PIVOT

CPA CANADA

Named BEST MAGAZINE by the National Magazine Awards: B2B 2021

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2021

THE END OF BUSINESS AS USUAL

The green economy is here.
Are you ready?

+ BANKING ON THE FUTURE / A CPA MAKES HIS DEPARTURE / TRACKING THE HOME RENO BOOM

“**Canadian investors** are relying on an **American entity** to safely hold their cryptocurrency investments.”

The Globe and Mail, May 19, 2021

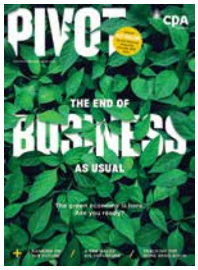
EXCLUSIVE ONLINE CONTENT

CPACANADA.CA/NEWS

- What will the post-pandemic office look like?
- Technology trends CPAs should keep an eye on
- How to build a psychologically safe space at work

PHOTOGRAPH BY GUILLAUME SIMONEAU

FEATURES



ON THE COVER
PHOTOGRAPH BY LAWRENCE KAYKU

WHAT DO YOU THINK?
Send your letter to the editor to pivot.letters@cpacanada.ca. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

MAKING HISTORY

Canada and the CPA profession have a unique opportunity to host a global ESG standards board

BY CHARLES-ANTOINE ST-JEAN

Bonjour à tous!

My fellow CPAs, we have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity before us. The IFRS Foundation Trustees' plan to create an International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB) will ensure that the rules that govern sustainability reporting will span borders and deliver high-quality information across all sectors. This has the potential to change the fundamentals of our economy and ensure the road map to recovery leads us to a better world where sustainability is front of mind for everyone. And in a global context, Canada and the CPA profession are both in a position to be looked to as leaders on sustainability and standards setting.

A comprehensive Canadian offer has been submitted to the IFRS Foundation by the Government of Canada to host the ISSB. The bid incorporates an extensive collaborative effort facilitated by CPA Canada that includes the largest pension funds, financial institutions, securities regulators, accounting firms, insurance companies and a First Nations organization, along with the support of a broad cross sector of Canada's leading business, academic and public policy organizations. Private and public institutions have committed financially for Canada to host the ISSB. The overwhelming support clearly demonstrates the commitment to sustainability that courses throughout our country.

It also signals that Canada stands ready to work with other nations in addressing what is potentially the most important challenge facing us today: climate change. To host the ISSB—which will affect the trajectory of investing worldwide through the convergence of climate-related standards and frameworks—would be a momentous occasion and an honour.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

The global business ecosystem needs the ISSB to establish a common playing field of consistent and transparent global standards for environmental, social and governance (ESG) reporting. As it stands, there are multiple frameworks. But there is no widely accepted set of global standards. The result? A costly and complex task for companies to report and comply, and a difficult job for investors and regulators to compare and evaluate performance.

If we truly want to foster greater ESG-driven investing that has integrity and impact, having consistency and comparability on a global scale is essential.

WHY CANADA?

Canada is well respected for its business governance, and our governments and corporate sector are active with sustainable business practices of including commitments and actions to reduce impacts on wildlife, air, land and water, as well as funding the new, innovative technologies that have the potential to significantly lower future emissions.

Canada and the CPA profession have also long been known both for the quality of our standard setting and for the independent, objective and transparent structures responsible for the delivery of those standards. We pride ourselves in providing expertise, resources and funding for these initiatives—including providing official French translation of IFRS's global standards to the world without charge.

Canada has one of the strongest and most trusted capital markets and banking systems in the world. With our laudable record of business governance and major public and private buy-in to this initiative, Canada is the best choice for the ISSB.

THE FUTURE

I can't help but feel that the time for change is upon us; we need to strike while the iron is hot to ensure a better tomorrow for both our country and our profession. And the ISSB is the first step.

CANADA STANDS READY TO ADDRESS THE MOST IMPORTANT CHALLENGE FACING US TODAY: CLIMATE CHANGE

It is expected that the IFRS Foundation will be announcing the location at the time of the United Nations Climate Change Conference 2021 in Glasgow in November. Also known as COP26, the conference aims to accelerate action toward the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. I couldn't imagine a better time to make this announcement, nor a better time for Canada to make a splash.

C'est une occasion historique, soyons solidaires et faisons la différence! ◆

PHOTOGRAPH BY LINDSEY GIBEAU, WESTBORO STUDIO

SKIP

PIVOT

WINNER
6 Gold and 2 Silver medals, including Best Magazine, at the National Magazine Awards: B2B 2021

VOLUME 4 | ISSUE 5

EDITOR Paul Ferriss
SENIOR EDITOR Dave Zarum
ART DIRECTOR Adam Cholewa
FRENCH EDITOR Mathieu de Lajartre
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY
Daniel Neuhaus
ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Melanie Morassutti
EDITOR, DIGITAL Beverley Ann D'Cruz
ASSOCIATE ART DIRECTOR
Dan Parsons
EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS
Harriet Bruser, Asmahan Garrib
COPY EDITORS
Jen Cutts, Janet Morassutti
CONTRIBUTORS
Liza Agrba, Bruce Ball, Claudine Baltazar, Gord Beal, Matthew Billington, François Boileau, Steve Brearton, Matthew Hague, Matthew Halliday, John C. Havens, Ziya Jones, Jason Kirby, Erin Leydon, Priyanka Lloyd, Jason McBride, Kagan McLeod, Chris Powell, Courtney Shea, Guillaume Simoneau

Partners in Growth
For every ton of paper used on Pivot's behalf, St. Joseph Communications will contribute to the planting of a tree through GrandTrees.

PUBLISHER
Heather Whyte, MBA, APR, CDMP
ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER
Tobin Lambie
PRINCIPAL, CONTENT
Douglas Dunlop
SALES DIRECTOR
Douglas Kelly
ADVERTISING SALES, ACCOUNT REPRESENTATIVE
Ian McPherson
(416) 364-3333 x 4059
ian.mcpherson@stjoseph.com
DIRECTOR, LANGUAGE SERVICES
Jane Finlayson
EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD
CHAIR:
John Redding, CPA, CMA
MEMBERS:
Maury K. Donen, CPA, CMA
Debra J. Feltham, FCPA, FCGA
Caroline Garon, CPA, CGA, CAFM
Jason R. Kwiatkowski, CPA, CA, CBV, ASA, CEPA
Ashley Lowe, CPA, CA

MIX
Paper from responsible sources
FSC www.fsc.org FSC® C103458

Pivot is published six times a year by the Chartered Professional Accountants of Canada in partnership with St. Joseph Media. Opinions expressed are not necessarily endorsed by CPA Canada. Copyright 2021.

TORONTO
277 Wellington St. W., M5V 3H2,
Tel. (416) 977-3222,
Fax (416) 204-3409
MONTREAL
2020 Robert-Bourassa Blvd, Suite 1900, H3A 2A5,
Tel. (514) 285-5002,
Fax (514) 285-5695

SUBSCRIPTION INQUIRIES
Tel. (416) 977-0748 or 1-800-268-3793
pivot.subscriptions@cpacanada.ca
ONLINE
cpacanada.ca/pivotmagazine
ADVERTISING
advertising.pivotmagazine@cpacanada.ca

Additional annual subscriptions are available at the following rates: members, $32; students, $45; non-members, $55. Single copy, $5.50. Outside Canada: $89 for a one-year subscription; $8.90 for a single copy. GST of 5% applies to all domestic subscriptions. For subscription inquiries, call (416) 977-0748 or 1-800-268-3793 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday; fax: (416) 204-3416. GST registration number 83173 3647 RT0001. Publications Mail Agreement No. 40062437. Printed in Canada. ISSN 2561-6773. Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to the Toronto address above.

STRATEGIC CONTENT LABS

PRESIDENT
Douglas Kelly
MANAGING DIRECTOR, CONTENT
Maryam Sanati
SENIOR VICE-PRESIDENT, STRATEGY Duncan Clark
MANAGING DIRECTOR
Jonathan Harris

VICE-PRESIDENT, RESEARCH
Clarence Poirier
DIRECTORS, CONSUMER MARKETING
Lenny Hadley, Janet Palmer
PRODUCTION DIRECTOR
Maria Mendes
PRODUCTION MANAGER
Joycelyn Tran

A DIVISION OF ST. JOSEPH COMMUNICATIONS
CEO Tony Gagliano

PURPOSE DRIVER

IN TREATMENT

CPA Shane Saltzman is harnessing the power of therapy to treat addiction and mental health while finding meaning in his own career **BY CHRIS POWELL**

About 2,200 people have completed a rehab program at Toronto's Trafalgar Addiction Treatment Centres since its inception in 2013, but co-founder and CEO Shane Saltzman never tires of seeing someone emerge from the darkest period of their life with a renewed sense of optimism and fortitude.

"When I look at someone on day 30 versus day one and see that transformation, the tears in their eyes, the excitement about approaching their new life…it's a pretty powerful moment," says Saltzman, a CPA who began his career with Deloitte in 1999 and also spent time with Pitney Bowes Canada prior to launching Trafalgar.

A recent entrant on *Canadian Business*'s Growth List 2020 of Canada's fastest-growing companies, with five-year revenue growth of 846 per cent, Trafalgar was forced to pivot quickly when the pandemic hit Canada and its outpatient treatment programs were jeopardized.

The company introduced a four-week online treatment program within 48 hours of the pandemic-mandated lockdown in March 2020, complemented by a suite of online tools, including an aftercare program and surveys that allow people to do their own self-monitoring on matters such as quality of life, depression or general anxiety disorders.

"With addiction, it's all about your own personal motivation and level of engagement, which is why we're creating these online resources so we can create better engagement," says Saltzman. "Long-lasting recovery in our mind is about client engagement—what do you need to participate in when you feel the need?"

PHOTOGRAPH BY **ERIN LEYDON**

MASTER OF PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTING

We develop business professionals to build nations.

Our Master of Professional Accounting Program is CPA-accredited and offers students a transformative learning experience with the opportunity to study alongside high achieving peers from across Canada and build relationships with an established network of alumni and faculty.

Students are actively involved in competency-based training to prepare them for success on the Common Final Exam (CFE). Students will hone their communication, collaboration, problem solving and decision-making skills in an immersive program run over two summers.

Learn more at edwardsmpacc.ca

CPA ACCREDITED

EDWARDS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

It's an interesting career path from beginning your career as a CPA with Deloitte to creating and leading Trafalgar. How did you get here?
From the beginning it wasn't about being an accountant but having the skill set to be able to drive better business results. I wanted to be part of something meaningful. I was never excited about selling widgets for the sake of selling widgets. It was about passion for an industry you believed in or the business challenges you wanted to tackle.

"IT'S ABOUT FINDING MEANINGFUL WORK, NOT JUST LOOKING AT THE NUMBERS. WHAT CAN WE CONTRIBUTE TO SOCIETY?"

A business partner of mine struggled with recovery over the years, and we saw Canada as being very behind when it came to treatment. It did not have a mental health focus—it was mainly 12-step focused, group-based addiction counselling and very little individual therapy, which meant there was not a mental health aspect to it. There was an opportunity to create something really special that didn't exist. What we thought would be a side project to help a few people eventually grew.

Do you regard your job as a vocation of sorts?
I love it because it's meaningful. For me, it was always about finding meaningful work, not just looking at the numbers. What can we contribute to society? How can we make a difference? If you can make a difference, and provide a living for your employees and yourself and your family, then isn't that a win-win? That's the way we look at. I've always looked at the greater good and how I can do better at things. For me sometimes it's, "Great, you sold 20 more boxes this week than you did last week. Who cares?"

You're a CEO, so results matter, but you're also the head of a company where there are significant real-life implications for clients. How do you balance the two?
When you're working for a typical for-profit company, is it customer first or profit first? Or is it one and the same? We're dealing with people's lives—they're not a number, they're a person. If we take care of them like family and do our best to support them with integrity and accountability, they feel as though they have a safe space in their recovery. It's kind of karma: you do good and good things will happen. It's about that high-level standard of care and a commitment to our employees. If you're not going to take care of your employees, they're not going to take care of the clients. The clients know right away the person who's there to collect a paycheque, versus the person who cares about that individual. If someone's in crisis at 5 p.m. and it's shift change, is it "Too bad, so sad," or is that person really going to be there to help them through it? For us, it's about hiring caring, compassionate people who truly are dedicated to our cause.

How did your virtual treatment program come about?
Because of COVID-19, we had to close our physical outpatient program on day one of lockdown, and we put that whole program online in a matter of 48 hours. It grew from a regular monthly admission of five people per month to an average of 20. We're seeing people from across the country participating in this program because of greater accessibility. People are starting to realize that there's this new alternative to residential care.

How has the introduction of the virtual treatment component changed your business?
It's like we're a startup. The opportunity to help people is endless right now, and the mission for us is creating greater awareness that not everybody needs to go away for treatment. There are too many people struggling, not knowing where they can get care and thinking they have to go away to get help when they don't want to. Wherever you are in the country, if you've got a computer and good internet, you can get the help you need.

Making a difference

Trafalgar Addiction Treatment Centres launched its virtual intensive outpatient program on March 17, 2020, moving its entire four-week, 20-hour per week program online in a move CEO Shane Saltzman says has permanently changed the landscape of addiction and mental health treatment in Canada.

1.
Trafalgar's team of clinical therapists has since grown from three to **22**.

2.
More than **185** clients have participated in the program with a **94%** completion rate.

3.
The program has provided more than **8,300** virtual appointments. "It's an alternative to going away for rehab," says Saltzman.

Executive Career Opportunity

Chief Audit Executive

Does the idea of working to deliver strategically important audits and projects in a highly collaborative environment motivate you?

The Office of the Auditor General of Canada is looking for a Chief Audit Executive.

Job profile

- Oversees and directs internal audits and the annual practice review exercise
- Maintains organizational and professional ethical standards and ensures all internal audit activities are in compliance with the Institute of Internal Auditors' International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing
- Assists the Auditor General and the management team by providing independent, objective assurance and consulting activities designed to add value and improve the OAG's operations

Requirements

- Bachelor's degree from a recognized university in business administration, public administration, or a related field (e.g. information technology (IT) auditing, fraud auditing, or accounting)
- Canadian professional accounting designation (CPA) and/or a Certified Internal Auditor (CIA) certification
- Experience in briefing and advising senior executives in the private or public sector, on project, program or policy related issues*
- Experience managing an audit function within a private or public organization as well as planning and directing the work of a professional auditing staff*
- Experience in establishing and maintaining effective working relationships with internal and/or external stakeholders at the executive level*
- Experience in managing human and financial resources*
- Bilingual imperative CBC/CBC

* Experience is considered sufficient if the depth, scope, complexity, and duration of the candidate's experience are commensurate with duties and responsibilities of members of senior management, starting at the Director/DX/ASG-07 level (or equivalent).

Apply today!

A full job description can be found on our Working at the OAG page.

For additional information on this staffing process, please contact Vanessa Le Fèvre by email at vanessa.lefevre@oag-bvg.gc.ca.

oag-bvg.gc.ca

Office of the Auditor General of Canada

Bureau du vérificateur général du Canada

Have you done any tracking to determine its efficacy versus in-person treatment?
We see it as similar. Our completion rates have been upwards of 95 per cent. Clients are working from home with Netflix and every distraction in the world, so if they don't want to be doing groups and talking to strangers they won't do it. Yet we're seeing people participating. They're engaged, they're happy and motivated and eager to participate. What it tells us is that this program is for people who are motivated, who recognize that they have some struggles and want to better themselves. It's a great flexible alternative to access care. It becomes an earlier intervention model. If you know you're struggling, and you're motivated and have a busy professional or family life, you can now get access to care without going away or losing your job or your family or having to face the stigma [of being in treatment].

How would you characterize the past year? There have been lots of articles talking about how the pandemic was going to exacerbate drug and alcohol use.
I believe the tsunami has yet to happen. I use the analogy that the soldiers are still at war; everyone is hunkering down and fighting the good fight—working from home, watching their kids homeschool. Then the soldiers return from war, the dust settles and people realize, "Whoa, I've been through a lot." People are going to start to recognize that they thought things were going to get better, but did they? That's not to say it happens to everybody, but this is the thing about mental health: It doesn't discriminate. There are so many unique life events that are going to happen and I think everybody's been through so much that people are going to react differently.

Are you prone to looking back at how far you've come in these eight years or are you always looking forward?
I'm a no-regrets kind of person. I think, at the end of the day, we all make decisions, whether it's business or in life. I think you've got to look at it like, "This is what I wanted to do, and this is the result I got." As long as you do your best and you work toward your goal, you'll be at peace with your decision. It's not a life of regrets, it's a life of opportunity. I couldn't be prouder of what my team has accomplished over these last eight years and the lives we've impacted. It's truly satisfying and rewarding. ◆

STOCK SYMBOLISM

In early June, the Krispy Kreme doughnut chain announced it would go public and its shares would trade on the Nasdaq stock exchange under the symbol DNUT. The Winston-Salem, N.C.-based company isn't the first to use its stock ticker as a clever marketing tool. —*Steve Brearton*

BOOM
Dynamic Materials Corp., maker of explosives for metalworking among other products, listed in 1971 under the symbol BOOM. At the time, the firm was known as Explosive Fabricators Inc.

HOG
In 2006, motorcycle maker Harley-Davidson changed its NYSE ticker symbol from HDI to HOG. "The nickname 'hog' has been closely identified with Harley-Davidson for decades and is a term of affection and respect for our motorcycles all around the world," a spokesperson said via press release.

TEAM
Upon going public, the CEO of the workplace software firm Atlassian wrote that they chose their Nasdaq symbol "because our mission is to unleash the potential of every team."

WOOF
Veterinary diagnostic provider Antech launched an IPO in November 2001 under the trading symbol WOOF. Co-founder Robert Anton says the Nasdaq ticker "is indicative of the fun and the smiles pets bring to our lives."

WORK
Weeks before going public on Nasdaq in 2019, messaging platform Slack Technologies changed its stock ticker from SK to WORK.

YODA
The Procure Space UCITS ETF, an exchange-traded fund focused on satellite operators and space hardware makers, trades under the symbol YODA on the London Stock Exchange. On Nasdaq, the same ETF trades under the ticker UFO.

ZZ
Mattress manufacturer Sealy Corp. had its initial public offering in April 2006 and trades publicly on the New York Stock Exchange with the stock ticker symbol ZZ.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY **ISTOCK**; YODA BY **GETTY**

1

PICTURE THIS

ARMED AND READY

Brampton, Ont.-based MDA has been engineering space technology like the Canadarm for more than 50 years. Its next mission? To go where Canadian space tech has never gone before. **BY LIZA AGRBA**

In April 2001, Canadarm2—a robotic arm designed and built by Brampton, Ont.-based space technology company MDA Ltd.—flew to the International Space Station aboard NASA's space shuttle Endeavour. Among the astronauts to have operated the arm in space is Tim Kopra. Retired from space travel after logging 244 days in space, he's now MDA's vice-president of robotics and space operations. "I feel so privileged to have worked with the hardware and now be in a position to help sustain its engineering and maintenance," says Kopra.

Having a former astronaut on the management team is right on brand for a company that's grown into Canada's premier space tech manufacturer since its inception in 1969. The Canadian-owned company employs 2,000 people and contributes to both Canadian and international space programs. Besides robotics and space ops, MDA specializes in satellites and geo-intelligence—all with a sustainability-driven ethos: don't litter. "There's so much space debris orbiting Earth at hyper-velocities," says Natalie Panek, a senior engineer in MDA's robotics and automation division. "I was always taught the 'leave no trace' principle when it comes to exploring the wilderness. That applies to space as well."

To that end, MDA is developing a tool meant to snatch errant space debris out of orbit and bring it down to Earth. The Launch Adapter Ring Capture Tool (LARCT)—equipped with two jaw-like structures—is part of the firm's mission to keep orbits usable for future generations. "Orbits are like highways, and every new satellite has to steer around all the existing ones that have been launched into it," says Justin Charbonneau, system architect for MDA's commercial space robotics team. "As time goes on, orbits can become busy to the point of being contaminated and useless."

Repairing what's already out there is another key to keeping space exploration sustainable. That's where tools like Canadarm2—which helps repair satellites, among other tasks—come in. A decade ago, MDA built the Next-Generation Small Canadarm (NGSC), which helps the company explore new technologies. It's a proof-of-concept project that won't make it to space, but is regularly used as a research tool for other satellite maintenance projects. Another of MDA's terrestrial prototypes is the Lunar Exploration Light Rover, a sort of camera-equipped moon buggy that will be used as a test bed for future moon missions.

As the adage goes, teamwork makes the dream work, an idea not lost on a company that's made a mission of propelling humanity to new heights. "There's a huge learning curve to being successful at a job like this," says Charbonneau. "But it's not like there's an enormous library with 10,000 books for new employees. Most of the knowledge you need exists in people's minds, and my colleagues are always willing to share what they know." The culture is also not without a sense of humour: MDA's cafeteria was recently dubbed "LunchPad."

As space exploration moves farther from Earth, the future is likely to hold an increasingly important role for tech that can work autonomously at great distances. MDA is currently working on Canadarm3—a next-generation, AI-enabled arm that will perform tasks on Lunar Gateway, a planned deep space outpost some 400,000 km from Earth. The merging of AI and space travel might ring of science fiction, but it's a rapidly approaching reality made possible by companies like MDA, where testing the limits of possibility is everyday business. ◆

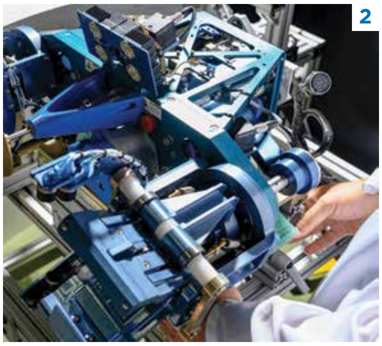
Retired astronaut Tim Kopra spent

244

days in space prior to joining MDA as vice-president of robotics and space operations

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DANIEL NEUHAUS

2



3

4

5

1. Although it isn't space-bound, the **Next-Generation Small Canadarm** (NGSC) pictured here—a more dexterous version of the Canadarm robot—is a proof-of-concept prototype now used as a valuable research tool for other satellite maintenance projects.

2. Engineers working on the **Launch Adapter Ring Capture Tool** (LARCT), which is designed to capture errant space debris and return it to Earth.

3. A close-up of the human-like hand of the **NGSC**.

4. Justin Charbonneau and Natalie Panek in front of a **Canadarm** prototype.

5. The team at **MDA** test and review its cutting-edge robotics technologies.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

ACCOUNTING FOR TRUST

The accounting profession is driving innovation in ethical AI design

JOHN C. HAVENS

Transparency begins with disclosure. By stating a fact you feel someone must know before connecting with them, you demonstrate integrity.

So, in this spirit of transparency, here is my disclosure: My area of expertise has never been popular. With the exception of applied ethicists, admittedly few people have proclaimed, “I can’t wait to bring applied ethics to my business!”

But that is quickly changing.

Based on the pressures brought about by recent EU regulation focused on the classifications of risk for artificial intelligence (AI), organizations of every size are rethinking what “applied ethics” (the real-world application of moral principles) means for their business. Rather than focusing on an organization’s code of ethics or negative PR, organizations need to adopt methodologies touching on every aspect of operations in order to comprehensively address areas of risk.

Noticing the nudge

A critical aspect when working in the field of artificial intelligence and ethics is to recognize that, despite a manufacturer’s best intentions, it is entirely up to the end user how they will react and respond to an AI product. Whether it’s a banking chatbot or an autonomous vehicle, a user’s response is based largely on their background (cultural, regional, political) and the context in which an AI tool is introduced. Where this concept includes transparency and disclosure, trust is often earned.

A key design methodology to illustrate this idea can be found in the concept of “nudging” in AI. For example, when utilizing a dieting app designed to curb overeating, we’ve knowingly provided consent to allow these “nudges” to influence our behaviour. However, “nudges” in AI can easily become forms of manipulation. For instance, if a companion robot for vulnerable senior citizens were designed to recommend medications from a particular pharmaceutical provider, this would clearly be considered manipulation, especially if their caregivers were not informed of these choices. This is why methodologies to identify and communicate risks are so critical to leveraging applied ethics to build trust. In the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) Standards Association’s book, *Ethically Aligned Design*, the chapter on affective computing notes:

“While nudges can be deployed to encourage individuals to express behaviours that have community benefits, a nudge could have unanticipated consequences for people whose backgrounds were not well considered in the development of the nudging system … Systematic analyses are needed that examine the ethics and behavioural consequences of designing affective systems to nudge human beings prior to deployment.”

These analyses are critical given that almost all AI systems utilize human data for the basis of the algorithms that guide their use. As this data is currently being shared without unified global policy, technology or cultural guidelines, organizations must utilize applied ethics methodologies in the earliest design phases, as opposed to trying to “retrofit ethics” into a prototype being readied for market.

Accounting for trust

As two key industries dealing with risk, financial services and accounting are currently driving innovation regarding AI ethics now that machine-learning algorithms have been widely employed in

ILLUSTRATIONS: HAVEN AND BALL BY **KAGAN MCLEOD** banks, credit unions and similar financial institutions around the world. Where disclosure and consent is made available to customers anxious about protecting their money and identity, those organizations demonstrating transparency will benefit from increased retention and trust.

These applied ethics methodologies should be used in the accounting profession. "Nothing can harm trust faster than when a client feels like they're being deceived," notes Brian Friedrich, board member of the International Ethical Standards Board for Accountants and co-lead for the trust and ethics stream of CPA Canada's Foresight consultation, which is helping to define the future of the accounting profession. "When emerging technologies are being implemented, it's critical to ensure that we, as CPAs, understand how a client's data and money are handled and safeguarded, and that we can explain these to clients in ways they can also understand."

And, while planning for key aspects of risk is critical, organizations need to begin testing methodologies now in order to provide innovation and avoid negative consequences. As Beena Ammanath, executive director of the Global Deloitte AI Institute, notes in her *Forbes* article, "Trust at the center: Building an ethical AI framework": "While we are in the early days of commercial AI regulation, organizations cannot sit by and wait for lawmakers to create a road map. To do that is to miss out on gains made possible by AI, like the discovery of insights that can lead to innovations that benefit business and society."

ORGANIZATIONS MUST UTILIZE APPLIED ETHICS METHODOLOGIES IN THE EARLIEST DESIGN PHASES

Incorporating AI ethics methodologies into an organization is a comprehensive task, but it need not be a daunting one. Every opportunity for transparency builds trust; the ultimate risk is not that your organization may be fined for an AI-oriented transgression, but that your customers will opt for competitors who have earned their trust via the transparency you now need to succeed. ◆

John C. Havens is Director, Emerging Technology & Strategic Development for the IEEE Standards Association. For more on applied ethics methodologies, check out the IEEE's Finance Playbook and its roadmap for trusted data and artificial intelligence systems for financial services.

TAX LAB

TOWARD A BETTER SERVICE

How CPA Canada promotes a top-notch tax administration

BRUCE BALL

With government workplace closures, urgent relief program roll-outs and new tax filing hurdles, it's been "all hands on deck" at the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) for the past 18 months. As CRA staff scrambled to keep taxpayer services on track, CPA Canada and our members played a big role in spotting problems and advising on solutions to ease tax administration during these chaotic times, building on a well-established working relationship.

In fact, the pandemic fallout led to stronger trust, a better mutual understanding and more effective collaboration between our two organizations.

Canada's professional accountants have a long history of advocating for a better tax system. From the introduction of income tax in 1917, professional accountants have brought a collaborative spirit to their role as intermediaries connecting taxpayers with government. From advice on dozens of federal budgets, through the Carter Commission and resulting 1972 tax reforms, to more recent consultations on areas such as the red tape reduction, the underground economy and tax supports for people with disabilities, Canada's tax system has benefited from the profession's work in the public interest across the decades.

With the signing of a framework agreement in 2014, CPA Canada and the CRA solidified their connection. The first deal between tax authorities and tax practitioners worldwide, the agreement set a formal process for continuous engagement and closer collaboration. A set of joint CRA-CPA committees established under the agreement serve as forums for identifying and discussing issues, while a steering committee of CRA and CPA Canada leaders provides high-level guidance and direction.

These committees opened ways for CPAs to provide valuable input on the CRA's delivery of electronic services, tax audit experiences and streamlined administrative processes. CPA members with specific expertise, such as scientific research and experimental development tax credits or commodity taxes, now had opportunities to raise common problems they saw among their clients with their CRA counterparts. In turn, the CRA helped build understanding by explaining internal obstacles to better service (e.g. security issues, technological barriers) that might not be apparent to those outside of government.

With CPAs' willingness to pitch in and our extensive network of practitioners interacting with the CRA's services daily, the CRA began not only accepting our input but actively seeking it. For example, the CRA regularly consults on new design features of its electronic services—like My Account and other secure portals—with the efile program leaders of Big Four and smaller firms and tax software developers who comprise CPA Canada's technology working group. More recently, CPAs were invited to preview the CRA's new GST/HST registration website and the application portals for business subsidy programs administered by the CRA.

Over time, committee work evolved beyond regular meetings with formal agendas and action points. These meetings remain vital roundtables, but even before the pandemic, mutual familiarity and comfort had reached the point where issues could be handled informally as they arose, often with quicker resolution. This evolution made CPA Canada better placed to deliver input as the CRA sought our views on the pandemic's sudden and unusual tax service challenges.

As the CRA was determining how to deliver the Canada Emergency Response Benefit, the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy and other complex programs under tight timelines, CPA Canada was gathering information from members and stakeholders on how to smooth their implementation. Together with the Canadian Tax Foundation and other stakeholder organizations, we also identified concerns about how pandemic-driven issues could disrupt the CRA's usual tax and benefit programs. We also discussed legislative issues with the federal Department of Finance.

When a member of Parliament asked before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance whether the CRA predicted the pandemic would create challenges for people preparing and filing income taxes, Ted Gallivan, assistant commissioner of the CRA's Compliance Programs Branch, replied:

"We've been working closely with CPA Canada almost daily by email and phone and having teleconferences with members. Also, with the [Canadian Federation of Independent Business], the Canadian Tax Foundation, [and the Association de planification fiscal et financière] in Quebec, so we're in pretty close consultation with the practitioner community. They're giving us feedback on what they're seeing, and that allows us to react before Canadians are adversely affected."

CPA Canada wants to hear from you! Share your tax ideas at **pivot.letters@cpacanada.com**

Of course, some taxpayer issues are not resolved as we hoped they would be. For example, the federal government agreed with the need to extend many tax filing and payment deadlines in 2020 in light of the extraordinary conditions. Unfortunately, as we documented on the CPA Canada website, more modest extensions were not allowed in 2021, despite extensive discussions with our contacts at the CRA and others in the federal government.

The CRA is committed to providing the best service for Canadians, so contact us if you've seen persistent issues with the CRA's services or have ideas on how to improve them. Note that we can't get involved in individual issues or complaints—for that we recommend starting with the CRA's service feedback program for submitting complaints or, if that doesn't resolve things, getting in touch with the Office of the Taxpayers' Ombudsperson.

But when it comes to ideas that can make Canada's tax administration better for everyone, we want to hear from you. ◆

Bruce Ball, FCPA, FCA, is the vice-president of taxation at CPA Canada.

OMBUDSPERSON'S VIEW

THE LINE OF DUTY

How the taxpayers' ombudsperson champions service rights for taxpayers

FRANÇOIS BOILEAU

Last year was a year unlike any other. The Canada Revenue Agency (CRA)'s capabilities were put to the test and the Office of the Taxpayer's Ombudsperson (OTO) played a crucial role in helping many vulnerable Canadians break through service barriers to get financial aid they badly needed to make ends meet. The pandemic compelled our OTO team to work with our CRA counterparts more closely than ever before.

With spiralling workloads, travel restrictions and staff at both organizations suddenly working from home, new problems with the formal processes and

ILLUSTRATION BY KAGAN MCLEOD

written documents that we previously employed made us explore more flexible, cooperative and ad hoc ways of getting things done. Looking ahead, I expect these new ways of working together will continue, and this will strengthen the abilities of both organizations to improve the fairness and efficiency of the CRA's services to taxpayers.

As Canada's tax ombudsperson, my mandate is to uphold the eight service rights within the Taxpayer Bill of Rights. Among other things, taxpayers can expect the CRA to:

- Treat taxpayers professionally, courteously and fairly (Article 5)
- Deliver complete, clear, accurate and timely information (Article 6)
- Accept service complaints and respond with an explanation of their findings (Article 9)
- Be accountable (Article 11)

The Taxpayer Bill of Rights is designed to protect Canadians from mistakes, processing delays, misplaced documents, inconsistent information, inappropriate behaviour and other types of service lapses. If a taxpayer or their representative does not believe these rights are being respected in their specific case and if they have not been able to work things out through the CRA's complaint process, they can make a service complaint with the OTO. The OTO may then review the matter, providing a fair and objective review.

For those experiencing immediate hardship, however—for example, where a tax return processing delay holds up the refund a family needs to afford the necessities of life—the OTO team is able to facilitate contact by the CRA to encourage a fast response.

As the pandemic wore on, we observed the work of resolving complaints, including those most urgent, grow more efficient as more frequent, less formal cooperation among OTO and CRA staff built more collaboration and understanding on all sides.

Along with handling individual complaints, the OTO works to identify and help correct service issues that are systemic. Some of these issues come to the OTO's attention when they are raised repeatedly through service complaints from individuals.

The OTO also looks proactively for opportunities to improve the service the CRA provides. Our extensive outreach includes town halls, conferences, presentations, community meetings and trade shows. In these forums, we meet with Canadians, including taxpayers, tax professionals, and various levels of government and community support organizations, to identify service-related issues affecting large numbers of individuals, businesses, organizations, community groups and members of vulnerable populations.

Sometimes, the broad scope of an issue will prompt us to launch a systemic examination to analyze the problems and recommend corrective action. One past report explored ways of improving the CRA's Community Volunteer Income Tax Program. Another looked into the CRA's communications and outreach efforts to shelters and other support organizations about benefits. A third examined the delays and lack of transparency in the CRA's processing of individual income tax and benefit returns and adjustment requests.

Overall, the OTO has issued 15 of these systemic reports with 101 recommendations for the minister of national revenue since 2008 when the office started operations.

Over the past year, the evolving relationship between the OTO and the CRA allowed us to influence systemic change—with less formality—to achieve faster results.

After the government launched the CERB, for example, our staff received a high volume of calls from taxpayers with rejected CERB claims who wanted to know their options for recourse. The CRA took up our informal request to communicate these options clearly on the CERB site; dispelling confusion and helping taxpayers across Canada know what to do if they believed their claim was wrongly denied.

101
recommendations have been made for the minister of national revenue as a result of the OTO's systemic reports

While this collaborative spirit between the OTO and the CRA has been gaining momentum, it's grown stronger as people with both organizations rose to meet the pandemic's challenges. In fact, the degree of collaboration and understanding has risen to the point where the CRA is welcoming the OTO's informal feedback. These increasingly informal interactions are improving the OTO's effectiveness in promoting continuous improvement in the way the CRA delivers its services.

Canada's tax system is complex, and both the CRA and the OTO are committed to making it work better for taxpayers and the people who advise them. We invite you to contact us if you or someone you represent believe you haven't been treated suitably by the CRA or if you think there may be a broader issue affecting the quality of the CRA's services. ◆

François Boileau is the taxpayers' ombudsperson. The Office of the Taxpayers' Ombudsperson can be reached via canada.ca/en/taxpayers-ombudsperson.

SHAM, WOW

A catalogue of recent cons

BY DAVE ZARUM

THE CRYPTOCURRENCY EDITION
Reported losses due to crypto frauds have risen 1,000% over the past year.

US$2 MILLION

Was stolen from cryptocurrency investors by fraudsters impersonating Tesla CEO Elon Musk, says the U.S. Federal Trade Commission. Musk is a proponent of currencies like bitcoin and dogecoin (he has called himself the "dogefather," and Tesla has purchased at least US$1.5 billion worth of bitcoin), and a giveaway scam saw Musk imposters contact potential victims with an opportunity to quickly "multiply" investments, asking them to convert dollars into cryptocurrencies, only to keep the money for themselves. This comes one year after scammers targeted Twitter, hacking into celebrity accounts (including Musk's) in a similar fraud that netted US$121,000.

"Wow... this really works"

Thought a Mississauga, Ont., man after an initial $4,000 crypto investment turned a quick profit. Using a crypto trading agency he found online, he continued to invest but, when it came time to cash out, the agency—which turned out to be fraudulent—kept creating excuses and asked for more and more money to release the funds. "They would just put up roadblocks, left, right and centre," the man said. "In order to get my money back, it cost me money." All told, the man reportedly lost $200,000.

Phone calls and WhatsApp messages continued to flood his phone, including one that read: "It's a scam, don't send any more money." The man was promised he would get all of his funds back—if he would transfer another $500.

167

Counterfeit trading and cryptocurrency apps were traced to a single server as part of a fraud identified by British cybersecurity firm Sophos. Scammers tricked users into downloading apps via a replica iOS App Store page—in some cases even luring victims via online dating websites. Victims then downloaded replica apps that stole users' money. "The fake applications we uncovered impersonate popular and trusted financial apps from all over the world," stated a Sophos senior researcher in a release. In some cases, Sophos reported that, when an individual would try to withdraw their money, scammers locked them out of their accounts.

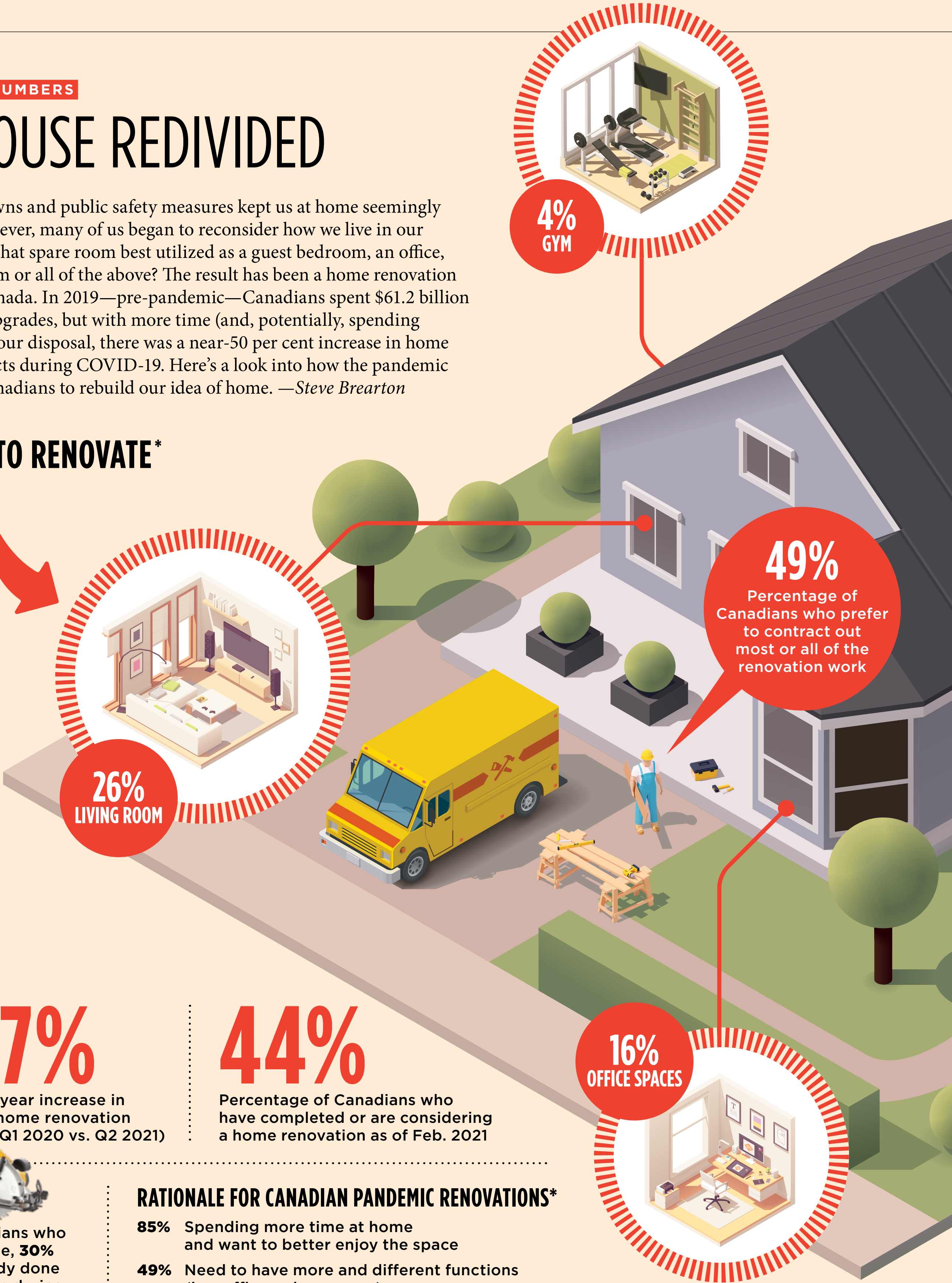
PHOTOGRAPHS: ELON MUSK BY GETTY; COINS & GLASSES BY ISTOCK

BY THE NUMBERS

A HOUSE REDIVIDED

As lockdowns and public safety measures kept us at home seemingly more than ever, many of us began to reconsider how we live in our houses. Is that spare room best utilized as a guest bedroom, an office, a home gym or all of the above? The result has been a home renovation blitz in Canada. In 2019—pre-pandemic—Canadians spent $61.2 billion in home upgrades, but with more time (and, potentially, spending money) at our disposal, there was a near-50 per cent increase in home reno projects during COVID-19. Here's a look into how the pandemic has led Canadians to rebuild our idea of home. *—Steve Brearton*

ROOM TO RENOVATE*



+47%

Year-over-year increase in Canadian home renovation spending (Q1 2020 vs. Q2 2021)

44%

Percentage of Canadians who have completed or are considering a home renovation as of Feb. 2021

For Canadians who own a home, **30%** have already done renovations during the pandemic, while another **25%** are planning to do work.

RATIONALE FOR CANADIAN PANDEMIC RENOVATIONS*

85% Spending more time at home and want to better enjoy the space

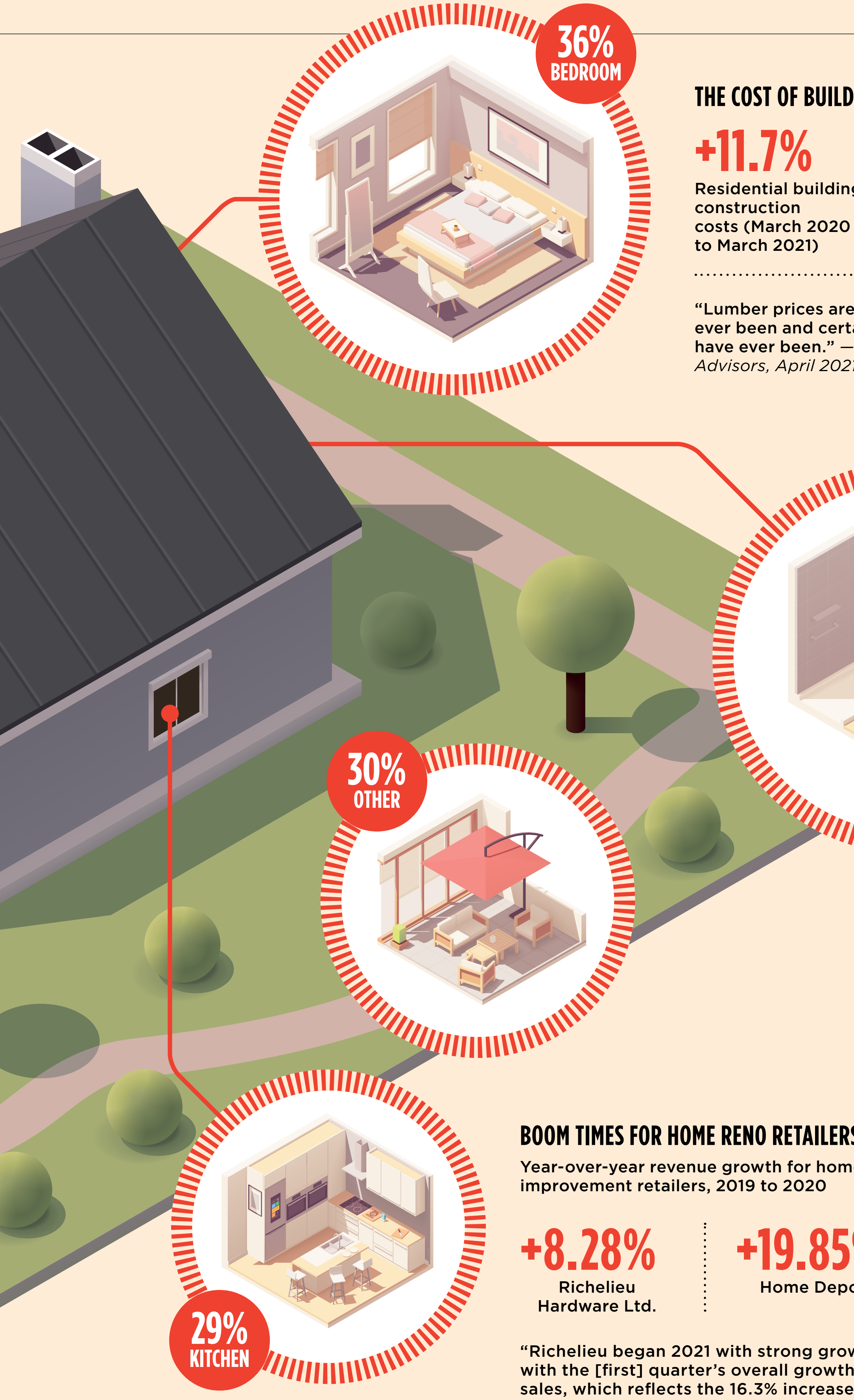
49% Need to have more and different functions (i.e., office or home gym)

40% Increase home value

34% Have more disposable income

*MULTIPLE ANSWERS ALLOWED

SOURCES: STATISTICS CANADA, ABACUS DATA, CTV NEWS, RICHELIEU, CANADIAN REAL ESTATE MAGAZINE, REMAX



THE COST OF BUILDING

+11.7%
Residential building construction costs (March 2020 to March 2021)

+118.9%
Yearly increase in the cost of softwood lumber

"Lumber prices are the highest they have ever been and certainly the most volatile they have ever been." —*Paul Jannke, Forest Economic Advisors, April 2021*

BOOM TIMES FOR HOME RENO RETAILERS

Year-over-year revenue growth for home improvement retailers, 2019 to 2020

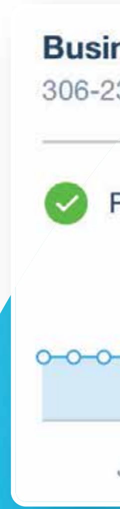
+8.28%
Richelieu Hardware Ltd.

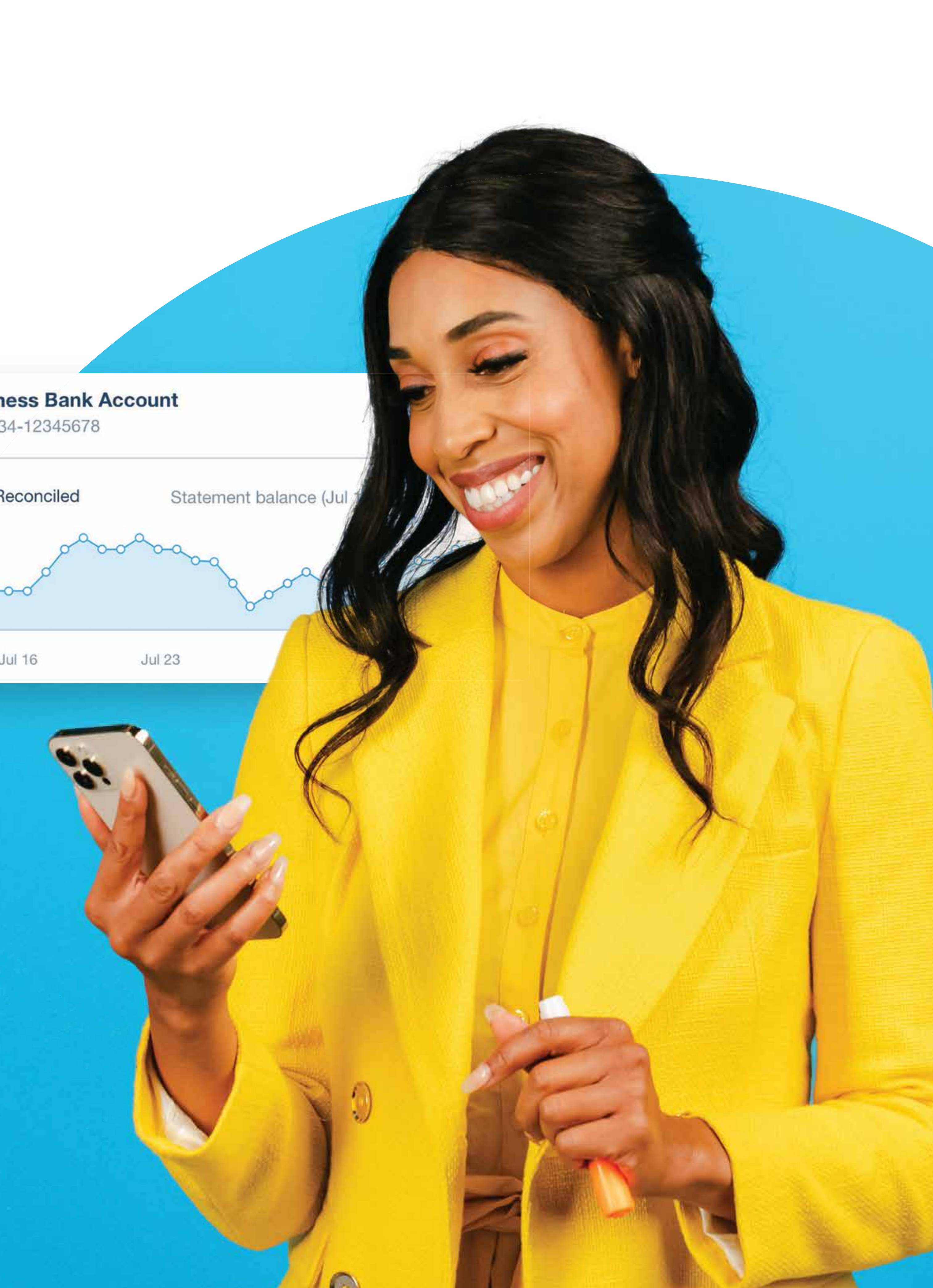
+19.85%
Home Depot

+24.19%
Lowe's

"Richelieu began 2021 with strong growth.... We are satisfied with the [first] quarter's overall growth and the 19.3% increase in sales, which reflects the 16.3% increase in the manufacturers market and 34.3% rise in the retailers and renovation superstore markets." —*Richelieu Hardware Ltd. president and CEO Richard Lord, FCPA*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY **ISTOCK**

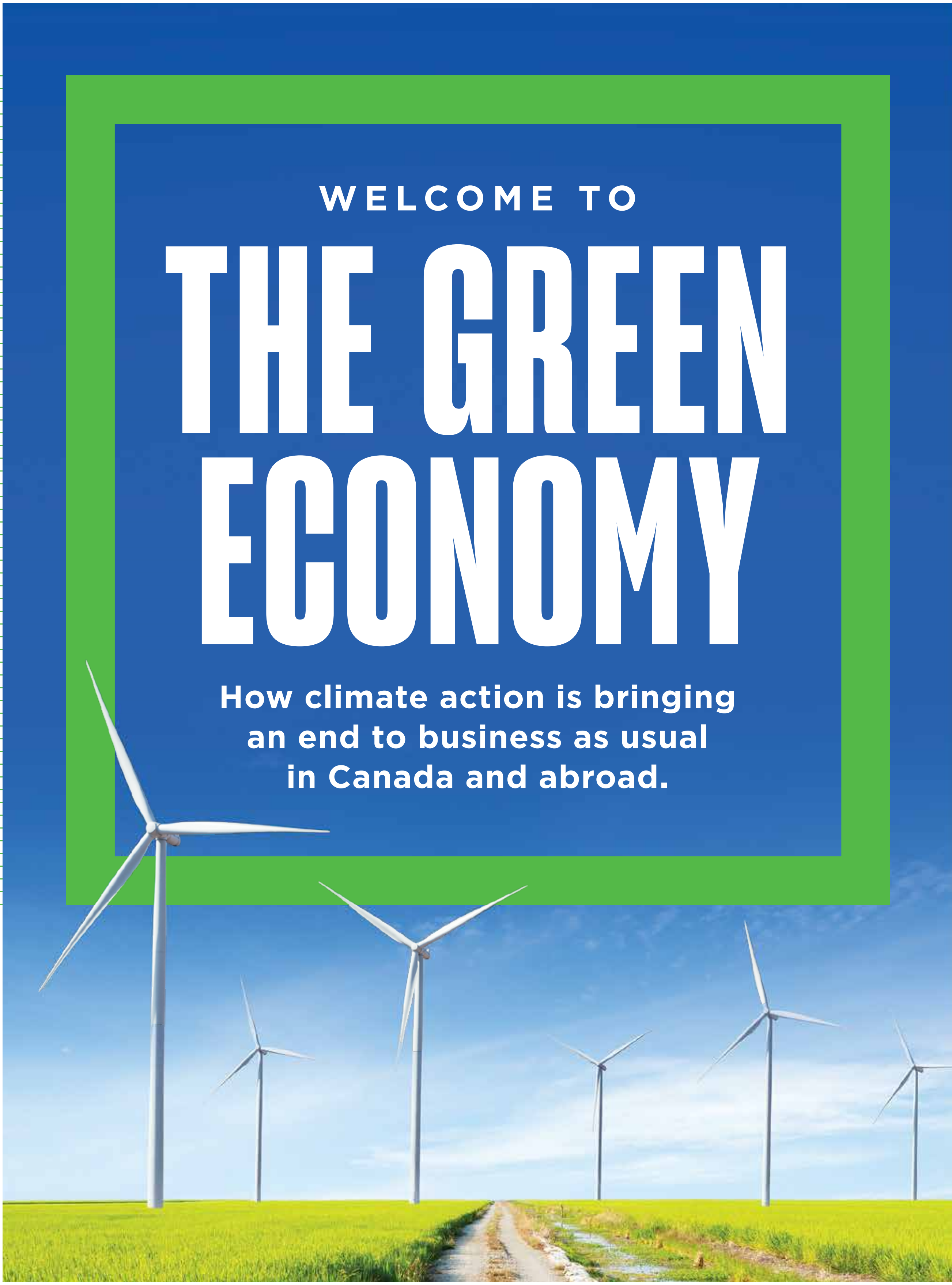



ness Bank Account
34-12345678
Reconciled
Statement balance (Jul
Jul 16
Jul 23

WELCOME TO

THE GREEN ECONOMY

How climate action is bringing an end to business as usual in Canada and abroad.



PHOTOGRAPH BY ISTOCK

WHY DOES CANADA NEED A GREEN ECONOMY?

Sustainable business is more than inevitable. It's imperative.

BY PRIYANKA LLOYD

In 2020, Larry Fink, CEO of BlackRock Inc., the world's largest asset manager with nearly US$9 trillion in assets under management, wrote in his annual letter to CEOs that his company would begin evaluating climate risk as part of BlackRock's investment decisions. "Awareness is rapidly changing, and I believe we are on the edge of a fundamental reshaping of finance," wrote Fink. "The evidence on climate risk is compelling investors to reassess core assumptions about modern finance."

At the G7 finance ministers meeting in June 2021, officials agreed to move toward making it compulsory for companies to disclose their climate-related risks as part of safeguarding the financial system from climate shocks. More than a moral imperative, the need to address climate change has now become an economic one. After decades of scientists sounding the alarm on the need to act swiftly and boldly to avert a global climate crisis, the alignment of international financial institutions and capital markets to begin rethinking and reshaping our current economic system represents a significant step forward.

From exacerbating climate change to compounding social and racial inequalities, the status quo is failing us. What we need is an economy that is prosperous, socially inclusive and operates in a way that safeguards a healthy, thriving planet for generations to come. In other words: a green economy.

When it comes to the transition to a green economy, Canada has a clear responsibility for action. We are the 11th-highest emitter of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the world and produce more emissions per person than any other G20 economy. Beyond doing our fair share, we risk getting left behind if we do not act decisively, as other countries look to take advantage of the estimated US$26-trillion opportunity that the shift to a green economy creates. From export opportunities that come from being leaders in clean technology development and manufacturing, to the millions of jobs that will be created domestically from meeting the need for green and ethical products and services, the green economy is ripe with economic potential.

It's why leading countries have not only set targets to reach "net zero" by 2050, but have also committed billions of dollars in green recovery measures as part of post-COVID-19 economic stimulus packages.

Our closest and largest trading partner, the United States, has set a goal to cut emissions by 50 per cent by 2030 and achieve 100 per cent clean electricity by 2035. The Biden administration's first budget, released in May 2021, included US$800 billion to accelerate the deployment of clean-energy technologies over the next 10 years.

Canada has also increased its climate ambition, setting a goal to reduce its GHG emissions by 40 to 45 per cent by 2030 and to hit net zero by 2050. The April 2021 federal budget included $17 billion in investments in climate action, and the climate plan released in December proposed legislating

Canada's net-zero targets.

Meanwhile, the cost of renewables is rapidly falling, and electric vehicle (EV) sales are poised for a meteoric rise.

Momentum is on our side, but our successful transition to a vibrant and inclusive net-zero future is by no means assured.

We have waited until the 11th hour to wake up to the climate emergency. As stated in the International Energy Agency's report in May 2021, the pathway to net zero is still possible, but narrow. It went on to say that "achieving this cleaner, healthier future will rely on a singular, unwavering focus from all governments, working closely with businesses, investors and citizens."

Countries will have to increase their climate commitments to deliver the transformational impact required, with annual clean energy investment worldwide needing to more than triple by 2030 to around US$4 trillion. Most of our required GHG emissions reductions by 2030 are possible through existing technologies, but they must be adopted rapidly. We need to stop new investments in oil, gas and coal supplies, and retire coal-fired plants in advanced economies by 2030.

17
billion dollars allocated to climate action investments in April's federal budget

So what does all of this mean for the average business in Canada? It means that the transition to a green economy is already in motion and every business will be shaped by these forces. Businesses that are not yet thinking about their environmental, social and governance (ESG) practices will become less resilient and competitive, and risk getting left behind. It also means that if we do not collectively cut carbon emissions in line with the pace science tells us is needed, we will fail to realize the benefits of the green economy.

We need every business to do its part in setting ambitious reduction targets, implementing plans and rethinking business models, like the hundreds of businesses in our network at Green Economy Canada are already doing across the country.

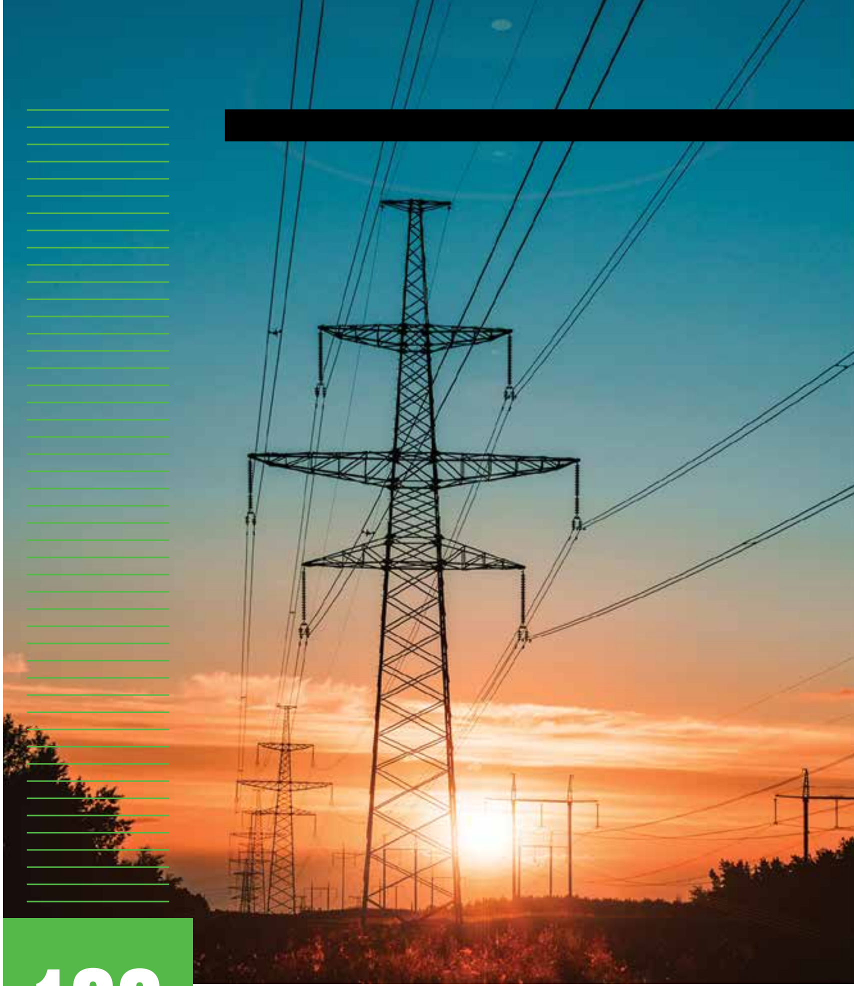
The imperative for a green economy has never been greater and the stakes are high. Now is the time for a full-court press to create a better business as usual. Let's get to work. ◆

Priyanka Lloyd is the executive director of Green Economy Canada, an organization that works with community organizations to launch and grow green economy hubs across Canada.

SOLAR PANELS BY **UNSPLASH**; MONEY BY **ISTOCK**

THREE BIG QUESTIONS

BY MATTHEW HALLIDAY



1 How ready is our electrical grid for an electric vehicle onslaught?

Last year, an EY report examined how Canada's electrical utilities would deal with stress on the electrical grid in three EV-adoption scenarios: slow, medium and rapid. The latter matched the federal government's ambitious targets: 30 per cent of new light-duty vehicle sales by 2030, and 100 per cent by 2040. Then, this past June, the government announced a stunning new target: 100 per cent zero-emission sales by 2035.

That's ambitious—last year, only 3.5 per cent of new-vehicle sales were EVs or other zero-emission vehicles. But public sentiment is changing fast, and the auto industry is making aggressive EV commitments: GM and Volvo intend to exclusively produce EVs within the next 10 to 15 years.

Is Canada ready?

"Our grid could only handle 15 per cent EV adoption as it stands today," says Daniela Carcasole, EY's Canadian power and utilities leader. "We've got some time to improve that, but only so much."

EY's report found that in the rapid-adoption scenario, electricity demand would increase by 65 terawatts by 2030, an 11 per cent increase. Rather than add new generating capacity, most utilities are focused now on demand management—reducing peak electricity needs through off-peak price incentives and AI-managed smart grids that are responsive to minute fluctuations in demand.

In Ontario, Hydro One is deploying battery storage and smart-grid technology to help improve reliability. Bracebridge Generation, a smaller Ontario utility, is using $2.9 million in federal funding to deploy solar, storage and smart-grid systems.

"There may be some infrastructure upgrades needed, but there are other creative ways to deal with this," says Sarah Stevens, VP of customer relations and system development with Alberta's Enmax. "Energy management, energy storage, distributed generation—these are what we're really digging into."

Distributed generation is foundational to most utilities' grid-resilience planning—integrating smaller-scale and renewable power sources, such as district-energy systems or solar panels, to create a more elastic electrical supply. Eventually, this kind of system could include direct vehicle-to-grid charging, with idle cars discharging energy into the system.

Quebec has been a fast-adopter of EVs, with the province's Electric Circuit announcing plans to add 4,500 charging stations by 2028. But, for the most part, utilities are taking a wait-and-see approach about what kind of upgrades will be necessary, as they collect more information about the real-world demands of EVs. Enmax, for example, has piloted a small program called Charge Up, which saw the utility provide 60 charging stations, public and private, to customers in Calgary. Their EV-charging habits are being closely monitored to inform decision-making about grid upgrades.

Natural Resources Canada has committed $100 million to a "Smart Grid Program" aimed at supporting utility-led projects that will improve grid dependability, in part to facilitate greater EV adoption. Provincial and municipal governments are regularly ponying up smaller sums to help make Canada's lofty EV goals a reality. ◆

100
per cent of auto sales in Canada will be zero-emission vehicles by 2035, per federal goal

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ISTOCK

2 Can Canada's oilpatch make the jump to a low-carbon future?

The existential dilemma facing Canada's energy industry was never more apparent than in May, when the International Energy Agency (IEA) released "Net zero by 2050," a road map illustrating how the global energy sector could achieve net-zero emissions. The plan outlined hundreds of milestones, including ceasing investment in new fossil-fuel projects.

The report's timing put an exclamation point on weeks of bad news for the oil and gas sector, like the Dutch court decision ordering Shell to slash emissions by 45 per cent by 2030, and the addition of three climate-activist directors to ExxonMobil's board in an unanticipated shake-up. As companies respond to more government mandates, and with shareholders and insurers wary of the impacts of climate change, the hits are likely to keep coming.

So where does that leave Canada's oil and gas sector, and the 600,000 Canadians directly and indirectly employed by it?

Juli Rohl is optimistic. She's a lead animator with the Alberta-based Energy Futures Lab, a group that unites multiple stakeholders to highlight how the industry can make the transition to a low-carbon future.

"A lot of new technologies that will help build a greener energy sector are based on the foundation of oil and gas development, and a lot of translatable skills," says Rohl. "The incumbent industries have the data, the people, the physical assets and experience to build the next economy."

Take hydrogen. While electric vehicles will likely dominate light-duty transport in the future, hydrogen is shaping up as a major low-carbon fuel for heavy-duty and industrial transport. Alberta is well-positioned to be a lead producer of so-called "grey hydrogen," derived from natural gas—the production process generates greenhouse gases, but carbon-capture technology can be used to turn grey hydrogen into more climate-friendly "blue hydrogen."

Other opportunities lie with the province's 97,000 inactive oil and gas wells. The wastewater found in many is a potent source of lithium (for use in electric vehicles' lithium-ion batteries). Other inactive wells may have the potential to become sources of geothermal energy.

"The existing energy sector has the multinational structure needed to lead huge change and the highly skilled workers used to these kinds of projects," says Delia Warren, a former engineer in Newfoundland and Labrador's offshore oil industry. Today, Warren is a member of Iron & Earth, a non-profit focused on helping Canada's energy-sector workers re-skill for greener industries.

The transformation will depend in large part on governments helping subsidize everything from retraining to infrastructure upgrades (natural gas pipelines, for example, would need retrofitting before they could carry hydrogen). And, to some degree, that also means a shift in attitudes.

In May, when the IEA released its net-zero road map, the Alberta government rejected its premises. Likewise, Newfoundland and Labrador is doubling down on Advance 2030, a plan to massively increase offshore extraction.

"That just breaks my heart," says Warren. "That will only entrench our dependence on a declining industry... Renewable energy won't replace every job lost and it won't bring back the boom years. But it's a long-term industry versus a short-term one." ◆

PHOTOGRAPH BY ISTOCK

3 How do Canada's green infrastructure plans measure up?

Buildings, bridges, utility lines, roads big and small; infrastructure is everywhere and it's instrumental to the world's de-carbonization commitments.

It's why nations around the world are pledging wholesale changes. The United States aims to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to half of 2005 levels by 2030, implementing a carbon-pollution-free energy system by 2035, emissions-free public transport in every city and billions of dollars in cleantech R&D. The European Union's Green Deal aims to reduce the 27-country bloc's emissions to less than half of 1990 levels by 2030.

Canada's plans are slightly less ambitious: a 40 to 45 per cent GHG reduction from 2005 levels within the next 10 years. To help pull it off, a number of green infrastructure investments are front and centre, including a $14.9-billion public transit fund and $1.5 billion for energy-efficient building and retrofits.

1.5
per cent of Canada's GHG emissions come from concrete production

In total, 17 per cent of Canada's carbon emissions come from energy consumption in homes and other buildings. From home renovation credits to improved energy codes, the federal government, alongside provincial governments, aims to slash that figure. But there's also a host of private sector players finding opportunity in infrastructure-focused cleantech.

For example, Montreal's BrainBox AI is applying Big Data to buildings, with a machine-learning system that "learns" a building's unique particulars—where and when the sunshine hits the exterior, which offices are occupied and which are vacant, etc., and combines that with weather forecasts and other external information. The AI then optimizes the building's HVAC system to take advantage of passive heating and cooling, lowering its carbon footprint, the company claims, by 20 to 40 per cent.

On the east coast, Halifax's CarbonCure Technologies is tackling the emissions from concrete—the manufacture of which accounts for 1.5 per cent of Canada's GHG emissions alone. CarbonCure captures carbon dioxide from the air and injects it into concrete, where it "mineralizes." Besides extracting CO_2 from the air, the process strengthens the concrete, reducing the needed building material.

Just about every Canadian city has at least symbolically declared a climate emergency. How that translates into action differs from city to city, but most are at least tentatively exploring land-use changes that reduce congestion, improve public transit and encourage sustainable development. Electric vehicles aren't without their environmental burdens, from emissions associated with their manufacture to the environmental impacts of mining lithium for their batteries. There are companies at work trying to mitigate that latter problem, however. Mississauga, Ont.-based Li-Cycle, for example, works with auto manufacturers to recover lithium, nickel and other materials from waste batteries, reducing the need for lithium mining. This year, the company snagged a multi-year contract with Ultium Cells LLC, GM's battery manufacturing arm, to recycle material from its Ohio plant.

"It's taken a long time for sustainability-focused businesses to be seen as mainstream," says Warren of Iron & Earth. "But in the past couple of years, even, it's obvious how fast people have been understanding that the transition isn't a threat—it's an economic opportunity, as well as a chance to create a new world." ◆

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ISTOCK

ACCOUNTING FOR THE NATURAL WORLD

By learning to understand and measure natural capital, CPAs can be key drivers in a green economy

BY GORD BEAL

For too long, our capitalist system has used and consumed the natural world for little more than a means to financial and economic prosperity. Nature has been referred to as an externality, rarely considered in traditional decision-making models. As a result, we have caused what many would describe as irreparable damage to our planet. By contrast, Indigenous peoples have a deep spiritual, physical and social connection to the land as caretakers, a fundamental philosophy from which we would all be wise to learn. It is time to reconsider how we measure the value of nature, and incorporate it into every decision we make. In this, the accounting profession can play a significant role.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ISTOCK

Our challenge? To rethink our dependence on nature and our place in the natural world.

As the green economy emerges, attempts are being made to better integrate nature into current industrialized concepts of economic and social progress. The increasing use of terms like "natural assets," "green infrastructure" and "natural capital" is an example, as we seek to identify and articulate the underlying value of nature for our well-being.

"Natural capital" has emerged as a common pseudonym for nature. The International Integrated Reporting Council recently merged with the Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (SASB) to form the Value Reporting Foundation. The integrated reporting framework is being adopted and used by leading corporations around the world. This is important because the framework includes natural capital as a key element in value creation and reporting. In this context, natural capital is defined as "all renewable and non-renewable environmental resources and processes that provide goods or services that support the past, current or future prosperity of an organization." Although this still describes nature as a commodity, the spotlight on natural capital is an opportunity to shift the global industrialized mindset and set a new course for a sustainable future.

In October, the UN's Conference of the Parties (COP) 15 conference on biodiversity will bring together leaders from around the world to address the human impact on nature. A key objective will be to agree on a new set of goals that will require metrics to monitor progress and hold us accountable. Released earlier this year, the much-anticipated Dasgupta Review of the Economics of Biodiversity identifies the importance of embedding nature into the accounting systems that drive financial and other critical decisions. This insightful report is garnering significant attention and will raise the bar on the importance of specifically integrating the value of nature in decision-making for governments and business alike. Also, tools are emerging such as the Natural Capital Protocol to assist with the identification, measurement and valuation of our impacts and dependencies.

Building on the work of the Taskforce on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD), the international Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD) is working on a framework for organizations to report and act on evolving nature-related risks. A key goal for this is to encourage a flow of financial capital toward nature-positive outcomes. An example is the planting of trees—a substantial investment that will see its value increase over time. Trees facilitate carbon storage and sequestration, soil protection, air quality, storm water and flood management, as well as natural shade for helping to cool city centres. These impacts are less tangible and more difficult to measure than commercial value, but arguably more important.

The Public Sector Accounting Board is hearing a lot of dialogue around accounting of natural assets and has identified forward-looking accounting and reporting initiatives as part of a draft strategic plan. A shift in our collective mindset is underway.

Accounting should inform the decisions we make. Consider, for example, building a mega-mall in place of existing green space. Commonly, these investment decisions focus on commercial value such as future revenues, property taxes generated and job creation. While these are important considerations, they do not address the impact on water, air quality, loss of trees and green space. The long-term cumulative implications of such decisions on climate change, biodiversity and human health are clearly matters of public interest. Economic prosperity without adequate consideration for the health and well-being of people and planet is simply not sustainable.

By actively incorporating the value of nature into the decisions we are making—looking at strategy, risk and new approaches for defining success—professional accountants are poised to provide leadership for both present and future generations. ◆

Gord Beal is a CPA and vice-president, research, guidance and support for CPA Canada.

GOING GREEN?

The Green Economy Tracker charts and grades nations based on national policies relating to five categories: Governance, Finance, Sectors, People and Nature. How do Canada's green initiatives stack up against the rest of the globe?

Canada

National Green Economy Plan	●●●●○
Green Fiscal & Monetary Policy	●●○○○
Small Business Support	●●●○○
Green Jobs	●●●○○
Natural Capital Accounts	●●●●○
Green COVID-19 Recovery	●●●●○

SOURCES: THE GREEN ECONOMY COALITION/GREENECONOMYTRACKER.ORG

National Green Economy Plan: Clearly stated goals and a course of action as established by federal governments.

Green Fiscal & Monetary Policy: The development of an integrated approach to greening financial policy, i.e. phasing out fossil fuel subsidies.

Small Business Support: Infrastructure to foster startups and other small businesses contributing to the green economy.

Green Jobs: Employment opportunities created in the green sector.

National Capital Accounts: Tracking and valuating "natural capital" such as clean air, mineral reserves and biodiversity.

Green COVID-19 Recovery: Incorporating factors of sustainability into overall pandemic recovery plans.

United Kingdom

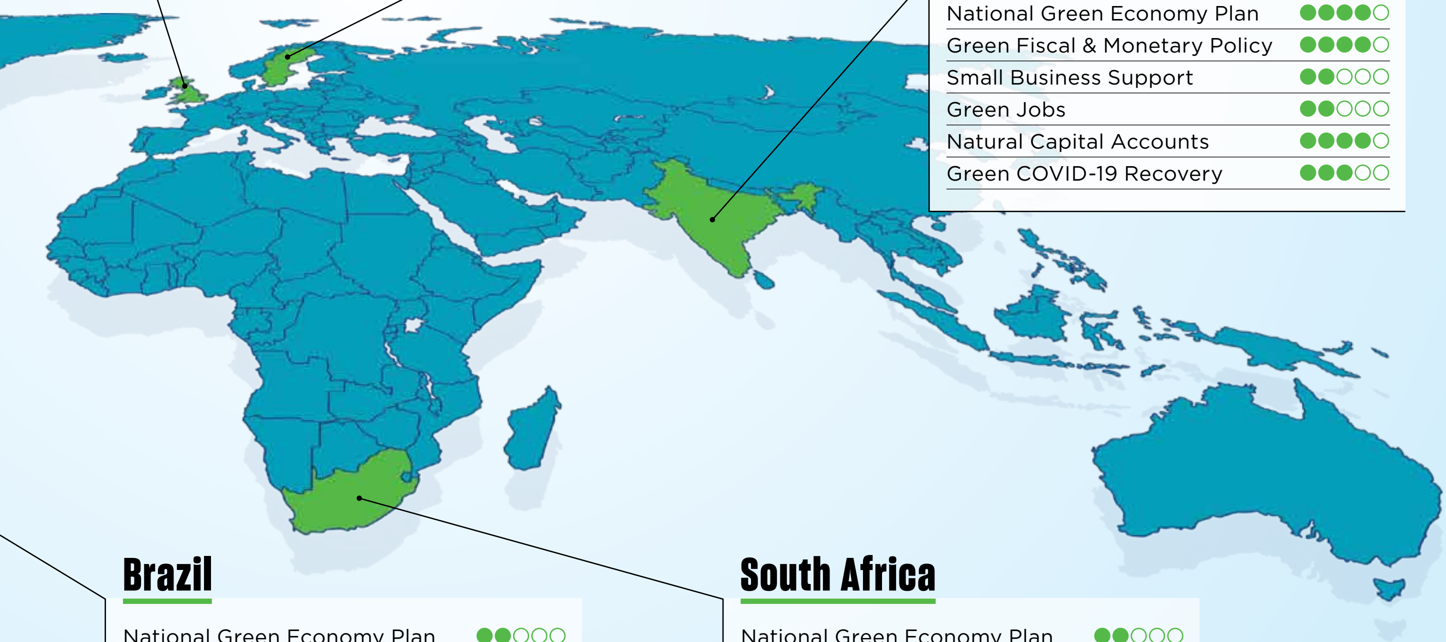
National Green Economy Plan	●●●●○
Green Fiscal & Monetary Policy	●●●○○
Small Business Support	●●●●○
Green Jobs	●●○○○
Natural Capital Accounts	●●●●○
Green COVID-19 Recovery	●●●●○

Sweden

National Green Economy Plan	●●●●●
Green Fiscal & Monetary Policy	●●●○○
Small Business Support	●●●○○
Green Jobs	●●●●○
Natural Capital Accounts	●●●●●
Green COVID-19 Recovery	●●●●●

India

National Green Economy Plan	●●●●○
Green Fiscal & Monetary Policy	●●●●○
Small Business Support	●●○○○
Green Jobs	●●○○○
Natural Capital Accounts	●●●●○
Green COVID-19 Recovery	●●●○○



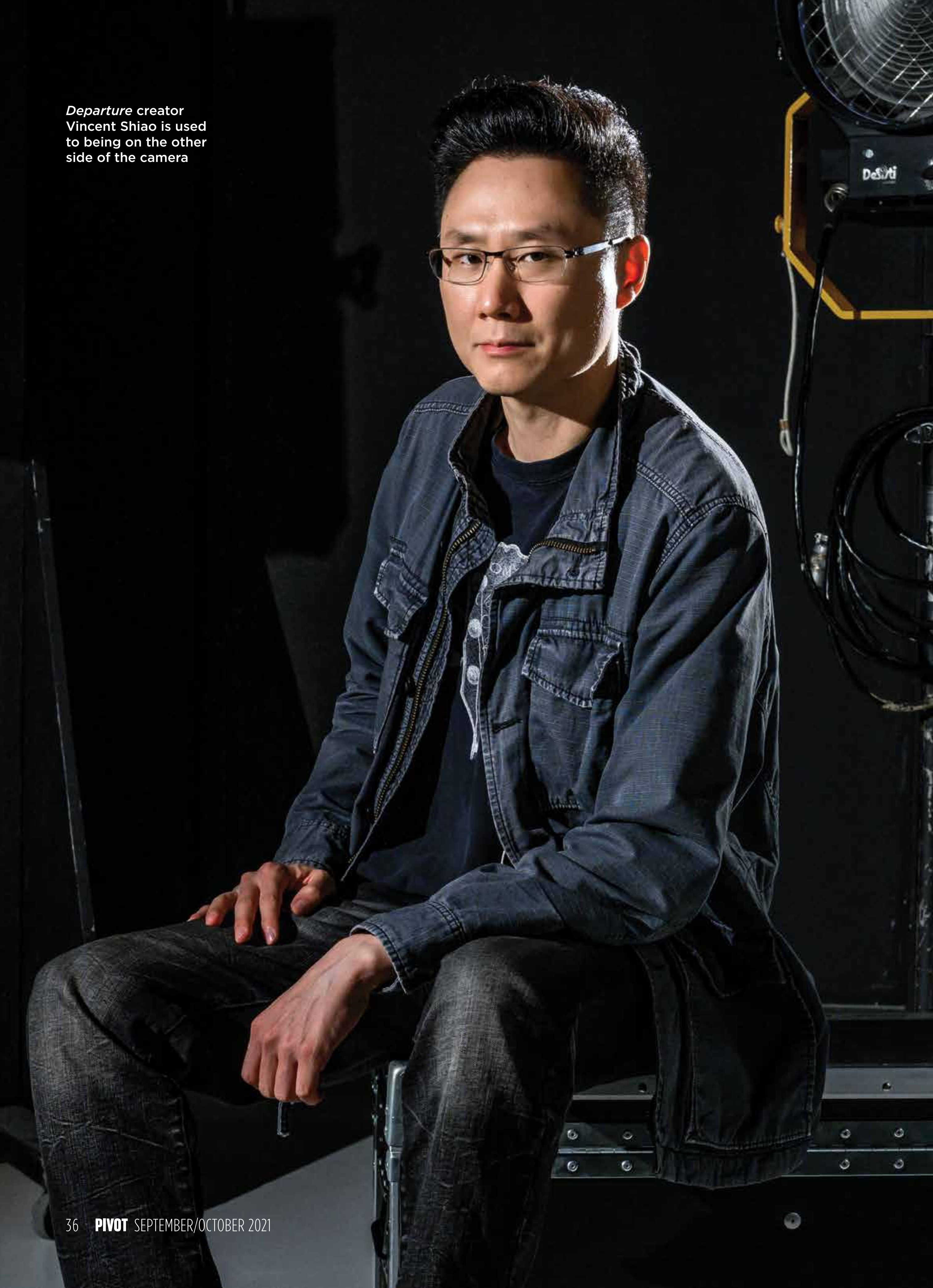
Brazil

National Green Economy Plan	●●○○○
Green Fiscal & Monetary Policy	●●○○○
Small Business Support	●●○○○
Green Jobs	●●○○○
Natural Capital Accounts	●●○○○
Green COVID-19 Recovery	●●○○○

South Africa

National Green Economy Plan	●●○○○
Green Fiscal & Monetary Policy	●○○○○
Small Business Support	●●○○○
Green Jobs	●●○○○
Natural Capital Accounts	●●○○○
Green COVID-19 Recovery	●●○○○

ILLUSTRATION BY ISTOCK



Departure creator Vincent Shiao is used to being on the other side of the camera

BY JASON McBRIDE | PHOTOGRAPHS BY DANIEL NEUHAUS

Not many people can parlay their accounting skills into the glitzy world of entertainment. Meet Vincent Shiao, the CPA turned screenwriter whose series *Departure* is one of the most gripping shows on TV.

DRAMA KING

There are several ways to become a film or TV writer. You can go to film school and network like crazy. You can become a production assistant and, through design or dumb luck, get your foot in the door that way. You can write, shoot and upload a short film to YouTube or Vimeo and pray for it to go viral. Or you can go the extremely unusual Vincent Shiao route and first become an accountant.

Shiao is the creator of the acclaimed, immensely popular Canadian-British suspense drama *Departure*, the first season of which premiered in Canada last fall and immediately became one of the country's hottest new TV shows. *Departure*, which stars Archie Panjabi (*The Good Wife*), Kris Holden-Ried (*Vikings*) and the late, great Christopher Plummer, chronicles the mysterious disappearance of a British passenger plane over the Atlantic. Over the course of six episodes, a fictional investigation body—the Transport Safety and Investigations Bureau, headed by Plummer's character, Howard Lawson—endeavours to solve the mystery, with the plot a steady stream of twists and turns involving suspected terrorism, double agents and evil airline execs. Think *24*, rewritten by Michael Crichton.

Shiao, 40, was born in Toronto and later moved to Mississauga, Ont. His father was an architect, his mother a pharmacist. He started writing stories at an early age, with Crichton a signal influence. "I was 12 years old when *Jurassic Park* came out and, over the next few years, I read all his books. Every one of them has some kind of technological aspect that pushes the envelope."

A high school teacher read Shiao's early attempts at fiction and encouraged him to keep at it. But, with two professional parents and nervous he'd end up waiting tables, Shiao went in an entirely opposite, and arguably less risky, direction: finance. He attended the Ivey Business School at Western University and became a professional accountant, landing his first job with KPMG right after school. He spent five years there, in a division focused on information, communications and entertainment industries, the first two years in audit before shifting to taxes. Shiao enjoyed the elegance and symmetry of accounting. "Things have to add up," he says. "The debits have to equal the credits. That's accounting."

Shiao kept writing, however, and by the time he landed at KPMG, his focus had shifted primarily to screenplays. He wrote after work, on the subway, on weekends. He joined a screenwriters' circle at the Liaison of Independent Filmmakers of Toronto, the long-standing filmmakers' co-op whose alumni includes Atom Egoyan and Bruce McDonald. In 2009, Shiao was head-hunted to work for Alliance Films (now Entertainment One), where he was hired as a corporate tax manager. It was another step closer to the film and TV world.

In the middle of his five-year tenure with the company, he took a six-month sabbatical to study screenwriting at the Canadian Film Centre (CFC). While there, Shiao met Malcolm MacRury, a writer, producer and showrunner who'd worked on classic shows on both sides of the border: *Deadwood*, *Street Legal* and *Republic of Doyle*, among others. MacRury gave a workshop and mentored a couple of students, including Shiao, who developed a pilot at the CFC that MacRury describes as "*Downton Abbey* set in a Japanese internment camp." (A fascinating idea, but a very difficult one to sell, Shiao learned.) MacRury found Shiao to be a rigorous, logical writer, and likened his skills to those of an architect: "He knows where the pillars go, how much load a wall can take."

As it turned out, Shiao's accounting chops were surprisingly transferable to screenwriting. In his very first high school accounting class, Shiao learned about GAAP—generally accepted accounting principles—the set of rules that govern the complexities and legalities of business accounting, which guided him throughout his career. Screenwriting, in contrast, had its own basic rules but they weren't imposed by an external authority, and most beginning screenwriters have to learn or discover them on their own. "You can read books, but there are no commonly accepted guidelines," he says. "Like, *here are the steps you take to write a good screenplay.* As a result, people starting out don't do it in a structured way and their screenplays end up meandering a bit."

Shiao's work did at first, too, but he soon realized that basic three-act structure—setup, escalation, resolution—was the GAAP of good screenwriting. "Writing is structure," he says. People think writing is a purely creative endeavour, a right-brain activity. And maybe that's true for stream-of-consciousness poetry. But writing TV or feature-length film is the opposite—it's very much a left-brain activity."

While at the CFC, putting his financial experience to good use, Shiao also came up with an hour-long drama called *Quants*, about two brilliant mathematicians helping out a ruthless Wall Street investment bank. That project didn't go anywhere, but Shiao did manage to secure an agent and, in 2014, he left Entertainment One for a job as a script coordinator on the Canadian space adventure series *Killjoys*. He was, in some ways, terrified—and not because he was going from a six-figure salary to a $30,000 contract. He'd been a well-regarded CPA; now he was going to be the lowest-ranking member of a writers' room where many of his colleagues had previously run their own shows. There were some days, Shiao says, where he literally said nothing during meetings.

"People think writing is a purely creative endeavour, a right-brain activity. But writing TV or feature-length film is the opposite–it's very much a left-brain activity."

Filming on location at White Waltham Airfield in Maidenhead, United Kingdom

PHOTOGRAPHS: LEFT BY DENNYS ILIC/SHAFTESBURY AND GREENPOINT PRODUCTIONS; RIGHT BY BEN MARK HOLZBERG/SHAFTESBURY AND GREENPOINT PRODUCTIONS

◀ *Departure* is Christopher Plummer's final on-camera role. The Canadian actor appeared in 217 films and television series over the course of his career, which began in 1953 with an appearance on a CBC drama called *Encounters*. He passed away on Feb. 5, 2021

"He was an absolute legend," Shiao said of working with Plummer. "It was an incredible honour to have written for him. He just has a presence that takes it to another level."

Plummer was nominated for seven Tony Awards and three Academy Awards. In 2018, at age 88, he became the oldest actor to earn an Oscar nomination for *All the Money in the World* and won Best Supporting Actor in 2012 for *Beginners*

He was also aware that the chances of making it as a writer were perilously low. For Shiao, a big baseball fan, it was a long shot comparable to becoming a major-league player. "There are 30 teams in Major League Baseball," he says, "and there's a 40-man roster on each team. Thirty times 40 is 1,200. So, 1,200 players employed by MLB—that's it, for the entire continent. If you total up the number of professional TV writers working at any given time, it's about the same. KPMG had more accountants on the floor I worked on than there are writers in the entire Canadian industry."

But there he was, at last a professional writer, working in an actual writers' room. He was surrounded by other experienced, smart writers and learning a lot. It was his turn at bat.

In March 2014, Malaysia Airlines Flight 370, en route from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing, vanished. All 227 passengers and 12 crew were believed dead and, despite many investigations, the actual cause of the disappearance remains a mystery, one of the biggest in aviation history.

Like much of the world, Shiao was beguiled by the disaster. "Around the world, every day, thousands of people die from car crashes and no one cares," he says. "But a plane crashes and it's front-page news. A plane disappears and it's front-page news for a month. There are still people obsessed with what happened to that particular flight."

His *Killjoys* contract complete, Shiao began writing a pilot TV script inspired by MH370. He called it *Departure*. He wanted to figure out what was so compelling about plane crashes—was there something inherently mysterious about the mechanics of flight itself? Was it about the lack of control? He was also fascinated by the investigations themselves. Shiao had never heard of a show about an investigator at the National Transportation Safety Board who tries to solve a plane crash. Such a story would have built-in mystery, myriad characters with conflicting agendas and that Crichtonian blend of science and suspense. He also knew that it would be an expensive one to make and that networks are usually on the hunt for content that doesn't stray too far from the familiar. His agent sent it out on spec anyway to producers in Canada and the U.S., hoping that it would at least land him another contract on a different show. It did; by 2017, he was working on *Ransom*, a new series about crisis negotiators.

But the *Departure* script continued to float around Toronto and L.A., eventually coming across Malcolm MacRury's desk. After the CFC, MacRury and Shiao had fallen out of touch, but MacRury was delighted to see his old student's name on the script. "It was amazing, a stellar piece of work," he says, and one that shrewdly avoided manipulation. "Vince is very wary of cheating or using emotions falsely in a story." MacRury immediately took the project to Shaftesbury Films, the Toronto production company behind *Murdoch Mysteries*. They likewise adored it and, after about a year, began production. After a few years in the minor leagues, Shiao had suddenly been called up to the big show.

Though *Departure* was obviously Shiao's baby, he was also uncommonly humble in the writers' room. Owing again to his accounting background, where every audit is a team effort, he was an eager collaborator. "His humility is rare," says MacRury, who served as showrunner for the show's first and second seasons. "Everyone wants to be the star or big boss, and he's refreshingly not like that."

The resulting scripts were evidence of that, and a lure to some of TV (and film's) best-known actors. "The scripts were compelling, smart and well-written," says Kris Holden-Ried, who plays an investigator on the show. "The amount of research

“A fraction of ideas turn into actual pilots. Like in baseball, you might get on base two or three times out of 10. Then, if you’re really, really lucky, you might hit a home run.”

Vincent put into it was impressive.” During the shooting of the first season, too, Holden-Ried fondly remembers Shiao as a daily presence on set, constantly tweaking and updating the scripts, always available to clarify story or character. Shiao was similarly rapturous about the actors, particularly Christopher Plummer. “It was an incredible honour to have written for him,” Shiao says. “He just has a presence that takes it to another level.” Plummer’s story instincts were still keen, too. At one point, he urged Shiao to cut a bunch of introductory exposition, arguing that the audience wouldn’t retain it anyway. Shiao was concerned about potential confusion, but Plummer, as it turned out, was right. “That 70 years of working in TV and film came in handy,” Shiao says.

The pandemic forced Shiao to collaborate with the *Departure* writing and production team virtually. He is currently preparing for season three.

Shiao’s all-time favourite TV show is *Breaking Bad* but, with *Departure*, he hoped to capture some of the flavour and relentlessly taut pace of *24*, which he considers the first mainstream, serialized network show, where every episode concluded with an undeniable cliff-hanger. *Departure* certainly possesses that tension and, for all of its technical subject matter, it’s a show that’s equal parts thriller and emotional drama. While the plot is increasingly intricate, the pace and precision of its swerves feel natural and nuanced. When the show reaches its resolution, there’s a sense of surprise and inevitability, a tricky combination to pull off in any medium. As in accounting, everything adds up.

The first season of *Departure* premiered in the U.K. in July 2019, several months before COVID-19 made air travel, temporarily at least, a bittersweet memory for most people. (It aired in Canada in October 2020.) Last August, as a second wave of the pandemic was threatening Canada, Shaftesbury started shooting the second season of the show. Shiao’s mum about plot details, but he did confirm that the new episodes centre around an accident involving a high-speed train. Most of the original cast returned and Christopher Plummer, due to COVID-19 protocols, shot all of his scenes from his home in Connecticut.

Then, in early February, Plummer died at the age of 91. *Departure*, it seemed, was his final project. While the world mourned the passing of a legend—gruff leading man of *The Sound of Music*, mesmerizing star of the Canadian cult classic *The Silent Partner* and, at the time, the oldest actor to ever win an Oscar for *Beginners* in 2012—Shiao was still reeling from the fact that Plummer had spoken his words at all. “He was an absolute legend,” Shiao says.

For Shiao, of course, *Departure* continues. In May, Global green-lit the third season; it will chronicle the aftermath of a deadly ferry accident. Shiao is currently working on the scripts for that, which will begin shooting this fall. He has other projects in the works—some further along, some just a paragraph on his computer—but he remains delighted, and still somewhat surprised, simply with the fact of *Departure*’s existence. “With screenwriting, you have a bunch of ideas, and you turn a fraction of those into actual pilots or feature-length screenplays,” he says. “Like in baseball, you might get on base two or three times out of 10. Meaning you’re tracking interest from producers or a producer options your script. Then, if you’re really, really lucky, you might hit a home run. That’s the equivalent of getting a show made.” ◆

Sponsored post

How cloud-based software - and a human connection - can attract new SMB clients

xero.com/ca

THE challenges businesses have faced during the COVID-19 pandemic have revealed much about the resilience of the entrepreneurial spirit. According to Statistics Canada, even within the industries hit hardest by the pandemic (including accommodation, food services, and retail), business openings exceeded closures this past February, which resulted in an increase in the overall number of active businesses. While some of these were businesses reopening after temporary shutdowns, many of them were actually brand new.

Launching a venture in one of the most challenging eras takes determination, not to mention adaptability. In a recent survey that Xero conducted among 1,200 Canadian small business (SMB) owners, the data showed that two-thirds (67%) agree that the pandemic showed them the value of remaining flexible and adaptable. Moreover, 73% stressed the importance of mastering digital technology in uncertain times.

What this means for your accounting practice is that SMBs are quite open to new ways of doing things. Every business needs an accountant or trusted financial adviser, and one who is tapped into the latest software or technology — like cloud-based solutions — is going to be especially well-positioned to attract new clients. The first step, though, is to get a clearer sense of what these potential clients need and what their current headspace is.

Understanding the SMB headspace

Most new businesses start out as a one or two-person team, meaning they're having to wear multiple hats — and that might mean being the company accountant on some occasions. This is especially true in the early days of a startup when there's no room in the budget to hire a dedicated person for everything that needs to get done.

This do-it-yourself approach can work well, up to a point. As the number of transactions grows, however, there will be more money to manage and therefore, more financial records to keep. That's when the realization can set in that being one's own bookkeeper and accountant is actually a lot of work, leaving many SMB owners feeling overwhelmed, anxious, and perhaps even defeated.

It's important to keep this in mind. Your new, prospective clients may be worrying about everything from work-life balance to meeting their tax obligations and dealing with debt. At the end of the day, they need support and, above all, they need an empathetic ear.

When you meet with them for the first time, focus on making a genuine human connection and listen intently to their needs. Demonstrate that you understand their fears and concerns. This will provide them with more confidence that you are the right accounting adviser for them because, rather than simply trotting out facts and figures about accounting and financial reporting, you're showing them that you have a vested interest in their overall success, beyond the numbers.

Working with them, not for them

Part of making that human connection is reframing the relationship between accountant and client as a collaborative partnership — one where you're not just compiling financial numbers but also supporting every aspect of their business.

Cloud-based solutions can facilitate this collaborative process. At Xero, we offer an extensive suite of tools, including an ecosystem of over 1,000 third-party apps, that allow prospective SMB clients to integrate their accounting platform with the tools they already use and are familiar with. This is one way that your practice can support all of your clients' day-to-day business needs — from accounting to human resources and payroll, to tracking inventory, and more.

The forecasting capabilities of cloud-based accounting software can also help you provide your clients with projections of their business trajectory, and in a way that they can easily understand. This is important because it reinforces the idea that you are working with them, not for them.

Being an adviser to their business

If you're looking to attract new SMB clients to your practice, the real value that you can offer them lies in advisory services. A good adviser will ensure that clients meet their financial obligations, and will use real-time data to ensure that they always know exactly where their business stands.

A performance adviser can analyze the health of a business by using the latest technology to deliver a complete snapshot of crucial financial info in real time. On the other hand, a strategic advisor offers not only data, but also sound expertise — and creative problem-solving — to empower clients to make the best decisions for their business.

Whichever role you take on, make sure that your focus is on building a genuine relationship with prospective SMB clients. It's an uncertain world out there, especially for new businesses, and they're looking for more than just a service provider; they're looking for a teammate. An accounting practice armed with the latest cloud-based solutions — and an empathetic, human touch — can offer just what Canada's SMBs are seeking in an accounting partner. And if you happen to have both, you might just be looking at your practice's newest SMB client.

By Faye Pang

Xero Country Manager, Canada

Prior to joining Xero, Faye helped launch the Uber Eats app in Toronto in December 2015, scaling the business from 80 restaurants on launch day to 20,000 partners by the end of her tenure.

BANK TO THE FUTURE

BY DAVE ZARUM

PHOTOGRAPH BY GUILLAUME SIMONEAU

In 2014, then-Bank of Canada Governor Stephen S. Poloz set out to appoint a chief operating officer, a newly created role at the institution. The COO would not play a part in setting monetary policy but instead oversee all of the Bank's administrative and operational functions—including bank note production—and spearhead strategic planning. It would require a tactical mind capable of wearing many hats with a chameleon-like ability to adapt.

Poloz tapped Filipe Dinis, a CPA with 30 years of public service experience, including roles as assistant secretary to the cabinet of the Privy Council Office and chief financial officer of the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). It was an easy choice, given Dinis' experience leading teams and his eagerness to facilitate change. For Dinis, the opportunity to mold the position from scratch in an evolving organization was too good to pass up. "It was perfect for me," says Dinis from his Ottawa, Ont. home, "because I don't like to stand still."

Neither does the economic landscape, especially in the age of digitization. In response, the scope of the Bank of Canada is expanding.

If you think the Bank just sets interest rates and handles the production of bank notes, think again. Under new governor Tiff Macklem and the guidance of Dinis, the bank is putting together a new strategic plan that will outline its acceleration into the future. From cybersecurity to payment systems, crisis management, digital currencies and overall sector resiliency—the ability to withstand whatever may come—the Bank of Canada is determined to evolve. And Dinis is well equipped to help pull it off. What was already a busy position when he first began seven years ago has suddenly grown into much more.

Central banks have evolved from money printers to think-tanks, leaders and so much more. Here in Canada, CPA Filipe Dinis, COO of the Bank of Canada, is formulating an unprecedented strategic plan and leading the charge.

After graduating from McGill University with a degree in commerce, Dinis left an entry-level position with CIBC in his mid-twenties to work as a uniformed agent with Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA). It was a sharp detour from the financial sector, but, with his sturdy frame and close-cropped haircut, he looked the part. More importantly, it was a first step toward a career in public service.

Dinis, who was born in Portugal and raised in Montreal, moved to Ottawa for his work with CBSA before taking a position with the Foreign Affairs and International Trade department (now Global Affairs Canada), where he proved himself adept at managing multiple stakeholders. Working with officials from Mexico and the United States, Dinis helped standardize border entry requirements under NAFTA. In 1996, while with Global Affairs Canada, he found himself working on the high-profile aerospace trade dispute between Canada and Brazil concerning Bombardier and Brazilian aircraft manufacturer Embraer.

He continued to make a name for himself in the public service sector when, in 2010, there was an opening for the CFO position with CRA. At the time, Charles-Antoine St-Jean had recently served as comptroller general. Now president of CPA Canada, St-Jean advised public sector finance leaders like Dinis that, in order to fulfill the role of CFO, one should have an accounting designation. "This made a lot of sense to me," recalls Dinis. "At the time the CRA had an operating budget of about five billion dollars and did all the accounting for the majority of the government revenues."

Already a self-proclaimed "numbers guy," Dinis didn't need more convincing and, at the age of 45, earned his CPA designation. "It was another aspect that would help me make a strong contribution to the institution."

Given his unique background and collaborative leadership style, Dinis is an ideal figure to play a key role in guiding the central bank's evolution.

"Filipe is highly approachable and has a great ability to be pragmatic—no nonsense," says Ben Gully, assistant superintendent at the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions (OSFI), Canada's regulatory body for its financial institutions. "When it comes to crisis management you need clear, decisive actions or communications and Filipe is very effective in that regard."

Gully is a member of the Canadian Financial Sector Resiliency Group (CFRG), a coalition launched in 2019 that partnered the Bank with public and private sector leaders from institutions like OSFI, the Department of Finance and the "Big 6" banks. Dinis is chair of the group's steering committee. The CFRG meets regularly to enhance the sector's readiness to respond to potential risks. In the face of emerging threats, like cyber attacks, information sharing across multiple organizations is invaluable.

"The relationship between the macro and micro—central banks and regulatory authorities—has definitely evolved and matured," notes Gully who, just over twenty years ago, worked at the Bank of England. "Today, the partnership is a critical one. Central banks have a larger, macroeconomic view. And, clearly, the lesson from the global financial crisis is that micro-prudential supervisors—of which OSFI is one—need to broaden beyond the individual institution."

That notion of managing risk through collaboration is also at the heart of another group Dinis and the Bank of Canada are playing a leading role on, the Resiliency of Wholesale Payments System (RWPS) program, which includes commercial banks and Payments Canada.

The CFRG and RWPS are designed to be essential tools in identifying and managing risks. In response to the pandemic, the CFRG held weekly conference calls and facilitated meetings with everyone from federal leaders to municipal transit authorities as efforts focused on COVID-19 recovery.

"[The Bank] has a leadership role to play," Dinis says. "We're proud of what we're doing by bringing people together and maturing as a whole."

Of course, the small size of Canada's financial sector helps, particularly when compared to that of other nations. During the financial crisis of 2008, it was remarked that you can put all Canadian regulators in one taxi and they can sort things out. In the United States, meanwhile, you'd need several buses. The relatively cleaner system in Canada helps the Bank's ability to lead and help enact real change.

Nowhere has change come faster than in the digital realm. Accelerating the Bank's digital approach has become a particular focus for Dinis.

In the short term, that means the Bank is shifting from "exploring digital," to "doing digital," leveraging proven tech to apply to both monetary policy and operations. Zoom out and the aim is a total shift. "My view is that in order for us to effectively promote the economic and financial well-being of Canada in the digital era, we must become a digital-first central bank in all aspects of our business," says Dinis, who is currently helping to enable the Bank's digital strategy.

Artificial intelligence, machine learning, Big Data, robotic automation and cloud computing are quickly becoming central tenets of the Bank's focus. The topic du jour for Dinis is quantum computing, as the Bank is engaged in a number of experiments exploring everything from digital payment security to quantum-inspired algorithms that work to improve economic modeling.

A key endeavor Dinis is particularly proud of is the Bank's "IdeaSpace," an innovation hub launched in 2017 that partners with academia and the private sector to develop new ideas. Through the hub, the Bank has recently explored payment fraud detection and ways to detect data anomolies.

"In order for us to effectively promote the economic and financial well-being of Canada, we must become a digital-first central bank in all aspects of our business."

Recently, the Bank also launched a central bank digital currency (CBDC) project, which hosted a competition called the "Model X Challenge," enlisting faculty from universities across Canada to share proposals relating to the design of a digital currency.

Among the three finalists was a team from McGill co-led by professor Katrin Tinn, who proposed a concept called asymmetric privacy that aims to limit the possibilities of misuse of consumers' purchasing data. "It means that the money received would have a digital record, but the money sent you cannot associate with the individual who spent it—only the company or persons received," explains Tinn. "So, if I go to buy a coffee at Starbucks, nobody will have the records of it except for me—but there will be a record that somebody bought a coffee from Starbucks."

Proposals like Tinn's could help shape the design of a CBDC, which Dinis and the Bank are exploring for some point in the future. Some experts believe a CBDC could eventually signal the end of paper money.

"There is definitely a lot of thinking going on and Canada has been relatively fast to get involved," says Tinn. "At this point, it would be strange if they didn't develop a CBDC."

It's a long-term project—many of the technologies proposed have yet to be properly tested or, in some cases, invented—as the Bank continues to guide the sector down the path from gold to paper money and, now, data.

While the Bank was one of the first central banks to create an innovation hub, they are becoming more common. CBDC's, too, are being explored around the world—China, for example, is currently testing a digital yuan. They represent important milestones in the Bank of Canada's move to the future.

"In some areas we're leading, in some we're learning from others," Dinis says. "But the important thing is that we're doing something."

Dinis' tenure as a uniformed border security agent only lasted a year and a half, but the experience is one he won't forget. Working from multiple facilities in Montreal, Dinis seized the odd package of contraband—usually agriculture products—and once proudly intercepted a major drug shipment. "That's what it's all about—protecting your country."

It's a mandate that still drives Dinis, so it's not a huge surprise that he has been one of the Bank's biggest proponents for bolstering cybersecurity measures; instead of protecting borders, now he's working to protect a stream of ones and zeroes.

Filipe Dinis believes the Bank of Canada needs to be a "digital-first" enterprise

Beginning with the very first central bank, Sweden's Riksbank, there has always been a relationship between note issuance and security. Traditionally this has come in the form of combating counterfeiting (for example, the original American greenbacks were printed in green because it made them much harder to replicate than had they been black-and-white) and is a reason the Bank has invested heavily in developing the high-tech security features on today's bank notes.

But the threat has evolved beyond counterfeiting into the world of online hacking. Defending against it can feel like a hopeless task, like trying to grab a fistful of water.

"The challenge of this whole cyber field is that there's no right amount of investment that you can make that will result in zero-risk," says Dinis. "So, you really need to apply your risk lens to deciding where you're going to put your next dollar."

In a financial crisis, notes OSFI's Gully, the central bank can facilitate support through capital and liquidity, "but that's not the case for cyber attacks. It's much more about risk management than financial mitigation"

Throughout his tenure at the Bank, Dinis has made strategic and operational decisions that are anchored in financial considerations, a perspective he gained as a CPA. But his CPA background is now also proving valuable in his efforts to strengthen the financial sector through threat assessment.

"Going beyond the numbers," he says, "my designation has influenced how I think about risk. Being able to analyze a complex decision and thinking, not only of what the operational or financial impact would be, but also looking at the big picture and assessing whether there are any new risks requiring mitigation has been crucial."

Recently, the Bank of Canada launched a pilot project with OSFI to assess climate change scenarios as part of a broader ESG agenda as the Bank aims to explore "big questions", like how to assess the risks in making the transition to a low-carbon economy. Add it to the long list of ways the Bank is looking to make the Canadian financial sector more secure and resilient than ever. From exploring digital currencies and other advanced tech, to bridging public and private entities and guarding against potential threats to the sector, there is more to the Bank than meets the eye.

It all makes for an exciting work life for its COO. One day, Dinis is at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg for the unveiling of the Viola Desmond bank note, the next he's dealing with HR matters at the Bank, and the day after that he's chairing a committee meeting between the top financial minds in the country ("My trick as a leader is to surround yourself with people who are much smarter than you are. That's always a good strategy," he chuckles.)

Dinis is juggling a lot. And that's how he prefers it. When it comes to interests outside of work, Dinis defaults to his lifelong love of hockey, which he still plays regularly. Asked what hockey position he plays within the Bank of Canada, his face lights up and he answers without hesitation. "I would be the centre," he says. "The centre sets up teammates and is entrusted to go in the corners. They set the tone and the speed of the game, while being aware that they're just one of six players on the ice for their team, all with different roles and responsibilities."

"But at the end of the day, the centre is a playmaker who carries the puck," says Dinis. "And I like having the puck." ◆

PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRIS ROUSSAKIS

ILLUSTRATION BY MATTHEW BILLINGTON

EXTRAORDINARY ITEM

IN LIVING COLOUR

A Canadian company is bringing another dimension to the competitive world of 3D printing **BY DAVE ZARUM**

In 1986, an American inventor named Chuck Hull was granted the first patent for a 3D printer. Two years later, his company, 3D Systems (the biggest company in the market today), sold its first commercial rapid prototype printer. But consumers had a long wait before 3D printing devices would make their way into their homes (in the meantime, the technology was making its mark: In 1999, the first 3D organ—a human bladder—was printed for transplant use).

It wasn't until 2009 that the at-home market opened up when a company, MakerBot, developed a DIY printer kit for under US$1,000 that can fit on your desktop, along with a website, *Thingiverse.com*, that encourages users to upload and share their myriad design ideas.

Today, there are several brands and models available. Whether you're a hobbyist printer at home manufacturing keychains, a teacher printing replica dinosaur fossils or the Brampton, Ont., father who recently used a 3D printer to build a cast after his toddler fractured his arm, the applications are seemingly endless.

Now, Toronto-based Mosaic Manufacturing is aiming to introduce a new world of colour to 3D printing with the third generation of Palette.

Palette 3 provides multicolour printing capabilities and attaches to any existing fused filament fabrication (FFF) 3D printer. Fused filament fabrication is the most commonly used 3D printing type and utilizes a string-shaped printing material made of plastic or nylon. Printers run on these filaments, which are akin to ink cartridges in traditional 2D printers, depositing them layer by layer to form a 3D object. The range of filament material varies from chopped carbon fibre reinforced with nylon, to a stiffer, more affordable polymer-based material.

Palette 3, which began shipping in the summer, sells for US$599 and can take four separate coloured filaments. For another $200, Palette 3 Pro takes eight filaments.

THE RESULT IS MORE COLOUR AND CUSTOMIZATION, OFFERING NEW LEVELS OF DETAIL TO PROJECTS

The user loads the filaments into Palette, which then feeds them into a splicing system that cuts them and welds them together into a single strand. The result is more colour combinations and customization, offering new levels of detail and creativity to printing projects.

Many industrial 3D printers, by contrast, use the speedier multi jet fusion (MJF) technology, using inkjet-type heads to outline designs on a bed of nylon powder, which is then fused in layers to create a 3D object. Companies developing MJF tech, like B.C.'s Tempus 3D, co-founded by CPA Robert Bleier, are helping to fuel the rapid growth of the market.

According to a KPMG report, global sales of additive manufacturing technology (another term used to describe 3D printers) and services are poised to more than double by 2024 to reach roughly US$35 billion.

It's why there is also buzz over another new Mosaic release, Array, a large-scale 3D printer destined for use in factories (the company says it will be shipping by December). The machine, which resembles a large wine fridge, holds four separate printers and uses proprietary technology to automatically replace printing plates to increase efficiency.

Mosaic is aiming to stake a claim in the growing industrial market, particularly given the events of the past year and a half.

"We witnessed a powerful change in customer sentiment toward domestic manufacturing solutions, especially as foreign supply chains collapsed," says Mosaic co-founder and CEO Mitch Debora, who was named one of MaRS' 21 Canadian tech entrepreneurs to watch in 2021. ◆

TRENDING

MILKING IT

Oat milk latte, anyone? Non-dairy milk sales have skyrocketed and a surge in plant-based eating suggests the nut milk craze may be here to stay. **BY MATTHEW HAGUE**

In early 2021, Geneviève Bolduc, marketing director of Danone Canada's plant-based food and beverages category, noticed a spike in sales. Demand for the oat-based version of Danone's Silk brand of non-dairy drinks had jumped by a whopping 350 per cent. The trend was not a surprise and continued a boom in consumer interest in plant-based beverages accelerated by the pandemic, which Bolduc says has "showcased Canadians' demand for access to healthy, locally sourced products." She points to a newly introduced zero-sugar oat milk option that illustrates just how varied tastes in the category are becoming.

A decade or two ago, non-dairy milks were hard to find in grocery stores. They tended to be relegated to health food shops, nestled between the hemp cereals and crystal deodorants. At the same time, traditional dairy milk has been in a 20-year period of stagnating sales since 2000, according to Statistics Canada data. In contrast, non-dairy beverages are surging in popularity

PHOTOGRAPH BY DANIEL NEUHAUS

“A LOT OF CONSUMER CHOICE IS DRIVEN BY PERCEPTION OF BENEFITS MORE THAN VERIFIED REALITIES”

and taking up more shelf space at Loblaws, Sobeys and other retailers. “Non-dairy beverages were posting dollar sales growth of eight per cent at the end of 2019 compared to one per cent growth for dairy beverages,” says Leslie Ewing, executive director of Plant-Based Foods of Canada.

Some beverage sales have ticked up into the triple digits since the pandemic began. “The dairy alternative category, including beverages and yogurt-style products, is currently valued at $450 million in Canada,” Bolduc says. “This number is only set to grow.”

Part of what drove the COVID-19 bump was that “more people were drinking coffee at home,” says Alison Jackson, EY’s former West Coast consumer leader and currently a managing partner at the firm’s Calgary office. “So, people replicated the choice in milk options from their favourite cafés.”

But Jackson points out that there are other important, non-pandemic drivers for the demand: Approximately 16 per cent of Canadian adults are lactose-intolerant and nearly one-fifth of Canadians are now opting for some type of plant-based diet or limiting the amount of meat they consume.

On the business end, growing consumer interest isn’t the only appeal for non-dairy milk companies. According to a *Forbes* analysis, plant milks offer returns averaging six per cent higher than cattle dairy.

“The dairy industry in Canada is regulated,” says CPA Glenn Fraser, national leader of the food and beverage processing practice for MNP. “Prices are set and producers and processors need to operate within that framework. Non-dairy milk products still face the typical red tape encountered by any food and beverage company launched in Canada but don’t have those same restrictions. I don’t see why non-dairy milk products can’t become mainstream one day.”

Sylvain Charlebois, director of the Agri-food Analytics Lab at Dalhousie University in Halifax, also balks at the notion that non-dairy milks are a fad. “I’m not convinced it’s trend-driven,” he says. “Fundamentals do suggest consumers are looking for alternatives, and oats are particularly of interest since we grow the product in Canada.”

One of the benefits of non-dairy milk, however—the sheer variety of choice—is also one of its main challenges. In any given grocery store, there are oat, cashew, almond, soy, rice, coconut, sweetened, unsweetened, chocolate, vanilla and strawberry options. That adds complexity and possibly confusion for busy shoppers—not to mention the popularity of those options is always in flux. In 2020, an American company called Táche introduced pistachio milk that outsold its own projections by 300 per cent within the first six weeks. Meanwhile, oat may be the flavour du jour, but sales of rice milk are falling.

It can also be confounding to navigate the health messages telegraphed by each non-dairy brand. Brittany Hull, vice-president of marketing at Burnaby, B.C.-based Earth's Own, a popular non-dairy milk maker, believes non-dairy milks will continue finding new customers, in part because of the environmental benefits. "Earth's Own almond milk uses 16 times less land and four times less greenhouse gas emissions compared to cow's milk," she says.

There's nothing to dispute those numbers—or the fact that, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, cattle farming produces 62 per cent of all greenhouse gas emissions from livestock, which is more than pigs, poultry and all other animals combined. But critics of almond milk point to the high volume of water almond farming requires. A study by Oxford University suggests it requires 130 pints of H_2O to produce a single glass of almond milk. Google "Is soy milk healthy?" and you'll find mixed messages.

"It's important to keep in mind that a lot of the consumer choice is driven by perception of benefits more than fully verified realities," says EY Canada's Jackson. She sees a lot of growth potential in non-dairy milks, though she ultimately thinks soy, oat and other options will remain a niche product. "Non-dairy milks still represent less than 20 per cent of traditional dairy sales," she says. "It's still not surprising to go into a grocery store and find they don't have your particular brand of oat milk for sale. If you went into a large grocer and didn't see dairy at all, that would probably make headlines." ◆

RETAIL

SECONDS' CHANCE

Shoppers are lining up to buy castoffs at new bricks-and-mortar retail discounter Krazy Binz. The secret to its success? Selling Amazon returns and making shopping feel like a game.

BY COURTNEY SHEA

The sun was barely up on a hot morning this spring in Alberta Park, a normally sleepy industrial area of Edmonton, and already hundreds of eager bargain hunters—eyeing the competition—had arrived at the newest location of discount retailer Krazy Binz. The crowd had the giddy energy of tweens lined up for Taylor Swift tickets and formed a line that snaked twice around the building.

At 9 a.m., a siren rang and the first group of allotted shoppers rushed

ILLUSTRATION BY KAGAN MCLEOD

inside, some with a particular find in mind, others combing large bins for hidden gems before their 30-minute time limit was up. “It’s like a real-life treasure hunt,” says Krazy Binz general manager Nora Mousa. “Often customers don’t know what it is they’re going to walk away with, but very few shoppers go home empty-handed.”

Mousa and her husband, Mo Tarabieh, made their pandemic career-pivot late last year. Both accountants, they were eager to launch a new business venture and thought the concept behind Krazy Binz—based on a novel American model where shoppers line up to score mystery deals—would work just as well on this side of the border.

In February, they held the grand openings of Ontario stores in Hamilton, Cambridge and London. Since then, Alberta locations have been opened in Calgary, Red Deer and, most recently, Edmonton. By the end of the year, they plan to open three more locations, including in B.C. and Mississauga, Ont.

Shopping at Krazy Binz lands somewhere between a trip to Dollarama and an appearance on a high-drama reality series. Would-be bin divers can either brave the lineups or sign up online via Canadian line management software company, WaitWell. Registration opens 12 hours before the next shopping day and customers (at least those who aren’t waitlisted) get a text with their allotted 30-minute shopping slot in advance.

Inside every Krazy Binz location are between 50 and 100 rough-hewn wooden bins stocked with a random assortment of electronics, clothing, pet supplies, jewellery, cosmetic items, home and kitchen supplies, and other odds and ends. If you can find it on Amazon, it may be somewhere in the heap. The world’s number one online retailer is currently Krazy Binz’s main supplier of overstocked, off-season and grade-A returns (i.e., returned with tags on). The fact that unsorted merchandise gets deposited directly into the bins may be part of the fun, but it’s also intrinsic to the profit model. “If we were paying employees to sort through the items, organize and stock shelves, we wouldn’t be able to offer the kind of low prices that we offer,” says Mousa.

Mousa mentions a shopper in Kitchener, Ont., who scored a smart watch for $3; one in Red Deer got a ring light for $1. Electronics are probably the most popular finds—Dyson hair dryers, PlayStations and even computers are all regularly in the mix. The fact that Krazy Binz has become a destination for online resellers may be worrying for traditional retailers. For Mousa, it just means repeat customers.

For resellers, Krazy Binz’s business model is a no-brainer, says *Retail Insider* founder Craig Patterson.

SHOPPING AT KRAZY BINZ LANDS BETWEEN A TRIP TO DOLLARAMA AND AN APPEARANCE ON REALITY TV

For consumers, the appeal is multi-layered, starting with the thrill factor. “Consumers are no longer wanting to go to a physical location just for the sake of making a purchase,” says Patterson, “so what else are you bringing to the table?” In the case of Krazy Binz, the answer is “gamification,” as staff members plant a series of secret gold and blue eggs among the merchandise. If you find one, you can trade it in for a high-ticket item.

Mousa explains that merchandise is purchased by the truckload but is otherwise vague on specifics. She says they are currently working to develop new retail relationships with other online retailers, especially those that deal with challenges around reverse logistics—that is, returns.

The ability to give a second life to merchandise that would otherwise be discarded may be the true advantage of Krazy Binz's model.

"For so long, it has been about the shift to online, but now that shift has happened," says Daniel Baer, a CPA with EY working in the retail sector. For online operations like Amazon, this has meant major revenue increases over the past year, but it has also presented challenges when it comes to returned merchandise. "For brick-and-mortar stores, managing returns is a relatively simple process, but many online shops don't have the infrastructure to handle returns. Nor do they have the financial means to figure it out," Baer explains. And, so, hundreds of thousands of returns get rerouted to landfills, as demonstrated last October in a CBC *Marketplace* special investigation. "If a business can align themselves with ethical consumerism," Baer points out, "that's going to work in their favour." ◆

TRANSPORT

ROADS TO RECOVERY

In the wake of Greyhound's demise in Canada, a handful of coach lines across the country are vying—and in some cases partnering up—to go where buses had gone before **BY JASON KIRBY**

For residents of the small cities and towns that dot Eastern Canada's roadways, the demise of Greyhound Canada came as a shock. The iconic bus operator had mothballed its fleet in the spring of 2020 when COVID-19 caused ridership to dry up. But, earlier this year, after nearly a century in operation and three years after pulling out of Western Canada, the company made its exit from Canada permanent.

Some rival bus companies, like Megabus, have already jumped in to close the gap on prime routes between major cities like Toronto, Ottawa and Kingston, Ont., where demand is high. Orléans Express in Quebec offers a popular service between Ottawa and Quebec City. Meanwhile, Ontario Northland, a provincial crown transport operator, announced the return of rail service to northern Ontario starting around 2025 after being shut down in 2012. Still, Canada has been left with a fragmented intercity bus system that advocates say leaves many communities with dramatically reduced service and short-changes rural residents, Indigenous riders, students and budget-conscious travellers.

Enter the contenders hoping to build a new national bus network. One initiative is being led by Regina-based Rider Express, which launched in 2017 and now connects roughly 50 cities and towns between Vancouver and Winnipeg. The company had set its sights on expanding into Ontario and Quebec before Greyhound left Canada, but Greyhound's departure has given that plan new urgency.

Rider is in the process of doubling its fleet of 12 buses in order to better service Ontario and Quebec, but isn't planning to go it alone. The company has been in talks with Ontario Northland about linking its booking systems and schedules so passengers can easily plan longer trips, and is looking for other partners to expand its network further east. "It's not always easy or financially viable to do it all ourselves, so we're seeking synergies we can build on," says Rider general manager Omer Kanca.

Thanks to its more streamlined business model, Kanca believes Rider can succeed where Greyhound failed. It doesn't exclusively run its buses out of major terminals, instead partnering with gas stations, rest areas and hotels to act as transit stops, and maintains a thin management structure that further keeps costs down. However, Kanca says some government support

A Coach Atlantic Maritime Bus crossing the Confederation Bridge

would be needed to ensure it and its partners can break even on remote, low-traffic routes.

Meanwhile, in February, four regional motorcoach companies formed a "Coast-to-Coast Bus Coalition" to propose an extensive national bus network covering essential routes using shared software for costs of new intercity buses, similar to what's in place for municipal transit services. "If you're providing scheduled daily line run service, that's public transit on provincial highways," he says.

Supporters of the proposal point to the need to provide safe and affordable transportation to rural and Indigenous communities.

"IT MAKES SENSE TO HAVE AN ECOSYSTEM OF REGIONAL PLAYERS RATHER THAN ONE BIG MONOLITH"

booking reservations and shipping packages. One of the companies, Coach Atlantic Maritime Bus, is run by a family of accountants—founder Mike Cassidy is an FCPA and his wife, Mary Jane, and their three sons are all CPAs. Coach Atlantic operates scheduled bus service across Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and P.E.I., as well as charters, school buses and airport transportation.

Along with the other bus companies that make up the coalition (Wilson's Group in Victoria, Calgary-based Pacific Western Group and Kasper Transportation in Thunder Bay, Ont.), Cassidy envisions a "trans-Canada bus line" supported by the federal government through subsidies for the capital

"It makes sense to have an ecosystem of regional players rather than one big monolithic behemoth [like Greyhound]," says Terence Johnson, president of Transport Action Canada, a consumer advocacy group, which wrote a letter to federal Transport Minister Omar Alghabra backing the coalition's plan.

Whether this push for a national bus network works or not depends a lot on federal support, says Cassidy. Without that, he predicts a further deterioration of intercity bus service. "I think you'll see those carriers redefine what level of responsibility they should carry within their region," he says, "and maybe they'll cut back, do less kilometres." ◆

PHOTOGRAPHS: BUS COURTESY OF **COACH ATLANTIC TRANSPORTATION GROUP**; THE BEATLES COURTESY OF **DISNEY+**

***PIVOT* RECOMMENDS**

Off the clock

BY DAVE ZARUM

Listen

Since its debut season in 2018, which exposed infamous self-help-group-turned-sex-cult NXIVM, CBC's ***Uncover*** has been setting the standard for investigative journalism podcasts. The latest release, "A Death in Cryptoland," investigates the mysterious death of 30-year-old Canadian "crypto tycoon" Gerald Cotten. After it's revealed that he was the only person with the passcodes to accounts holding nearly a quarter of a billion dollars worth of cryptocurrencies, Cotten's death immediately unravels "a cataclysmic chain of events."

▲

Watch

After assembling over 100 hours of footage for his First World War documentary, *They Shall Not Grow Old*, director Peter Jackson returns to the archives for ***The Beatles: Get Back***, taking viewers inside the studio during the January 1969 recording of *Let It Be*, the band's final album released. Jackson combed through 56 hours of archival material to offer a view into the creative process behind one of music's most prolific hit-machines. *Available for streaming on Disney+*

Read

This October, on the 60th anniversary of his debut, *Call for the Dead*, John le Carré's 26th and final novel, ***Silverview***, will hit bookstores in Canada. Le Carré, who died last December at the age of 89, produced a bestseller every decade from 1960 onward, building a legacy with Cold War thrillers like *The Spy Who Came in From the Cold* and *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy. Silverview* was le Carré's only complete, unpublished novel.

CLASSIFIEDS

Accounting Services

Is your practice inspection coming up this year? Do you need your annual or tri-annual files or policies monitored as required under the CSQC1? Would you like your financial statements reviewed to ensure they meet or exceed all of the ASPE, IFRS or not for profit reporting standards. Do you have files that require External Quality Control Review? If yes, then please call us, the external monitoring and reporting experts. We have over 36 years of practical hands on experience. When excellence counts, please contact us at 416-835-3283 or visit www.orbstqualityassurance.com

Enhance your CPA. Focus on strategic numbers, resources, memories and questions as a Chartered Memory Steward. One hour free webinar eligible for PD. Cmscanada.org

External Monitoring

EXTERNAL MONITORING, CYCLICAL FILE INSPECTIONS, ENGAGEMENT QUALITY CONTROL REVIEWS, DETAILED FILE REVIEWS, FINANCIAL STATEMENT PRESENTATION REVIEWS, COMPLEX TRANSACTIONS, AUDIT SUPPORT. Over 25 years of experience, practice inspection committee member, IFRS, ASPE, ASNPO specialist, public company experience. Visit www.jonesoconnell.ca, call 905-688-4842, or email email@jonesoconnell.ca

Practice Wanted

An Ottawa CPA, CA, CPA(ILL.), CFP, TEP is looking to purchase an existing practice or block of accounts. I am open to a practice anywhere in the Ottawa area. Contact OttawaCPA98@gmail.com

Professional Opportunities

YONGE STREET AT YORK MILLS IN TORONTO. Great shared space with several CPA firms. Includes access to boardroom, can also include tax library, software and staff. Retiring CPA's could move in, or sell block of accounts. Wayne 416-733-4578 ext. 228 or wayne@mg-cpa.ca

Practise for sale. No audits. No reviews. Experienced and competent office manager handles bookkeeping, basic T1 preparation and tax audits. Gross $225,000, of personal tax, and NTR corps. Burlington / Hamilton area. Can include building. Hourly billing rate $350. Ed@Taxwizz.com

York Region CA CPA Sole practitioner seeking successor grossing $400,000+ reply to yorkcpa75@gmail.com

Hamilton, Ontario CPA, with office and 2 employees, seeking transition, merger, partnership, succession arrangement. Excellent opportunity for new CPA or home office accountant, looking to move up to professional office, and merge practice. Please reply in confidence to hamcpa@outlook.com

Oakville CPA practitioner seeks successor for highly profitable practice with $750k of annual billings to corporate and personal tax clients (no reviews or audits). Grade A office space included. Owner seeking to gradually retire over next several years. Flexible arrangements considered. Would suit entrepreneurially minded sole proprietor or young partnership with existing nucleus of clients. Contact oakvillecpafirm@gmail.com

DEN MOTHER

35-year-old CPA Sarah Cheng started her company, Bluish, to celebrate maternal resilience—one tulle skirt at a time **BY ZIYA JONES**

After my first baby was born, I developed the baby blues. It lasted for about six months. I'd been working 12-hour days at my accounting job then all of a sudden I stopped when my mat leave started. **I struggled with that shift in identity.**

I really wanted something we could do together that was just for us. I started dressing us up in matching tulle skirts. She was this squishy little baby so it was really cute. And it made us both happy! **I started Bluish selling tulle skirts,** so other mothers could have a similar experience.

For five years, it was my side hustle. Then I went through a pregnancy loss that threw me out of orbit. **Recovering from that grief changed my focus.** I decided to take on Bluish full-time.

Last year, **I was invited to pitch the business on *Dragons' Den*** and all the judges showed a lot of interest. I was eight months pregnant when we filmed the show. It was a lot of anxiety! But presenting and public speaking weren't new for me; I drew on my accounting skills to make my pitch. At the end of the show, they extended a deal to us.

At our core, **we're about supporting mothers in their struggles**—whether its baby blues or loss or illness—and celebrating their strength. We believe in women choosing to be more than their blues, choosing their happiness. To build our community, we put together newsletters and an editorial that highlighted different struggles that are common to women.

If other women are mulling over launching a new project, I'd encourage them to just give it a shot. Be honest about what really motivates you and give yourself permission to try it. If, at the end of the day, you decide your project isn't something you want to continue to pursue, **don't be afraid to stop.**

A customer sent me a note recently thanking me for our product but also for taking care of mothers' souls. At the end of the day, we're a business. But I hope our message keeps resonating with people—**we want to be a business with a heart.**

PHOTOGRAPH BY CLAUDINE BALTAZAR


NETHERWOOD
1894
ROTHESAY N.B.
True, our students wear uniforms.
But there's nothing uniform about them.
SINCE 1877, Rothesay Netherwood School has been committed to educating, celebrating and supporting each and every one of our students so that they can be their very best. We offer rigorous academics in a beautiful, safe community that is supported by low student-teacher ratios and a world-class IB curriculum. And our daily Advisor Program ensures all our students are truly thriving emotionally and socially from day one.
Visit rns.cc today to find out more or to arrange a visit.
It's our nature to nurture.
1877
ROTHESAY NETHERWOOD SCHOOL