

# LEVELUP

CENTRAL OKANAGAN BUSINESS REPORT

# 15

WOMEN IN  
LEADERSHIP



THE PERFECT PAIRING  
OF TECH AND WINE

FEMALE FORWARD  
TECH COMPANY

CANNABIS 2.0



# LEVEL UP

Speaker Series: Future of HR & Recruiting

*FEATURING*

# ERIC TERMUENDE

*AND MORE!*



**WEDNESDAY  
FEBRUARY 19, 2020  
4:00 - 7:00PM**



## **KEY TAKEAWAYS**

- How to increase retention of top performers
- Techniques to differentiate your story to new candidates and existing team members
- A new framework for recruiting the best candidates for your organization



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# WELCOME TO THE FIRST EDITION OF LEVEL UP



Our new quarterly publication designed to shine a light on the local business sector. Our communities are full of success stories, emerging innovation and business excellence, and Level Up will focus on these topics along with other compelling stories in the business community. Part informative, part educational, every story will not only showcase local talent, but will resonate with our readers near or far.

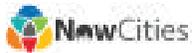
Our vision for Level Up is to be inspiring and informative, at times contrary, but above all purposeful. Inside you'll find a mixture of news, features and columns on a wide range of business topics. *By the Numbers* will deliver statistics and trends on our local economy, learn about new local development projects in our *Building a Community* section, or find useful financial information in *Money Matters*. Check out new businesses in *Opening Doors*, and find out who is hiring in *Job Market*. Plus, be in-the-know about exciting projects happening right in our backyard in *This Happens Here*. Finally, learn about overcoming business hurdles in our *Breaking the Biz Barriers* section.

In this first issue you will find stories of fifteen local women who have broken the mold and Levelled Up in their industries. Each inspiring woman has her own story on how she got to where she is today - but not without challenges, hurdles and a relentless drive to achieve success. These ladies will share inspiring wisdom from their many experiences.

Thanks for picking up our newest publication and joining us in launching the Level Up Central Okanagan Business Report. There's a famous quote that says "Hang out with people who force you to level up". Thanks for hanging out with us - let's Level Up together.

*Rob Cupello*

**Rob Cupello**  
VP of Business Development for NowMedia Group



**LEVEL UP**  
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Tyler Robson,  
Valens GroWorks Corporation



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# THE PERFECT PAIRING: SUMMERHILL PYRAMID WINERY AND CONNECT

**A RELATIONSHIP THAT STARTED WITH PHONE SUPPORT HAS AGED INTO A ROBUST RELATIONSHIP PROVIDING FULL IT SERVICES TO SUMMERHILL PYRAMID WINERY.**

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When Summerhill began having issues with their IT Provider in the summer of 2019, they decided to hire CONNECT as their full time IT services provider. Because CONNECT has always provided excellent services to Summerhill in the past, there was enough built-up trust to allow CONNECT's IT department to take over the management of their IT services.

As soon as CONNECT took ownership of the IT services, all of the old provider's cloud services were migrated to a locally-hosted, on-premise server. From there, CONNECT began resolving outstanding issues the previous IT Company was unable to address.

After stomping out all the wrinkles, CONNECT ensured all staff had an easy to use environment and line of support should they require any assistance. A key ingredient that sets CONNECT apart from the competition is an easily-accessible support team – always there to answer the call, anytime and on-demand.

With the outstanding issues solved, CONNECT began working on special projects. The first, a custom guest wireless splash page, was deployed to gather emails for an opt-in mailing list. This has helped Summerhill's team to build stronger brand awareness and create a closer relationship to their customers - enhancing sales and loyalty.





CONNECT is providing a sense of security for Summerhill staff, as they never have to look far for support. Like a great sommelier, CONNECT continues to make competitive workstation and laptop purchase recommendations for the staff.

**Here is a list of the main initiatives completed or underway at Summerhill:**

- Server install
- Cloud services migration to an on-premise server
- High-speed wireless maintenance
- Network access management – VPNs/ remote access, VLANs, POS installs, and much more!
- Equipment consulting and supply (laptops, desktops, servers, network gear, and more)
- Cable management
- Cable installations

CONNECT provides expert, high-quality IT and Telecom services backed by our industry-leading written guarantee. As a trusted technology partner for businesses with decades of strong community ties, CONNECT's mission is to understand your business needs and pain points and to reduce risk, reduce costs, and increase profits.

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# THIS HAPPENS HERE

## KELOWNA-BASED BIODEGRADABLE CELL PHONE CASE COMPANY RAMPS UP PRODUCTION

STORY BY: KENT MOLGAT

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**A high profile endorsement from a star like Jay-Z is helpful, and the recent investment from a venture capital company that he's a part of makes for great headlines, but it's just one step on Kelowna-based Pela's journey.**

The manufacturer of compostable cell phone cases remains focused on its goal to divert a billion pounds of plastic from the waste stream.

Director of brand marketing Kate Wilson stopped-by at KelownaNow to tell us more about this local success story. Getting noticed by the big names in the entertainment industry is all part of the plan for Kelowna-based Pela, which is staying focused on some ambitious plans.

“It's really confirmation that what we're doing is relevant,” said Kate Wilson, on the Jay-Z endorsement. “It's going to give us a platform that is even bigger than we've ever had before.”

The idea behind the Pela cell phone case wasn't born in a trendy west-coast coffee shop like you might have guessed. It's something that occurred to an environmental consultant in Saskatoon where flax-fields can stretch as far as the eye can see. His name is Jeremy Lang.



“He was the one who found the problem that he thought was plastic phone cases that didn’t have to be plastic,” said Wilson.

“There’s actually a waste once you farm flax for the flaxseed oil, he found that instead of burning off the field, you could actually use it as a solution to make compostable phone cases.” But the real spark behind Pela belongs to the next generation.

“It actually started when he was in Hawaii playing in the sand with his son and his son kept coming across pieces of plastic,” she explained.

The first of Pela’s compostable cell phone cases were made right in Saskatoon and started selling in 2011, but the company didn’t really start to take off until Lang brought in partner Matt Bertulli, who has helped get the company scaling-up.

“He brought those skills and that big business mind to the business when we moved it to Kelowna and opened up headquarters,” said Wilson.

There are plans to bring the manufacturing equipment from Saskatoon to Kelowna in the months ahead, but at present, the manufacturing is happening in Hong Kong.

“We started manufacturing in Saskatoon and once we hit global scale and started shipping world-wide, we had to move our manufacturing overseas in order to keep up to that scale,” she explained. But resuming at least part of the manufacturing close to head office is a big part of the company’s plans.

“We’re going allow our team and our community to be able to touch and feel and see the process,” said Wilson. “And it’s something that we really need to hold close to where we live and where our headquarters are because we don’t want it to be a disconnect from our business.”

Things are happening fast for Pela. Their headquarters are located at the Innovation Centre downtown. And by the way, Pela is hiring.



## FROM PAPER TO PAPERLESS, HOW INNOV8 DIGITAL SOLUTIONS IS TRANSFORMING INTO A PROVIDER OF HELPFUL BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY.

WRITTEN BY: JORDEN PUZZELLA

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“The business is in transition,” said Andre Brosseau, President of innov8 Digital Solutions. “It’s in what we call a digital revolution, or rather, a digital transformation.”

Traditionally, innov8’s business has been printers, copiers and scanning solutions, but now they’re migrating that into artificial intelligence, IT solutions, back-end document storage and management, as well as staying within their traditional business.

That traditional business started in 2013 with the purchase of Lakeside Office Systems in Kelowna by Andre Brosseau.

Now, Andre operates innov8 from seven offices, with their head office in Kelowna that supports Kamloops and Nelson offices. Victoria is the island hub for Nanaimo, Courtenay, and Campbell River operations.

This is the cumulation of several independent corporations into one strong, customer-focused business. With a team of over 60 people and 7 offices, their support for customers across the B.C. Interior and Vancouver Island has allowed them to become the largest British Columbia owned and operated office equipment organization.

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“CUSTOMERS WANT A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE NOT ONLY ON THE DAY THEY MAKE THE PURCHASE BUT FOR YEARS AFTER THEY TAKE THE INITIAL LEAP OF FAITH. I KNOW THAT EMPOWERED PEOPLE MAKE THE DIFFERENCE - SOMETHING TECHNOLOGY CAN NEVER REPLACE. ”

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“We’ve always focused on customer service first and I’m in an enviable position as I’m doing this because I want to,” said Andre. “It’s better when you meet a client and actually analyze people’s needs and make a correct recommendation versus trying to sell them on what you have.”

That focus directed innov8 to carry multiple brands. This ‘best of breed’ approach provides them with the strategic advantage to look at somebody’s needs, applications and back-end software, then recommend the best product and solution for them.

“We’ve picked what we feel are the superior brands, and now we can tailor them to individuals.”

One big blessing with the business, or as Andre admits is probably the driving factor for him and his wife Katia, innov8’s Director of Marketing and Client Services, is philanthropy.

“What motivates us is giving back,” said Andre. “That is by far the biggest reason as to why I’m growing and building this business. It’s so we can go back and support the communities that supported us.”

Approximately 15% of pre-tax dollars goes back into philanthropy, supporting many programs like the Foundry Kelowna, Joanne’s House, KGH Foundation, Victoria Hospital Foundation, Mamas for Mamas and many other charities are supported because the entire team at innov8 knows how important it is to give back. Katia works tirelessly to help bring causes that are close to their hearts, such as mental health and the hospital foundations, both financial support and public awareness.

“I’m so proud of the work we do and this past summer we held a fundraiser in our back yard in support of CMHA, ‘let’s build longer tables, not taller fences’, that raised \$45,000 for Foundry Kelowna in support of youth mental health,” said Andre.

innov8 works tirelessly to provide positive experiences for both staff, customers and community.

With the goal to revolutionize their industry in Canada, Andre and Katia will continue supporting the community as they help businesses in British Columbia grow and improve their internal operations by customizing the fit-for-purpose solutions, streamlining processes, reduce costs and provide suit for purpose equipment.





## FINANCIAL EXPERTS SHARE THEIR SAVING TIPS, SO YOU CAN ACCOMPLISH YOUR GOALS



SAVING TIPS FROM THE PROS  
WRITTEN BY: JACOB HILL & JORDEN PUZZELLA

We all have financial goals that we're aiming for, whether that's a vacation, wedding, vehicle or something else. With your goals in mind, budgeting and saving each month will keep you on track to reach them.

To help you with your finances, goals and desires, the pros at Valley First, a division of First West Credit Union, share their personal saving experiences. They've saved for their family, their unique dreams and financial goals, but today, Jason, Kylaina, Stacey and Lara share their insights so you can accomplish your goals too. Here is how they started saving, their goals and some tips so you can do it too.

### **Jason Garrett, Branch Manager, Rutland Branch**

"I've always placed money into a savings account. My mum and dad said they would help me with my first car, but I'd have to pay half the cost, which created a big incentive to save," said Jason. "If you can't see it, you won't spend it. Rename your Savings account to 'Don't Spend' or have it in an investment portfolio account that you can't see every day,"

Jason and his family are planning a trip to Europe and, at the time, the vacation looked to be two years away. He broke down the timeline and looked at what they would need to save each week and set up auto transactions to keep himself on track.

"We started with \$100 per week into a 'Holiday Account' which would give us \$10,400 over two years," said Jason. "The best practice is to set up an auto transaction for this amount to coincide with payroll so you don't miss it. Treat your savings plan like a loan or mortgage payment. By this I mean that you need to make this payment no matter what so you will budget for it. Savings is no different."

### **Kylaina Afonso, Assistant Branch Manager, Downtown Kelowna Branch**

"Put money aside BEFORE you start spending it. I suggest doing that on the same day as payday after your bills are paid, if possible," advised Kylaina. "I look at my regular savings like a bill that needs to be paid each month — non-negotiable. If I have

extra funds left over in my budget once the bills are paid, I top up my savings. Adding a little extra never hurts!”

Having a goal to work towards will keep you motivated to save consistently. Kylaina recently became engaged and is in the process of planning and saving for her wedding! Every payday, her and her fiancé contribute funds to their ‘Wedding’ savings account so that they can have their dream wedding.

“Start early and often, even if it’s small. Money adds up faster than you think. As you can, increase these regular savings over time,” concluded Kylaina. “I know a lot of friends that were never taught savings habits while growing up. Some managed to figure it out on their own, but many didn’t. Start the savings habit first and go from here. Working around it makes it feel like less of a burden or set back to your lifestyle that you’ve become accustomed to.”

**Stacey Agecutay, Wealth Planning Specialist, Penticton Main Street Branch**

“My savings goals started in my 20’s as saving for a home purchase, future family planning, potential relocation for work, some travel and retirement. In my 30’s, the order of those goals shifted and adjusted such as home purchase changed to a larger home, education for my son and more extravagant travel,” said Stacey. “Now, close to entering my 50s, my goals have changed again to put retirement at the forefront, travel has moved higher in priority and being able to help my adult son progress with his future financial plans.”

It’s imperative to figure out what your priorities are — do you want to travel lots, start a family, buy a home, retire early? From this, you will be able to figure out how you can accomplish your goals, month-to-month.

“I’m going on a dream vacation in autumn of 2020. I know the cost will be about \$4,500, so I have started putting money away in increments of \$300 monthly to reach my goal,” concluded Sta-

cey. “Visualize your goals and create a bucket list — commit it to paper, make it real. Prioritize that list and figure out what the ‘cost’ will be for that item on the list and identify the timeline. Break it down to a monthly or bi-weekly savings commitment and, most importantly, stay consistent.”

**Lara Kinvig, Assistant Branch Manager, Oliver Branch**

“I’m going to be real with you, I don’t always save up — it depends on the situation. I use my credit card to get the points, transfer to my line of credit for better interest, then, if I have the cash or some cash, I put that against the payment,” said Lara. “I will have budgeted how much I need to pay per month in order to have it paid off quickly or at least in a time frame I deem reasonable. When I am saving up, I always look at my take home pay, deduct my expenses, look at what I can give up or spend less on and set those funds aside in a different account.”

As you go through life, your priorities will change depending on what stage you’re at. For example, Lara had her first child just over a year and a half ago. While this was a beautiful moment in her life, it caused her to think about, create and prioritize different goals and budget strategies for the future.

“Out of sight, out of mind! Have your RSP/TFSA/Savings amount transferred on payday, before you can get your hands on it,” concluded Lara. “My dad always told me to save 10% of my wages/salary. When I was 18 and into my early 20s, I was like, ‘sure dad’ and just did it to please him, but then I could see my savings growing and because of this financial advice, I was able to travel the world and have experiences I would never have had if I hadn’t saved for it.”

There you have it. Real actionable advice from Jason, Kylaina, Stacey and Lara. When you need advice, don’t be afraid to get saving tips from the pros at Valley First, a division of First West Credit Union. Find the nearest branch to you and book an appointment today and find out how you can reach your financial goals quicker.



# THE 2-SIDED SALES PITCH

CONTRIBUTED BY: JUSTIN RAWN  
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT  
AND MARKETING MANAGER



**Kelowna and the Central Okanagan have demonstrated consistent and impressive economic growth for several years.**

As growth continues, the demand for high-skill and professional workers outnumbers the supply. Local businesses and their HR staff are finding it difficult to attract and retain the top talent they need and are looking for ways to set themselves apart in the eyes of job seekers. The answer, in part, lies in viewing the hiring process as a sales cycle rather than a search. For the job seeker, the need to sell yourself throughout the hiring process is an obvious one. From resume construction to contract negotiation you are perpetually in a sales pitch where you are the product. A common mistake from the employer's perspective is forgetting they are playing the same game. From job posting to final offer, the hiring process is as much a sales pitch for the business as it is the job seeker.

You must present a strong case for why your business should be chosen over

an ever widening net of competitors, and with strong local growth and the rise of remote work options, you are competing against more employers than ever.

An effective sales pitch is more than telling applicants you provide free coffee, though that may be part of it, but a greater revelation lies in understanding the job seeker of 2020.

Older generations of workers overwhelmingly value two things: stability and high pay. The younger generations value different aspects of work that many employers aren't readily considering in their recruitment. Two themes consistently present themselves when this group is surveyed; they want work they find meaningful and they want engagement in corporate social responsibility. These two areas are excellent opportunities to build a modern and profoundly effective sales pitch during the hiring process.

First, for an employee to find their work meaningful, they don't need to be scrubbing oil off the back of a

baby seal. Meaning can be found in work that may initially be seen as monotonous, but the value lies in a clear understanding of how meaningful one's work is to the core functions of the business. Cultivating meaningful work requires a culture where the impact of each individual's effort is clearly visible and recognized.

Secondly, provide answers before there are questions on how your company takes corporate social responsibility seriously. Dive into the goals and vision of the existing employees and how they're making an impact. If this isn't something that currently exists within your company, now is the time to take a hard look at your social purpose, how to embed that purpose into your culture, and how you can use it to make your company one that people want to work for.

Highlighting these key areas throughout the hiring process is not only an effective sales pitch to land your next all-star employee, but a recipe for creating a thriving work culture for years to come.

# BY THE NUMBERS

# LOCAL ECONOMIC STATS

The Central Okanagan is on the up in just about every way. Population, labour force, student numbers, houses, incomes, business licences – they're all increasing.

But, of course, rising figures in certain areas – like the prices of homes – aren't likely to please everyone.

Many of the changes we're seeing in the area are due to overall population growth. Growing services, tech and health sectors have all helped boost - and cater to - the population.

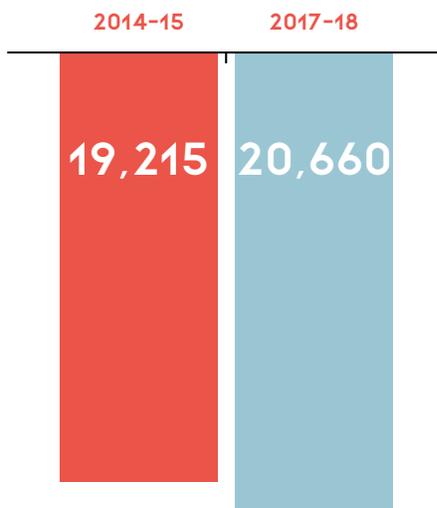
Just last year, for example, Accelerate Okanagan (which promotes tech in the region) commissioned a study that gave credibility to Kelowna's "Silicon Valley North" Nickname.

The much-discussed tech sector was estimated to have grown 15% a year since 2013, contributing \$1.67-billion to the regional economy.

"Big things are happening here, and we're just getting started," Accelerate Okanagan's Raghwa Gopal said at the time.

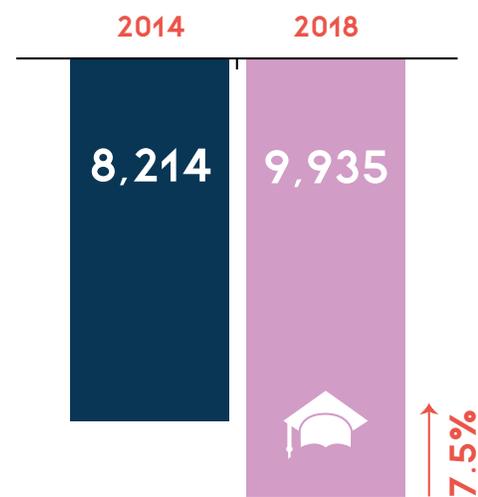
Big things are indeed happening in the region – and it isn't just in tech. We've dug into the stats and drawn up a few very nice graphs to illustrate exactly what's going on.

## OKANAGAN COLLEGE



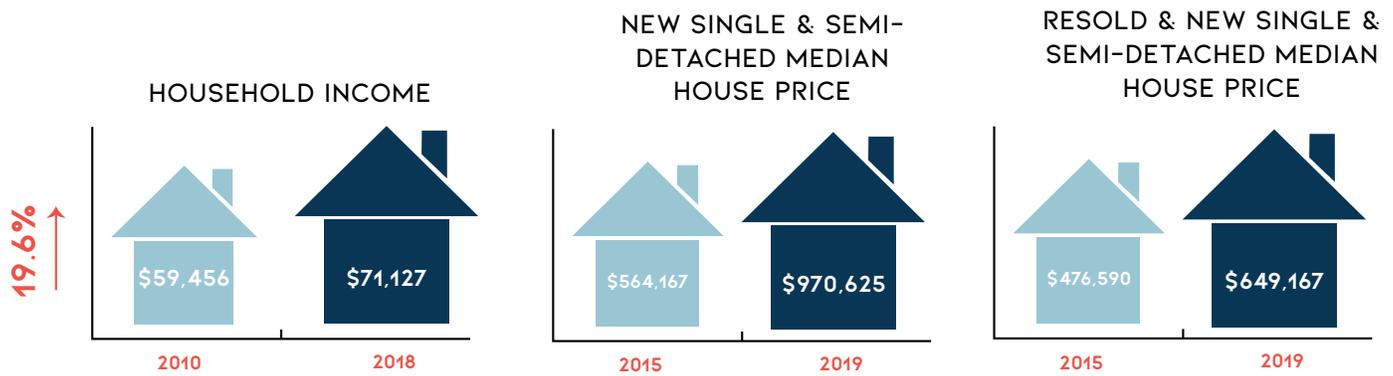
**Okanagan College, had a student population of 19,215 in 2014-15. By 2017-18, it had grown to 20,660.**

## UBCO ENROLLMENT



In 2014, there were a total of 8,214 students at UBCO. In 2018, that figure was 9,935. This is an increase of 7.5% over the last four years.

But these students aren't just coming to the area temporarily – according to UBCO, 48% of the college's graduates stay after completing their studies. It's no surprise they would want to remain in the region, either. Beyond the obvious – the lake, weather, mountains, skiing, hiking, restaurants, wineries – there is also an exciting and growing economy.



Incomes have also been increasing, with the latest data showing 19.6% growth between 2010 (when median household income was \$59,456) and 2015 (when it was \$71,127).

But what about housing for these households?

In 2015, new single or semi-detached homes were being sold in the region for an average of \$564,167, according to Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation data.

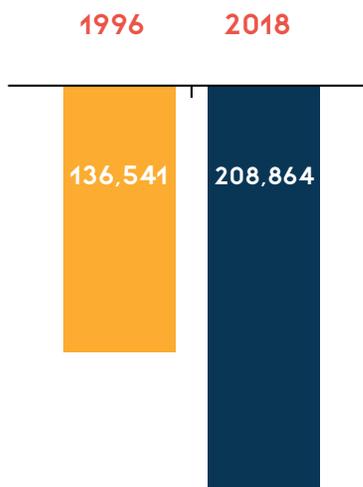
By 2019, that average has so far grown to \$970,625 – a sum few in the area can afford.

For both new homes and homes being resold, according to the Okanagan Mainline Real Estate Board, the average in 2015 was \$476,590. As of September 2019, the figure is \$649,167.

Combined with a vacancy rate of 1.9% among purpose-built rentals in 2018 (according to CMHA), it's little surprise the region's biggest advocates often fall back on the defence of "It's cheaper than Vancouver." But these are problems the Central Okanagan shares with other successful urban areas across North America – and yet another sign of its rapid growth.

## BY THE NUMBERS

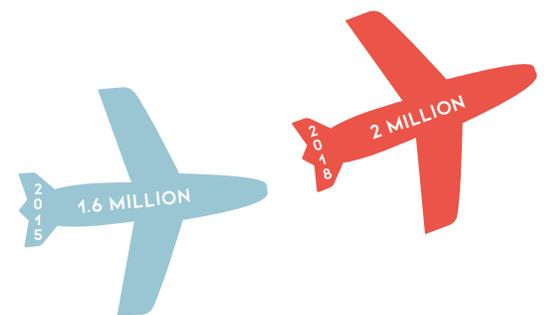
### CENTRAL OKANAGAN POPULATION



Back in 1996, the Central Okanagan's population had surged to 136,541. Based on the most recent data, the population in 2018 was 208,864.

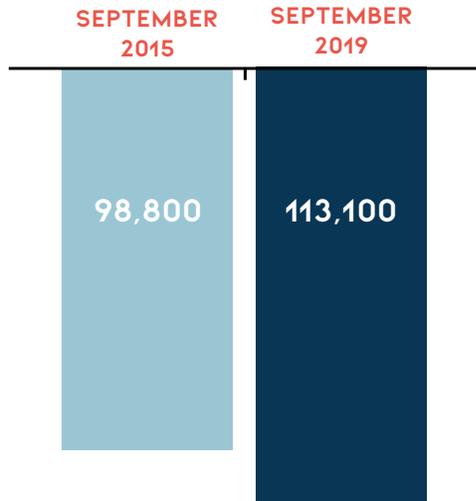
That makes the region – centred on the City of Kelowna – the third largest census metropolitan area (CMA) in British Columbia (after Vancouver and Victoria).

### KELOWNA AIRPORT PASSENGERS



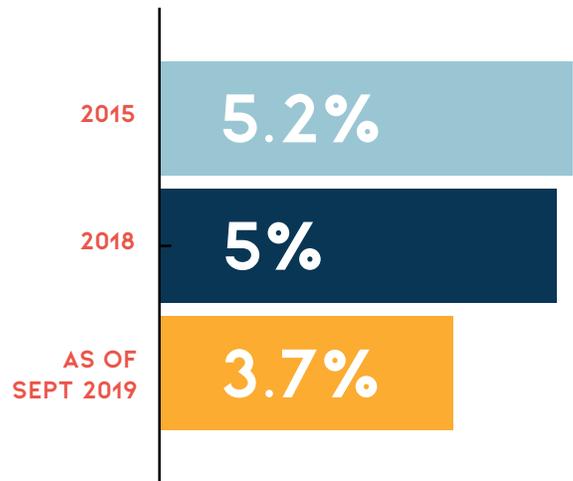
Kelowna International Airport is where many tourists arrive – and passenger numbers there have surged from 1.6-million in 2015 to 2-million in 2018.

## LABOUR FORCE



In terms of the available pool of workers, the region has seen a considerable increase over the last five years. In September 2015, the labour force was 98,800-strong, according to StatCan. By September 2019, that had grown to 113,100.

## UNEMPLOYMENT RATE



Over the same period, unemployment fell – from an average of 5.2% in 2015 to 5% in 2018 and 3.7% as of September 2019.

## EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY



2.2% FORESTRY, FISHING AND HUNTING

According to Statistics Canada, 13.1% of all those employed in the area work in health at the likes of Kelowna General Hospital.

Retail is next on the list with 13% of workers, followed by construction (10.9%), accommodation and food (9.4%), and professional, scientific and technical positions (6.7%).

The once-dominant agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting sector is now relegated to representing 2.2% of the region's workers. A downturn in the industry, meanwhile, is likely to push those numbers down even further – particularly following the November closure of the Tolko lumber mill in Kelowna.

One sector rising up in its stead is tourism, which now represents nearly \$2-billion a year to the region.

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# 15 WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

MERYLE  
CORBETT

First West Credit Union

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BREA  
LAKE

Accelerate Okanagan

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KAREN ERICKSON &  
KAYLA CARUANA

IG Wealth

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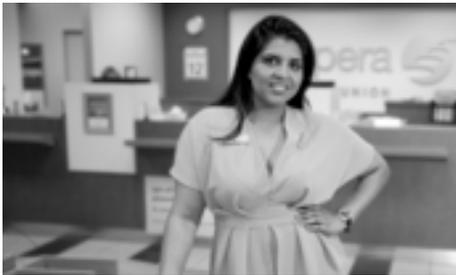
# 15 WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

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**TASHA  
SINGH**

Prospera Credit Union

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**ASHLEY MUNRO &  
TAYLOR KOLAR**

TWP Inc.

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**JENNIFER  
DIXON**

Urban Development Institute

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**LISANNE  
BALLANTYNE**

Tourism Kelowna

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**KRISTA  
PAINE**

Ian Paine Construction

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**SHAUNA STEWART  
DOUGLAS**

Mommbly & Permission to Profit

---



**JENNIFER  
THORNE**

Odlum Brown Limited

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**CASSIDY  
DEVEER**

Third Generation Homes & Central  
Okanagan Home Builders Association

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**ANGELA GORDON &  
CRISPIN BUTTERFIELD**

Kelowna Women in Business (KWIB)

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# LISANNE BALLANTYNE

TOURISM KELOWNA

Tourism Kelowna's Lianne Ballantyne reflects on the journey to becoming a leader.

Story by: Megan Trudeau

Lisanne Ballantyne is the CEO and President of Tourism Kelowna, a destination marketing agency that the city entrusts to bring in more than two million visitors a year.

Ballantyne got her start in the media world, working for outlets like *The Sun*, Global and CTV.



“While I was at *The Sun*, there was a remarkable woman who hired me, who didn’t know quite what my skill set was, but she had a belief in me,” Ballantyne recalls.

“She took me under her wing for four years as promotions manager of a major daily newspaper. That showed me that you can take anyone with the right attitude and trust them to build the skills they’ll need for the job.”

From there, she went on to spend most of her career managing and marketing major convention centres, arenas and exhibition sites.

Before coming to Kelowna, she worked at Edmonton’s Economic Development Corp.

Ballantyne says she didn’t always know that she wanted to be in a leadership role. It just came naturally over time.

“I knew that I really liked making improvements at whatever organization I was with, and bringing that value piece to whoever the customer was we served,” she says. “I would say it’s only because of a love for working in a team environment that you become a leader.”

“I think what’s important for anyone to know, especially women who often wear so many different hats, is that you can be a leader without a title,” Ballantyne adds.

“You can be a leader in whatever role you play. It’s about bringing that

value to your family or your organization or your community.”

Her advice to others who may be struggling to move their career forward is simple – visualize where you want to be.

“The best way to get ahead in your career is to be very clear on what you want your destination to be, and then re-engineer it backwards,” she advises.

“Envision yourself in 20 years – what do you want your life to be like?”

“If you have an end goal in mind, you can always know what the next step is.”

“ IF YOU HAVE AN END GOAL IN MIND, YOU CAN ALWAYS KNOW WHAT THE NEXT STEP IS. ”

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## 15 WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP



### MERYLE CORBETT

#### FIRST WEST CREDIT UNION

Meryle Corbett is a fountain of knowledge, and had some wisdom to share with aspiring leaders in the Okanagan and beyond.

She is the board director for First West Credit Union and recently retired from her role as the financial advisor for KF Aerospace. She shared some lessons learned over the years, and doled out some career and life advice.

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Interviewed by: Megan Trudeau

#### **How have things changed in business over the years in Kelowna?**

When I first came to Kelowna, I moved into the position of controller, which was in charge of all the accounting systems for Sunrype – and I was probably the highest ranking female in the company. It is a pretty lonely position when you move into town. You don't know very many people and it's not always easy to connect. I found it took a lot of time to really build a network and I think that made me aware that it is important to have a good network and good community of colleagues so that we can work together and be able to pick up the phone and have a conversation and say, 'What do you think about this?' or 'I'm struggling with this issue, got any advice?'

#### **Have you seen the number of women who are in leadership roles in the Okanagan increase?**

It has been awesome to see in the last 10 years the number of women in business. There are some incredible leaders and there are hidden gems all over the Valley of women that have incredible expertise and experience.

Some have led very high profile companies, not only in Canada but also outside the country. There has been the odd event where we have had exclusively women and I remember walking into one – it was a Pinnacle Series I think they called it. I think there were over 100 women in that room and I went, 'Oh my gosh, I had no idea there was that many,' and we actually congregated in one place, we had a guest speaker and were able to do some learning, working and connecting.

It's nice to see it has come a long way. There is still some work to go. But, working on it and getting better and better and taking baby steps in the right direction is always a good way to work it, right?

#### **As a leader yourself, what do you think makes a strong leader?**

Strong leaders have an ability to inspire people around them. To me, a supervisor takes work off a desk and moves it around from this position to that position, or from this person to that person. So supervising is more about managing the work.

But leadership is about finding the strengths of all the people that work with you and then tapping into that strength and figuring out what makes them really shine. I have actually had people where I have said, 'I see you on your desk there and you don't look happy, you look miserable. I'm worried – tell me how you are feeling.'

And they will go, 'Oh, I hate this job. I can't sleep at night.'

Some people will break down, and I have had people in tears and then we have said, 'Well, what do you like? What is good in the job? What are the things

you are passionate about, and how do we find a way?' If their skills are tapped into and their strengths are maximized and there is an opportunity to be recognized and do what they love, that's where people shine, right? That is what leadership is to me.

**Any leadership lessons you'd like to share?**

I learned early on that it's not always what you say to people, but how you make them feel when you say it – I call it MRI, or 'most respectful interpretation.' Always treat people the way you would want to be treated yourself.

I like to make decisions by consensus, instead of by an arbitrary crack of a whip. I have learned to treat people with respect, be inclusive, get consensus and always do it with a respectful tone when it happens because if something is said in frustration and anger, those people walk away and remember how they were made to feel forever and you might have lost loyalty or trust that you cannot win back.

**Any advice for women who are struggling in the position they are in?**

I listened to a speaker once, another local leader in town, who said if you wake up more than three days in a row unhappy with your job, then you need to do something.

What you need to do is either fix your problem yourself, if you can fix it yourself – go to your boss or your supervisor and figure out what needs to be fixed and ask to have it fixed. Or, if that is not right, then you need to start making plans of where you would go and make a change in your job or your career. Out of that struggle, there will be things you can control and things that one cannot control, and it is finding the magic of, 'I can control what I can, I can ask for what I can, and if it is not in the realm of possibility, then the last thing left in my control is to move to something else.'

Another mentor told me, 'Don't run from the job you don't like, run to the job you wish to have.' That means sitting back and having a self-talk, if you will, and saying: 'Well, if I am not happy in this job, what do I want?'

**Any final advice you have for women in business?**

I think I'm pushing 60 here pretty quick and I think if I were to look back over 40 years in business and learning... Life is short, and I worked incredibly hard and worked about 70-80 hours a week for the first 20 or 30 years of my career.

Finding the balance is difficult, but I have one of those personalities that I can go 150% or 5%. I really do not work well in the middle. So I have to be able to discipline myself to find that work-life balance, because life is short, and I think that is something to always keep in mind.

Career is a great piece of one's worth and life. But friends and family also have high value.



**"I LEARNED EARLY ON THAT IT IS NOT ALWAYS WHAT YOU SAY TO PEOPLE, BUT HOW YOU MAKE THEM FEEL WHEN YOU SAY IT."**

## “ IT’S NICE TO SEE WOMEN IN THOSE ROLES BECAUSE THEY OFTEN INSPIRE OTHER WOMEN TO KNOW THEY CAN DO IT TOO. ”

Interviewed by: Megan Trudeau

Cassidy DeVeer still sometimes enters a job site and is assumed to be the homeowner. Little do they know, she’s actually in charge.

“Sometimes I will let them sit in their awkwardness until they finally figure out they’re being a little narrow-minded,” she says. “I usually don’t mind the shock factor they get when they’re like, ‘Oh! Oh, okay, so I’m working for you.’”

DeVeer is the president of Third Generation Homes and the first female president of the Central Okanagan Home Builder’s Association. She oversees a little bit of everything – from field work to clients, sales, design work and marketing.

“A female on site will seem out of place to a lot of the men who are working there, so they automatically think you’re the homeowner or a designer or something like that. The last assumption is that you work for the business they are working for,” she explains.

“There’ve been lots of times dealing with people at the City and they’ve asked if they can talk to my father, assuming I work for him. You have to work hard as a woman because I don’t think we get away with as much as men do. We set high standards for ourselves, and I think society does as well.”

It can be a frustrating experience, but DeVeer says the tides are changing. Every time she enters a room, there are more and more women at the table.

“It has been an old boys’ club for a long time and we’re slowly seeing a change for us,” she says. “You know, obviously more women are in design, but we’re seeing it more and more in project management, carpentry, site supervision and management.”

With more and more women entering the trades, DeVeer says that there are a growing number of female leaders in the industry – and we’re really good at it.

“We just fit well in those roles. We are generally really detailed, and we can see the ‘big picture’ of things,” she says. “When you look at most relationships, the head of the household is not generally the man anymore, it’s the woman. She’s more in charge and you can see that shift from decades ago. In our industry, it makes sense and we’re going to see more of it. It’s nice to see women in those roles because they often inspire other women to know they can do it too.”

**What does DeVeer suggest if you’re struggling to be seen?**

“I would say don’t be afraid to speak up,” she advises. “Oftentimes, I’ve been sitting in a room of people and was like, ‘Do I know as much as these people?’ And then I’ll ask questions and I’ll start talking and I realize that I do know as much, and I do belong here.”

Having a support system of other people who understand the challenges you face is also an important factor.

“It’s great to have a network of other women in business or industry that you can talk to or you can relate to and feel comfortable with,” DeVeer says. “You feel like you can support them and praise them, and it doesn’t feel like you’re downgrading yourself at all.”

She adds: “I think women definitely need to rid themselves of the insecurities that would come with not supporting one another.

**“I THINK EVERYONE WILL BE BETTER FOR IT.”**



## CASSIDY DEVEER

THIRD GENERATION HOMES &  
CENTRAL OKANAGAN HOME  
BUILDERS ASSOCIATION

“ YOU HAVE TO WORK HARD AS A  
WOMAN BECAUSE I DON'T THINK  
WE GET AWAY WITH AS MUCH AS  
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SOCIETY DOES AS WELL. ”



### JENNIFER DIXON

#### URBAN DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

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Interviewed by: Megan Trudeau

Jennifer Dixon is the executive director at the Urban Development Institute, a non-profit membership-based association that supports the real estate development industry. Previously, she worked with the Kelowna Chamber of Commerce as the director of policy.

She sat down with NowMedia to talk about women in real estate, making it as an entrepreneur and overcoming self-doubt.

#### **Do you think there are enough women in leadership positions?**

I think there are more and more, which is very positive. In some industries, women are more represented than others, but I think that in those industries that maybe women have traditionally not been as recognized in, it is improving.

#### **What do you think the future looks like for women in your industry?**

I think it's going in a positive direction, not just in this industry but in all industries. Women have a lot to offer and it's just going to keep moving forward. I would actually like to see the day where there doesn't have to be any type of recognition or celebration of women in specific positions.

#### **What kind of advice would you give to women out there who are struggling to progress in their career?**

I think that it's really important to build your confidence – and one thing that helps to build your confidence is to build your competence. There are a lot of ways to help build your confidence, and once you have that confidence, it really helps you to be able to take risks. I don't mean risks where the downside would be catastrophic if it didn't pan out. What I mean by that is to be able to stretch yourself and to take on new things that you wouldn't have done before, to be able to challenge yourself.

If you're not in a leadership role now and you want to be, that would have to involve something that will help you grow in a way you haven't grown before.

#### **Can you think of a specific example of when you had to challenge yourself to move ahead?**

In between working for the Kelowna Chamber of Commerce and the job that I have now, there was a bit of a gap. I became an entrepreneur and I started consulting. That was a big risk. I was a bit scared to do that. There was a little bit of self-doubt. I was asking, 'Can I do this? Is that going to work?'



“

I THINK THAT IT'S REALLY IMPORTANT TO BUILD YOUR CONFIDENCE AND ONE THING THAT HELPS TO BUILD YOUR CONFIDENCE IS TO BUILD YOUR COMPETENCE.

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It's interesting since that role was actually part of what led me to come into this role. So if I hadn't taken that risk, if I hadn't gone out and done that, I don't know if I would've had the role that I have now.

**How did you overcome that self-doubt voice?**

It was basically by focusing on what I knew I could do well. That sort of comes back to your skills, your talents and your interests. What I decided was, 'Okay, I'm going to do a consulting business based on things that I know how to do so that I can actually provide value to people.'

You don't really know until you go out and try.

But I wound up getting clients and things started to roll and then one thing led to another and I wound up with a full-time job, which I was happy to have.

## SHAUNA STEWART DOUGLAS

### MOMMBLE & PERMISSION TO PROFIT

Shauna Stewart Douglas is the founder of Permission to Profit, an online course designed to help entrepreneurs grow their businesses. She also runs Mommbles, an online community supporting over 20,000 moms.

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Interviewed by: Megan Trudeau

#### **What would you say is your style of leadership?**

My approach is very collaborative. We all have our skills that we can bring to the table and that is fantastic, but you really want to make sure that you are bringing other people who are going to bring complementary skill sets.

That way, you can get that much farther, that much faster. It is important to me that I am working with people who I trust and who I am ready and willing to rely on.

#### **What other qualities do you think good leaders have?**

I think that good leaders have the ability to push forward in the face of fear. Strong leaders have the ability to be very clear on what their end goal is, what they are providing for their communities and for their customers.

Being very clear on that and making it possible for them to push through fears and push through setbacks, push through pivots as they happen – the ability to see the forest through the trees and get past the scary moments by being very clear of where you are going.



#### **Why did you feel like Mommbles and Permission to Profit were necessary projects?**

Moms are a powerful force in our community and, honestly, the world. When moms feel supported and connected there is a ripple effect that reaches out to, and impacts, her community.

This positively impacts all of her relationships, including those with her children. Ultimately that is what Mommbles has been about for me: Positively impacting safe, loving, confident homes for kids. This effort has now branched further into Permission to Profit, which is about supporting women in entrepreneurship.

Mommbles' aim is to support women through community, and the mission behind Permission to Profit is to support women through the profit-building growth of their businesses.

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### **How did you get started as an entrepreneur?**

I have worked in an entrepreneurial capacity for many years, starting with growing up in a very entrepreneurial home. I have been involved with start-ups in all stages of growth, from those in the pre-launch and pre-revenue stage, to those several years after selling to a larger company.

I love getting in there and rolling up my sleeves and doing whatever needs to be done, which is why I love supporting entrepreneurs who are wearing several hats and doing the same thing!

### **Why is entrepreneurship so appealing to you?**

One of the things that I love about entrepreneurship is that it feels to me like it is one great big puzzle. There are all these different aspects that you are pulling together. You're putting together the operation, the finances, the business model, the sales and the HR, and all these pieces come together in a way that builds something. You are creating something out of nothing and that is a fascinating process.

Doing that for my own business I found incredibly exciting and interesting, and then having the chance to work with other entrepreneurs on their businesses is just amazing.

### **What kind of challenges have you faced along the way?**

There are some things that have occurred in my personal life. Was it a challenge? It definitely was a challenge. There were definitely things to overcome there,

but overall it has been overwhelmingly positive. I am a biological mom and an adoptive mom and I feel incredibly grateful for the ways this journey has evolved. I wouldn't change a thing.

### **Having gone through it all yourself, what advice would you give aspiring entrepreneurs?**

Some of the advice I give entrepreneurs is to get into the guts of the challenge you are seeking to solve for your clients and don't be afraid to ask the tough questions. Inevitably what is going to happen – and it is a tough truth, but I am going to say it – is that not all of our ideas are going to be feasible. And that's okay! Maybe a business we launch and try isn't going to work either, but it's not failure, it's data!

This is part of how we understand the market, our business model and our team. Getting really clear on your "North Star," and figuring out what your overarching end goal is, is going to help you get over those road bumps.

The next piece of advice is: Just go for it! Start something. Test the new offer. Tell people what you are doing. Perhaps the first idea you have isn't necessarily going to be the one that knocks it out of the park... but the next one could be it.

The point is to work on our ideas, get them out there, and get them into the market. That way you can use actual data to continue to improve the work you are doing and the way you serve your clients. I know it can be scary...but go on and do it anyway. Your clients need you.





## ASHLEY MUNRO & TAYLOR KOLAR

TWP FITNESS INC.

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Story by: Megan Trudeau

Many women have an aversion to the typical gym. It can be a frightening place – a forbidden zone even – especially when you’re going solo.

Sometimes daily life feels like that too, when you’re trying to move up the corporate ladder, or start a new business. But, with the right community, it doesn’t have to be that way.

Ashley Munro and Taylor Kolar are sisters and business partners, and their area of expertise is helping other women feel powerful and connected. As co-owners of TWP Fitness Inc., their goal is to cultivate a safe space for women to come and work out and feel empowered.

Munro says that the word that resonates the most when it comes to their business is “community,” which is an important factor in the success women experience, whether they’re lifting weights or working towards career goals.

Creating a place where community flourishes means being mindful about the way you communicate and the type of expectations you set for yourself and for others. It’s not about how you look, it’s about how you feel.

“You’ll never hear the word ‘bikini’ or ‘weight-loss’ at TWP,” says Kolar. “It’s always about focusing on being strong, having performance goals and being the best version of yourself. Growth, leadership, empowerment – those are kinda big ones for us.”

Not only do these kinds of values help you reach your physical fitness goals, but Kolar and Munro say that they see the confidence their members develop seep into their daily lives.

**“I THINK, ULTIMATELY, WHEN YOU’RE GOING TO GO FOR SOMETHING, GO FOR IT. GO FOR IT BIG. DON’T STAND BACK OR STAY BEHIND.”**

Having other people in your community who want you to succeed and can show you the way is a great way to build your own leadership skills. The two sisters were lucky to have a strong leadership role model in their mother, who started out as a sales Representative over 20 years ago.



She was the only woman in a male-dominated industry, and had to really hustle to gain respect in her field, which is something that many women can relate to.

Munro and Kolar learnt from their mother to have no fear when it comes to working towards their goals.

“I think ultimately, when you’re going to go for something, go for it. Go for it big. Don’t stand back or stay behind,” Munro says. “And, really spend time, daily, weekly, whatever that looks like, to figure out what you stand for, what you want, what your values are and do not ever bend on that. There’s a lot of people that want to give really great advice, but sometimes it doesn’t align with your values as a business. Finding a network in the community that aligns with those values is a pretty special thing.”

“If anyone is feeling lost or they don’t know where to start or they’re not feeling super empowered, you don’t even have to come to TWP to workout,” Munro and Kolar conclude.

“Come for a coffee, hangout, be inspired by the amazing community of women there and just know that our doors are always open.”



## BREA LAKE

### ACCELERATE OKANAGAN

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Interviewed by: Megan Trudeau

Brea Lake is the CEO of Accelerate Okanagan, an organization which helps technology entrepreneurs in the region start and grow their businesses by providing mentorship and connections. She got her business degree at Okanagan College and worked at Disney's Club Penguin before joining Accelerate Okanagan.

Brea sat down with us at NowMedia and spoke about the technology industry, what makes a great leader and how things are changing for women in power.

#### How would you define a good leader?

I feel like I have seen a lot of different leadership styles, and I feel like there are good qualities in a lot of them.

But I think a good leader is one that is open, listens to their staff members, has a clear vision and is willing to pursue that vision, even if it means saying no to certain opportunities.

#### What is your leadership style?

My leadership style is more of a servant leader. There are only 10 full-time members and 10 contract members that we work with. I'm really there to help make their jobs easier – removing the barriers, figuring out what the opportunities are and making sure we are all moving forward in one direction with a clear vision.

#### What kind of advice would you give to women who want to get into technology?

Find a mentor. I think that is probably the biggest piece of advice I could give, and if you are looking for mentorship, our organization helps with that.

We can help to plug you in or introduce you, but I think it is really important to find someone who has been there and done that to learn where the highs and lows can be and how to overcome some of the challenges that you might face.

#### As a leader yourself, what is the biggest challenge you've faced?

I am a younger female in a leadership role, so I think there is a challenge that comes with getting credibility in new rooms that you walk into. Sometimes getting your voice heard can be a challenge, but one that I have learned to overcome.

I think it can always be a challenge, but something we can learn to overcome by being more assertive and understanding our position and definitely being prepared to walk into those meetings.

#### Any leadership lessons that you have learned?

One big leadership lesson I have learned over the years is that it is okay to make mistakes, and if you do make a mistake, own up to it to your team. It is okay to fall on your sword and say, 'Hey, this probably wasn't the best decision,' and explain where it came from.





**What is it like being in the technology industry as a woman? Is it more male-dominated?**

First off, I should say that the tech industry has been growing by leaps and bounds since I have gotten to be a part of it, so it has been an exciting opportunity for me to grow in my career.

While it is definitely more male-dominated, I've started to see that switch of more females starting to enter the industry. But it is for sure heavily weighted on the administrative side and not so much in the technical roles.

We have about 26% females working in tech here in the region, which is higher than most averages we see in other communities. Still, we would love to see that be higher – see more women pursue careers in the technology field, especially more on the technical side of it.

**Do you think it's intimidating going into that environment as a woman?**

I think so, and I think a lot of it has to do with the opportunities that are presented early on.

When you were growing up as a girl through school, the opportunities might not have been there, whereas now there are a lot of day camps and classes for women or girls to get enrolled in a lot sooner. I think that helps to plant the seed for what opportunities there could be for a career in technology.

**As a leader in the technology industry, do you see the environment changing?**

Definitely, it is changing. I notice more and more tables I sit around, there are more females. I think the exciting thing about technology is the whole industry really embraces diversity.

They are wanting different thought patterns. They are looking for people who can think outside of the box and have different perspectives. I think there are a lot of opportunities that might have not been there in more traditional industries. So, I think that is exciting, and I am definitely pleased to see more women around board tables.



## KRISTA PAINE

IAN PAINE CONSTRUCTION

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Interviewed by: Megan Trudeau

Krista Paine is a registered interior designer and has over 10 years of experience in project management. She was born and raised in Kelowna and attended BCIT for interior design. She has run Ian Paine Construction and Design since 2012. She is the second generation to manage the firm, which was founded in 1973.

Krista sat down with us at NowMedia to discuss how hard it is for women to rise in her industry, how to rise to leadership positions and how to gain respect in a male-dominated environment.

**Do you see a lot of female leaders in the Okanagan?**

I have found quite a few women I know in leadership positions in the Okanagan who are very strong and very independent. It's nice to know we have women to look up to, and that they are there because they work really hard.



**What kind of traits do you think make a good leader?**

Confidence is definitely a big one. And independence – knowing that you can solve the problem on your own if you have to. Also knowing where to look and knowing who to ask, and always willing to learn.

**Do you find your industry is very male-dominated?**

It is hugely male-dominated. The vast majority of people in the industry are men. It has definitely been a challenge being female, but my experience and background knowledge have helped.

**Does it impact your ability to do your job?**

When I first started working with my father, I got the impression some trades felt I was just the daughter of Ian Paine. At that point, while working towards managing the company, I had to work hard to earn their respect.

I had to prove my education and my experience – and I also realized I had a lot to learn.

Last year, I became a Red Seal carpenter, which gave me more credibility in the industry. We have been lucky to have won multiple awards in the past few years, which has gained us more credibility in the interior design field.

**Do you think women have to work harder in order to rise up?**

Yes. I wish it weren't true. Fortunately, the general public is becoming more aware of women rising up in this male-dominated industry, which will make it easier for future women builders. I am proud to be one of the few female builders in the Okanagan who continue to be successful.

**What would be your advice for women looking to get into the trades or into leadership positions?**

I would say gain as much experience as possible. Know what you want to do. Having more education and experience gives you more credibility. Be confident in your knowledge, dive in and be willing to make mistakes.



**TASHA SINGH**  
PROSPERA CREDIT UNION

Interviewed by: Megan Trudeau

Tasha Singh is a financial advisor with Prospera Credit Union at Kelowna Mission Park. She is from Vancouver, where she got started selling cars.

Tasha sat down with NowMedia to discuss what she's learned about leadership and being in business.

### **How would you define a good leader?**

I would define a good leader as someone who listens, someone who doesn't know all the answers, who's willing to research with you and learn with you.

Someone who's always growing to be better, not to be the best. That they're able to read people and understand someone and always think about how someone else will feel. That's a good leader.

### **Do you think that's a common leadership style?**

I think there's a huge emphasis now on EQ versus IQ, so there's a lot of emotional intelligence conversations happening nowadays.

Even now for our staffing, it's huge that people know how to read someone else emotionally. You should know if you've hurt someone's feelings or if you step on a couple of toes. That's something that's emphasized more so in the hiring process now.

### **What would be your best piece of leadership advice for women?**

Listen. Just listen. Sometimes we don't need to dispense advice and sometimes we don't need to tell everybody that we're the best, because when we're the best other people know that.

I think that people don't slow down and listen enough. They don't actively listen. Everyone's always looking to give an answer. Sometimes people just need an ear, and they need to be heard.

### **What would you say was the biggest challenge for you in your career?**

I think at Prospera we are really lucky. Our regional director is a woman, my branch manager and assistant manager are both women, all the ladies in the front line are women. But I think the biggest challenge as a woman is getting other people to get past the fact that you're a woman. I think our industry is historically known as a male's field.



Having one whole branch to ourselves, we laugh and tease about it, but we're so lucky that all of us get along. When my grandmother passed and I went back to work, I literally walked into a hug. I opened the door and one of the ladies was there and she was like, 'Hey, Tash, welcome home.'

It's a really nice environment, and I think that our female leaders have a lot to do with that.



## JENNIFER THORNE

ODLUM BROWN LIMITED

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Interviewed by: Megan Trudeau

Jennifer Thorne is an Investment Advisor and Associate Portfolio Manager with Odlum Brown Limited. Prior to that, she practiced law in Kelowna for almost a decade. She sat down with NowMedia to talk about how she got to where she is now, and what kind of advice she has for women looking to move up in their careers.

### **How did you get started in your career?**

I came to my present role as a second profession. Prior to my involvement with Odlum Brown, I practiced law for nearly a decade before deciding to broaden my professional horizons. I worked with an executive coach to refine what I was looking for, which gave me a framework to evaluate new opportunities as they came along. One day, as it often works in Kelowna, a friend of a friend got wind of what I was thinking, and was able to introduce me to the great team at Odlum Brown. Of course, I ultimately decided to join the firm, and it's been an opportunity that I've been really thankful for.

### **What would you say is your style of leadership?**

My style of leadership is really about honesty and being real. As a classic Type A personality, I struggle with perfectionism and high performance. But, I think that if we are all going to be successful in this world we have to acknowledge our limitations and understand our skill sets.

Most of the success that I have had in my life comes from a combination of hard work, identifying smart opportunities, and also a little bit of failure. I try to lead by being approachable, honest, and making people feel like it's okay to struggle through.

### **What has been the biggest challenge for you in your career?**

Thankfully, I've faced very few challenges where being a woman has been a detriment. At times people have specifically sought me out because of that slightly softer side or different perspective. The biggest challenge that I face as a woman is really about balancing family, career, marriage, friendship and all of the different components of a rich and full life.

Men and women both struggle to balance those things, but as women, we tend to carry a lot of guilt about having a successful career while still being present as a parent and spouse, and still having friends and interests and time for ourselves. When you're in a high performing, high demand career, that challenge becomes a bit more acute. But I do believe that if we're just honest about it and open about it, it's certainly not insurmountable.

### **Do you think in our community there are enough female leaders?**

There's always room for more women in leadership. As more women take on executive and leadership roles, one thing that I find encouraging is that for the first time the conversation is not just about a leader being a woman. I like that we're starting to focus less on gender and more on recognizing people's skills and encouraging them because they are simply good at what they do. For me, that's the evolution of equality. We're lucky to have so many great leaders and business people in our community, including ones who happen to be female, and that's a trend I'd like to see continue.

### **Do you have any advice that you would give to other women, or people in general, who want to make progress in their career?**

My best advice is: don't be too hard on yourself! It's natural to want the appearance of success, of having it all together, of doing everything and being everything. But that's a myth. I am good at many things in my life – just don't look at the inside of my car! What life looks like on the surface is not always a good reflection of reality, so give yourself a break. You'll get there. If you're genuinely interested in achieving success, ask a lot of questions, be engaged, and allow yourself to fall into it without beating yourself up along the way.





## KAREN ERICKSON & KAYLA CARUANA

IG WEALTH MANAGEMENT

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Story by: Megan Trudeau

Karen Erickson and Kayla Caruana are a mother-daughter team of financial advisors at IG Wealth Management in Kelowna, and they're making waves in their field.

Caruana is one of the youngest certified financial planners the company has across the whole of Canada, and is part of an all-female team.

She has attended national conferences and is part of a movement trying to make changes on a government level so that only certified people can call themselves financial planners.

As it is, she says, anyone can call themselves a financial planner – without having to go through the certification process.

“We are trying to raise the bar for professionalism and make sure everyone is held to a higher standard,” she explains.

She attributes her confidence and success to growing up with a strong female role model in her mother.

“I grew up in this business knowing I could make just as much or more than any male advisor out there, no problem,” Caruana says. “So I came into that with that mentality, thus the confidence and empowerment.”

“The glass ceiling has been a tremendous challenge,” Erickson adds.

“But because we are both self-employed, we do not have a glass ceiling at IG Wealth Management. We earn what we deserve and we can grow our business as fast as anybody can.”

Caruana says that she has been inspired by her mother’s leadership style over the years, which she describes as servant leadership.

“I would say that competence and confidence are key attributes for a woman in leadership,” Caruana says. “One who has the expertise and empowers others to grow and achieve, and my mother demonstrates both those qualities.”

“She was always one to say: ‘Okay, so what do you need? You are at the bottom, but I am not going to talk down to you, I’m going to ask you what you need in order to succeed.’”

“She was always the first one to pick a tissue up off the ground, or if there was a spill she was down on the ground making sure that everything was clean and presentable.”

“I think that leadership in general is always doing the right thing whether anyone is looking – that’s a big deal, lead from the front,” says Erickson.

“You cannot tell people what to do, you gotta show them what to do and I think that I wasn’t going to ask anyone to do something that I wasn’t prepared to do myself.”

As for leadership lessons learned along the way, Erickson says that one of the most common mistakes people make is with communication.

“I think that the most important thing that leaders need to do is to actually have a vision of where they want to go. One of the biggest mistakes they make is that they don’t communicate,” she explains.

“In order for you to move in one direction together, every team member, no matter where they play, has to play their role. They all need to know what that looks like and what is expected of them.”



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## 15 WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP



# ANGELA GORDON & CRISPIN BUTTERFIELD

KELOWNA WOMEN  
IN BUSINESS

Story by: Megan Trudeau

Kelowna Women in Business (KWIB) has been supporting women in their business and career goals for the past 27 years, welcoming those who are new to the community and those who bring valuable mentorship to the table.

Crispin Butterfield, president of KWIB, and Angela Gordon, vice president of the group, explain that their mandate is to connect people and build networks – whether they are entrepreneurs or building their career with a company.

They offer a variety of events for women looking to expand their business knowledge and stay up to date with trends. Members can take part in workshops, coffee socials, dinners, speaker series and more.

“It seems no matter what level of business people are in, a common denominator is networking – getting out and meeting new people and creating new relationships,” Butterfield says.

“We all kind of get into the habit of putting our head down and we get stuck inside a bubble sometimes.”

If you are struggling to make vital moves in your career, Butterfield says the important thing is to just put yourself out there.

“I know it’s kind of nerve-wracking sometimes to go to these events when you don’t know people and you don’t know what to expect, but it’s really important to build your community,” she adds.

Butterfield and Gordon’s latest event aims to shine a spotlight on female leaders in Kelowna who are excelling in their fields.

On March 18, 2020, KWIB will host the first annual Rise Awards.

The event is not just for KWIB members – nominations and voting will be open to the public.

The duo, along with the rest of the board of directors, will be handing out two awards: one for Change Maker and one for Woman of the Year.

“If you go back three or four years, there was really nothing in the community helping support women and also showcasing all the local talent that we have,” Gordon says.

“So this is our way of bringing it back into the community and putting some of our exceptional local leaders into the spotlight and giving them recognition for all that they do.

“I think for me the underlying thing is that we in KWIB are strong believers in inclusion and diversity, and it’s not about excluding anybody. It’s about creating an opportunity to showcase the talent that women have.

“There’s a lot of great men in our community doing great things with their businesses, and all we want to do is make sure that spotlight can also shine on a woman who is a local leader. I think by having a women’s award that does that – it’s not taking away from anything, it’s only adding a new opportunity to help praise those that have done an excellent job.”

Nominations for the Rise Awards are open until Feb. 16, 2020.

For more information, visit [kwib.org](http://kwib.org)





## ARITZIA

### Why did you come to Kelowna?

We have such loyal customers in the Okanagan and so we felt it was time to offer them the Aritzia in-store experience.

### When did you open?

October 10, 2019

### What can people expect?

Our new Orchard Park location is a light-filled boutique with curated works of art and plenty of plants. Our architects and designers consider each Aritzia location individually, and create a bespoke mix of local influences, natural materials, custom furniture and art. Orchard Park features well-lit fitting rooms, extra-large mirrors and cozy lounge area. The store also offers must-have Aritzia pieces from in-house brands including Wilfred, Babaton and Tna.

### What's your brand's DNA?

Aritzia is an innovative design house and fashion boutique. We conceive, create, develop and retail fashion brands with a depth of design and quality that provides compelling value. Each of our exclusive brands has its own vision and distinct aesthetic point of view. As a group, they are united by an unwavering commitment to superior fabrics, meticulous construction and relevant, effortless design.

## COPPER BREWING

**Kelowna has an evolving craft beer scene that is being well received by the citizens of this city. We want to provide people with better choices and are ecstatic with the support we have had since opening in late August. We provide high-quality approachable craft beer and with 15 of our own beers crafted right here on-site, there is something for everyone to enjoy. Along with the beer, we offer food service provided by our neighbors MTL. They have a specialized menu just for us and provide food service from Monday to Saturday.**

We are all about crafting Genuinely Good Beer, which is our tagline. We take pride in spending the time and effort in ensuring the beer we tap is of the utmost highest quality. We are a family-friendly, community-oriented taproom with a dog-friendly patio and plenty of games for people to enjoy.

## PORTIA ELLA

**Portia Ella is on a mission to inspire community, sustainability, and conscious beauty - opening its doors to Kelowna in the Orchard Park Shopping Centre on November 15th. The company was originally formed in Kelowna, and focuses on providing beauty products that are sourced from Canadian brands that empower indie female entrepreneurs across the country. Portia Ella is pushing the boundaries of sustainability in retail by prototyping ways to recycle its own waste to create its displays.**

Behind the doors of Portia Ella there is an experience that is unforgettable. People have described it as a 'human-to-human' experience. Portia Ella bridges the gap to create community relationships in retail.

Together, we have the power to make an impact.

Experience The New Way of Beauty.

# OPENING DOORS



# BUILDING A COMMUNITY

WALTER GRAY'S POSITIVE  
IMPACT ON KELOWNA  
STORY BY KENT MOLGAT

Four times he was elected mayor — and no-one in this community has ever held that position more times than him. When asked for his most memorable moment during that time, Walter Gray recalled being asked into City Hall on his last day in power before Colin Basran took office.

The city manager, Doug Gilchrist, had called him in to sign off on an important piece of business.

“He said, ‘You just bought the Canadian National Railway,’” recalled Gray, “49 kilometres, Kelowna to Vernon.” Gray’s response? “Ha — where do I sign?”

Rails to Trails is just one effort Kelowna’s longest-serving mayor is proud to have been a part of. Another is the Mission Greenway.

Gray was quick to give the credit to his predecessor, Jim Stuart, for having the vision for the project — but it was under Gray’s leadership that it came to fruition. “There were a lot of dissenters along the way, but we managed one by one to kind of dispel that and it wound up being an extremely popular thing,” said Gray.

“It also started to change the culture of people that live here.”

Gray believes it was a big boost in helping make Kelowna’s personality more about physical activity. Another key event during Gray’s tenure was the 2003 wildfire that destroyed hundreds of homes as well as historic KVR Trestles.

“We mustered together with a committee,” recalled Gray, “and moved very quickly and got the funding to rebuild those.”

But more importantly, Gray is proud of how the community responded in the aftermath of the loss of 239 homes.

“It wound up being a rallying point in our history. When neighbours got to know neighbours.”

Gray also championed the development of a transit system in Kelowna. He credits his role on the BC Transit Board for pushing him to — so to speak — get on board.

“Every month at a meeting, it would give me an education,” he remembered.

He looks back with pride that Kelowna stuck with building a transit system despite a lot of criticism and low ridership in the beginning.

“It really did pay off in the end,” he said.

In fact, he believes it played a significant role in Premier Gordon Campbell’s decision to expand UBC to Kelowna.

“One of the considerations was that we were providing, if you like, student transportation, and that’s where buses really took off in Kelowna.”

Last year Kelowna’s bus system saw over five million rides.

Gray credits airport managers Roger Sellick and Sam Samaddar for making the best of the opportunities, but he views the development of Kelowna International Airport as the most important thing that’s happened during his time in office.

“That is the biggest single asset Kelowna has that makes Kelowna what it is today,” said Gray.

Gray, whose background was in broadcasting, has served as president of the Chamber of Commerce and first joined council as an Alderman in 1986.

He was elected mayor in 1996, 1999, 2002 and 2011.



# JOB MARKET

## MEETING THE CHALLENGES IN RECRUITING IN THE OKANAGAN

WRITTEN BY: IAIN BURNS

There's no doubt about it: the Okanagan is experiencing a tech boom. There are now 12,500 people working in the sector – a 90% increase over the last four years. In a transformation every bit as impressive as the emergence of local wineries, the valley has been blessed with its very own silicon miracle.

From animation studios like Yeti Farm Creative to email specialists Bananatag, there are plenty of big players – and almost all of them are looking to grow. But the question on the lips of many tech leaders in the Okanagan is: “How do we get the talent?”

For part one of a series for Level Up, we asked some of the most important figures in the sector how they are Meeting the Challenge to get the recruits needed to fuel the industry.

Brea Lake, the CEO of tech advocacy group Accelerate Okanagan, said there are 130 unfilled positions in the Okanagan right now. That figure is very likely to increase in the future, she explained. And while there is a very good supply of entry-level work-

ers coming from Okanagan College and UBCO, bringing in more experienced developers is proving tricky.

Many firms are looking to the likes of Vancouver – using the Okanagan's cheaper housing and outdoors lifestyle as a lure – as well as overseas.

Some companies are even thinking about setting up offices abroad.

Ashley Ramsay, who founded Kelowna animation firm Yeti Farm Creative with her husband Todd in 2007, said there is a big shortage of tech talent in the area. Her own company has seen extraordinary growth over the last 18 months, going from 37 to 104 employees. She said she has a staff retention rate of between three and four years, and that she has no problem finding entry-level talent.

That's in part thanks to a two-year animation diploma introduced at Okanagan College in September 2017. But as well as younger animators at the beginning of their careers, the studio also wants more senior workers – including people who have worked for the likes of Pixar.

Headhunting talent from Vancouver, though, is not satisfying the need. Her hope is for international workers to come into the region on permanent residency schemes.

But Corey Wagner, co-founder and CEO of Bananatag, another rapidly growing tech firm in the region, finds that senior roles are easier to fill in Vancouver. His team is split between Kelowna and Vancouver – about 60 in the Okanagan and 40 in the big city. All developers and marketers at the company are based in Vancouver, he said. Bananatag doubled its workforce to 100 people last year. Next year, they plan on adding another 50.

But Corey explained that senior, high-level talent is increasingly based in Vancouver – and there are far more people to choose from in the province's biggest city. Even so, he is amazed at how few people actually apply for jobs – even for junior positions. It has never been easy to find people in Kelowna, Wagner said, and UBCO is not producing enough to

fill the gap. It's hard to grow a tech company in Kelowna without a talent pool, he added. And on top of that, even when talent is identified it can be difficult to actually bring them to the Okanagan. A woman, for example, could be interested in coming to work as a developer – but her husband might struggle to find work. The deal might then be off.

Meanwhile Jeff Keen, who is the COO at Pela Case, is focusing on different areas. His firm, which sells compostable phone cases, made headlines in October after announcing a \$5-million investment from a fund started by American rapper Jay-Z. Pela Case employs 30 people – along with five contractors – and has 18 open positions. By spring 2020, the company is expecting to employ more than 60 people – and by the end of next year, as many as 100.

His message, though, is a simple one: You don't need to be a "tech person" to work at a tech company. It's a misconception to assume that everyone working in the industry is a computer programmer, he explained. A growing tech firm needs to hire people in sales, retail, product development, marketing, production, logistics, graphic design and all things creative. People with business or creative skills have huge opportunities in the sector, he said.

But he added that while the Okanagan has proved a good source for creative workers, that hasn't been the case for media and advertising specialists. Because of that, Pela Case is looking outside the region to fill those positions – and may open a satellite office in Vancouver if that is what it takes to bring in the talent.

The Okanagan, though, has plenty in its favour, with more and more people attracted to the valley for its lifestyle, according to Keen. He added that graduates, too, are much likelier to hang around – he said whereas 80% would leave a few years ago, now 80% want to stay. Either way, it's imperative the region attracts and hangs on to more talent.

Keen said he believes the knowledge economy – as opposed to the traditional physical resources economy – will drive the Okanagan's growth within the next five years. And to help that transition go smoothly, it's going to take a lot more workers specializing in tech, creativity and innovation. Will the tech industry succeed in Meeting the Challenge of recruiting workers in the Okanagan?

We can only wait and see – and hope.



# BREAKING THE BIZ BARRIERS

WRITTEN BY: IAIN BURNS

## IS BRITISH COLUMBIA AT RISK OF LOSING ITS COMPETITIVENESS BECAUSE OF TAX INCREASES?

Tax increases in British Columbia could threaten the future of business growth and investment. That's according to a report from the Business Council of British Columbia (BCBC), an industry group representing some of the biggest firms in the province.

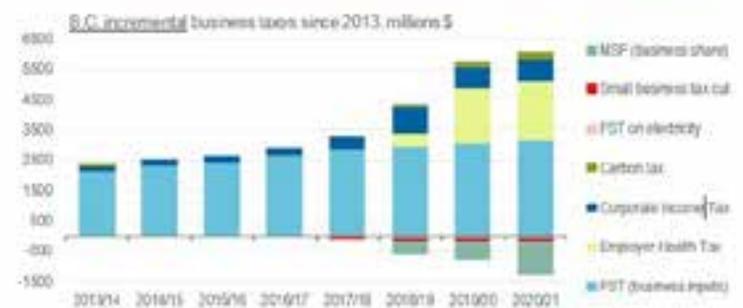
We decided to take a closer look at BCBC's warning, and also ask an Okanagan expert his view of the changes. The report, which was first published in the summer, explains that BC could end up losing its competitive edge because of a cumulative surge in taxes.

It highlights three main changes:

The elimination of the HST (harmonized sales tax) and return to the PST (provincial sales tax)/GST (goods and services tax) model. BCBC says firms are paying about \$3 billion in sales tax on business inputs where previously, under HST, they would pay nothing. The Employer Health Tax. BCBC says the levy is a "large tax hit" that could have an overall impact of about \$800 million on businesses. An increase in corporation tax. A two-point rise (from 10% in 2013 to 12% today) adds \$700 million to income tax paid by firms, BCBC says. The report also mentions changes to labour laws and regulations that are adding to costs.

Among those are a minimum wage that has grown considerably in recent years alongside changes to the BC Labour Code and Employment Standards Act and environmental regulations.

FIGURE 1: BUSINESSES WILL PAY AN ADDITIONAL \$5 BILLION TO THE PROVINCE THIS FISCAL YEAR DUE TO TAX INCREASES



Source: B.C. Budgets and BCBC for some estimates of share of taxes paid by businesses.

"Taken holistically, the cumulative impact of higher taxes and mounting regulatory costs is weighing on investment and business sentiment in BC," the report concludes.

"We are concerned that over time companies will become more tentative about investing in BC and deploy capital in other jurisdictions."

The bottom line? Businesses are paying close to \$5 billion more in tax now than they were in 2013, BCBC says. But why is the BCBC so upset about these increases? Shouldn't all firms pay their share to help keep the province happy and healthy?

The primary worry, the report contends, is that the province could potentially start seriously losing out on investment.

That's because, while taxes on businesses have grown in BC, they have fallen in nearby jurisdictions.

BC's "relative competitive position," therefore, has been lost as corporate and personal income tax rates have been slashed in the US.

In Alberta, too, a commitment has been made to cut corporate income tax rates from 12% to 8% by 2022.

"Relatively high" income tax rates on "skilled workers, experienced managers and entrepreneurs" are also causing problems, the report adds, especially as competitors step up their efforts to bring in top talent.

"The risk is that the province will chase new capital away and deter some companies from expanding their BC operations," the report explains. "Policy makers need to be more sensitive to the impact of provincial tax and regulatory policies on business."

"They should understand that without new investment and a desire by companies to expand, fewer jobs will be created, some existing jobs will be in jeopardy, and overall economic growth in the province will suffer."

Locally, the combination of these factors might already be having an effect. Dan Rogers, the executive director of the Kelowna Chamber of Commerce, says businesses in the area are concerned about "cumulative increases" in tax. "It's impacting everybody across the board," Rogers explains.

He mentions Tolko, which permanently closed its Kelowna lumber mill in early November and announced a shutdown across BC over Christmas.



"It's not just a supply issue," Rogers says. "Overall costs are rising. Layers of taxation are having an impact." He also mentioned increasing property tax increases – a municipal prerogative – as another burden that can weigh down businesses.

The report, too, addresses property taxes, explaining that in 2018 they increased by 22% on 2013 levels.

Rogers says the Chambers of Commerce across the province are "trying to get the government's attention" about the threats faced by businesses. There should be a "total review of the tax code," he says.

This is especially important for owners of small businesses, he adds, who are less able to deal with increases than larger firms. "If we don't get a hold on it, it could be really serious," Rogers says. But how serious could it get?

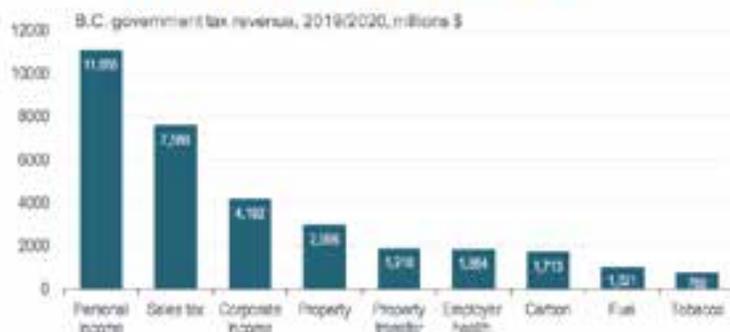
"Investors might look at other places to move their capital," he says. "If you don't remain competitive and investors can go elsewhere and do better, they will. "Look at what's happening in Alberta."

The US is "generally more competitive" than BC, Rogers adds, and international competitors are constantly challenging for investment.

And if investment proves hard to come by and taxes continue to increase, everybody suffers, he says.

"It means less funds available," he explains. "That means less money for staff. Less money for everything."

FIGURE 2: SALES TAX AND CORPORATE INCOME TAX ARE SIGNIFICANT SOURCES OF REVENUE FOR THE PROVINCE



Source: B.C. 2019 Budget.



**BIG BEAR**  
SOFTWARE

## HOW BIG BEAR SOFTWARE IS CONNECTING THE OKANAGAN TECH INDUSTRY

WRITTEN BY: KEITH MACINTYRE



For over a decade, Big Bear Software focused on the defence industry. Primarily writing software for a Calgary company developing a military tactical simulator for Middle Eastern armies. Then, three years ago Big Bear Software pivoted in a new direction.

Under the founder's vision, Keith MacIntyre has started along a path towards a seven-year goal. They're working towards building a 20 to 25 person consulting company, which could then be used to develop their own product lines. By December 2019, Big Bear Software will have 20 employees and contractors on their team. What's refreshing is that half of these employees are women and many already possess the distinction of a leadership role.

With this expanded team, Big Bear Software is about to launch its first product line. Starting this winter, they'll be helping children be safer on ski hills.

A little over two years ago, Big Bear Software had a junior team with some senior contractors and the CEO, Keith MacIntyre, was managing the software team, projects and still writing software.

"I remember when we won a contract with Kal Tire, I had a discussion with my dad (a retired Chartered Accountant and successful business owner), about hiring Amy Fink as a Project Manager," said Keith MacIntyre. "She was my first non-technical hire and I was wondering if I could really afford someone to take on tasks that I felt I could still do."

"My Dad bluntly asked 'Are you growing your business or not?'"

"I looked at him and replied, 'of course I'm growing it'."

"His reply, 'So what's the problem?'"

Since that time, Big Bear Software has steadily increased their ability to take on complex projects and add high-quality people to the team. Keith reflects on hiring Amy as a key moment that allowed him to transition into other roles.

Amy has now grown into the COO role and is managing a large portion of the company as well as working on their strategy and new goals.

"Without Amy, we would not have been able to grow much beyond five people with mid-size projects," added Keith. "Over the two years, she has led senior teams, developed processes for large clients and defined large-scale complex business applications."

"I feel like I have the ability to choose what my job is today and in the future, because here at Big Bear, I feel supported that I'll be able to learn and grow," said Amy. "The work we do is purposeful and especially with our recent entrance into the Health Industry, we can use our talents to significantly help make an impact on the world."

Recently, Big Bear Software won a contract with Innovate Calgary to build a platform to help life sciences and biomedical companies commercialize their health-related inventions, conduct clinical trials and secure regulatory approval. This has allowed them to expand their team and focus more on the health industry. Through this expansion, one of Big Bear software developers, Emily Cheyne, who joined the team earlier this year from a large health organization, has taken on a leadership role in the company. Leading one of the largest software projects, Emily is working with customers, directing a team of six software developers and the design team, as well as architecting and writing software.

“Big Bear Software is an environment where I am never reminded that I am a woman,” added Emily. “In the tech industry, it is often, the ‘Developers and PMs’ and the ‘Female Developers and Female PMs’. I have never felt that here and it is something I really value.”

On the team, another four female employees are a key part of the websites, graphics design and marketing portion of their company. As the team grew, they merged with their new Creative Director, Scott Refvik’s company, ‘diguno media’, to enhance the user experience and design capabilities for software applications. They started working on GoByBike



BC Society’s ‘Bike to Work Week’ web application and with Amy leading the team, this will be a highly visible project early next spring that Candice, Angela, Shana and Cecilia will be a big part of.

Shana Korotash, new Director of Marketing, brings 18 years of business management experience including senior operations experience.

As Big Bear Software’s Customer Experience Manager, Angela Moore is key to customer relationships by helping connect clients and their users to products through content strategy and communications. “Although it might be a fact that there are fewer women in leadership roles within tech, the way I live my life is by focusing on solutions, no matter what the statistics of a situation, job role or industry may be. I really feel as though Keith, as the leader of the organization, does a great job of focusing on solutions as well. As such, the culture at Big Bear is more about attracting mindful people with growth driven attitudes who are also resolution-focused.

Candice Dias, an experienced graphics designer has taken the lead on designing some of Big Bear Software’s projects. “I really appreciate that culture at Big Bear, I’ve never worked at a company where I feel like I can make a mistake and not be criticized or judged, but learn from it.”

Cecilia Ratke, who has just started her career and is being encouraged to grow and learn. “New to the Okanagan, starting my career and being given an opportunity to learn and work with the Big Bear team has been great!”

“I can’t have a company without great people, and I’m grateful every day for the great team of people that have chosen to work for Big Bear Software,” concluded Keith. “I have more than once been a key employee at a company where I didn’t feel valued.”

As their company grows, Keith wants to ensure that everyone feels valued and is happy to come to work. Big Bear Software is pleased to see that they have built a culture where everyone regardless of age, gender or background can be the best they can be.



## CANNABIS 2.0 AND THE FUTURE OF VALENS

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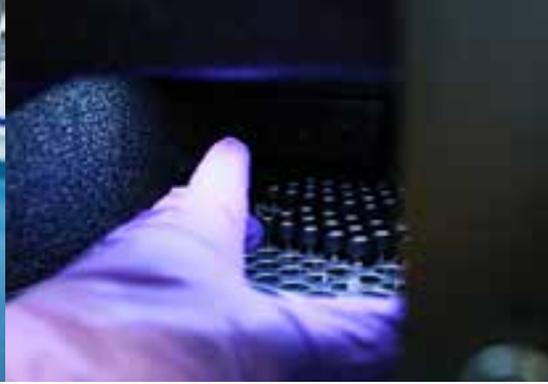
Cannabis has come a long way in Canada. While federal legalization has taken the industry to new highs in the country, there have been limitations in terms of product innovation and development. However, with “Cannabis 2.0” now in full swing, the Canadian market is expected to finally be flush with popular cannabis derivatives like edibles, vapes, infused beverages, capsules and topicals.

While Valens does not directly supply the consumer market with its own products, it plays an integral role in providing supply to the demand by acting as third-party product development and manufacturer. As a result, this second phase is having a major impact on the company’s growth and future. But before we dive into how Cannabis 2.0 is shaping the company’s future, let’s look at who the company is at its core.

Valens GroWorks Corp. (TSXV:VGW) (OTCQX:VGWCF) is a multi-licensed, vertically-integrated cannabis company focused on being the partner of choice for leading Canadian and international cannabis brands by providing best-in-class, proprietary services including CO<sub>2</sub>, ethanol, hydrocarbon, solvent-less and terpene extraction, analytical testing, formulation and white-label product development.

It is the largest third-party extraction Company in Canada with an annual capacity of 425,000 kg of dried cannabis and hemp biomass at our purpose-built facility in Kelowna, British Columbia which is in the process of becoming European Union (EU) Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) compliant. Additionally, the company’s subsidiary, Valens Labs, is a Health Canada licensed ISO 17025 accredited cannabis testing lab providing sector-leading analytical services and has partnered with Thermo Fisher Scientific to develop a Centre of Excellence in Plant-Based Science.

Valens is the only processor in Canada to utilize five different types of extraction methods giving clients the most flexibility and range of product offerings in the cannabis space. The company is well-positioned as a one-stop-shop, offering product development, product formulation, analytical testing, extraction, and distribution.



Valens views cannabis as a deeply personal experience, driven not by the masses, but by intimate and individual needs and wants. The company believes that the industry needs to stay in the hands of the people and resist being corporatized. The company's mission is to become the world's most trusted partner for best-in-class cannabis extraction, testing, formulation, product development and manufacturing.

## HERE'S WHAT THE VARIOUS PARTS OF THE COMPANY LOOK LIKE:

- 1. VALENS AGRITECH:** World-class, high capacity cannabis extraction, product development, and R&D facility.
- 2. VALENS LABS:** A full service, ISO 17025 accredited, testing laboratory named the "Center of Excellence in Plant Based Science" by Thermo Fisher Scientific.
- 3. SORSE™ TECHNOLOGY:** Patented, in-house emulsion technology transforms cannabis oils into water-soluble forms, infused food, liquids, and topicals without the taste or smell of cannabis. This technology promises the following advantages over other products:
  - Shelf-stable for over 2 years
  - Zero cannabis taste, colour or odour
  - Provides effective, consistent dosing
  - Lower dosage proved sufficient due to an increase in bioavailability when consumed
  - Resistant to temperature change including boiling, freezing and thawing
  - Faster onset making it the safer and more trusted option. Observed in 5-15 minutes versus the industry normal of 30 minutes – 2 hours
  - Faster offset making it feel exactly like an alcoholic beverage. Observed in 45 minutes – 2 hours versus the industry normal of 4-8 hours.
  - Proprietary formula with exclusive Canadian rights

## CANNABIS 2.0 IS SHAPING THE FUTURE OF VALENS

Legalization 2.0 opens up new opportunities for the industry in Canada and a majority of them will be in extraction-based products. The edibles market alone is estimated to be worth at least \$1.6 billion a year in Canada, with cannabis-infused beverages adding a further \$529 million, [according to a Deloitte study](#). And this does not include the substantial market for concentrates, topicals, capsules, and tinctures.

Looking at this predicted scope, it's evident that extraction will form the basis of the existing and emerging industries given that all producers must pass through extraction in moving cannabis from plant to retail products.

In anticipation, Valens has been focusing and preparing heavily for the new wave of legalization by providing third party opportunities to develop all products in one place by offering white-label agreements to companies. In a short period of time, Valens has become a one-stop-shop for licensed producers as well as CPG and pharma companies in providing the broadest product and service offerings in the Canadian market.



**AS PART OF CANNABIS 2.0, VALENS IS WORKING ON DEVELOPMENT AND EXTRACTION OF SEVERAL PRODUCTS, DEPICTED IN THE GRAPHIC BELOW:**

AVAILABLE NOW:

PHASE 2 (COMING IN JANUARY 2020)

PHASE 3 (COMING H2 2020)

TINCTURES  
TWO-PIECE  
CAPS  
SOFT GELS  
ORAL SPRAYS  
VAPE PENS

BEVERAGES  
CONCENTRATES  
TOPICALS

EDIBLES  
INJECTABLES  
NATURAL HEALTH PRODUCTS  
SUNSCREEN  
BATH BOMBS ETC.  
MORE INNOVATIVE PRODUCTS

VALENS HAS EXTRACTION AND WHITE LABEL AGREEMENTS WITH SEVERAL COMPANIES AS SHOWCASED BELOW:

**EXTRACTION**

HEXO  
GTEC  
SUNDIAL  
ORGANIGRAM  
CANOPY GROWTH  
THE GREEN ORGANIC DUTCHMAN  
HARVEST ONE  
SPEAK EASY

**WHITE LABEL**

BRNT  
SHOPPERS DRUG MART  
ICONIC BREWING CO.  
  
50+ OTHER OPPORTUNITIES  
CURRENTLY BEING NEGOTIATED

**FACILITY EXPANSION FOR PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT**

Valens currently operates in Kelowna, British Columbia, in a 27,000 square foot production floor focused on extraction to crude, distillate, full spectrum, isolate, formulation and emulsion.

As the company gears towards legalization 2.0, Valens has purchased the property next door to its home in Kelowna, BC, which will be tailored towards product formulation and development. The new 50,000 square-foot space will increase capacity (to 1,000,000 kilos of input capacity) as well as product offerings to tinctures, capsules, vape goods, sprays, edibles, beverages, topicals and natural health products and house all white-labelling needs of clients.





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# LEVEL UP

Future of Business Conference

brand storytelling • technology • innovation

This will be a jam-packed day of learning about the future of brands and marketing from some of the best storytellers in the industry, understanding the future of technology in business and how to use it to benefit your organization and be inspired by some of the most innovative ideas, advances and concepts on the horizon for business.

**KELOWNA, BC**  
**OCTOBER 23, 2020**

**GET YOUR TICKETS TODAY**  
**LEVELUPCONFERENCE.CA**

## LEVEL UP SPEAKER SERIES EVENTS

THE FUTURE OF HR & RECRUITING  
FEBRUARY 19, 2020  
4-7PM

THE FUTURE OF SALES  
APRIL 22, 2020  
4-7PM

THE FUTURE OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING AND SEO  
JUNE 10, 2020  
4-7PM

FOR EVENT AND TICKET INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT  
**EVENTS.LEVELUPCONFERENCE.CA**

# FROM LEVEL UP 2019



"It was a **great experience** to get **valuable advice** from respected leaders and learn what it means to be a good leader."

- Tiaan Boshoff Gr. 12 student KCS

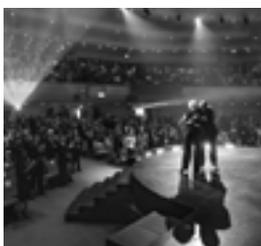


"The energy in the room was exhilarating and the audience was fully engaged in the learnings of the day. Speakers gave practical takeaways on how to improve as leaders and in business as well as inspiration to overcome fears and obstacles that hold us back. The event was truly **above and beyond expectations**. I can't wait to see what next year brings!"

- Cybele Negris, ICD.D | Co-Founder & CEO  
Webnames.ca

"Level Up was incredible! **So many takeaways** and so much to process from the day. We can only imagine the logistics and attention to every detail that went into creating such an event. It was clear how much dedication and thoughtfulness went into the day and it **was hugely successful!**"

- Monica and Jaclyn  
Spaced for Living



The Level Up event was **enormously rewarding**. We garnered critical business insights from each and every speaker, and to learn from Mr. John Chrétien and Stephen Harper was an experience of a lifetime!

- Kelly  
Gallery 421

"It was the **best leadership event** I have ever attended! Hopefully, this was the foundational concept of what's yet to come."

- Justin Corradetti  
Dominion Lending

It was a rich day for us - each speaker was engaging, our fellow attendees were great to connect with and we feel very blessed to have been part of that **significant event** and to take back nuggets of wisdom to our team and daily lives.

- Kate Dalton, Recruitment Consultant  
Platinum Recruiting

"You did all **make history!**  
The buzz was something I've never felt in Kelowna before."

- Jude Brunt, Community Investment Manager  
United Way Southern Interior

When I saw the All-Star line of international and local speakers in person and the crowd's reaction to this diverse group, I knew Csek Creative and NowMedia hit a home run, making Kelowna a world class location for events like this, now, and in the future.

- Al Hildebrandt, CEO  
Kelowna Foundation

The Level Up Leadership Conference made a big promise in what some would call a small market, Kelowna. What they delivered was a world class conference **beyond our expectations.**

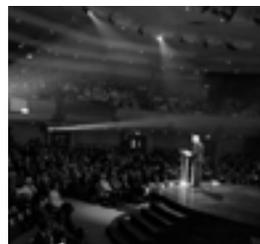
- Dallas Gray  
Al Stober Construction Ltd.

The highlight for my son was meeting Jean Chrétien. It was also great for the local Entrepreneur's Organization as we received quite a number of people interested.

- Scott Butler, President  
Highstreet Ventures Inc.

"After hearing the interesting, relevant, and entertaining speakers, we returned to our business with a renewed energy and focus, and look forward to making improvements in the last quarter of 2019 and into 2020."

- Pamela Pearson, Director of Internal Operations  
Sentes Automotive



# SPEARHEADING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHILD ADVOCACY CENTRE OF KELOWNA

