer practicing early-stage technology and biotechnology law at a firm in Vancouver. He left Vancouver looking for more finance & international experience after having completed his Chartered Financial Analyst designation and spending two summers at the UN in New York City. With that in mind, he accepted a role in the Securitization practice in London, England with Clifford Chance, the largest international law firm in the world.

Evan left London in 2008, returned to Canada to join the Securities practice at Blakes in Calgary where he was involved in numerous public and private financings, M&A deals and general commercial transactions. He remained there until he was recruited by The Forzani Group, a national retailer of sporting goods, to act as its VP, General Counsel. In his role, he led the sale of the company to Canadian Tire in 2011. After the sale, he became the VP, General Counsel at Stuart Olson, a national commercial/industrial construction company based in Calgary, until joining Wawanesa in 2016.

Evan holds a B.Comm (Hons.), an LLB, a CFA and an MBA from the Ivey School of Business at the University of Western Ontario. He is also a Fellow with the LMI and has completed his CIP designation. He is a Board Member of ICMIF, a Board Member of the CGC, was the Co-Chair of the Major Corporations Division of the 2022, 2023 and 2024 Winnipeg United Way Campaign cabinets and continues to be involved with the Business Development Committee.

Debra Jonasson-Young



Executive Director
Stu Clark Centre for Entrepreneurship
I.H. Asper School of Business
University of Manitoba

Industry:
Entrepreneurship

Topics of Interest:

Strategic Development
Execution & Implementation
Operations Management
Consumer Behaviour
Marketing
Leadership
Entrepreneurship
Human Resource Management

Debra is a strategic and visionary leader who has consistently excelled at building strong and profitable organizations and an active member within the Winnipeg business community for over 30 years.

Debra is currently the Executive Director for the Stu Clark Centre for Entrepreneurship at the Asper School of Business, responsible for the strategic direction of the centre in support of furthering entrepreneurial engagement within the University of Manitoba student population. In her previous role as Director of Executive Education for the Asper School of Business, Debra was responsible for the Executive Education program in support of delivering leading edge programming for senior leadership in both the public and private sector.

Debra was previously President of People First HR Services. Prior to People First, Debra was Vice-President of Dufresne Furniture and Appliances. In this position, she was responsible for the strategic direction and operation of the retail division, as well as the furniture wholesale alliance with the North West Company and the Dufresne Retail Solutions Group.

Debra has also held the positions of Vice-President for Shopper's Optical and Vice-President and General Manager of Videon CableSystems. Debra spent the majority of her earlier career within Eaton's Department Store working her way up through successive positions, latterly as the General Manager of the Manitoba North Western Ontario division. Debra holds an MBA from the Asper School of Business at the University of Manitoba.

Active within the community, Debra is a Past Chair and currently sits on the board of the Associates of the I.H. Asper School of Business. In 2019, she was appointed to the Manitoba Women's Advisory Council (Status of Women Provincial Government). She is Past-Chair of the Women of Winnipeg, on the executive of the Institute of Corporate Directors Manitoba Chapter, sits on the Advisory Board of TEC, and a member of the CPA Manitoba Disciplinary Committee. She was a Governor of the Manitoba Museum for nine years, and was on the board of Manitoba Hydro Board and value Partners investments. Debra also served on the board of the Winnipeg Downtown Business Improvement Zone as Chair, sat on the board of Tourism Winnipeg, and acted in an advisory role to the University of Manitoba, Continuing Education Division as well as to the Red River College Business Administration program.

Jamie Alyce Jurczak



Partner
Taylor McCaffrey LLP, Barristers and Solicitors

Industry:

Law

Topics of Interest:

Legal
Human Resources
Entrepreneurship
Small Business
Leadership
Marketing

Experienced in all facets of management-side labour and employment law, and an experienced civil litigator, Jamie's experience allows her to assist clients with a variety of workplace matters, including wrongful dismissals, grievance and interest arbitrations, policy and contract development, collective bargaining and negotiation. Her practice has a special focus on occupational health and safety (OHS) matters. She is experienced in defending employers charged under provincial and federal OHS legislation, and is well versed in assisting clients in responding to serious workplace accidents, addressing administrative appeals of regulatory orders, and policy development.

Since the legalization of cannabis in Canada, and the abundance of provincial legislation that came with it, Jamie has become a thought leader in working to develop and update cannabis, drug and alcohol policies for Canadian companies. Additionally, Jamie is a skilled human rights lawyer capable of conducting independent investigations. As such, she has experience dealing with a variety of workplace harassment (including sexual harassment) and violence situations.

She is the author/editor of the OHS (West) and WCB (West) titles of the Canadian Encyclopedic Digest and she is recognized as a leading practitioner in OHS and Workplace Human Rights by the Canadian Legal Lexpert® Directory.

Jamie is also a small business owner, as co-director of Maples Academy of Dance, where she continues to actively teach. She enjoys engaging with the local business community through her involvement with both the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce (past-chair) and the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, where she is currently a member of the Advocacy Leadership Counsel.

Dustin Karsin B.Env.S. (Hons), PMP, LEED AP BC+C



Associate, Operations Analyst, Buildings
Stantec

Industry:
Consulting

Topics of Interest:
Project Management
Sustainability
Construction
Architecture
Engineering
Financial Tracking
General Management
Leadership

Dustin is an MBA graduate from the University of Manitoba Asper School of Business. He is an Associate in the Buildings (Architecture and Engineering) team at Stantec, Winnipeg. Dustin has a wealth of project management and financial tracking experience and assists in managing the financial components of the Stantec Project Portfolio. Stantec provides professional consulting services in planning, engineering, architecture, interior design, landscape architecture, surveying, environmental sciences, project management, and project economics for infrastructure and facilities projects. Stantec's net revenue was $4.5 billion in 2022.

In his previous role as Director of Sustainability and Project Planning at the Assiniboine Park Conservancy (APC), he led the development of key strategies, programs, and initiatives to support project management, and sustainable practices. He created and implemented policies, procedures, and guidelines for environment and sustainability focus areas. These areas include waste reduction, water, energy & climate, environmental health, education & engagement, transportation, greenspace management, and procurement. Additionally, he led the operational readiness project for Canada's Diversity Garden's - a $125 million dollar horticultural attraction bringing together architecture, landscaping, and diverse plant life.

Dustin holds a Project Management Professional (PMP) certification as well as a LEED AP BD+C accreditation from the US Green Building Council. He combines his business acumen with his passion for sustainability, having created the Stantec Winnipeg Office sustainability program when they opened a new downtown office in 2015. Returning to Stantec in 2023 in a new role and capacity has enabled Dustin to bring his project management and financial expertise back to the practice.

Terence Karacsony



Senior Manager, Valuations, Forensics, and Litigation Support
MNP

Industry:
National Firm

Topics of Interest:
Accounting
Finance
Entrepreneurship

Terence Karacsony, MFAcc, CPA, CA, CBV, CFF, is a Senior Manager specializing in Valuations, Forensics & Litigation Support at MNP LLP in Winnipeg. He oversees engagements in business valuations, forensic investigations, and litigation support, serving as a trusted advisor to clients and legal teams across diverse industries and across Canada.

Terence helps stakeholders navigate complex financial issues by translating them into clear, decision-focused insights. His experience spans valuation for tax and estate planning, shareholder transactions and buyouts, and commercial litigation, including damage quantification, financial investigations, and complex financial analyses. Known for clarifying ambiguity, he defines project scope, identifies key value drivers and risk factors, and develops transparent, well-supported analyses that meet decision-makers' needs and withstand scrutiny in dispute resolution.

Terence would be a strong fit as a speaker at the Asper School of Business, given his ability to connect classroom concepts to real-world applications. He brings a practitioner's perspective on how valuation is used in transactions, planning, and disputes; how financial statements can be interpreted through an investigative lens; and what "defensible analysis" looks like in practice.

His sessions are case-driven and practical, giving students frameworks they can apply immediately and a clear perspective they can carry into their future careers.

Kristen Kennedy



Regional Vice President
BMO Bank of Montreal

Industry:
Financial

Topics of Interest:
Finance
Leadership

Kristen Kennedy is the Regional Vice President of the Winnipeg market for BMO Bank of Montreal. She's responsible for the largest branch network in the region, managing personal banking services in Winnipeg and surrounding area.

Kristen brings over 20 years of experience in the financial services industry. Throughout her tenure, she's held progressive leadership roles across both the business commercial bank as well as retail banking. She was appointed to her current role in 2012, supporting the southern prairies market from Brandon, Manitoba, and relocated to join the Winnipeg team in August of 2018.

Kristen's time with BMO has centered on workforce retention and development, and managing the evolution of customer expectations in a rapidly changing - and highly digital banking environment. She's responsible for upwards of 200 employees and has experience leading across urban and rural markets.

A believer in the value and importance of community and giving back, Kristen leads the annual campaigns for the banks national partners, Kids Help Phone and Employee Giving. She also champions women in business and BMO Pride.

A proud Manitoban, Kristen holds a Bachelor of Commerce Honours from the University of Manitoba.

Derek Lachaine ICD.D

President and Chief Executive Officer
TransX Group of Companies



Industry:
Transportation

Topics of Interest:
Supply Chain/Logistics
Entrepreneurship
Leadership
Strategy

Derek joined TransX in 2001 and has since played a pivotal role in the company's growth and success. With a deep understanding of the business, Derek has gained exposure to all areas of the company, beginning in Linehaul operations before advancing to Vice-President of Truckload Sales and Operations, and later, Chief Operating Officer.

TransX is a leading provider of integrated transportation services across North America. CN acquired TransX on October 30, 2018. Integrating TransX into CN, Derek lead the transformation of TransX from a primarily Road carrier to an Intermodal carrier with Road. By the end of 2023, 65% of TransX business moved by Rail (from 27%) proving the commercial success of truck-to-rail conversion model for TransX, CN, their joint customers and the environment.

With a Bachelor of Science degree in Bio Systems Engineering, an ICD.D designation from the Institute of Corporate Directors and the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management, and the completion of the Advanced Management Program at Harvard University, Derek brings a strong academic foundation to his leadership. Known for his innovative, people-focused approach, he is now leading TransX into its next chapter as Chief Executive Officer.

Under Derek's leadership, TransX continues to grow as a leading provider of integrated transportation services across North America. His wealth of experience and strategic vision positions the company to achieve new levels of success.

Zhen Liu

President
SILEX Fiberglass Windows & Doors Ltd.



Industry:
Manufacturing

Topics of Interest:
Marketing
Accounting
Entrepreneurship
Leadership

Zhen Liu is the owner of SILEX Fiberglass Windows and Doors, a leading Canadian manufacturer of high-performance fiberglass windows, doors, and curtain walls. With a strong background in construction and manufacturing, Zhen has overseen the company's growth and development, positioning SILEX as an industry leader in the Canadian fenestration market.

Zhen's leadership has been instrumental in driving innovation and ensuring product excellence, particularly in the development of energy-efficient and sustainable window solutions. His hands-on management style allows him to work closely with the production team, ensuring that every product meets the highest quality standards. He is deeply committed to delivering tailored solutions that meet the unique needs of each project, whether residential, commercial, or institutional.

Zhen has successfully navigated various market challenges, including economic fluctuations and changing industry regulations. His strategic approach has allowed the company to thrive, even during difficult periods. Zhen's ability to foster strong relationships with architects, builders, and contractors has been key to SILEX's success, with the company contributing to notable projects across Canada, including residential and large-scale commercial developments.

As an industry leader, Zhen Liu remains dedicated to advancing the use of fiberglass technology in windows and doors, ensuring that SILEX continues to provide innovative and durable products that contribute to sustainable building practices.

Shawn MacDonald

Regional Vice President, Business Financial Services, Manitoba, Saskatchewan & Northwestern Ontario
Royal Bank of Canada



Industry:
Financial

Topics of Interest:
Supply Chain
Strategy
Entrepreneurship
Human Resources
International Business
Leadership
MIS/Business Technology

Mr. Shawn MacDonald is the Regional Vice President, Business Financial Services at the Royal Bank of Canada. In his position, he is responsible for leading RBC's commercial and small business team across the Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Northwestern Ontario Region. Shawn joined RBC 28 years ago and has held various positions across the organization. This has included experience in sales leadership, strategy development and execution, program management, change management and international experience.

Shawn has a Bachelor of Arts from Dalhousie University and a Bachelor of Commerce degree from Saint Mary's University. He also has a Master's of Business Administration from the Rotman's School of Business at the University of Toronto. Shawn is very active in various Boards and Committees. He is currently on the Board of Directors for Winnipeg Harvest and Indigenous Works.

Anthony Maros

Senior Private Banker
BMO Private Wealth



Industry:
Financial

Topics of Interest:
Finance
Leadership

A BMO Banker for over 20 years, I joined BMO Private Wealth in 2018 as a Senior Private Banker. I have an undergraduate degree from the University of Manitoba in Economics, and I completed the Columbia Business School's Family Enterprise and Wealth program. I am a Financial Modeling and Valuation Analyst - FMVA, a Mergers and Acquisitions Professional - M&AP, as well as a International Mergers and Acquisitions Expert - IM&A. I have enjoyed being a member of The Associates with the University of Manitoba's Asper School of Business, the Manitoba Association of Business Economists, and the Risk Management Association of Manitoba. For almost a decade, I guest lecturer at the University of Manitoba for a 4th year course called Accounting Theory. Lastly, I was recognized on the Top Under 40 list for the Investment Industry Association of Canada (IIAC) in 2020.

I take time to listen and understand each client's circumstances, financial needs, and goals – for today and the future. Then, I bring in a customized team of BMO Private Banking specialists to look at their entire financial picture. From day-to-day banking to specialized lending, we take a holistic approach to design a customized and integrated financial plan. I regularly revisit this plan and adapt it as the client transitions throughout life.

As a Senior Private Banker at BMO Private Wealth, I advise ultra high net worth Canadian families enterprises, professionals, business owners and executives on banking, lending and cash management solutions to help them reach their business as well as personal financial goals through my experience with large corporate and capital market transactions, my current specialties are helping clients with family enterprise and family office planning, leverage life insurance solutions, and those interested in capital for mergers, acquisitions, and succession. I help my clients so that they can focus on what they do best.

Nan Marques



Senior Vice President, Investment Management
Mackenzie Investments

Industry:
Financial Services (Investment Management)

Topics of Interest:

Strategy
Transformation
Project Management
Leadership
Continuous Improvement
Operations

Nan Marques, SVP, Investment Management, is a seasoned investment executive with over 30 years of financial services experience.

Nan brings a broad set of expertise to Mackenzie Investments with a background in strategic planning, project management, fund governance, risk management, investment performance analysis, incentive programs, equity trading, real estate asset management and investment operations.

Nan joined IG Wealth Management (an IGM Financial operating company) in 1995 and held several executive positions within the firm. He played a lead executive role in the planning and implementation of the consolidation of the investment management divisions within IG Wealth Management and Mackenzie Investments (combined AUM of $140B at the time). Nan joined Mackenzie Investments at the conclusion of this strategic project and subsequently led the integration of Canada Life's investment management operation (adding another $40B of AUM at the time). Prior to joining IGM, Nan was a member of TD Canada Trust's retail management team.

Nan is a graduate of the University of Manitoba where he received his Master of Business Administration. He is also a Chartered Financial Analyst charter holder and a Certified Financial Planner.

Melanie McCreath



Chief Executive Officer
MEDOCare Pharmacy

Industry:

Various

Topics of Interest:

Finance
Leadership
Investor Relations
ESG
Sustainability
Strategy
Communications
Women in Business

Melanie McCreath is results driven, people-first leader with over 15 years of experience in a variety of sectors, including capital markets, capital program delivery, economic development and tourism, manufacturing, mining, retail, and technology consulting.

She holds a Bachelor of Environmental Studies (Honours) from the University of Manitoba, the FSA (Fundamentals of Sustainability Accounting) credential through the IFRS Foundation, and the CPIR (Certified Professional in Investor Relations) credential through Ivey and the Canadian Investor Relations Institute (CIRI).

Melanie is proudly Métis, a member of the Associates of the Asper School of Business, and an Ivey Executive MBA 2025 candidate.

Nancy McCuaig

Executive Vice President and Chief Operations Officer, IGM Financial Inc.
IGM Financial Inc.



Industry:
Financial Services

Topics of Interest:
Leadership
Technology
Cyber Security

Nancy McCuaig is the Executive Vice President and Chief Operations Officer at IGM Financial Inc., where she is responsible for defining the operations strategy and leading the operational excellence agenda for IGM and its subsidiaries, IG Wealth Management and Mackenzie Investments. Additionally, Nancy serves as the Chief Information Security Officer (CISO) overseeing the cybersecurity strategy.

Since joining IGM in 2014, Nancy has held senior leadership roles directing enterprise technology architecture, infrastructure and operations, service governance, crisis management and the real estate portfolio. With over 35 years of experience across financial services, insurance, and gaming industries globally, Nancy currently serves on the Mackenzie Investment Board and Heartland Mutual Insurance Board.

Martin McGarry

Chief Executive Officier
MMI Group



Industry:
Commercial Real Estate

Topics of Interest:
Commercial Real Estate
Asset Management

Martin is the Chief Executive Officier of Cushman & Wakefield | Stevenson. He began his commercial real estate career nearly 30 years ago and has been a top producer for the last two decades. If you were to ask anyone who has any involvement in commercial real estate, they will tell you Martin is a person you can depend on and trust to do the best thing for his client.

Martin is responsible for the execution, vision, and strategy as the CEO of CW Stevenson as well as the President and CEO of MMI Asset Management. He manages strategic relationships with key investment partners and is continually in pursuit of client-service excellence.

He serves on the Board of Directors for World Trade Centre Winnipeg. Martin was also appointed to the Manitoba Provincial Working Group for development of a capital region growth plan that will aim to deliver better infrastructure at lower cost and improve planning, permitting, and zoning.

Jennifer Mullen-Berube



President
Cushman & Wakefield | Stevenson
and MMI Asset Management

Industry:
Commercial Real Estate, Asset Management, Residential and Commercial Property Management

Topics of Interest:
Leadership
Culture
Transformation
Regulation and Industry
Digitization

MMI GROUP

Jennifer Mullen-Berube is a visionary steward who leads transformative moments, leaving a legacy of shared success. As President of Cushman & Wakefield Winnipeg | Stevenson and MMI Asset Management, she brings over 25 years of high-impact leadership across financial services and commercial real estate. Jenn champions strategic growth through her core values of integrity, stewardship, and well-being, empowering teams to achieve beyond their expectations.

An ICD.D certified director, MBA graduate, and certified executive coach, Jenn's career includes board and advisory roles at prominent organizations, including Manitoba Blue Cross and Friesen's Corporation. She is recognized for her strategic insights into growth, digitization, ESG, and risk management, along with her commitment to nurturing high-performing teams. Her vision is to lead with authenticity, empowering others to reach their fullest potential and leaving a legacy of integrity, resilience, and possibility.

Amy Oliver

President
Amy Oliver + Co



Industry:

Venture Capital and Management Consulting

Topics of Interest:

Leadership
Strategy
Women in Business

Amy Oliver is an experienced healthcare executive and the founder and CEO of Amy Oliver + Co where she offers trusted advisory services, professional leadership, business coaching to practive owners, leaders, academics, and organizations in health and social sectors.

Amy has coached and advised hundreds of health leaders and practice owners. She is passionate about bridging the gaps around strategy, management, and leadership through knowledge translation at the crossroads of health and business. She is the founder of the Healthy Busines series, the Womentum series, and the online leadership platform, The Stack.

She holds an MBA with a dual concentration in Organizational Leadership and Health Administration. She is a pharmacist, a Certified Leadership Coach, and a globally certified Project Management Professional. Amy holds certificates in Emotional Intelligence, Advanced Strategic Management, and Leadership. She is a sought after keynote speaker and a member of the Speakers Bureau of Canada.

Amy has won multiple health sector and leadership awards and is also a recent alumna of the prestigious Governor General Canadian Leadership Conference.

Gavin Rich

President
Tough Duck



Industry:
Apparel and Fashion

Topics of Interest:
Marketing
Supply Chain / Logistics
Entrepenuership
Leadership
Family Business

Gavin is President of Tough Duck, a global leader in Safety, Work and Outdoor Apparel. Tough Duck was started in 1939 by Gavin's Grandfather, Abraham Rich.

From half a million square feet of Distribution Facilities in Winnipeg, Tough Duck serves hard working people in many industries around the world-the trades, aviation, construction, agriculture, transportation, and more.

All Executive Leadership, product design, logistics, marketing and sales management come from our talented team at our Exchange District Head Office in Winnipeg.

Gavin is passionate about Winnipeg, family business, growing long term enterprise value, the supply chain, and giving back to the community. He is especially proud of the team that leads Tough Duck and the growth of the brand.

Gavin holds a BA (Adv) from The University of Manitoba Faculty of Arts.

Nolan Ploegman, MBA



President & CEO
Concord Projects Ltd.

Industry:
Construction

Topics of Interest:
Finance
Accounting
Sales
Marketing
Human Resources
General Management
Construction Management
Project Management
Real Estate Development and Investing
Property Management

Nolan Ploegman joined Concord Projects, a construction and general contracting company, in 2005 and now oversees all aspects of the business.

Nolan has attained a Master of Business Administration (MBA), as well as a Bachelor of Commerce (Honours, majoring in finance and accounting, from the Asper School of Business. Nolan's experience and knowledge in real estate development, real estate investing and property management also provide clients with added value.

Nolan leads an experienced team in all aspects of the business including finance, accounting, marketing, human resources and technology. Nolan is passionate about non-profit and charitable organizations and related initiatives including the recently established Concord Projects Foundation.

Calvin Polet



President
Neptune Properties Inc.

Industry:
Commerical Real Estate, Entrepreneurship

Topics of Interest:
Entrepreneurship
Leadership
Ethics
Strategy / Decision-making

Calvin's career started as a Dairy Queen franchisee and self-serve car wash operator (The Wave Car Wash). After selling the DQ and returning to school, he co-founded Neptune Properties Inc., a Winnipeg-based family office whose initial focus was commercial real estate in Winnipeg, where he holds the role of President.

The real estate portfolio consists of industrial and retail assets in Western Canada and industrial assets in Minnesota, totalling approximately 1.3 million square feet of rentable area. In 2005, Neptune expanded its investment strategy to include direct operating investments, participating in the start-up of Prairie West Ice Cream, a private-label ice cream manufacturer in Winnipeg. In 2012 Neptune partnered in the formation of True North Foods, a federally-certified beef-processing facility based in Carman, Manitoba. Both food production companies serve clients coast-to-coast and are in the midst of expansions, with True North Foods having the goal of becoming the fifth-largest beef-processing plant in Canada by 2025.

He holds a BA in Economics and an MBA from the University of Manitoba and the ICD.D designation from the Rotman School of Management. As President of Neptune Properties, he provides strategy and governance insight to the various operating branches.

Volunteer activities include 23 seasons of coaching and volunteering in the football program at St. Paul's High School. Past involvement has been on the boards of the Downtown Winnipeg Improvement Zone, which he chaired in 2013, and St. Paul's High School, which he chaired from 2019 to 2021.

John Proven, CPA, CA

President
NFI Group of Companies



Industry:
Enviromental Technology

Topics of Interest:
Human Resources
Leadership
International Business
Finance
Accounting
Strategy and Planning

John was educated at the University of Manitoba where he obtained his Bachelor of Commerce in Marketing and Finance, 1990. In his senior year, John was the President of the Commerce Students' Association (Senior Stick).

He is active in the community as a Past Chair of the Associates of the I.H. Asper School of Business, a former Honorary President of the Commerce Students' Association, Past Director of the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce and Director of Cerebra Medical Inc, an early-stage medical technology company. He has been newly added as Director of Red River Mutual Insurance.

John and his wife Margaret have two sons. His eldest son, Andrew graduated from the Asper School in Spring 2017.

Paul Provost



President
6P Marketing

Industry:
Marketing, Advertising Agency

Topics of Interest for Presentations:

- Developing Marketing Plans
- Managing your Brand: Developing a brand strategy
- Marketing tactics 101
- Activating your Website
- Intro to Facebook
- Intro to Linkedin
- Educate your Audience
- Internal Marketing: Engaging your team to Growth

Paul Provost is the founder and president of 6P Marketing. Paul began his career in business planning and operations. After 20 years of progressive marketing experience in advertising agencies in Calgary and Winnipeg, Paul and a small team of communications specialists started a small studio in Winnipeg, Manitoba. This studio would grow and evolve into 6P Marketing, a full-service progressive marketing agency.

Since 2007, 6P has blended innovative technology with engaging creative and progressive marketing strategy, helping Winnipeg businesses find and share their passion. 6P Marketing specializes in brand development, CMS websites, email marketing, advertising and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) solutions, all tailored to the specific needs of entrepreneurs and brand leaders.

6P is pleased to actively provide services to over 100 growth oriented clients in the following industries: Agri-Business (G3, Manitoba Pork, Agrihub, O&T Farms, Fort Garry Brewing, Verve Seeds, CCGA), Technology (Industrial Technology Centre, North Forge, Farmcaster, Zantek, Feedflo), Not-for-profit / Associations (The Associates, Harvest Manitoba, Economic Development Winnipeg, RMED, CEDF, MB Chambers of Commerce), Professional Services (Crosier Kilgour Partners, Private Pension Partners, Standard Insurance), Construction / Real Estate (Genstar, Priority Restoration, Sigfusson Northern), as well as Manufacturing (Conviron, Eastside Group, State Industries) among others.

Paul holds a Bachelor of Commerce Honours degree from the Asper School of Business at the University of Manitoba, is bilingual in French and English, and is actively involved in the Winnipeg community. He is a member of the board for the Canadian Chambers of Commerce, the Winnipeg Executives Association, and is an active member of The Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, The Associates, the Winnipeg Advertising Association, Manitoba Home Builders' Association, as well as the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce.

Derek Rolstone

Principal
Stone HR Strategies



Industry:
Human Resources

Topic of Interest:
Human Resources

Derek Rolstone is a dedicated professional with over 25 years of HR/IR experience. He partners with organizations and has a lengthy and proven track record of increasing revenue, enhancing brand and building high performance teams in government, private and publicly traded companies. Derek has helped many organizations make (and save) money through effective people strategies. He was a former HR Director for Suncor Energy, Bell Canada, TransX and Pepsi, plus a former instructor at the Faculty of Business, Red River College.

After 20 years as an HR Director, and while teaching at RRC, he decided to start Stone HR Strategies in 2014. Now with 170+ clients (many are SME businesses where Stone works directly with owners/leaders of companies that have between 5 and 50 employees, who realize they need some help on the HR front..... Stone HR Strategies helps take some of the 'people stuff' off their desks!).

Derek believes in strategic HR that is bottom-line driven and constantly relating actions back to the company brand by thinking about how to engage employees to give discretionary effort. Stone HR is not your typical team HR experts; everything is centered around attracting, retaining, and engaging. His team of 15 HR professionals does this by assisting companies to develop/build teams, enhance policies, plan strategically, and improve culture. Stone HR has a proven track record of increasing revenue, enhancing brand image, and building high performance teams in government, private and publicly traded companies.

Derek is a Frequent Guest Lecturer with organizations such as TEC, Asper MBA, MITT , AWE, EO, TAB, MHBA, PPMA, and EAM.

Derek has an MBA from the University of Victoria and a BA from Western. He loves squash, motorcycles, Duke basketball and is on the Board of the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre.

Scott Russell

Co-Founder and Managing Partner
Amiron Ventures



Industry:
Tech/New Venture/Consulting

Topic of Interest:
Marketing
Finance
Entrepreneurship

Scott has extensive experience in the development, management, and growth of both new ventures and established businesses across a wide range of industries including tech, energy, real-estate, agriculture, e-commerce, health, and beauty.

He is a four-time founder and has led capital raises and developed projects and partnerships worth $75M+ in over 20 countries around the world. Scott has led the development of strategic initiatives and regional operations in both developing and developed markets around the world.

He is a Chartered Professional Accountant and holds a bachelor's degree in Finance and International Business.

Colin Ryan, CFA, ICD.D



Senior Portfolio Manager and Vice Chair
Wellington-Altus Private Wealth

Industry:
Wealth Management

Topics of Interest:
Leadership
Investments

Colin began his wealth management career in 1992. In addition to serving high net worth, ultra high net worth and institutional clients, Colin spent many years in executive management at his prior firm managing the Prairie Region and was on the advisory committee that set policy and strategy for over 1200 advisors and $120 billion in assets. Colin is a former finalist for the IDA Distinction Award, for investment professionals representing excellence in the profession. In addition to being recognized annually internally at his previous firm for excellence in wealth management, in 2019 he was recognized as one of the top 50 (#11) Advisors in Canada by Wealth Professional Magazine. In that same year was also awarded the Portfolio Manager of the Year award by the same publication and his team was finalist for the advisory team of the year (fewer than 10 employees).

Colin Ryan is a Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA). This program's rigorous curriculum, three levels of examination, and work-experience requirements make the CFA charter the most rigorous and recognized achievement within the global investment industry. Colin also has a B. Comm. (honours-finance) from the Asper School of Business. He has also attended executive education programs at The Wharton School at The University of Pennsylvania and The Rotman School of Management at The University of Toronto as well as many other industry related courses. He is committed to lifelong learning and as such recently completed the Institute of Corporate Directors Course (ICD.D) through the Rotman School of Management and the Asper Executive Education Centre.

Colin's community involvement includes:
- Chair, Associates, Asper School of Business
- Campaign Chair 2017, United Way Winnipeg
- Past Co-Chair Major Giving Campaign, United Way
- Past Member Board of Trustees, United Way
- Past Chair of the Investment Dealers Association (MB)
- Past Chair of the Asper School of Business Young Associates Program.
- Past Member of the Board of Governors for the Winnipeg Art Gallery
- Past Member of the Finance Committee for the Sports Center of Manitoba

Reuben Saba

Vice President, Business Development
Medicure, Inc.



Industry:

Pharmaceuticals & Healthcare

Topics of Interest:

Marketing
Supply Chain/Logistics
Entrepreneurship
Leadership
Healthcare
Hospital
Insurance Payor Landscape in Healthcare
Pharmaceuticals
Retail Pharmacy

Reuben Saba has progressively had expanded roles within the pharmaceutical industry and currently serves as the Vice President of Business Development at Medicure Inc. He is responsible for coordinating the strategic direction of the company's expansion efforts. This includes identifying potential partnerships, securing new business opportunities, and overseeing the integration of these opportunities into the company's existing operations. Furthermore, this role also encompasses managing the company's access to the US payor market, a critical aspect that involves understanding and navigating complex third-party payor landscape, cultivating relationships with key stakeholders, and ensuring the company's products are successfully introduced and adopted within these markets.

Prior to joining Medicure, Reuben lent his expertise to the Public Health Agency of Canada in the Molecular Pathobiology Department, emphasizing on the host genetics involved in neurodegenerative diseases. He earned his M.Sc. and Ph.D. at the University of Manitoba and further engaged in post-doctoral training at the Interdisciplinary Center for Neurosciences at the University of Heidelberg (Germany) as a Canadian Institute of Health Research and Excellence Cluster Post Doctoral Fellow.

Somia Sadiq

Founder, Principal Partner
Narratives Inc.



Industry:

Territorial Planning. Impact Assessment.
Conflict Transformation. Research.

Topics of Interest:

Entrepreneurship
Leadership
Trauma-Informed Practice
Diversity

narratives

Somia is a Certified Environmental Professional (EP) and a Registered Professional Planner (RPP), specializing in Impact Assessment, Conflict Transformation, Negotiations, and Peace building.

Somia's portfolio includes: negotiations, strategic communications, impact assessments, social programming, capacity building and training, risk evaluation, and development and execution of engagement programs.

Somia's work is informed by a keen interest in creating space for multiple knowledge systems, and understanding psychosocial barriers to reconciliation, particularly dynamics of othering, framing, and trauma.

Susana Scott

Founder and President
Brematson & Associates Inc.



Industry:
Charity

Topics of Interest:
Disability
Government Bureaucracy
Entrepreneurship
Leadership

Susana Scott is the founder and President of Brematson Disability Advocates Inc., a national fee for service advocacy organization. Her services include, tribunal hearings, appeals, and reconsiderations for the Canada Pension Plan disability program, private insurance Long Term Disability (LTD) claim appeals, and the Disability Tax Credit (DTC).

The creation of the company in 2004 was a direct result of her personal experience with disability issues, which she encountered when her daughter was born with Spina Bifida. Susana's experience is vast when it comes to government relations. She is a former Special Assistant to the President of the Treasury Board of the Federal Government of Canada under the administration of Prime Minsters' Honorable Jean Chretien and Honorable Paul Martin. She has expertise in navigating government bureaucracy and interpreting legislation. Susana set a vision for Brematson & Disability Advocates to bring clarity, build connections and to advocate for disabled individuals and their families across Canada.

In addition to her advocacy work, she has made a point to contribute to the disability community. She sponsored the Society for Manitobans with Disabilities (SMD) All Abilities Dance Group, and the SMD Dancing with Celebrities fundraiser. Also, her support of the City of Winnipeg, Sponsor Winnipeg initiative has resulted in an Adaptive Book Collection for children with learning disabilities and the support of the Sign-A-Story program for deaf children at the Millennium Library.

She is the President for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus Association of Canada, SBHAC. Susana's efforts have included participating in the lobbying of the Provincial government for accessibility rights legislation in Manitoba. This has resulted in an Accessibility Advisory Council Act and the Passage of Strong and Effective Accessibility-Rights Legislation. She is also a board member for Variety, the children's charity.

Susana is a member of TEC Canada, the preeminent leadership development program in Canada and part of the Vistage Global leadership network with over 15,000 members worldwide. Through membership in TEC Canada Susana and business leaders meet regularly to sharpen their business leadership skills, participate in stimulating speaker sessions, share best practices, and provide peer mentorship to the other members of their Group.

Blaine Shewchuk

EVP, Individual Wealth
Canada Life



Industry:
Wealth Management

Topics of Interest:

Accounting
Finance
Entrepreneurship
Leadership

Blaine Shewchuk joined Canada Life in 2024, as Executive Vice President, Individual Wealth, a leading wealth platform for entrepreneurial advisors and clients.

Blaine joins Canada Life from Investment Planning Counsel (IPC), where he has been President and CEO since 2021, following an extensive career in wealth and asset management at IGM Financial – which included the role of EVP, Chief Strategy and Corporate Development Officer.

Blaine has a Bachelor of Commerce (Honours) degree from the University of Manitoba, holds the CPA and CMA designations, and is a CFA Charterholder, CFA Institute.

Scott Shippam

President
Shippam & Associates Inc.



Industry:
Promotional Merchandise

Topics of Interest:

Marketing
Entrepreneurship
Leadership
Sales

shippam
promoting your brand

For over 25 years, Scott Shippam has been a noteworthy leader in Manitoba by supplying corporate merchandise for large and smaller businesses throughout Canada. Clients use Shippam products for uniforms, employee gifts, special events, and marketing material.

Scott has been the past president of the Entrepreneurs Organization (EO) for Manitoba. Scott has also been on the board for the Winnipeg Executives Association and the Promotional Product Association of Manitoba.

Scott has a passion for spending time with his wife - Nancy, son - Carter, and daughter - Emily. His hobbies also include fishing at the lake, playing hockey, and golf.

Bram Strain

President & CEO
Business Council of Manitoba



Industry:
Business Association / Government Relations

Topics of Interest:

Leadership
Government Relations
Advocacy
Business & Process of Government

Business Council
of Manitoba

Bramwell (Bram) Strain is the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Business Council of Manitoba. Bram is a Manitoban, raised in Elm Creek and is a graduate of Brandon University. Prior to joining the Business Council, Bram was most recently the City Manager in Lethbridge, Alberta. Prior to that, he served as Deputy Minister in the Manitoba Government with the Ministries of Infrastructure, as well as Education, Training, and Immigration. Bram has also served as Assistant Deputy Minister for Western Economic Diversification, Regional Director General for Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Director General for Service Canada, and Associate Regional Director General for Veterans Affairs Canada.

Bram is a strategic leader who utilizes a relationship-based leadership style that focuses on results and outcomes beneficial to stakeholders. Bram has worked extensively with the private sector in the development of economic and infrastructure projects leading to growth and community enhancement. On behalf of the Business Council, he is focused on economic growth for the province of Manitoba by creating the conditions for a competitive business environment for industry to thrive.

Bram has extensive experience inside of all levels of government which allows for a unique insight into politics and government relations.

Kim Ulmer



Regional President

Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Nunavut & Western Ontario
RBC

Industry:
Banking/Financial Institutions

Topics of Interest:

Leadership

Kim Ulmer is the Regional President for Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Nunavut, and Western Ontario. Responsible for achieving a best-in-class sales and service experience for all clients in business and personal banking, Kim is thrilled to lead and is inspired by a talented workforce of over 2600 employees from the radiant fields of Saskatchewan to the vibrant city of Sudbury to the extraordinary tundra of Canada's north.

Passionate about youth, the entrepreneurial spirit, diversity & inclusion, and the arts, Kim is active in the community and a strong supporter of employee volunteerism.

Kim currently serves as Secretary to the Business Council of Manitoba. Kim also dedicates her time to the national board of the Canadian Women's Foundation, the Saskatchewan's Polytechnic It's about time Capital Campaign, and is a founding member of the International Women's Forum new Winnipeg chapter. Kim also plays an active role in the Asper MBA Executive Mentorship Program at the University of Manitoba.

Kim proudly serves as the Executive Champion for RBC Pride, an RBC Employee Resource Groups within her region supporting the 2SLGBTQ+ community.

Kim holds an MBA from Dalhousie University and a diploma in Business Administration from SIAST and received an honorary degree from Saskatchewan Polytechnic in the spring of 2018.

Kim and her husband Garnell, reside in Winnipeg, Manitoba surrounded by family, friends, and a spirited community.

Avi Vaserman

CEO/CTO
Sytex Ltd.



Industry:
IT Infrastructure & Cybersecurity

Topics of Interest:

Cybersecurity

Avi Vaserman is a seasoned IT professional and entrepreneur with a passion for delivering secure, efficient, and tailored technology solutions to businesses across Canada. As the founder and CEO of Sytex Ltd., Avi has built a reputation for excellence in cybersecurity, IT consulting, and managed services, serving a diverse clientele that includes legal firms, accounting offices, medical clinics, manufacturers, and real estate companies.

With a career rooted in hands-on problem-solving and client satisfaction, Avi's journey began with a simple act of helping a neighboring business with their IT needs—an experience that sparked the creation of Sytex. Today, Sytex is recognized for its proactive approach to cybersecurity, offering protection against malware, ransomware, and phishing threats through advanced technologies and strict policy enforcement.

Avi's leadership is defined by his commitment to staying ahead of industry trends. He actively participates in seminars, webcasts, and continuous learning to ensure Sytex clients benefit from the latest innovations. His philosophy centers on minimizing downtime, optimizing network performance, and safeguarding data integrity—all while providing responsive, personalized support.

Under Avi's guidance, Sytex has become a trusted partner for businesses seeking scalable IT infrastructure and reliable remote and on-site support. His dedication to excellence and customer service has earned praise from clients and positioned Sytex as a top-rated IT provider in Winnipeg.

Shaun Vincent

Founder and Creative Director
Vincent Design Inc.



Industry:
Marketing/Creative Agency

Topics of Interest:

Marketing
Entrepreuership
Indigenous Design

VINCENT DESIGN INC.

Shaun Vincent is an artist, graphic designer, and entrepreneur who grew up in the Métis community of St. Laurent. Shaun is the founder of Vincent Design Inc.

He founded the company in 2007, after earning an Advanced Diploma from Red River College Polytechnic and spending several years working in the design industry. Shaun saw the need for representational design and struck out on his own to build a branding and marketing firm with a focus on promoting Indigenous communities, organizations, and companies. Today Vincent Design Inc. has grown to a team of close to 40 doing this work.

Shaun has designed hundreds of logos, specializing in those that require a deep understanding and sensitivity to the people and stories they represent. He worked on the Survivors' Flag, a design created for the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation in honour of residential school Survivors. The Flag was introduced during the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation federal holiday in 2021 and raised at Parliament Hill in Ottawa. He has also worked with several organizations across Canada, including the Southern Chiefs' Organization on branding and marketing around their acquisition of the historical, flagship Hudson Bay Building, web presence and branding for Indspire, and branding and layout for Canadian Geography on the Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada.

As an artist and entrepreneur, Shaun has crafted a unique style guided by connections to the land, history and 'knowing.' It is this Two-Eyed Seeing bridging Indigenous understanding with Western strengths that defines Shaun Vincent's work and Vincent Design Inc.

Larry Wandowich

Chief Administrative Officer
Rural Municipality of Rosser



Industry:
Development

Topics of Interest:
Change Management
Leadership
Marketing
Business Strategy
Government
Not-for-Profit

Larry Wandowich is the Chief Administrative Officer of the Rural Municipality of Rosser. Under direction of Council, he oversees the implementation and delivery of programs and services in the municipality, which includes both rural lands and the CentrePort lands in the RM of Rosser. Larry is a former executive member of Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries. Past executive portfolios include Community Relations & Partnerships, Marketing Campaigns & Loyalty Programs, Casino Promotions, Player Development & Recognition, Corporate Security, McPhillips Station Casino, and a Business Improvement pilot program. Larry has over 30 years of management experience with 21 of those years at the executive level.

Larry has a BA from the University of Winnipeg and an MBA from the Asper School of Business, University of Manitoba with a specialization in Human Relations. Larry is a former University of Winnipeg Wesmen basketball player, a past Honorary President for Business Administration Students' Association at the University of Winnipeg, and a past Chamber Ambassador with the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce. Larry has served as a Board member for the following organizations: Habitat for Humanity Manitoba, St. Boniface Diocesan High School, and Board of Consultors for Manitoba Catholic Schools. He has also helped with the Asper School JDC West program for many years and is a member of the Associates. Larry is happily married for over 29 years and is a proud father of one daughter, who achieved her Bachelor of Business Administration while playing college volleyball in Alberta.

Grant White

President, Portfolio Manager
Endeavour Wealth Management



Industry:
Wealth Management

Topics of Interest:

Innovative leadership
Customer/Client Experience
Building an Experience Brand
Challenging the status quo in traditional industry

ENDEAVOUR

In Grant's role as the President of Endeavour Wealth Management, he is responsible for daily operations as well as the long-term strategy for the business. Grant considers himself to be a compassionate and innovative leader in the industry. In particular, he loves the challenge of building an experience brand based in traditional industry.

I've always believed that if you are good at something, you should use your talents to help other people. I believe that my talents lie in creating unique client and customer experiences, especially in traditional industry. It is amazing, the experience you can create when you take a moment to step back and look through the eyes of your customer. It is the basis for how we create inspired moments and attempt to evaluate infinite detail. As wealth managers, our sole responsibility is to help people to live more of the life they want to, when they want to. We focus on the defining moments that matter in people's lives and help them to experience more of them. To be more in them, and we honor the ones that do.

After graduating with his honors degree in finance and marketing Grant entered the financial services industry in 2005. Since then he has been recognized as a top performing Financial Planner and Portfolio Manager by not only his own firm but other independent organizations including The Carson Group, an international Wealth Management Organization based out of Omaha Nebraska, and Wealth Professional where he was voted the top advisor in Canada under 40. Grant is regularly featured on CJOB, The Globe and Mail and Wealth Professional Magazine where he is asked his opinion on economic events, innovative leadership and financial planning strategy.

Grant is a proud member of the community and when he is not at the office, he and his wife Sam lend a great deal of time to local organizations which are close to their heart. Grant is passionate about ending homelessness and focuses on working as a member of the fundraising cabinet for the United Way of Winnipeg. He is a mentor for startup businesses with North Forge and serves on the St. Paul's High School Alumni Association board.

Denise Zaporzan, FCPA, FCMA, BSP

President
Asteria Global Inc.



Industry:
Consulting, Strategy & Leadership

Topics of Interest:
Strategy
Teams
Leadership

Denise is President & CEO of Asteria Global, an international consulting firm advising tech entrepreneurs and business leaders on growth, evolution, succession planning, and exit/acquisition.

She is a Fellow Chartered Professional Accountant (FCPA), having earned Fellow recognition in 2010 for exceptional career achievements and service to the accounting profession.

Prior to founding Asteria Global, Denise served as Chief Financial Officer for privately held and publicly traded companies. She enjoyed over 20 years in executive roles, leading financial and strategic planning, mergers and acquisitions, change management, and transitioning an initial public offering.

She is a past sessional instructor and moderator for accounting, strategy, and leadership courses at the Business School as well as Executive Education. She has been an Associate member for 11 years – serving on the board for 9 years.

Denise is a past board director and audit committee member for the Canadian Cancer Society, past United Way Winnipeg committee member, and past board member and gala chair for the Winnipeg Art Gallery.

In addition to serving as Chair of the Associates, she is a board director and finance committee chair for Economic Development Winnipeg.

Grant Zipursky

Director/Chief Executive Officier
MD Innovative Strategies Ltd.



Industry:
Health Care Technology

Topics of Interest:
Start ups
Medical Techology

Grant is Chief Executive Officier for MD Innovative Strategies, which provides consultative and marketing strategies to incubators and start up medical device companies.

Grant received his Bachelor of Science through University of Manitoba. He then futhered his studies at Wharton School of Business for their Leadership and Mentorship Program as well as Harvard Business School for Strategic Planning Seminars.

In addition he also volunteers his time with several community Boards and committees, as well as, mentoring students at the University of Manitoba.

Joanne Zuk



Principal and CEO
Joanne Zuk Leadership and Strategy

Industry:
Consulting (Strategy, Engagement, Facilitation)

Topics of Interest:

Entreprenuership
Leadership
Negotiation
Culture Change

Joanne Zuk is a Winnipeg-based strategist and entrepreneur who specializes in strategic planning and stakeholder engagement for organizations that have a complex relationship with government. Over the past three years, she has developed strategic plans for dozens of organizations, including Manitoba Public Insurance, the YMCA-YWCA of Winnipeg, and Red River College Polytechnic. She has also been contracted as a facilitator by national organizations such as Cereals Canada and YWCA Canada.

Prior to opening her firm, Joanne had a 20-year career in public service, where she thrived by building high performing and engaged teams. During the final 5 years of her career, she was a senior executive in the Cabinet office, which placed her at the heart of power and decision-making in Manitoba. Her understanding of the interactions between the public and private sectors is an asset that her clients value deeply.

Joanne has specialized expertise in strategy alignment, cultural transformation of large organizations, and negotiation strategies – with a focus specifically on women and other equity-deserving groups.

Joanne holds a BA (Psychology) and BSc (Biology) from The University of Winnipeg, a Masters in Public Administration (MBA stream) from the University of Manitoba, and an Executive Leadership Certificate from Schulich School of Business. She has been trained in multiple innovation methodologies, including Lean, Human Centred Design, Innovation Engineering and in public engagement and facilitation.

Joanne is married with two grown daughters. She is an avid cyclist and nerd.