

Smith

SPRING 2022

NEW
LOOK!

Vol. 67—No. 1

SMITH MAGAZINE | SPRING 2022

Gift Giver

How Robin Kovitz created a better gift basket and built one of Canada's fastest growing companies

Once Upon a Time

Writing books for kids isn't child's play. Just ask these three authors

Convince Me

TED Talks star Niro Sivanathan on how to be persuasive

Closing the Gap

Colin Lynch and other Smith alumni are helping diverse entrepreneurs find new ways to grow

Smith School of Business

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Alumni Notes



Happy trails

DAN TISCH, EMBA'96, and his parents, Feder Tisch and Edie Edvartia Tisch, took a trip in December to Brasília to explore their family history. The visit took them from the bustling capital, Brasília, to rural gaucho country near the Brazilian border. "Gosh, what a trip!" he writes.

times in their lives and countries. People reach out through a host site, such as IssuesInFace.com, and are paired with a mentor who journeys with them through life's challenges. It's been really rewarding work!"

2000s

PETER GRA...

Queen's women's water polo team that achieved a silver medal for the first time since 1993. Go Gaels!"

MICHAEL STEIN, BCom'93, lives in Vancouver and almost 15 years in finance in Eastern Europe. I downshifted and founded Colindale Beach Villas, which provides executive-class accommodation on a beachfront property not far from Cabor Cliffs Golf Course in beautiful Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. Michael is also an adviser to CyberLucent, a Canadian cybersecurity company founded by **STEPHEN MACEWEN, MBA'98, BSc(Eng)'94**, colindalebeachvillas.ca



LEANNE HILL, BCom'99, has been working in the travel industry for the last 20 years. Recently, she accepted a position with Royal Caribbean International as the strategic account manager for Western and Central Canada. Leanne lives in North Vancouver, B.C. where she enjoys hiking and the outdoors. Most of all, she enjoys spending time with her two French Bulldogs, Lewi and Mr. Fitz.

on two boards: The Canadian Professional Sales Association and the Volunteers in School program. Richard lives in Oakville, Ont.

DORRIE MANU, BCom'96, has expanded her ministry role with Cru to start a strategic digital marketing team. She also serves with the Canadian digital marketing team. "Dorrie, a connector, is living and thriving in the digital age."

RICHARD BARBER, EMBA'97, has been appointed chief client officer of Bridgepoint Financial. In 2021, Richard received the Institute of Corporate Directors' ICD.D designation. He also serves

JACQUELINE CHILTON, BCom'93, is excited to share that her daughter, Jessica, is enjoying her first year at Smith in the Commerce program. She is co-captain of the

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Submissions will be published in the next issue of Smith Magazine.

Visit: smithqueens.com/alumninotes

Smith

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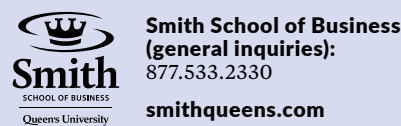
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FSC



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INSIGHT



Making an impact

I CAN'T TELL YOU how excited I am that in-person events are back! Since Covid-19 restrictions have loosened, I have had the distinct pleasure of connecting with students in and out of the classroom, meeting with our Advisory Board in Toronto, our Global Council in New York, and participating in the rollout of the Principal's Strategic Plan (queensu.ca/principal/strategy), "For the Future: Re-imagining Education for Impact" during an event held in Toronto's historic Distillery District.

These are among many events and interactions with students and alumni that are helping me get better acquainted with the Smith and Queen's communities. I am ramping up my travel, and I look forward to connecting with more alumni across Canada and around the world in the near future.

I have also been participating in leadership panels with *The Globe and Mail* and the global business school association EFMD, as well as having meetings with the mayor of Kingston, Kingston Economic Development and the Business Schools Association of Canada. The latter two organizations both recently appointed me as a board member.

I have talked a lot about the future of business education and the need for what we do—our teaching, research and, ultimately, our graduates—to have an impact on society. If companies are expected to have a positive influence in their communities and the world, so too must business schools. I encourage you to read my thoughts on the importance of business schools having a social impact and how business education must evolve to meet the changing expectations of organizations, in a piece I wrote for *Smith Business Insight*, "Training future leaders to thrive" (find it at smithqueens.com/insight). The new Queen's strategy is in line with this vision—re-imagining educational programs to prepare our students to have an impact on the world throughout their lives.

This issue of *Smith Magazine* is filled with stories of Smith students and alumni who are already making an impact. Here are just a few examples:

- Smith Commerce students, alongside their Engineering counterparts, raised \$339,000 for the Canadian Cancer Society ("Commerce shoots. And scores!", pg. 7).
- UPstart Venture Challenge winners Kelly Thomson and Mehwish Panjwani, both BCom'16, created reusable packaging for e-commerce ("UPstart winner tackles trash", pg. 8).
- Several Smith alumni have stepped up with funding solutions for Black, Indigenous and other diverse entrepreneurs ("Closing the funding gap", pg. 20).
- Juniper Park, an ad agency led by Jill Nykoliati, BCom'93, created Signal For Help—a hand gesture that lets abused and abducted women call for help ("Adventures in Advertising", pg. 26).
- The Wema breast pump, created by Sahar Jamal, BCom'11, Artsci'11, is reducing the risk of infant death by helping moms in Kenya breastfeed longer ("Empowering working moms in Africa", pg. 40).

As a community, it's important that we stay connected. Please update your profile on SmithConnect.com if you are interested in mentoring a student or are available for coffee chats. We always need guest speakers in our classes and at student events. Please email the Alumni Engagement team (smithalumni@queensu.ca) if you can volunteer the time to share your experience and career journey with our students.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to me directly with your ideas for how we can engage the alumni community, support our students and enhance the impact of Smith around the globe.

Wanda M. Costen, PhD
Dean, Smith School of Business
at Queen's University
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SCHOOL NEWS • PROFESSORS • STUDENTS • CLASSROOM

Commerce shoots. And scores!

A **SOLD-OUT CROWD** of 5,000 people turned out to the Kingston Leon's Centre in March to watch the Commerce vs. Engineering Rivalry Game hosted by the Cure Cancer Classic, a not-for-profit run by Smith Commerce and Queen's Engineering students.

For the first time in the event's history, Commerce took home the win with a shootout victory. Combined with proceeds from the organization's three previous events—a golf tournament and two hockey tournaments—sponsorship and match funding via government grant, students raised over \$339,000, which they presented to the Canadian Cancer Society after the game.



Purda takes on a new role



There's a new associate dean at Smith. Longtime finance professor **LYNNETTE PURDA** became associate dean (graduate programs) on Jan. 1. She oversees the Doctoral Program in Management (PhD) and Master of Science in Management (MSc). Both are research-based programs.

Purda, who is also the RBC Fellow of Finance, says she's delighted with her new role. "Smith has really proven itself as a great research institution and we still have so many opportunities with these programs."

This year marks Purda's 20th year on faculty. During that time, she has taught students across multiple programs, including Commerce, the EMBA, Master of Finance (both Toronto and Beijing) and the Master of Financial Innovation & Technology.

Purda says she's looking forward to working with her fellow faculty on the MSc and PhD programs. "We have so many experts that we can tap into. For our students, the key piece is that mentorship."

Most doctoral candidates, of course, are looking for careers in academia. So are some MSc students who

plan to next get their PhD. However, some people now take the 12-month program with an eye toward a career in industry or government.

"That strength in research allows you to tackle different problems," says Purda. "And with the huge amount of data available in every industry, having someone who can do more analysis can be really beneficial to a company."

The associate dean (graduate programs) is a new position. Previously, one associate dean oversaw both graduate programs and research. But the job has now been split in two. A new associate dean (research) is to be announced.

New master's degree in digital

Digital transformation is sweeping the business world. Companies need experts who can make it work. That's why Smith just launched the Master of Digital Product Management (MDPM).

The 12-month program is delivered virtually and it trains managers to lead digital product management and to make tech investments live up to their potential. The first class starts in September.

KATHRYN BROHMAN, associate professor and Distinguished Faculty Fellow of Digital Technology, is the program's director. "Every business today is a digital business . . . effective digital product management is no longer an asset. It's a competitive imperative," she says. Organizations spend hundreds of billions of dollars annually on digital

measures, but a recent survey of global business executives found that a whopping 78 per cent of those investments do not achieve the expected results.

Smith has partnered with Queen's University's School of Computing on the MDPM. Nicholas Graham, a professor from the computing school, is the program's academic director. The curriculum includes learning in digital strategy and innovation, gamification and usability, cybersecurity, product analytics, systems architecture and user experience.

Jessica Creces chairs the MDPM's advisory board. The senior executive at Cinplex Digital Media says it's unusual for people to inherently have the capabilities to lead digital product management. So it's important to build those skills. "The best product managers are able to think strategically about business and market direction while holding technical credibility on details with engineering and development teams," she says.

The MDPM is the latest Smith graduate program that addresses business' high-tech, big-data needs. The Master of Management Analytics (MMA) program was created in 2013, followed by the Master of Management in Artificial Intelligence (MMAI) in 2018 and

the Master of Financial Innovation & Technology (MFIT) in 2020.

UPstart winner tackles trash

When the pandemic hit, e-commerce surged. Roommates **KELLY THOMSON, BCom'16** and **MEHWISH PANJWANI, BCom'16**, quickly found space in their Toronto apartment taken over by packaging from their online orders.

"Neither of us wanted to be the one to spend an hour breaking down the boxes and dealing with moving them out," Thomson recalls. "We had this moment: 'Hey, this is really annoying for us as consumers and it's awful for the planet.'"

There had to be a better solution. Armed with Thomson's background in supply chain and cost optimization with Bain & Company, and Panjwani's strategy and operations design experience with the Boston Consulting Group, they set out to create a reusable e-commerce packaging solution.

The result—and winner of \$40,000 in Smith's annual UPstart Venture Challenge



Quil's Mehwish Panjwani (left) and Kelly Thomson

Exchange is back!

This key feature of the Smith Commerce program has resumed. **PAISIA WARHAFT, Comm'23**, got a head start on her travels, exploring southeast Asia (including Ubud Monkey Forest in Bali, Indonesia) before beginning her studies in Japan at Rikkyo University's College of Business. During the 2020-2021 academic year, international exchange programs were cancelled due to Covid.



in December—is Quil. The company (shopquil.com) sells reusable packaging made from recycled nonwoven polypropylene. Its bags come in three sizes and are already used by Prana Vida, Uncle Studios, H Ernest Project and Atelier B.

“We cold-emailed 30 brands and said, ‘Hey, we’re bringing reusable packaging to Canada,’” Thomson recalls. That was July 2021. By November, bags were shipping to customers (selected as an option at checkout). Once delivered, Quil bags fold up for drop-off in any Canada Post mailbox, with a prepaid return label.

Customers like it and have even taken the time to leave reviews to that effect on their favourite brands’ websites, Thomson notes. Quil is also adding more brands, including Sunday the Label, a maternity and nursing wear apparel brand launched by **KATIE CALLERY, MMIE'17**.

Thomson says they also have big ideas on how to further redesign the

e-commerce channel.

“There needs to be a new e-commerce world that’s not only more efficient but better for the planet. We think the first piece of that is packaging . . . but we ultimately want to get into the reverse logistics—how to deal with product returns and how to get product to and from customers more efficiently.”

Making business education more accessible

For **CAITLIN MACCUISH**, Smith’s new scholarship for Indigenous students helped her feel more comfortable returning to school for her MBA. “As a Métis woman in business, I appreciate how vital it is to increase Indigenous representation in business management and

ownership,” she says.

In March, Smith announced new scholarships for two equity-deserving groups. The Smith School of Business Scholarship for Indigenous Students and Smith School of Business Scholarship for

Black Students are available across the school’s MBA, professional master’s and graduate diploma programs.

“Scholarships like these give under-represented populations in business a much-needed seat at the table,” MacCuish says. In 2016, the Calgary native completed her undergrad in history at Queen’s followed by Smith’s Graduate Diploma in Business (GDB). She is now a student in the Full-time MBA class of 2023.

Applicants who self-identify as Indigenous or Black are eligible for the \$10,000 scholarships. They will be awarded each year based on academic excellence, community involvement and leadership experience.

“The business world is diverse and the classroom experience should reflect that diversity. Increasing financial award options is one way we are working towards this,” Dean Wanda Costen says.

Briefly

JAY WRIGHT, BCom'81, is the new chair of the Smith School of Business Advisory Board. The retiring president of Arterra Wines assumed the role in March. He took over from **MARYANN TURCKE, MBA'97, BSc(Eng)'88**, whose three-year term as chair ended. (Read an interview with Wright at smithqueens.com/magazine.)

A case study co-authored by Professor **ANTON OVCHINNIKOV** exploring a people-analytics approach to tackling post-merger employee count reduction took first place in the Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences (INFORMS) case competition.

NANCY SAMMON, a relationship manager in the Career Advancement Centre, was recognized with a 2021 Special Recognition for Staff Award from Queen’s. She was honoured for her work connecting the school and student diversity groups with companies and initiatives focused on increasing representation in business.

Analytically speaking

Professor Ceren Kolsarici is using her passion for numbers to make the world a better place

BY REBECCA HARRIS

IF THERE'S A MAXIM that helps explain the world of **CEREN KOLSARICI**, it's Aristotle's "the more you know, the more you realize you don't know."

"The extremely successful people I look up to are also the most humble," says Kolsarici, an associate professor, Ian R. Friendly Fellow of Marketing and director of the Scotiabank Centre for Customer Analytics (SCCA). "And it's because they are so self-aware and also conscious of their limitations . . . it makes them grounded."

Kolsarici uses the quote to illustrate a trait in people she respects, but she's also describing herself in a way. "I am a person who just likes learning, not only in my professional life but outside of my job as well," she says. "I get interested in different things and it evolves constantly."

Those interests include scuba diving, soccer (she grew up watching soccer in her native Turkey and played on the Smith faculty team), and Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) events. She also enjoys CrossFit and kickboxing (she's a brown belt) and took up tennis during the pandemic. She loves listening to classical novels on an audio book app while walking her dog. She also writes short stories and dreams of writing a novel one day.

Kolsarici's early love was math. It led her to get a bachelor's degree in industrial engineering at Middle East Technical University (METU) in her hometown of Ankara, Turkey's capital. But while she relished the quant side of things, Kolsarici soon realized an industrial engineering career wasn't for her. So after graduation, she studied marketing and got her MBA. She then moved to Canada to pursue a PhD at McGill University in Montreal. She joined the

faculty at Smith in 2009.

"Consumers really interest me," says Kolsarici, whose research explores artificial intelligence, big data and analytics applications for the design, evaluation and implementation of marketing programs. "It's such a compelling domain. It links to sociology, psychology, optimization, economics, mathematics and data. There is so much we can do in marketing to influence managerial decision-making and make things work more efficiently if we can understand how consumers act and why."

It's not just about getting people to buy more stuff, either. In her director role, Kolsarici speaks of the things that bring her joy. One is working with organizations and making a real-world impact on their decision-making and customers. The SCCA brings together researchers, graduate students and business people across disciplines and industries to work on applied projects to deliver a re-imagined customer experience.

"We try to look at our work at the SCCA in a broader sense and not only how to increase a company's profitability or make consumers buy more products," says Kolsarici. For example, the "AI for Good" project brings together faculty from diverse fields across Smith and Queen's University to use artificial intelligence for social good. Some current research projects explore the accessibility of AI for social enterprises, human trust in AI systems, and issues of bias, fairness, transparency and privacy in AI systems.

"It's about increasing the well-being of consumers, employees and society, and we have so many faculty members with years of expertise, and they're all contributing to that cause together," Kolsarici explains.

That includes her Turkish-born husband, associate professor and assistant dean (teaching and learning), **ARCAN NALCA**. The pair met while studying at METU. They have a 10-year-old son, who was born in Kingston. "It's not always easy to be an immigrant . . . and trying to build your career in a different country with a different language is a challenge, but I think we've done well," says Kolsarici. "This feels like home." ■

GUESS WHO'S COMING TO DINNER?

IN OCTOBER, students in the Executive MBA program crossed the world for a week of international study. The big trip is a new compulsory elective that takes students to one of Smith's international business school partners.

For its inaugural run, students could choose to visit ESADE Business School in Barcelona or the National University of Singapore. Due to pandemic restrictions, students were set to attend class virtually this year. But luckily, travel to ESADE got the green light just in time.

On their trip, the EMBA students travelled back and forth between ESADE's two campuses for classes on geopolitics and the European Union. In their downtime, they took part in a scavenger hunt around the city, a Spanish cooking class and a winery tour.

They also had a special Smith tour guide: Professor **RICARD GIL!**

Gil, who teaches managerial economics in the EMBA, grew up in Barcelona and just happened to be in town while on a sabbatical. He treated the students to a tour of the Gothic Quarter and trendy neighbourhood of El Born, followed by dinner at one of his favourite restaurants: Set Portes in the district of Ciutat Vella. "This restaurant is a classic that's been open since 1836 and showed students what old spaces looked like back in the day," he says, noting that, if you're ever passing by, you should try the house paella, one of the restaurant's specialties. ■



PROGRAMS

Financial access

The MFin program finds a new group of students

THE PANDEMIC WAS A GREAT time for businesses to try new things. Universities too. Remote teaching opened up a whole lot of possibilities. Case in point, Smith's Master of Finance-Toronto program.

MFin classes are normally held in person—one night each week and once every second weekend—at Smith-Toronto. Since students work full time, the program attracts people living in the Greater Toronto Area who can easily make the commute to school.

But during Covid, classes went online. Suddenly, having to get to downtown Toronto on a Monday night wasn't a prerequisite. As a result, MFin began to attract a wider audience—from Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver and other parts of Ontario.

"We were giving access to a whole group of people who never could have attended otherwise," says program director **EMILY SAUNDERS.**

Rather than forgo those potential students as MFin returns to in-person learning this year, Saunders and her team have now created a new MFin section: "MFin Blended", which starts this June. Enrolled students will follow the same curriculum as in-person students but attend remotely. They'll also take part in two residential sessions: in Kingston in June and Toronto in January,

alongside their fellow classmates who attend classes in person.

The Master of Finance-Toronto program has experienced solid growth since it launched 12 years ago with 43 students. It now typically enrolls 110 students in two sections (55 students per section). Adding a third section in the form of MFin Blended will increase those numbers, says the program's founder, Professor **SEAN CLEARY.** But, he adds, "it's not about growing the program so much as it is about providing more access." ■

To serve and consult

Smith students are on the case for local police

BY PHIL GAUDREAU

THERE'S A GROUP of specialists that get called on for the tough cases. Armed with just their brains, computers and an arsenal of questions, they get deployed into the field when there are issues to tackle and stories to investigate.

They are Smith Business Consulting (SBC), a student-run management consulting firm that has, for nearly 50 years, brought the skills and talent of Commerce students to bear in solving organizational challenges.

SBC works like a traditional consulting practice. Teams of upper-year consultants, supported by a fourth-year manager, take on client projects for a term. The students' efforts are part of a study course, Comm 504, which accepts 14 students each semester, plus a few in the summer.

"Smith Business Consulting is all about offering team-based experiential learning, which helps students develop contemporary consulting skills in a performance environment," says Charlie Mignault, director of SBC and an adjunct professor at Smith. "Once students are selected, I have an understanding of their academic interests and career aspirations, which assists me in finding clients and projects that match their goals."

The clients are diverse and span everything from agri-business to development and even police services. Late last year, the new chief of the Gananoque Police Service, Scott Gee, phoned Mignault seeking a sequel to a strategic plan previously prepared by SBC.

The team, comprised of **VENI SUBRAMANIAN, Comm'22** and **HENGJIA ZHANG, SAM HOLLINRAKE, BISHOY ATTIA** and **ALEXANDRA HOOK, all Comm'23**, centred the scope of their project around three focus areas the police service had: internal operational excellence, commitment to citizen protection and building community engagement. "From the pillars we defined, we gathered insights through interviews and surveys, engaged the citizens on the street

and turned those into recommendations for the police services board," Zhang explains.

"The team was dedicated to learning about our business and developed a highly customized plan that we can move forward with," said Gee, in Gananoque, Ont. "We especially appreciated that they understood the need to look at our strategy through an equity, diversity, inclusivity and Indigeneity lens." The plan included means of measuring success in providing professional service to racialized and Indigenous citizens, senior citizens, and those with mental health conditions.

The four-year strategic plan received board approval in January.

For Hollinrake, working with the local businesses in the development of the plan and hearing how grateful they were for the work being done offered some insight into what her future career might look like. "It highlighted that 'why' factor for us—that I can make a true impact on the community using the skills I build across my four years in this program," she says. "Being part of Smith Business Consulting was one of the best decisions I made." ■



On the Rhodes

A Commerce graduate gets the opportunity of a lifetime



WHAT DO Bill Clinton, country singer Kris Kristofferson and author Naomi Wolf have in common? They're all Rhodes Scholars. For more than a century, the world's best and brightest have gone to Oxford University on the famed scholarship.

Among the latest Rhodes Scholars is **JANE HUTCHINGS, BCom'21, GDA'21**. She's one of just 11 Canadians and 104 people worldwide this year to get what the Rhodes Trust calls "the

world's most pre-eminent postgraduate scholarship."

Hutchings grew up in St. John's and works at Deloitte in Toronto. She's off to England in September to earn two master's degrees over two years. She says she applied to the scholarship because "other Rhodes Scholars from Newfoundland always seemed to be doing amazing things. I thought what an opportunity that would be."

A Commerce degree wasn't in the cards for Hutchings growing up. She intended to study medical sciences. But her interest in business was piqued when, in Grade 11, she took part in a summer program that included a *Dragons' Den*-style pitch competition. Receiving the D&R Sobey Atlantic Scholarship (awarded to students from Atlantic Canada) allowed her to attend Smith.

At Oxford, Hutchings is taking a Master of Public Policy in her first year. In her second year, she's interested in studying global governance or financial economics. These line up with her career ambitions of working in international diplomacy and trade and, eventually, running for office in Newfoundland & Labrador. Regarding the latter, Hutchings wants to grow the province's rural economies while preserving local cultures.

It's a passion that Hutchings got first-hand experience with at Smith. She worked with Professor **TINA DACIN** on research that looked at community custodianship on Newfoundland's Fogo Island, where a mix of tourism, arts and fishing is revitalizing fortunes.

Hutchings points to Fogo Island and other efforts—such as one in Ireland to establish "remote work hubs" in small towns—as examples of how the province's rural communities can prosper. "There are a lot of cool things around the world that we can learn from," she says. "Innovation and new development can happen anywhere." ■

A NEW AVENUE

Commerce club partners to provide students access to direct-message mental health support

SOMETIMES STUDENTS JUST NEED a safe place to talk. A space where they can unload or vent about everyday struggles, academic pressures, relationships and school/life balance.

"Our generation loves to text, and it can be much easier to confess things and talk about your feelings over messaging because you don't have to do it face-to-face and you don't have to put a voice to it," says

FINN PRICE, Comm'22.

That's where Overflo, a youth mental wellness support service, comes in. In March 2021, the Queen's Commerce Mental Health Association (QCMHA) joined forces with the Toronto-based company on a pilot to provide a secure, direct-messaging service for first-year Commerce students to access mental wellness coaching and support. Price was QCMHA's partnership director at the time. "Really, we just wanted another avenue for students to get the support they needed."

The initiative was renewed for this school year and made available across all four Commerce years. It's funded by a contribution from **JEN HAMILTON, BCom'98**. Hamilton is co-founder of the Room to Breathe Project, which partners with organizations to provide social and emotional well-being knowledge and practices to youth and adults.

"There was some nice overlap between our mission and vision at Room to Breathe and the work happening here," Hamilton explains.

As of March, over 60 students had registered on the platform and connected with Overflo coaches to talk through issues such as dating and relationships, body image, burnout, social anxiety, career uncertainty and more.

"Having been through the Commerce program, I understand that there are so many different stressors and so many different levels of stress," Hamilton says, noting that, while sometimes those require more support, sometimes they really just need a lighter touch. "And with the world being much more connected now than it was 20 or so years ago, I think it's the right time to bring in some of these alternatives," she says. ■





The gentle art of persuasion

People tend to over-argue when trying to make a point. To convince someone, less is usually more, says Niro Sivanathan

BY JORDAN WHITEHOUSE

IN 2019, NIRO SIVANATHAN, MSC'02, Artsci'01, took the stage at TED Talks to give a speech about something most of

us could use help with: How to be more convincing. About halfway through, Sivanathan asked his audience to consider TV drug ads. Specifically, the voiceovers at the end of those ads that hurriedly list a drug's many side effects. Some are major side effects, such as internal bleeding. Others are minor, like itchy feet.

Sivanathan then asked the audience to imagine a sleep drug ad that only listed the major side effects of a heart attack and stroke. "Now, all of a sudden, you're thinking, 'I don't mind staying up all night,'" he told the crowd with a smile. "Turns out, going to sleep is important. But so is waking up."

This idea formed the basis of a study Sivanathan published a couple of years earlier in *Nature Human Behaviour*, one of the world's top science journals. It found that people exposed to both the major and minor side effects of a sleep aid in an ad rated the drug's

overall severity to be significantly lower than those only exposed to the major side effects. By listing both major and minor side effects in their ads, pharmaceutical companies weakened people's judgments of the overall risk of taking a drug and thereby increased the marketability of their drugs.

This finding isn't limited to selling pharmaceuticals. It's a well-documented judgment bias called the "dilution effect." For the past several years, Sivanathan (who holds a bachelor in psychology from Queen's in addition to the Master of Science in Management he earned at Smith) has taught the dilution effect to students at the London Business School, where he is a professor of organizational behaviour.

He also uses it to advise business leaders on how to be more persuasive. The main point he tries to get across when talking to them about the dilution effect: stick to your

Is it time for a four-day workweek?

BY KRISTEN SEARS

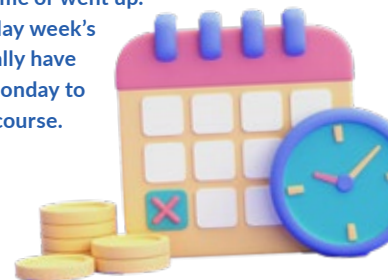
In 1926, Henry Ford created the five-day workweek. Until then, Ford employees put in 10 hours a day, six days a week. Now, they'd work eight hours a day, Monday to Friday. His competitors thought him mad. But Ford's productivity shot up. Soon the five-day week became the standard for industry.

A century later, is it time for a shorter week? Professor Tina Dacin thinks so. The pandemic has upended many long-held beliefs about work—like people must be in an office to work effectively. As the “Great Resignation” shows, employees are rethinking how much they want to work, and where. “They’re taking a hard look at their lives—including their jobs—and re-evaluating what’s important to them. In many cases, what’s not important to people is staying in their jobs,” she says.

Dacin believes now is the time for a “Great Experimentation” in work, and that includes trialing a four-day week. Research backs her up. A study out of Henley Business School in the U.K. found that 63 per cent of businesses already implementing the four-day model found it easier to attract and retain the right talent. Seventy-one per cent also said it helped attract and retain employees with children or those with family-care responsibilities.

Research in Iceland, meanwhile, showed improvements across a range of indicators, from perceived employee stress and burnout to health and work-life balance. And it didn't come at the cost of productivity, which stayed the same or went up.

The four-day week's time may finally have come. Just Monday to Thursday of course.



strongest arguments.

Sivanathan clearly knows a thing or two about the art of persuasion. That TED Talk, titled “The counterintuitive way to be more persuasive”, has almost two million views online and was named one of TED’s most popular talks of 2021.

Sivanathan became interested in how judgment biases impact decision-making and communication while earning his PhD. “It was fascinating to see that the way in which you frame information, present choices and structure proposals has a path-dependent impact in your ability to be more influential.”

Take the dilution effect, first used by social psychologists Richard E. Nisbett, Henry Zukier and Ronald E. Lemley in 1981. They found that when research participants were presented with both relevant and non-relevant information about other people, participants made less-extreme judgments about those people than when they only considered relevant information.

In the context of persuasion, weaker arguments tend to dilute stronger arguments. In other words, when we try to convince others by presenting them with all the arguments we have, we actually weaken our case.

The most convincing reason for why the dilution effect occurs is all about the law of averages, says Sivanathan. When we take in information, we give each piece a weighted score. Strong arguments get a higher score than weak arguments. But we don't add up all of those scores. We average them. So irrelevant or weak arguments tend to reduce the weight of the overall argument.

This is why Sivanathan tells business executives and entrepreneurs to focus on their most compelling arguments and ditch the rest. “I see it all the time in M&A transactions or negotiations or pitches to angel investors,” he says. “They pepper their slides with ‘15

ways we’re going to disrupt the fintech industry’. Or the ‘10 benefits of this over Uber’. That’s the wrong, wrong strategy. Stick to your two or three strong arguments and drop all the others.”

The art of discipline

As many of those same business leaders tell Sivanathan, however, it’s not always easy to determine which arguments are the most compelling. How do they figure that out? they ask.

His answer: be disciplined. “All of your arguments may sound good to you and you may be proud of them, but you have to step back, maybe run them by a colleague and really think about which are your strongest. Put those on the table. Leave the others to offline conversations. They can be part of your appendices, but they should never be the central element of your discourse.”

One reason why people don't narrow their arguments is that they want to cater to everyone in their audience, says Sivanathan. They think that by listing each of their arguments, they'll reach each of their audience members. But this is short-sighted, he says, because strong arguments tend to land as strong to most, if not all.

There is a slight counterpoint to this, he adds. If you know for a fact that the ultimate decision-maker in the audience will be swayed by one of your weaker arguments, include it. In his experience, however, this is rarely a fact.

In short, and as Sivanathan displayed on a slide in big red letters near the end of his TED Talk, quality trumps quantity. The delivery of your message is every bit as important as its content, he says. “Stick to your strong arguments because your arguments don't add up in the minds of the receiver. They average out.” ■

When we take in information, we give each piece a weighted score. But we don't add up all of those scores. We average them

Should you know what your co-workers earn?

A conversation with Professor Pierre Chaigneau reveals the upside and downside of pay transparency

BY ALAN MORANTZ



WOULDN'T IT BE GREAT if you knew what your boss earns? What the person in the next cubicle takes home? Pay transparency is an issue that's sure to rile partisans on either side, but much of the debate is based on intuition or self-interest. Plenty of firms publicize starting salaries, pay grids and formulas. But should everyone know what their colleagues and bosses make?

Searching for a dispassionate, evidence-based view, we turned to economist and finance expert Pierre Chaigneau. Chaigneau, associate professor and Commerce '77 Fellow of Finance, has researched executive compensation. He separates fact from fiction in this email exchange with Alan Morantz, senior editor at Smith Business Insight [smithqueens.com/insight].

ALAN MORANTZ: Mainstream economists consider information asymmetry as a major source of market failure—we don't all have equal

access to information on which to base decisions. Does that mean that economists would argue for full-blown pay transparency? Wouldn't that level the field in the workplace?

PIERRE CHAIGNEAU: At first glance, the answer is yes. Pay transparency is especially beneficial to workers to help them make better decisions. They will know more about other potential jobs they could have, which will affect their decisions to accept job offers, their leeway for negotiation before and after they have accepted a job offer, and their willingness to quit their current jobs. This is often beneficial because it reduces what economists refer to as search costs, and it also improves the efficiency of the matching between firms and employees. In simple words, this helps ensure that tasks are allocated to the best people for the job. Obviously, there are other effects at play, including countervailing effects.

I couldn't help but notice you wrote, "At first glance." Better decision-making for workers, lower search costs and a more efficient labour market sound like pretty good outcomes of pay transparency. At "second glance", are there situations that would work against these outcomes coming to pass?

Yes indeed. A problem with pay transparency is that it allows employees to know how much their colleagues make. This will make them reassess whether they are paid fairly themselves. Unfortunately, such comparisons often bring dissatisfaction because most of us have an innate tendency to overestimate our abilities and contributions to an endeavour, for example, because of a self-attribution bias. In turn, a feeling that one's level of pay is "unfair" has a demotivating effect, which reduces individual and organizational performance. This insight was at the heart of



managers earn more than they thought.

But one of those researchers, Perez-Truglia, also completed a study of extreme transparency [“The effects of income transparency on well-being: Evidence from a natural experiment”] in Norway where the tax records of all Norwegians are digitized and, since 2001, freely available. He found the gap between the happiness of the rich and the poor increased by 29 per cent as a result. Given these different and conflicting effects, how much should we factor in social welfare when devising a pay transparency policy?

Notwithstanding the difficulties associated with measuring happiness, this change in the “happiness gap” makes sense. The Nordic culture is egalitarian and frowns upon deviations from the norm. Pay transparency highlights these deviations. This finding is also consistent with the dissatisfaction effect I mentioned earlier when information about the pay of our peers is made available. In this context, peers can include co-workers, but also neighbours, family members, high school cohorts, etc. This is consistent with the finding from the study that “most [people] used the websites [with salary lists] to snoop on friends, relatives and social contacts.”

Above all, this and other negative findings emphasize that pay transparency is best applied selectively rather than broadly. It should be targeted to achieve some well-defined objectives. For example, it can be used to attract workers to overlooked occupations or organizations, to motivate hard work when employees underestimate the benefits of career progression, or even to help students make better-informed decisions when choosing their undergraduate programs. In many of these cases, it is possible, and often desirable, to provide aggregated rather than

individual-level data. This allows organizations to get most of the benefits of pay transparency while minimizing its psychological costs.

It’s also worth distinguishing between transparency on pay outcomes (how much someone gets paid) and transparency on the pay-setting process (how pay is determined). For example, like many workers of the “gig” economy, Uber drivers have full discretion over when and where they work. Uber sets their pay via a publicly available formula, which is the same for all its drivers, in part to ensure that Uber drivers will be available in most places at any time. In the end, there will be important variations in pay among Uber drivers, including a gender pay gap as documented in a recent paper [“The gender earnings gap in the gig economy: Evidence from over a million rideshare drivers”]. But the process that led to this outcome is fully transparent.

Pierre, you’ve argued persuasively that pay transparency is a blunt instrument best used selectively. But you also have skin in the game. As a university professor in Ontario, your salary is made public under the province’s so-called Sunshine List. I have to ask, How does it feel to have this information public? Has it helped or hindered you in any way?

I find this list useful. It is quite easy for me and others, including executive recruiters, to look up the salaries of finance professors at the University of Toronto, Western, but also Georgia State and Georgia Tech, since the state of Georgia (and others) have similar disclosure requirements. Now, these numbers must be put in context. Salaries will vary a lot depending on the type of employment (tenured, adjunct, etc.), the field (finance, marketing, etc.) and past achievements—especially publications in the best academic journals, which are used as a proxy for expertise. Still, it is quite easy for professors to look at these compensation numbers and figure out if they are underpaid or overpaid. Of course, it is rare for people to believe that they are overpaid, but at least those who are underpaid can now make a better case! ■

the efficiency wage theory, which recommended that employers pay above market wages.

If we take this reasoning one step further, employers may become reluctant to increase the wage of any employee when wages are publicly disclosed because this may trigger either discontent or demands for similar pay increases by other employees. Researchers Zoe Cullen and Bobak Pakzad-Hurson tested this effect in a recent working paper [“Equilibrium effects of pay transparency”] and found that pay transparency led to a small decline in wages. In this case, pay transparency backfires.

Pay transparency can be motivating if used appropriately and strategically. In a paper soon to be published, [“How much does your boss make? The effects of salary comparisons”] researchers Zoe Cullen and Ricardo Perez-Truglia found that disclosing managers’ salaries results in employees working harder when they find out that their

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SOLVING THE SECOND SHIFT PROBLEM

Female entrepreneurs in developing countries often struggle to balance their work and home life. A Smith professor looks for answers

BY ELIANA CHOW



WOMEN IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES are turning to self-employment. And for good reason. More than half see business ownership as a path to a better future, according to the Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative in Washington, D.C. Seventeen per cent of working-age women in developing countries are entrepreneurs (nine per cent in developed countries). Another 35 per cent would like to run a business (14 per cent in developed nations).

Yet there's a problem. Many work around the clock as both business owners and family caretakers. They often sacrifice time at work to deal with problems at home. The result: high levels of anxiety and depression, which can hurt the chances of their business taking off.

How can they be helped? Business education might do. Unfortunately, few courses cater to female founders juggling responsibilities at home while kick-starting a venture. Most programs develop "hard skills" like accounting, record-keeping and marketing.

PAULA LÓPEZ-PEÑA, an assistant professor of business economics, has studied the scarcity of "soft skills" (or noncognitive) entrepreneurship training. She believes traditional programs fail to consider pressures that women owners face. This lack of support contributes to gender gaps in firm performance and compensation.

In a working paper ["Managing the second shift: The impact of noncognitive skills on female entrepreneurs' time allocation and mental health"], López-Peña examined the impact of noncognitive training on the time management and mental well-being of women entrepreneurs. "Most woman owners in developing countries have no choice but to work a double shift," she says. "If we want to take an honest approach to help them grow their business, we must first help them find ways to balance work with family. We should take care not to pressure women into thinking they have to choose one over the other."

Similar struggles

To further explore these issues, López-Peña conducted a study of 300 women entrepreneurs in Bangladesh. Half took a 10-week cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) course that included "soft skills" training in problem-solving, time management and goal setting. The other half took traditional counselling, which unlike CBT didn't suggest specific action courses.

What did the study find? Of the women who took CBT (a form of psychotherapy that helps people rethink how they deal with problems), 11 per cent were less likely to report symptoms of depression. They were also 23

per cent less likely to lose an hour of work to address issues at home. Women who took CBT reported fewer family-related work absences, but they did not work longer hours. This suggests CBT freed up time from housework for more leisure time.

Although this research only looked at women in developing countries, López-Peña believes her findings apply to self-employed women across the world. From Bangladesh to Canada, women shoulder heavier burdens at home than men. "When faced with competing demands during the workday, most women will choose to meet their family's needs first," she says. "But day-to-day interruptions, like caring for a sick child, can inhibit productivity. In this way, Bangladeshi women are not different from women in more developed countries with similar struggles."

López-Peña plans to refine the CBT programming from her study to create a long-term solution for women. She also hopes to trace women-founded firm performance over several months or years. "We are only starting to understand which noncognitive skills—like perseverance, self-control or time management—matter most and how to build them," she says. "There is still so much work left to do. But this paper is the first stone on a path to helping women entrepreneurs flourish." ■

How to master meetings

Communications expert Michelle Gropp, MIB'13, on why you should love meetings

BY MICHELLE GROPP

MOST OF US HATE MEETINGS. They distract from our daily routine and get in the way of the work we're already doing. Often, we're not sure why we were invited. As someone who works with employees on communications, I hear all these complaints. My answer: You shouldn't avoid meetings; you should love them. Meetings are a great way to build your personal brand. Implement these four tips to stand out in meetings and show that you're ambitious, competent, confident and more.

PLAN AHEAD. Benjamin Franklin said, "Failing to plan is planning to fail." Preparing is so basic, but rarely done, or done well. But it's an easy way to differentiate yourself. Ask yourself: What's the purpose of the meeting and why were you invited? Who else is attending and what's expected? Fulfil your role by planning how your points will be relevant to the topic and attendees.

If you're the leader, what's your plan to facilitate? Meetings should be interactive. If you're doing an information-transfer lecture, then you should consider a different format. We can all relate to thinking, "This meeting could've been an email . . ."

BE ENGAGED. It's hard for the leader to facilitate if people aren't showing interest. Don't make the leader do all the work. Everyone attending is accountable to ensure the meeting is productive.

Take the initiative to listen and give feedback to move the discussion forward. If you don't have new ideas to contribute, then speak up to advocate for a colleague's point of view or ask a thoughtful question. These can be equally powerful.

GET TO THE POINT. When you do speak, be concise. Less is more. Think: What do we already know, and what do we need to know? This helps determine the amount of detail to share.

All too often, people overshare with long-winded comments. They hijack the meeting and take everyone down a rabbit hole. This causes attendees to become confused, distracted or frustrated.

Don't be that person. Jot down your key points before speaking to stay concise. This maximizes value and minimizes time and energy needed from attendees. They will undoubtedly notice and appreciate this—bolstering your personal brand.



LOOK PROFESSIONAL (EVEN ON ZOOM).

Even when not speaking, you're communicating. With the rise of work from home, here are three tips to look professional on camera. Bonus: they work even if you're in pyjama pants "off camera"!

First, adjust the camera height to eye level. It allows for your head, shoulders and upper chest to be visible. This is how attendees would see you in person, so replicate it online. Having your camera too low and angled up is unflattering.

Second, good lighting makes a big difference. I recently had a video call with someone for the first time. She had a window directly behind her that darkened her face. She looked like she was in witness protection. Not the impression you want to give. Make sure you have a good light source: natural light from a window, artificial light from lamps, or both. Place the lamp in front of you so it shines evenly on your face at or just above eye level.

Last, have a clean background. When attendees are distracted by your messy bookshelf, they aren't listening to what you're saying. They can also associate you with being disorganized. A simple, neat background goes a long way. If you run out of time to tidy, a virtual background is a good fallback.

Remember, you are always communicating. It's time to take control of your personal brand one meeting at a time! ■



Michelle Gropp is co-founder and master trainer at *Lead with Words*, which equips employees to increase influence and productivity through clear, confident communication. Based in Waterloo, Ont. and Beijing, it serves clients globally through e-learning. LeadWithWords.com


BY DEBORAH AARTS, ARTSCI'04

GAP

closing the funding



Black, Indigenous and other diverse entrepreneurs often have a hard time getting their businesses funded. A new movement hopes to change that, with several Smith alumni leading the way.



“It’s our response to some of the systemic discrimination and the unfortunate—but overt—anti-Black racism that we see in Canada.”

COLIN LYNCH, BCOM’07, ARTSCI’07, IS EXPLAINING the purpose of the Black Opportunity Fund (BOF), the charitable organization he co-founded in 2020 with 50 other Black business and community leaders (including **HAZEL CLAXTON, BCom’83**, and **ABDUL-AZIZ GARUBA, AMBA’12**). The BOF has a wide purview to raise and distribute capital—the goal is \$1.5 billion in its first 10 years—and provide supports to elevate Black businesses and organizations.

In its short existence, the BOF has already secured several multimillion-dollar commitments from corporations, conducted research to benchmark the needs of Black entrepreneurs and launched multiple business and non-profit grant and loan programs. Lynch is especially excited about a new equity investment model the BOF is developing for Black entrepreneurs. The BOF, he explains, will “recycle” the returns into other Black businesses or non-profits: “I think of it like philanthropic venture capital.”

Lynch is deliberate in his language detailing the need for an entity like the BOF. The organization is working to correct pervasive and systemic inequities, and that won’t happen by obfuscating the reality of the situation. Across the board, Black entrepreneurs face disproportionate difficulties accessing capital for their businesses. Lynch cites an analysis conducted by the 12 Federal Reserve banks in the U.S. into race-based lending patterns, which revealed that Black entrepreneurs requested the least amount of money, were the least likely to get what they asked for and were the most likely to be denied funding outright. This, he adds, helps to explain a key finding of BOF-supported research conducted by Abacus Data and the Senate of Canada’s African Canadian Senate Group: many Black business owners distrust governments, banks and credit unions. “The vast majority feel disempowered,” he says. “And they believe that race plays a significant factor in the evaluation and outcomes of their applications for funding.” The BOF aims

to change all that. Already, it has helped facilitate direct grants for more than 50 Black-run businesses and launched programs for Black entrepreneurs with funding from major banks, including TD, CIBC, National Bank and BMO.

Lynch has the resources and clout to contribute meaningfully to this cause. Just 15 years out of Smith’s Commerce program, he has forged a successful career in finance (including his current role as managing director and head of global real estate investments at TD Asset Management in Toronto) and earned national awards (including a spot on Canada’s Top 40 under 40 in 2020). He also has the intent: Eight years ago, he took a week-long retreat in North Carolina to “crystalize the modus operandi” of his life, and left committed to defining himself by his ability to positively change the lives of others. Helping to launch—and, in his current role as board member, lead—the BOF is in service to that mission. “Our work is going to be transformational. It will help to make the world a better place,” he says. “And I am very proud of that.”

The BOF is at the vanguard of a multi-faceted movement to right an entrenched wrong: It takes money to start and grow a business, and that money, whether it comes from banks, private lenders or governments, isn’t distributed equally in Canada. The situation, commonly known as the funding gap—in reality, it’s many cracks of varying depth and breadth—results in disproportionately smaller shares of capital for entrepreneurs who are gender diverse, Black, Indigenous and people of colour (BIPOC) and/or LGBTQ+. Correcting this is an overdue matter of fairness, yes, but also one of strategic national import. Without a diverse entrepreneurial ecosystem, Canada’s competitiveness in the global economy will stagnate. We need a more equitable funding environment than what has thus far emerged from outdated systems. The good news? A groundswell of changemakers like Lynch are building brand new ones. ›

Through the Black Opportunity Fund, Colin Lynch is working to get more funding support to Black-owned businesses. "Our work is going to be transformational"



A MAN IN THE TECH SECTOR

Canada has never been a straightforward place for any entrepreneur. Canadian financing can be a particularly meandering Choose Your Own Adventure story, comprising different types of cash (loans, grants, investments), funders (public, private, government) and processes (applications, pitches, old-fashioned networking). There's plenty of money here, but complex bureaucracy means we routinely middle or lag in comparative global analyses into variables like ease of raising capital and access to R&D grants. Our banks are notoriously risk-averse. Our venture capital, private equity and angel investing scenes are relatively modest, especially compared to those in the U.S.

Navigating this Byzantine landscape is easier for some than others, thanks to decades of myopia in the financial community regarding who ought to get support in building businesses. "The archetype of entrepreneurship as 'a man in the tech sector' has stubbornly endured," stated the authors of a 2021 report into the state of women's entrepreneurship in Canada—an

obsolete cliché that both limits the options and dampens the ambitions of those who don't fit the description. "The role that bias plays in financing new ventures is well documented," explains **ELSPETH MURRAY**, director of the Centre for Business Venturing at Smith and CIBC Faculty Fellow in Entrepreneurship. "If you're seen as a quintessential white male, you probably have a bit of a leg up. You have more opportunities to establish networks, find mentors and meet key decision-makers because those people are likely to have the same background as you do or think the same way you do."

As for everyone else? "Under-represented entrepreneurs are in fact getting more opportunities to be mentored and trained, but that doesn't correlate to funding," says **NUSA FAIN**, assistant professor and director of Smith's Master of Management Innovation & Entrepreneurship (MMIE) program. "They need to show more proof. They need to have a business up and running, and have a strong, already proven validation that it will grow before they attract funding."

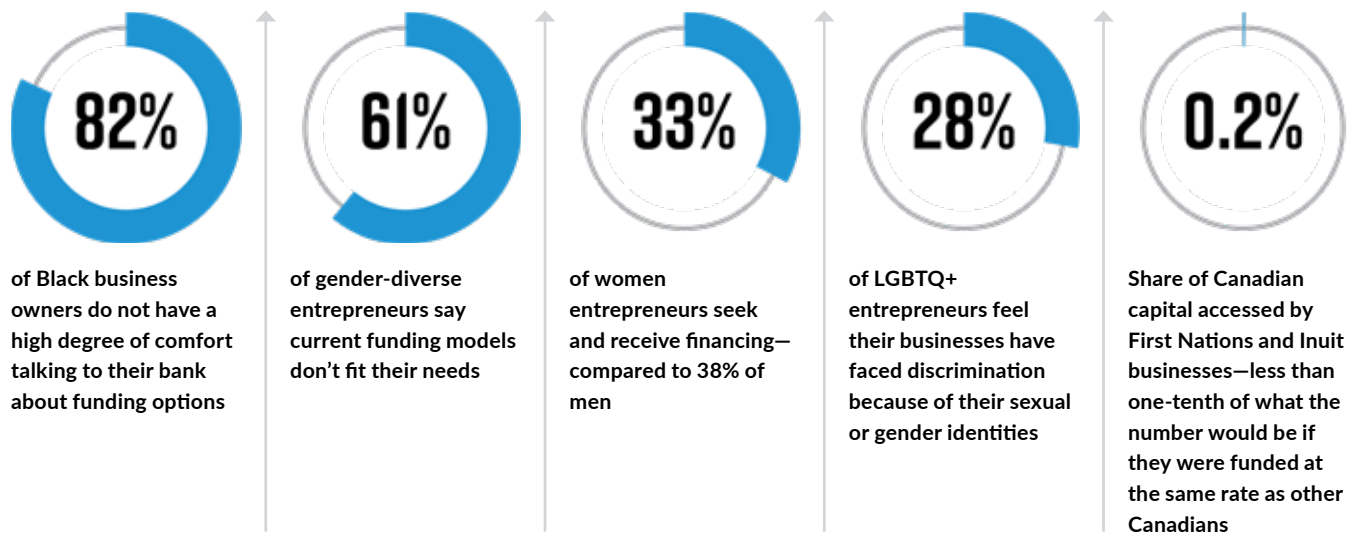
To be fair, in 2022, most people making investing or lending decisions understand the need for change. The

federal government has announced a slate of funding meant to provide loans, grants and equity investments for under-represented entrepreneurs. The government, through its various funding arms—most notably, the Business Development Bank of Canada—has earmarked hundreds of millions of dollars for programs to fund Black, Indigenous and women entrepreneurs. All of Canada's major banks, under increasing environmental, social and governance (ESG) scrutiny, have introduced initiatives to remove barriers for entrepreneurs attempting to access money. Even the stereotypically bro-heavy realm of private capital—comprising venture, private equity and angel investing—understands that the days of all-male, all-white portfolios are over.

"I'm really encouraged to see how the ecosystem as a whole has responded to the need for diversity, equity and inclusion," says Christiane Wherry, vice-president of research and product at the Canadian Venture Capital and Private Equity Association (CVCA), where she leads diversity, equity and inclusion efforts. "People understand that diversifying is not just the right thing to do, but a must. They are not

MIND THE GAP S

Diverse entrepreneurs are underserved by established funding systems



asking me ‘Why is this important?’ They are asking me ‘How do we do it?’ ”

There are more examples to follow. Many financiers are making public their intent to diversify their portfolios: Dozens of funding organizations—including the equity-based Canadian Business Growth Fund, led by CEO **GEORGE ROSSOLATOS, BCom’95**—signed the BlackNorth Initiative pledge in 2020, committing to specific actions and targets designed to end systemic anti-Black racism. Many are also working to diversify the people making investment decisions: For instance, in 2020, **NICHOLAS KLIMCHUK, BCom’13**, co-founded Out Investors, a global network for LGBTQ+ investment professionals that seeks to make the direct investing industry more welcoming. And others still are deploying technology to strip out human bias: Fintech unicorn Clearco, led by co-founder and president (and *Dragons’ Den* star) **MICHELE ROMANOW, MBA’08**, takes a blind, numbers-based approach to assessing which e-commerce brands get approved for the marketing and inventory capital it offers. Of the more than 5,500 businesses Clearco had invested in by mid-2021, 30 per cent were led by BIPOC founders.

TALENT IN A DIFFERENT PACKAGE

“Trailblazing investor” was not a descriptor **ERIN ZIPES, BCom’00**, expected for herself. An accomplished and typically risk-averse lawyer, she never considered she had any place writing speculative cheques to back fledgling businesses.

Then, in 2014, Zipes joined Shopify. Over seven years of progressive advancement—most recently as vice-president and assistant general counsel, a role she held before leaving the company late last year—she amassed the wealth and experience that comes with leading a company through incredible growth. And several of her female work pals were in the same position. As they noticed more male colleagues investing in other businesses, they saw an opportunity: “We realized, well, we can do that too,” she says. “We’ve had a master class in building and scaling a company. Our thinking was: How can we pay this forward?”

In the spring of 2021, she and nine of her fellow female Shopify veterans—including Atlee Clark, **Artsci’06**—launched Backbone Angels, a collective of angel investors dedicated to backing companies run by women and non-binary founders, with a focus on BIPOC women entrepreneurs. The aim is to apply the unique expertise, connections and, yes, chequebooks of the founders to serve underserved entrepreneurs in a direct and meaningful way. In its first year,

Backbone Angels invested US\$2.3 million in 42 different businesses.

Each Backbone founder makes her own investing decisions but provides support to every entrepreneur in the collective’s portfolio. There is a connective thread to everything that Backbone does. The unspoken rules that govern conventional investing decisions don’t apply. “Many of the male investors I know will talk a lot about the importance of betting on the jockey, not the horse. They ask questions like: ‘Is this person a killer?’ ‘Do they have what it takes to make me my money back, plus a return?’ ” Zipes says. For a male entrepreneur asking for money, these sought-after traits tend to manifest in outward confidence, big requests and chutzpah, she explains. For women and people of colour, they may present in less overt ways. “I don’t know if many male investors would recognize that talent and potential if it’s wrapped in a different package. But we

With Backbone Angels, Erin Zipes wants to demystify angel investing and encourage more women and under-represented groups to offer money and ask for it



can.” Traits that would be *verboten* in a Silicon Valley pitch room—vulnerability, admission of flaws, the words “I don’t know”—are not only tolerated by Zipes, they’re encouraged.

This perspective gives her access to opportunities she believes others might miss. Not long after Backbone launched, Zipes was pitched by the female founder of a circular-economy retail play that she thought was brilliant. Chatting excitedly about it with a few male colleagues, she saw a wall of blank eyes. “The penny dropped,” she says. “They just didn’t get it because they don’t shop that way. But I got it right away; it was part of my lived experience.”

Zipes has several goals for her work at Backbone. She wants a return on her investments, of course. But she also wants to demystify angel investing and encourage more women and under-represented people to both offer money and ask for it. There’s a well-worn management aphorism about individuals who get to the top and pull the rope ladder up behind them, preventing others from rising. With Backbone, says Zipes, “We’re sending the elevator back down.”

A BROADER FUNDING FLYWHEEL

No meaningful transformation can happen in a vacuum. Grassroots efforts to back diverse businesses will better thrive when macro-level systemic impediments are removed.

One such impediment is the aforementioned complexity of our financing systems, according to **ASHLEY RICHARD, MMIE’21**. Richard is associate director, Indigenous at Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub (WEKH), and the author of a recent national needs analysis on Indigenous women’s entrepreneurship, which identified convoluted and overwhelming financing processes as a key constraint. Much of her work at WEKH is to bring together different funding and support organizations to share ideas, pool resources and make things simpler for women entrepreneurs. “Our role is to be the connector,” Richard explains. “We’re working together because we understand the

importance of lessening the barriers. I mean, if the ecosystem is confusing to us, it’s exponentially more confusing for a new entrepreneur trying to navigate it.”

Another systemic barrier is the narrow thinking of financiers, investors and policy-makers. There is a need for decision-makers to understand the real needs of diverse entrepreneurs and recognize the potential therein—essentially, to apply the Erin Zipes approach at scale.

Salima Shivji, Artsci’05, sees this every day. Shivji left a flourishing law career and currently leads Movement51. It’s the educational, not-for-profit offshoot of The51, a Calgary-based platform that connects gender-diverse investors to established and aspiring entrepreneurs. Her team works on financial acumen-building—including a course called the Financial Feminism Investing Lab—designed to equip participants with tools and knowledge to make the funding process more accessible for all.

“It’s about changing the whole narrative,” she explains. “We offer participants a new way of considering and evaluating investments—through a feminist and gender-diverse lens.” Shivji considers her work to change minds as part of a broader funding flywheel, wherein education, cultivation of community and access to deals combine to produce pulsive, regenerative growth.

It’s hard work, all of it, but it’s gaining critical momentum. Program by program, deal by deal, Canada is evolving into a much more equitable place to fund a business. “If we look at all of the colliding macro and micro forces, there’s a lot of very good stuff happening,” explains Professor Murray. “A large train has left the station, and it’s going to be difficult to stop.” ■

SO YOU WANT TO INVEST?

Want to back under-represented entrepreneurs? Great! There have never been more options to get involved. Here’s advice from alumni experts at Smith and Queen’s to get started.

LISTEN FIRST

If investors want to invest in the businesses of under-represented entrepreneurs, they should first work to understand their needs, challenges and stories, says Ashley Richard. She recommends attending events (online and virtual), listening to podcasts and reading about experiences before any money changes hands. “Listening and giving that space in your life to take in the words of others is really important.”

START SMALL

Many new investors hold the misconception that each deal has to be a blockbuster. But cheques don’t have to be massive to make an impact, says Erin Zipes—especially when they come with advice and connections. “Don’t discount your professional experience or your network,” she says. “They can be really helpful to a founder.”

ADAPT AS NEEDED

The needs of diverse entrepreneurs can evolve, and so too should the approaches of their backers, advises Salima Shivji. “There’s no playbook,” she says. “It’s about recognizing a problem, and being adaptable and persistent in the work to fix it.”

DON’T GO IT ALONE

“Working collaboratively with other people is incredibly important when you’re looking to make positive change,” says Colin Lynch. He recommends seeking investment partners as you would a job. LinkedIn posts, cold calls and old-fashioned networking can yield surprisingly effective synergies. “The road is always unexpected,” he says, “but the reward is significant.”



Adventures IN Advertising

Jill Nykoliation, BCom'93, left a promising corporate career to work in advertising. Now she runs one of Canada's best (and most creative) ad agencies

BY CHRIS POWELL

IT'S HUMAN NATURE to want to cling to the familiar. After all, it's comfortable and safe. But Jill Nykoliation, CEO of ad agency Juniper Park\TBWA in Toronto, is acutely aware that everything inevitably reaches a conclusion. Perhaps more importantly, she's content to let it happen. "Don't use up energy trying to hold onto something that maybe is done," she says.

It's how Nykoliation knew when to call time on what had been a hugely successful early career with Kraft Foods and step into the unknown world of advertising—first as one of the partners of the agency Grip Limited, and then two years later as a founding partner of Juniper Park, now part of the global TBWA network, headquartered in New York City.

Nearly two decades and multiple professional and personal accolades later, her decision appears prescient. But she remembers her colleagues at Kraft being mystified. She had attained so much success, they said, and was highly regarded within the organization. She'd regret it, they warned.

But for Nykoliation, the move into the

Mad Men world of advertising after 10 highly successful years as a marketer represented an opportunity to again create her own path through what she calls the "tall grass"—the unmarked territory that presents both opportunities and maybe even the occasional pitfall.

There was still so much she didn't know when she first set foot into this new environment in 2005. Yet that step into the unknown brought with it the frisson of excitement that had been missing as her previous role reached its natural conclusion. "I spent five years in the tall grass at Kraft (where she helped launch and oversee the company's data-led CRM efforts, years before such things became fashionable), and when it started to feel like it was coming over to the paved road, that's when I knew it was time to go," she says. "The part I was uniquely good at was wrapping up, and that's when I went to the agency side of the business."

The tall grass is a concept that Nykoliation keeps circling back to when describing her professional life. It isn't for everyone, but she delights in metaphorically hacking her way

through, uncovering new insights and approaches. "I'm very much a tall grass person, and we're a tall grass agency," she says. "We attract people that love to carve out new spaces." It's not for the timorous, but Nykoliation is convinced she'll find her way through to the other side, usually with a breakthrough idea. "I'm like, 'Oh, I'll have something to show for it,'" she says. "I don't know what it is yet, but I will."

Powerful signal

That willingness to intrepidly venture into uncharted territory has enabled Juniper Park\TBWA to thrive while creating high-profile work for major Canadian and global brands including Apple, CIBC, GoDaddy, Nissan and PepsiCo. The agency has grown from six employees since its formation in 2007 to 150 today, while adding to its capabilities with new divisions. They include the design studio Le Parc; a precision marketing arm called Scalpel; and a content production division called Bolt Content. Most recently, it launched Trampoline, an incubator and accelerator for small BIPOC businesses and emerging creatives.

While many Canadian offices of global ad networks often find themselves relegated to repurposing work created in New York or Los Angeles, Juniper Park\TBWA prides itself on being at the forefront of its clients' marketing plans. "A satellite office would be a paved road," says Nykoliation. "What's the global standard? We'll do the Canadian version of that. We say, 'No, we'll create and launch [our own ideas].'"

There's perhaps no better embodiment of that approach than 2020's "Signal For Help," a simple yet highly effective creation developed for the Canadian Women's Foundation. The secret communication device for abused women arose out of one of the agency's regular Thursday staff meetings—known internally as "pirate huddles"—during the pandemic's early days.

That day, the conversation circled around to the rise in domestic violence due to women being trapped at home with an abusive partner. "I remember saying to the team, 'I don't know what



1. Palm to camera and tuck thumb



2. Trap thumb

A helping hand

In April 2020, Jill Nykoliation's agency created Signal For Help—a hand gesture that lets abused and abducted women call for help. Thanks to TikTok and other social media, Signal For Help is now internationally recognized. Last year, an abducted girl in Kentucky and two abused women in Spain were rescued after alerting others with the signal. Signal For Help was created for the Canadian Women's Foundation. An omnibus survey in February found that 40 per cent of Canadians have seen ads or info about Signal For Help and nine per cent have seen it used or used it directly.



About 20 years ago, Jill Nykoliation started a habit that she has maintained to this day: Keeping two notebooks. There's a black one for chronicling the simple tasks of ordinary professional life, like appointments, to-do lists, etc.

The other, always brightly coloured, contains what she calls her "epiphanies," those little pieces of accrued wisdom, book recommendations and quotes, that help shape her approach to work and life. She has filled about 20 of these notebooks with simple but occasionally profound observations, and she revisits them often.

"I didn't start [being] that reflective, but I started just writing things down, and then I started to use them for myself," she says. "These books are so valuable to me. It's kind of like a journal, but in service to my career."

I'm asking, but is there a way we can help, using our tools and our culture of generosity and kindness," says Nykolation. The American Sign Language symbol for "help" was too obvious, and texts or phone calls could be spotted or leave a digital trail for the abuser.

Like so many of the best communications, the idea put forth by Juniper Park\TBWA's chief creative officer Graham Lang—folding a thumb into the palm of a hand, and closing the fingers over top to silently convey the message "I'm trapped"—was simple and easy to comprehend. Buoyed by widespread sharing on social platforms like TikTok, Signal For Help eventually travelled around the world, leading to news stories such as one out of Kentucky late last year in which a missing 16-year-old girl was rescued after using the gesture to indicate to passing motorists that she was being held captive. (A 61-year-old man was arrested.)

Nykolation says it's a powerful feeling to know something she had a hand in creating proved so impactful. "I woke up that morning to a message from a girlfriend that read 'Isn't this your work?' and I cried," she says. "I'm proud beyond words." Along the way, Signal For Help joined a select few Canadian-made ad campaigns that have travelled beyond the country's borders, joining the likes of Always' powerful "#LikeAGirl" and "Dove Evolution."

Unlocking potential

Two decades since taking her first steps into the agency world, Nykolation is a highly regarded and acclaimed agency leader and CEO, notable accomplishments in a male-dominant business such as advertising. She is fluent not only in the masculine language of business, which tends to prioritize things like performance and innovation, but

has oriented her agency around softer traits like empathy, vulnerability and collaboration. "I'm really good at saying 'I don't know' or 'I need help.' There's no shame in that," she says. "I can be as smart as I want, but if I show up [with an] authoritarian style, it doesn't matter because I'm unintentionally shutting people down."

She describes her leadership approach as "leading from the feminine." Shifting the business to be more supportive and collaborative unlocked the dormant potential within the agency. "I've learned that you can be a high-performance and forward-leaning organization, and do it with kindness, generosity and gratitude," she says. "Performance doesn't have to be cutthroat, and kindness doesn't have to be at the expense of performance." That's borne out by the fact that, during what has been an incredibly difficult two-year period for the advertising

Creative force

Jill Nykolation's ad agency, Juniper Park\TBWA, is a Canadian creative powerhouse. Clients include big names like Apple, CIBC, GoDaddy, Nissan and PepsiCo. Three recent campaigns show the agency's knack to help brands stand out.



CIBC

Maybe you've noticed a new look at the bank? It includes a new red CIBC logo, inspired by the double-chevron logo the bank created for its centenary in 1966, and a new tag line: "Ambitions made real". Nykolation's agency helped with CIBC's brand refresh, which launched last September.



Nissan

Digital artwork in the form of Blockchain-based NFTs (non-fungible tokens) has gotten lots of media attention lately. Juniper Park\TBWA worked with Nissan and Canadian futurist Alex McLeod to create a one-of-a-kind NFT of Nissan's GT-R sports car. The artwork was auctioned for \$280,000 and came with the keys to a GT-R Nismo supercar.



Neale's Sweet N' Nice

The Canadian ice cream brand, with roots in the Caribbean, got a tasty pro-bono overhaul from Juniper Park\TBWA's Trampoline division. Trampoline was formed in 2020 to help BIPOC-owned small- and medium-size businesses grow. The man on the package? Charles Neale, who created the ice cream in Trinidad and Tobago in the 1940s.

industry, Juniper Park\TBWA had its best years from both a revenue and an output perspective in 2020 and 2021.

KEN WONG, BCom'75, MBA'76, marketing professor at Smith, says Nykoliation has consistently demonstrated that profitability and moral integrity aren't mutually exclusive. And she's done it while never losing sight of the fundamental role agencies play in furthering their clients' business objectives. "She is constantly inventing new services and refining old ones to keep her clients on the leading edge of marketing practice," says Wong. "It should come as no surprise that her agency has been performing at record-breaking levels."

Last year, Nykoliation was named one of Canada's three most powerful CEOs by the Women's Executive Network (WXN). The annual award recognizes three women leaders considered "trailblazers in their field, [who] advocate for workplace equality and display vision, strong foundational character, a sense of integrity and the ability to elicit public trust." Nykoliation calls the accolade "humbling," but is quick to share credit with her staff and the people who influenced her. "It's a team award for me because nobody does anything alone," she says. "It's an amalgamation of all the people who have been brave and generous and kind enough to work alongside me."

A Queen's family

While there was no specific moment that Nykoliation decided to pursue a career in marketing and advertising, the roadmap was in place from an early age. She learned about business from her father, Dennis, a successful executive who came up through the marketing side and held president and/or CEO roles with companies including Black & Decker Canada and Cambridge Towel.

"It was almost like I was doing classes at the dinner table," she says. "I learned about branding in service to business all through my childhood. It was all very natural." The Nykoliations are a Queen's family, with all four children attending the university. Jill's twin brothers Brent and Bryan earned Commerce degrees in 1992, followed by

"You can be a high-performance and forward-leaning organization, and do it with kindness, generosity and gratitude. Performance doesn't have to be cutthroat, and kindness doesn't have to be at the expense of performance"

Nykoliation in 1993. Her other brother Michael graduated with a degree in life sciences in 1994.

"My parents always said 'Jill, you can be anything a boy can be,' and I believed them," she says now. "I did well [coming up] through masculine industries and organizations, but now I look back and say, 'How come nobody says to a guy that he can be anything a girl can be?'" Nykoliation says that leading from the feminine has unlocked so much untapped potential within the agency—from elevating the calibre of the work and the insights that fuel it, to the makeup of the agency's staff.

When agencies looked to achieve greater diversity, equity and inclusion in the wake of George Floyd's murder, Juniper Park was already well ahead. "We've been ahead of the curve so many times," says Nykoliation with a hint of pride. Today, more than half (54 per cent) of Juniper Park\TBWA's staff is made up of women, while 32 per cent are BIPOC and 47 per cent come from outside of Canada. Lang and executive creative director Jenny Glover both hail from South Africa, for example, while president David Toto is from France.

"We want the sharpest talent possible. Who cares where they come from?" says Nykoliation. "Our culture is borderless, which brings the freshest minds and most creative ideas. It is borderless in hiring international talent and how we assemble our teams."

As a CEO, Nykoliation is acutely aware of the power she wields in inspiring the next generation of female leaders. Early in her career, she was granted weekly access to famed Kraft CEO Irene Rosenfeld. It would shape her approach to strategic thinking. "I remember thinking, I

am going to learn so much in her presence," says Nykoliation. "This is going to be a transformative project, and I can't believe nobody's fighting me for this. It will change me and rocket forward my learning."

Working alongside Rosenfeld shifted Nykoliation's opinion of what a mentor should be. Today, she urges staff to sign up for projects that she's involved with and simply watch how she works. "I could sit down with you for half an hour, or, like with Irene, I just decided she was going to be my mentor," she says. "I thought, I'm going to do this work, but I'm also going to study her."

Tall grass

When Nykoliation was a young girl, her mother taught her how to sew. Fabric was her first creative canvas, and the more she learned, the more curious she became about how things were put together.

In many ways, that curiosity became a guiding principle of her career. "You dismantle brands, and you say 'Oh, we can get rid of this and that, and this new piece comes in and then we're going to build it back,'" she says. "And that's what we do for every brand that comes in."

It's an approach that has helped distinguish both Nykoliation and Juniper Park\TBWA in a highly competitive and occasionally cutthroat industry. Even the best runs eventually come to an end, of course. By then, Nykoliation will likely have already recognized and accepted that it's ending, and grabbed her metaphorical machete in preparation for the tall grass of whatever comes next. ■

WHY YOU SHOULD

PROV

PROVOKE THE FUTURE!

STEVE GOLDBACH, BCom'96, has co-written two stellar business books that urge leaders out of complacency. In *Detonate* (2018), the principal and chief strategy officer at Deloitte in New York City showed how many corporate best practices no longer make sense and why they should be (as the book's title suggests) blown up. His latest book has an equally powerful name—*Provoke*—and tackles the wait-and-see approach so common in organizations today. Goldbach and co-author Geoff Tuff argue that, rather than play it safe, companies should go on the offence by “provoking” actions in their marketplaces. Far from being risky, such provocations reduce uncertainty, provide real-world feedback and open up new possibilities for growth. “Action, in an uncertain world, is increasingly the best way to learn,” they write. “If you don’t act with purpose, your once-thriving business could suddenly become a ‘wind down’ firm, operating on borrowed time.” Here, in this exclusive article for *Smith Magazine*, Goldbach explains why now’s the time to provoke the future. ›

BY **STEVE GOLDBACH**

Steve Goldbach:
"Provoking the future
is a far superior way
for teams to learn"





LEARNED THE POWER of provocation at the most improbable of places—a charity poker tournament for my then two-year-old daughter’s pre-school. I’m no Annie Duke (whose business book *Thinking in Bets* is a great read), but I fancy myself as semi-knowing what I’m doing. Through a bit of luck and the benefit of this being a charity tournament with mostly inexperienced players, I ended up as one of the final two players left out of 50. And apparently my opponent was really good. He was the defending champion and was now in a position to nearly repeat. The final table went quickly, so I didn’t get a good read on how he played before we were the final pair.

Because I didn’t know his tendencies, I had to learn quick. I decided to raise every time I had the “dealer” position—irrespective of my cards. I also played aggressively after the flop (the three community cards that are dealt after the first round of betting) by following up my bets. It turned out my opponent played pretty conservatively, folding to my bets most of the time. I quickly ascertained that he was unlikely to bluff at me, so when he did bet, I assumed that he had a strong hand, and when he chose not to, he didn’t. I used this information to quickly devise a strategy to whittle his “stack” (his remaining chips) down to a low enough level where he had very little flexibility. Ultimately, I won the grand prize of a gift card to a local restaurant (but the real winners were the kids, of course ☺).

I could have employed a more typical poker strategy, mixing up my play. But that would have taken me longer to gain an assessment of my opponent.

Of course, had he played more aggressively, I would have been forced to alter my strategy, but I would have still benefited from that information, so long as I didn’t meaningfully weaken my position in the process.

What I learned that night was that you can gather important information—and do so quickly—by provoking a response. This is a very different way of learning than what is typically done by most executive teams. It is this idea that I (and my co-author, Geoff Tuff) wrote about in our new book, *Provoke: How Leaders Shape the Future by Overcoming Fatal Human Flaws* [Wiley]. As Geoff and I challenged each other in writing the book, we ultimately came to the point of view that *provoking the future* is a far superior way for teams to learn in a fast-moving, uncertain world compared to how organizations traditionally learn. Companies that fail to employ this approach, at scale, risk becoming quickly marginalized.

We have three core reasons for this logic (and welcome debate on our thinking):

- 1) It’s forward-looking;
- 2) It is a great way to align an executive team;
- 3) It gives a voice to the tails of your organization.

PROVOKING IS FORWARD-LOOKING

Normally when an executive tasks a team to “study” an issue, they implicitly look to the past. Why are they looking to the past? Because the core method of “studying” is to gather a lot of data about the market, customer behaviour, etc. And data, by definition, is about the past, not the future. We can only hypothesize about the future. (As a side note: We should absolutely do that. I won’t go into it here, but a major tenet of having a *Provoke* mindset is to think about ways the future could be different using a technique called “scenario thinking”.) This gap between gathering data on the past and hypothesizing about the future tends to create a trap for executive teams. They want “proof” that a hypothesis will work, but they tend to only accept data as proof. Since data is from the past, it’s almost impossible to prove definitively that an idea ›

about the future will work. Leaders, please don't ask your teams to perform this impossible task. Instead, *provoke* your marketplace (or as my father used to say, don't *tell me, show me*).

Rather than using retrospective data analysis, pick a behaviour you want to try and change in the marketplace (e.g., will customers sign up for this offer?) and design a real-world test that will give you insight into whether you can change the trajectory of the future. We called this a *minimally viable move* in our previous book, *Detonate*, expanding on the minimally viable product (MVP) concept from the world of design. This is commonly practised in the world of software with beta versions of software, or A|B tests. But there's absolutely no reason that every business can't use these techniques. Even asset-intense businesses can use simulation and other forms of prototyping to get the benefits of this thinking. For example, to test the viability of a physical store with no employees, Amazon didn't conduct a BASES test or conduct a survey. It just opened a handful of stores to see if the non-employee stores worked in the real world. This kind of test gives

you much more insight into how people will behave, *if* given a chance to change their behaviour.

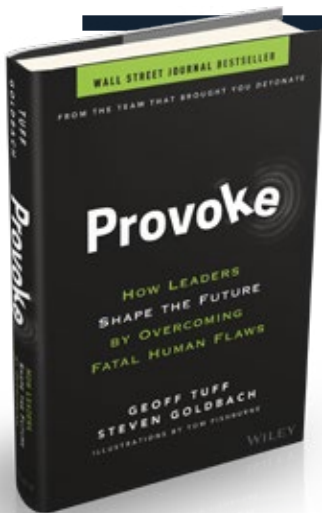
PROVOKING CREATES BETTER ALIGNMENT

Imagine a management team that is debating a product launch of a cloth diapering service that would compete with disposables potentially on the basis of price or being more environmentally friendly. Because the team can't agree on their potential target, they also haven't agreed on a few key aspects of the service experience or target price. In their last meeting, they discussed and debated the same issues again—agreeing to try and go get some more data about the number of families in their target cities who fell into the “price-conscious” and “ESG-conscious” segments. All the while, their board has been pressuring them to stop burning expense dollars and get revenue in the door.

Getting more data seems like what most management teams would do. There's an orthodoxy that if we just have better information, we'll make

better decisions. Unfortunately, there is no singular data point that will yield sufficient data to give us perfect confidence, and when we get in the habit of asking for some information, it tends to breed a desire for more. Maybe the ESG segment is smaller but they are willing to pay more? Maybe the price-conscious segment is large but harder to get to trial? We can be lulled into thinking that we would make the perfect decision if we just had *a bit more information*. But most likely, it will never be enough, so we are left in a vicious cycle looking for more and more information.

Provoking is a better learning method here. Don't pretend that the next piece of data will solve the debate; instead, design a test that is more comprehensive and based on the real world. In this case, why don't we just try and launch two competing versions of the cloth diapering service on a small beta basis in two different but representative cities? In one, we launch the version targeted at the price-conscious customer and the ESG in another. Or we could launch both offers in a single city and see which does better. We could even ask some questions of people



“STAY CURIOUS”

A Q&A with author
Steve Goldbach

Growing up in the Toronto suburb of Thornhill, **STEVE GOLDBACH, BCom'96**, got a lot of “parental nudging” towards an engineering education. But eventually, he successfully navigated those concerns because he was drawn to Commerce and Smith. “There was something about the high standards

and the energy of the school that really attracted me,” he says. Goldbach loved his time at Queen's (he met his wife there, **MICHELLE DUNSTAN, BCom'96**, now chief responsibility officer at AllianceBernstein). As graduation neared, he considered careers in both consulting and investment banking. But an information session with Monitor convinced him to choose consulting. “I remember hearing about Queen's grads that they had hired who had gone on to great things. It was this club of high achievers.”

Fast-forward 26 years and Goldbach is chief strategy officer at Deloitte (which bought Monitor in 2013) in New York City. His consulting career has given him a unique window into corporate

strategy and business leadership. A few years ago, he and Geoff Tuff, principal at Deloitte, turned their observations and ideas into a book, called *Detonate*. They've followed it up with *Provoke*, a *Wall Street Journal* bestseller. Here, Goldbach explains some of the lessons to be found in both books.

YOUR FIRST BOOK, *DETONATE*, HAS A PRETTY EXPLOSIVE TITLE. WHAT'S THE PREMISE?

Detonate is about the need for businesses to rethink longstanding orthodoxies, so-called best practices, and get out of the bad, ingrained habits that cause us to miss opportunities. Everybody loves to follow best practices. But if you do the math on best practices, they actually can't be “best” in the long run—they're average because everyone follows them. Only the first few get the benefit of actually being “best”. Instead, we suggest that companies need to go back to first-principles thinking to design how they run their organizations.

WHAT'S AN EXAMPLE OF SUCH A BEST PRACTICE?

One of my favourites is the idea that we can orient a forecast around revenue. We start with, How much is the market going to grow and what's our share of that market? Then we ask one of the worst questions in business: How much can we *afford* to spend based on the revenue forecast we're creating? Most businesses do this, yet it's completely the opposite of the way the world works.

who buy the service as to what drove them to purchase it. This would give us actual data on the totality of customer behaviour—and importantly, it would get us into the market faster. The benefit here is that when the management team can't agree, they can just agree to do something in the real world that will lead to a solution. In this way, a real-world test is superior in that it has the potential to settle the debate and get the team to action faster. So replace your esoteric debates with real-world tests to create alignment.

PROVOKING GIVES A VOICE TO THE TAILS OF THE ORGANIZATION

When Geoff and I wrote *Detonate*, which was focused on blowing up proverbial best practices to start from first principles because following best practices is a route to mediocrity, one of the frequent questions we'd get was: "How can you drive change from the middle of the organization?" To be candid, our strong belief is that it's pretty near impossible to drive broad change from the middle. If the C-Suite isn't supportive, the change effort will eventually

die. But here's the *but* . . . the middle can stimulate change by running tests. In this way, all you provocateurs out there who feel as if you're stuck with nobody to support you, the best way to get attention to "radical" ideas that challenge conventional wisdom is to figure out a way to run a small-scale test and then share the data with leadership. So instead of consistently feeling frustrated at "leadership's reticence to change," bring them a small and simple test that doesn't cost much but might yield some interesting insight.

Hybrid work is a great example that shows that failure to run the test is a key barrier to getting something better. There were plenty of people who voiced their preference to work from home at least some of the time prior to the pandemic. All the technology to do so—Zoom and others—existed; they weren't invented for the pandemic. The fact that we didn't have hybrid work at any scale was a failure of creativity to run a test to see if it could be made to work. People insisted it couldn't work—until they were forced to do it. Now it seems that the vast majority of office workers prefer to work from home at

“Don't pretend the next piece of data will solve the debate. Instead, design a test”

least some of the time. So, next time you've got a wacky idea, even if you're not confident it will work, it's always a good idea to run a small-scale test.

Taking a *provoke the future* approach and replacing data analysis with forward-looking tests is a lot easier if you make one simple change in your mindset. Whenever someone on your team suggests that doing something different is "risky", you could suggest that it might indeed be true that there is some element of uncertainty to trying something new. But when it comes to what's really risky in a business climate that people perceive is moving at a break-neck pace, doing the same thing that we've always done is what's really risky, and trying something new is the prudent, safe thing to do. ■

The way the world works is, we spend money to create demand that creates revenue. Revenue doesn't magically grow on trees and we decide how much we're going to invest in ladders to pluck it. So a much better way to think about forecasting a business is to start with customer behaviour. "I've got a hypothesis about what behaviour I want to drive. Let me do a test and figure out how much it costs to change that behaviour." And then, "What would be the revenue as a result?" But almost every organization sets their budget year-in and year-out with conversations that begin and end with a debate about if we can afford to spend enough based on committed profit targets. Profit is an outcome, so focus on the customer behaviour first.

IN PROVOKE, YOU ARGUE THAT LEADERS TOO OFTEN TAKE A WAIT-AND-SEE APPROACH. WHY ARE THEY RELUCTANT TO ACT?

Largely because they're human beings, and human beings are risk-averse. There's comfort in the status quo. We need to shift this orthodoxy. Think about it: In a world that's changing really fast, it's ridiculous to think that doing the same thing is not risky—it's incredibly risky. But the problem is that it *feels* comfortable because it's known. And the opposite is true for trying something different. It *feels* risky, but in a world that's moving fast, it's actually the safer move. We need to somehow make business leaders feel uncomfortable when they are *not* changing with their surroundings.

HOW DOES THAT ABUNDANCE OF CAUTION PLAY OUT?

An example is that leaders will see an emerging trend and instead of trying something new, they will ask for lots of data about it. It's like what humans do with a mole that seems like it's changed a bit. It makes us uncomfortable—but we tend to examine it more versus acting and going to see a dermatologist. Businesses do an analogous thing. They study, study, study and then need to do something massive—because the problem got really big. And that creates all sorts of unhelpful risk in the execution, including being right. It's like running through a dark forest really fast. That's a bad idea. You are going to run into a tree and it's going to hurt. It's better to prod along and feel for the trees. In business, we learn so much more by poking and prodding the marketplace versus what you can learn by studying data. Marketplace data is static and it's from the past.

WHAT DO YOU HOPE BUSINESS LEADERS TAKE AWAY FROM PROVOKE?

That it's far superior to run a business by consistently tweaking and being curious versus long periods of stasis followed by massive transformation. Leaders should be "consistently somewhat dissatisfied." How can we improve and make our customers happier? Don't wait for a customer survey. Sadly, most customers don't give feedback. They just stop being your customer.



Once upon a time...

BY ANGELA KRYHUL

Ever wanted to write a children's book? Meet three grads who have

If there's one lesson that successful authors learn early in their careers, it's to never underestimate children. Their ability to make sense of what's happening in the world around them is astounding. We chatted with three Smith alumni who are taking their passion for children's books to the next level as they craft the type of stories that kids and their families will cherish for years to come.

Lipika Sahoo

THE TALE OF TAILS (2021)



Lipika Sahoo, MBA'09, didn't think she had much in common with Mark Pichora during their year together in the MBA program. But after *You're Amazing!* came out, Sahoo asked him to review what she calls "a very dirty draft" of *The Tale of Tails*. Pichora's positive feedback changed her attitude.

"He said, 'You're doubting yourself for no reason,'" Sahoo remembers. "He walked me through some of the challenges he'd faced. I bounced ideas off of him. This wouldn't have happened had I never known Mark, and I would never have known Mark had I not been at Smith."

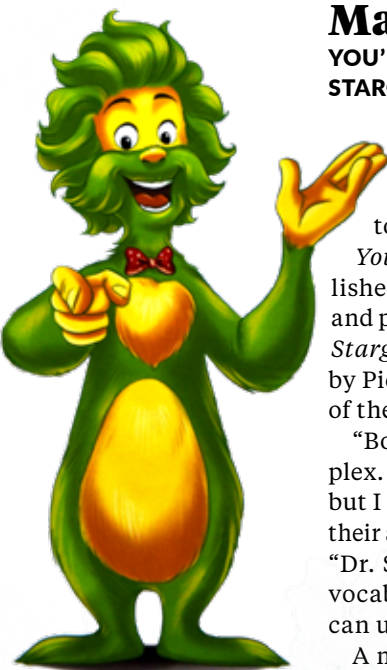
An engineer, Sahoo intended to return to India after graduation but decided to stay in Canada when CIBC recruited her as a management associate. She works in marketing, is the mother to two young boys (aged nine and five) and lives in Oakville, Ont.

Sahoo was encouraged to self-publish *The Tale of Tails* through FriesenPress. Illustrated by Sakshi Mangal, it's a playful story exploring the idea that "we all have things that are unique to us and that serve a purpose, so let's celebrate that," Sahoo explains. The story begins with a group of animal friends describing what they like best about their tails and ends by revealing that humans once had their own tails.

Her younger readers enjoy acting out the fun sounds that animal tails make, such as "swat-swat-swat" or "hop-hop-hop." For older readers, "it does lead to a conversation around evolution, how we came about and that we lose things we don't use," she says.

Sahoo says her writing and publishing journey has been "deeply personal" and rewarding, especially when she has the opportunity to read to children. It's also challenging: "I have a crazy corporate job and that's easy by comparison."





Mark Pichora

YOU'RE AMAZING! (STARRING YOU) (2016)
STARGAZING (2017)

Mark Pichora, MBA'09, likes to pack a lot of details and big words into his books. But he's confident his young audience is up to the challenge. *You're Amazing! (Starring You)*, illustrated by Mike Motz and self-published via FriesenPress, uses Seussian rhythm and pace to describe how the human body works. *Stargazing*, written, illustrated and published by Pichora, takes a deep dive into the mysteries of the universe.

"Both books cover subjects that are very complex. I tried to keep it simple and approachable, but I decided at one point to give kids credit for their ability to absorb and learn," Pichora explains. "Dr. Seuss books contain all sorts of invented vocabulary. If kids can understand that, they can understand real words."

A mechanical engineer in Montreal, Pichora,



works as a production supervisor for Toromont Cat. He first started thinking about writing for children nine years ago while reading Dr. Seuss stories to his infant son. "One night, I started stringing together a few phrases in the same form and was inspired," Pichora remembers. "That kind of spun into how amazing humans are and how [their bodies] work."

As a piano player, Pichora is attuned to the meter of Seussian verse and was meticulous when writing *You're Amazing!* "It was tricky to make it fall into place, especially when you get into some of the more scientific terminology," Pichora says.

He's gratified when other writers say they've been inspired by his journey, but book writing is his labour of love. While some aspiring authors dream about selling millions of copies, Pichora keeps his expectations grounded by remembering that he's writing for his son and himself.

Anitha Rao-Robinson

A FAMILY FOR FARU (2020)

Are children too young to understand issues around animal protection? Anitha Rao-Robinson, BCom'89, considered this question when someone asked why her book, *A Family For Faru*, touches on rhino poaching. "They really slammed it and said, 'You can't write this. It will be too much for kids. It's too sad. It's too awful. They don't need to know about this,'" Rao-Robinson remembers. "But I think children do need to know what's going on . . . and I also want to share stories of people doing kind things like helping animals and helping each other."

Writing about animals, the environment and characters that children can identify with is a dream come true for



Rao-Robinson. Over the years, she's woven writing into her busy life as a chartered accountant, raising two children (now aged 24 and 27) and publishing a young adult science fiction trilogy: *Broken Worlds* (2014), *Broken Promises* (2017) and *Broken Dreams* (2019).

A Family For Faru—illustrated by Karen Patkau and published by Pajama Press—tells how a young boy helps Faru, an orphaned rhino, evade poachers while on their way to the safety of a rhino sanctuary. When Rao-Robinson reads the story of Faru to schoolchildren, "you'd think they'd be sad about it . . . but they know things already and they ask really great questions," she says.

Rao-Robinson, who lives in Milton, Ont., donates 40 per cent of her book royalties and all of her school visit fees to rhino protection charities and sanctuaries. Last year, she donated \$1,400 to various charities through her *Kindness Is Everything* podcast—where young people share stories of kindness towards animals, people and the environment.

About a year ago, Rao-Robinson decided to put her energies into writing full time. That decision follows advice she gave to her own children: "I've always said 'Find something you really enjoy doing.' It's nice to finally show myself living those words."





Empowering working moms in Africa

Sahar Jamal, BCom'11, Artsci'11, is looking to make a difference in Kenya and beyond

BY ROSALIND STEFANAC

IN MANY DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, new mothers face a tough choice: protect their babies against health issues by breastfeeding longer, or switch to formula so they can go to work. Sahar Jamal is trying to solve that dilemma by making it easier for moms to breastfeed while holding down a job.

Jamal is the creator of the Wema breast pump. She says it's the only product of its kind tailored to working mothers in developing markets. The battery-operated, rechargeable device

fits under clothing so new moms can express milk discreetly no matter where they are. "One example that I love to give is a mother who is a construction worker and was able to use the breast pump while painting a house," says Jamal, who grew up in Vancouver and now lives in Nairobi, Kenya.

In Kenya, the risk of infant death is 14 times higher for babies who aren't exclusively breastfed for their first six months. Yet only seven per cent of moms use a breast pump, and Jamal says policies mandating lactation rooms in the workplace aren't enforced. "I think working mothers are one of the most important and maybe most marginalized members of our communities . . . the fact that we're making it so hard to nourish our future generations of children seemed unacceptable to me."

Jamal started her career in the corporate sector. She eventually moved to London, England to work at Johnson & Johnson as a senior brand manager. There, she took a voluntary post supporting maternal and newborn health-care programs in Asia and Africa. "I realized over time that I was enjoying that work more

than my day job," she says.

Intending to pivot her career into social impact, she returned to school for her MBA. It was during an internship at Jacaranda Health, a maternal and newborn health organization in Nairobi, that the idea to launch her company, Maziwa Breastfeeding, came about. Working with a team of biomedical and mechanical engineers from Northwestern University in the U.S., Jamal developed a prototype breast pump and launched Maziwa (which means "milk" in Swahili) in 2019. A year later Maziwa was chosen from a pool of more than 2,600 applicants from 135 countries for the MIT Solve class of 2020. Solve is a social impact pitch event, and Maziwa earned the award for maternal and newborn health, thereby winning US\$30,000 from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Today Maziwa employs 10 staff along with a large base of volunteers and advisers. Jamal expects that by year's end the Wema breast pump will be used by 2,000 moms and newborns in Kenya and another 1,500 elsewhere. Her goal is 100,000 mothers and newborns in Kenya annually by 2027, and another 150,000 in sub-Saharan Africa.

Jamal is also looking ahead. Her company is currently working on a battery-operated cooler to store expressed milk throughout the day. It's also looking to expand into accessories such as maternity bras, milk bottles and carry-on bags. She's also eyeing global expansion. "We're hoping to make a meaningful impact in sub-Saharan Africa. But I believe we have potential to launch in markets like South America and South Asia, too." ■



MUSICAL JOURNEY

Naanak Sodhi, MBA'21, is engineering a career in song

BY CHRIS POWELL

BACK IN THE 1980s, Naanak Sodhi's father got a Casio SA-10 keyboard as a birthday present. It was among the possessions that accompanied the Sodhi family when they emigrated from New Delhi to North America, eventually arriving in Calgary via the U.S.

That tiny keyboard could replicate 99 sounds, including the banjo, cello, heavy metal guitar and, um, "insect," and the young Sodhi found himself irresistibly drawn to his dad's old "magical electronic device," as he describes it.

But there was one more discovery awaiting Sodhi that would be the gateway to a future in music. In a Grade 8 computer science class, he discovered an Apple computer containing GarageBand. For most people, GarageBand is the software bundled with every new computer that they half-heartedly meddle with before losing interest. For Sodhi, it was a revelation. "I was like 'Oh my God, this is just like that synthesizer, except one million times better,'" he says. "I spent that entire semester not doing my actual work because I was making music all the time."

Sodhi eventually obtained a degree in engineering and, after spending the early part of his career with General Dynamics, joined Google Canada last year as a senior account manager on its automotive team in Toronto.

But he has kept his hand in music. Working under the name Sodhivine, he's released six albums—his latest, *Future Melodics*, arrived earlier this year and garnered airplay on both BBC Radio and CBC Radio—and more than 40 singles.

He has also scored more than one



dozen short and feature-length films, and in 2020 was invited to join Bell Media's team of screen composers, composing music for productions across the media conglomerate's 63 TV channels.

He submitted his first batch of 30 tracks to Bell last year, with India's major festivals serving as inspiration for 10 of them. He won't know how or where they'll be used until sometime this year. "My vision as a composer is to always tell a story with music," says Sodhi. "Just like art is designed to decorate a space, music is designed to decorate time. When I write music, my vision is always how I'm decorating the time of the listener."

Sodhi describes his MBA as the "jelly" between the slice of bread that was his engineering career and the bread that represents his creative pursuits. Receiving the Stephen J.R. Smith MBA Scholarship, he says, confirmed that he was meant to pursue the degree.

"My entire life was kind of split into this super-technical piece and the creative piece, and I thought, 'I've got to put these together somehow,'" he says. "If you think of them as two pieces of bread, I needed some kind of peanut butter or jelly in the middle. I could have quit my engineering job and tried to be a full-time musician, but that's only one part of the loaf that I'm eating. I wanted the whole loaf." ■

The joy of baskets

Robin Kovitz understands the magic of receiving a gift basket. She built her business on it

BY **BRENDA BOUW**

ROBIN KOVITZ, BCOM'02, PRESIDENT and CEO of Baskits Inc., swore she'd never become an entrepreneur like her father. Growing up, she learned that running a business came with so many ups and downs. So many uncertainties.

"The ups were exhilarating, but the downs were terrifying. The overall stress was hard to watch," says Kovitz, whose father owned and operated a large food manufacturing and distribution company in her hometown of Calgary. She spent many weekends and summers working there as a student. "I saw up close how risky entrepreneurship was and longed for the stability of a corporate job."

So, when Kovitz went to study Commerce at Smith, it was with the intention of working for a bank. "I couldn't think of anything more stable," she says. After graduation, she spent three years as a mergers and acquisitions investment banking analyst at CIBC.

Three years later, she decided to get her MBA at Harvard. There, she took a personality test and was amazed at what it revealed about her ideal career path. "I was off the charts for entrepreneurship," she recalls with a laugh. "At the time, I remember thinking, 'This test must be broken!'"

Fast-forward a half-dozen years, and, after working for a couple of private equity firms, Kovitz conceded to the personality test and started her entrepreneurship journey. One reason: She was looking to set her own hours as she started a family.

In 2011, Kovitz co-founded Jet Star Capital Ltd., a search fund company that finds established businesses and



acquires them. The name Jet Star stems from the concept of picking a star and propelling it to the next level, Kovitz says. In making that move, she became among the first women in the world to launch what's known as an "entrepreneurship through acquisition" search fund company, which buys a company intending to improve it instead of starting a company from scratch (see "A different path to entrepreneurship" on page 44).

While Kovitz had the financial chops to grow an enterprise, finding one she wanted to buy and build wasn't easy. Several deals fell apart for various reasons before she bought gifting company Baskits Inc. in 2014.

She initially dismissed the gift basket seller as lacking the market and growth potential she envisioned in an acquisition target. "I thought, 'Anyone can make a gift basket in their basement.' But then, when I started to dig into it, I saw that it had a lot of the criteria that I was looking for in a company and a lot of opportunities," Kovitz says of

"What if, when you opened a gift, each item inside was more interesting than the next? Not just a whole bunch of stuff thrown together, but high-end items thoughtfully curated"



Baskits, which was founded in 1985. “I also saw an opportunity to bring fresh thinking to the industry.”

Eight years later, and through two unpredictable pandemic years, sales at Toronto-based Baskits have grown sevenfold, driven by its rapidly expanding e-commerce site (Baskits.com). Kovitz says the company’s goal is to reach \$100 million in annual sales, up from a few million when she first bought the company. In 2021, Baskits made the *Globe and Mail*’s annual ranking of Canada’s Top Growing Companies, with three-year growth of 184 per cent. It was the second consecutive year that Baskits made the list. For the second year, Kovitz was also named one of the 100 Most Powerful Women in Canada by the Women’s Executive Network. She was recognized by WXN in its entrepreneurs category.

Today, Baskits has around 50 full-time employees and 100 seasonal staff that come on board for busy gift-giving times such as Christmas, New Year’s, Valentine’s Day, Nurse’s Week and Easter.

Kovitz credits a strong team for the rapid expansion. It’s a group that has executed and contributed to her vision of transforming gift giving from a simple transaction to a memorable and impactful experience. “I thought, ‘What if, when you opened a gift, each item inside was more interesting than the next? Not just a whole bunch of stuff thrown together, but high-end items thoughtfully curated,’” Kovitz says. >

There’s a gift basket for every occasion. The selection at Baskits includes a wide variety of gifts covering everything from alcohol and gourmet foods to baskets to celebrate a new baby in the family. The Toronto-based company delivers across North America



A different path to entrepreneurship

Most people who want to run their own business go the startup route. They come up with an idea, try to finance it and grow from there. But there's another way: entrepreneurship through acquisition (ETA) with a search fund model. That's how Robin Kovitz became an entrepreneur. Today, she's often asked to speak about the ETA route.

The goal of ETA, she says, is to buy an existing business, become its CEO and build the company into a larger and more successful enterprise. The search fund model, which involves investors, provides relatively inexperienced professionals with limited resources the opportunity to search for, acquire and operate a business in which they have a meaningful ownership position.

Kovitz says there are three big advantages to the ETA model. The first: You don't need to come up with a good startup idea. The business you're buying has presumably already proven itself. Second, the seller usually teaches the buyer the ropes of the business as part of the ownership transition. Third, Kovitz says, the business is already generating cash flow. That means, as a new owner, you can get broader access to capital than you would going the startup route.

"My first strategy was to elevate the product because our competitors weren't doing that."

Through Baskits.com and three stores in the Greater Toronto Area, Baskits offers a range of products from gourmet food and alcohol to baby clothes and household items. Many are curated under Baskits' brands such as Dabble & Drizzle (combinations of chocolate, nuts and other sweets), Jake & Jill (a line of baby clothes and other products named after Kovitz's two children) and Empress & Co. (a tribute to her late grandmother, Muriel Kovitz, that includes everything from candles to cashmere socks).

It wasn't just the quality and variety of gift-basket products that Kovitz set out to improve with Baskits. She also wanted to step up the gift-receiving experience. As a result, the company created an in-house courier service instead of relying on third-party companies.

"I really wanted to focus on high-end service," Kovitz says, "because I learned that—no matter how good the design and purchasing and assembly is—if the person delivering it is smoking a cigarette and throws it on your front step, you're not going to have a good experience. We worked on building our courier network and created a very sophisticated dispatch and tracking software system."

While the expansion strategy has been a success, the business has faced its share of challenges, the latest and largest being the pandemic.

"Like most businesses, it was terrifying at first," says Kovitz. In 2019, months before the pandemic hit, Baskits launched a travel gift business called Slice of Canada, which sells Canadian loonie-style chocolates and maple syrup products in airports. That business understandably took a hit amid pandemic-related travel restrictions.

The gift-giving side of the business also slowed at first, which prompted Baskits to get a medical device licence and start importing and selling face shields to boost revenue. But as the pandemic hung on and people got used to living in lockdown, many began sending gift baskets as a way to reach out to friends and loved ones they couldn't visit in person. So, while the Baskits stores in Toronto were closed in the pandemic, the company's e-commerce sales remained steady.

The additional business was great news. Meanwhile, Kovitz and her team managed operations, with staff working from home while ensuring the front-line staff, including delivery teams, were protected and safe. More recently, the company has had to contend with higher costs amid rising inflation and supply chain shortages.

"It's been a challenge," Kovitz says. "How can we provide the same or better value at a time when costs are increasing materially, and no one wants to pay more?" Kovitz says her team has adjusted by purchasing more inventory in advance and leveraging strong relationships with lenders.

It's the kind of entrepreneurial ups and downs that Kovitz shied away from at the start of her career—and is glad she eventually embraced.

"The fun thing about business is that it's constantly changing, and so we're also constantly adapting. And that's what makes it so exhilarating," Kovitz says. "I guess you can't really fight who you are." ■

How to get connected

There's an easy way to keep in touch with your fellow alumni. It's called SmithConnect and it's the exclusive network for alumni, faculty and students (smithconnect.com). With more than 11,000 members, SmithConnect provides a lot of opportunities to tap into the Smith community. Here are three ways to get started.



Re-connect

SmithConnect has a searchable directory that makes it easy to book a coffee chat or make new connections within the Smith community. You can search by name, program, industry, class year, company and more.

Expand your network

Joining SmithConnect is a great way to build your network and career. You can introduce yourself, share opportunities or promote your business. It's easy to link your profile to LinkedIn and list your business in our business directory. You never know what door SmithConnect may open.

Give back

You've built up your career and your expertise. Why not use your experience to benefit others? On SmithConnect, you can update your profile to indicate that you are "willing to help" by becoming a mentor to fellow alumni or graduating students. You can also post employment opportunities on our job board. We may be biased, but we're pretty sure that Smith grads make the best new hires.

ALUMNI SPORTS TALK

Sports is big business today. But change is happening as big data, social issues and more alter the big game. With that in mind, the Smith Alumni Toronto Chapter hosted a one-hour panel session in February called "Lights, Camera, Action: The Business of Sports". The virtual event was moderated by former CFL player Jock Climie, Artsci'89, LLB'94, partner at the law firm Emond Harnden, and featured three alumni discussing the present and future of sports.

FAN ENGAGEMENT

"The key thing is that sports needs female fans to grow. That is the way the pie is going to grow for everybody. There's a lot of potential here. Female fans are spending a lot, they care a lot, they're incredibly passionate and their fandom is growing, both for men's sports and women's sports. So it's an incredibly important demographic."



Jacie deHoop
BCom'14
co-founder, The Gist

THE PANDEMIC

"Covid forced sports organizations to think about new ways of doing things. And it accelerated some of the things that were happening in the background . . . [That includes] sponsorship of tarps in the stands, the partnership with EA Sports on crowd noise, and mobile initiatives, like having a second screen, that provide you with a different experience—as if you're in the arena."



Erin Crowe
BCom'93, executive
VP and CFO,
Senators Sports &
Entertainment



Scott MacIntosh
MMA'16, head of
sports analytics, SAP
Sports Entertainment

GAME TECH

"There's a real change in how people view data. If you've got three coaches on the field, what data does it introduce another voice with a different perspective on what's going on within the field of play or how you're making a business decision off the field. That's what is really exciting."

Watch "Lights, Camera, Action: The Business of Sports" and other Smith Alumni Chapter events at smithqueens.com/alumni/event-recordings. And visit SmithConnect.com to learn about upcoming alumni events.





Alumni Notes

1970s

JOHN ABBOTT, BCom'72, and his wife, Laurie (Gauchie) Abbott, Artsci'71, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary Aug. 21, 2021 with a cruise. They met at KCVI in Kingston and got married while at Queen's. John had a long and varied career as a commercial pilot, air force pilot, HR manager, university lecturer in Calgary, Israel, Egypt and Cuba, and management consultant. He also got an MBA along the way. He is now an artist selling paintings of Western Canada in Banff and Lake Louise. Laurie was working on her MSc in organic chemistry when their first child came along. Since then she graduated with a master's degree in theological studies and taught at a number of theological colleges in Calgary. She is now retired and spends her time leading Bible studies. The highlight of their many travels was participating in archeological "digs" in Israel where they discovered many artifacts going back to 6000 BC. John says he's hoping to be back in Kingston for his 50th class reunion.

STEVE GILCHRIST, BCom'74, writes, "Faced with barriers to travel and the general economic slowdown, I decided to go back to university to obtain a Masters of Environmental Science degree from the University of Toronto Scarborough. It was a daunting but fulfilling return to academe and a chance to buttress my knowledge of current environmental science." Steve lives in Pickering, Ont., and has launched a business initiative, Cinerex Water, which

markets air-to-water technologies in places that face water insecurity.

PAUL OWENS, MBA'74, lives in Edmonton and tells us he has been appointed senior vice-president, pension and policy with Ellement Consulting. He recently retired from the Alberta government after nine years as deputy superintendent of pensions. Paul has been the chair of the Foundation of Administrative Justice for five years. In 2020, he was a keynote speaker at the Investment and Pensions Europe virtual conference and guest-lectured in the Master in Quantitative Investment Management class at the University of New Brunswick in 2021.

W. BRIAN WEST, MBA'76, BSc(Eng)'72, tells us he's been retired for 15 years, following a 40-year career in the global mining industry. Brian lives in Bobcaygeon, Ont., and enjoys travelling, gardening and relaxing at home, as well as spending time with eight grandchildren. He's looking forward to travelling once the COVID pandemic

eases. He plans to start by travelling around the Pacific and Europe. A road trip across Canada is also a possibility.

KENT HALEY, MBA'77, retired after 23 years working in Halifax at Merrill Lynch and CIBC Wood Gundy. Kent plans to enjoy outdoor activities and winters in the southern U.S. with his wife, Brenda Heaney, MPL'79. They now live in Waterdown, Ont., which allows them to be closer to their three children and grandchildren in the Toronto area.

1980s

MALCOLM SMITH, MBA'82, Artsci'78, '79, tells us that he retired last July after 29 years at the University of Manitoba's I.H. Asper School of Business. During his time on faculty he served as director of the undergraduate international exchange program, head of the marketing department and associate dean (research and research graduate



SOPHIA ARVANITIS, BCom'99, AMBA'08, is working in London, England, after being appointed Ontario's agent-general there to build on the province's international presence in key markets around the world and to raise Ontario's profile in the U.K. As the province's primary representative in the U.K., Sophia positions Ontario as a top-tier destination for investment and job creation. Before this, Sophia was the director, Covid-19 response, economic development and culture for the City of Toronto.

programs). Earlier in his career, Malcolm was on the faculty at Mount Allison University and at the University of Lethbridge.

HUGH HELFERTY, MBA'85, Artsci'77, is living in Houston and tells us he published an opinion piece in *The Hill* calling on governments to harness the capabilities of oil companies to address climate change. He's working with a number of former industry executives to advocate for this position in Canada, the U.S. and beyond.

BRIAN LENAHAN, BCom'86, lives in Mississauga, Ont.,

and is chair of the Quantum Strategy Institute, a global organization of quantum technology experts dedicated to the acceleration of the adoption of quantum computing, sensing and communication. He says his latest book, *Quantum Boost*, is on the Amazon bestseller list in its category.

RHONDA ELDRIDGE, BCom'89, is living in Greenwich, Conn., and runs a social impact enterprise, called Harness All Possibilities, which she founded in 2016. It provides consulting and advisory services in the alternative investment, financial audit, fintech and blockchain-crypto space. Rhonda shares her knowledge on the future of work and blockchain, curating discussion, events and educational workshops and seminars to bridge literacy, access and inclusion gaps for people in career transition and underserved communities. In 2021, she was named among the Top



CHAMKAUR CHEEMA, MBA'85, retired in 2019 and is living in Vancouver with his wife, Sandy. After graduating from Smith, Chamkaur went on to have a variety of careers, eventually finding his true calling as a post-secondary educator at Kwantlen Polytechnic University in B.C., where he spent 23 years teaching entrepreneurial leadership. He credits the MBA program for giving him the skills to transition between various industries throughout his career. In retirement, Chamkaur continues to be active with several boards and real estate investments.



Happy trails

DAN TISCH, EMBA'96, Artsci'91, and his parents, Fedor Tisch and Edie Echevarria Tisch, took a trip in December to Uruguay to explore their family history. The visit took them from the bustling capital, Montevideo, to rural gaucho country near the Brazilian border. "Qué viaje!" he writes.

50 Caribbean Women In Tech by SiliconCaribe and appointed to the global board of directors for Help for Children. She says she "embraces exponential living with a love of quiet meditation, reading, blogging, networking, crossfit, family camping and sharing insights on 21st century topics."

1990s

BILL TSOTSOS, MBA'90, has joined the global investment management business of U.S.-based Prudential Financial, PGIM, as managing director of its institutional relationship group. Bill established a downtown Toronto office for PGIM in September and is working with the PGIM affiliate investment and distribution teams to foster new product

development and strategic relationships by bringing PGIM's partnership model, knowledge and offerings to Canadian investors.

JACQUELINE CHILTON, BCom'93, is excited to share that her daughter, Jessica, is enjoying her first year at Smith in the Commerce program. "She is co-captain of the Queen's women's water polo team that achieved a silver medal for the first time since 1993. Go Gaels!"

MICHAEL STEIN, BCom'93, lives in Vancouver and writes, "After spending almost 15 years in finance in Eastern Europe, I downshifted and founded Colindale Beach Villas, which provides executive-class accommodation on a beachfront property not far from Cabot Cliffs Golf Course in beautiful Cape Breton, Nova Scotia." Michael is also an adviser to CyberLucent, a Canadian cybersecurity



LEANNE HILL, BCom'99, has been working in the travel industry for the last 20 years. Recently, she accepted a position with Royal Caribbean International as the strategic account manager for Western and Central Canada. Leanne lives in North Vancouver, B.C. where she enjoys hiking and the outdoors. Most of all, she enjoys spending time with her two French Bulldogs, Lewis and Mr. Fitz.

company founded by **STEPHEN MACEWEN, MBA'98, BSc(Eng)'94.** colindalebeachvillas.ca

RICHARD BARBER, EMBA'97, has been appointed chief client officer of BridgePoint Financial. In 2021, Richard received the Institute of Corporate Directors' ICD.D designation. He also serves on two boards: the Canadian Professional Sales Association and the Scientists in School charity. Richard lives in Oakville, Ont.

DORRIE MANU, BCom'98, has expanded her ministry role with Cru to global strategist for digital strategies in the area of partnerships. She continues to also serve with the Canadian digital strategies team. "During the pandemic, we saw the need for connection and e-mentoring exponentially grow, as people were reaching out to navigate such uncertain

times in their lives and countries. People reach out through a host site, such as issuesiface.com, and are paired with a mentor who journeys with them through life's challenges. It's been really rewarding work!"

2000s

PETER GRAHAM, BCom'00, is living in Vancouver and has started his own consulting practice, InformedESG, where he works with stakeholders in the financial community to provide independent, easy-to-understand guidance on responsible investing.

JASON NARDARI, BCom'01, MPA'05, has been promoted to managing director, head of portfolio management, at CIBC Innovation Banking. Jason is responsible for monitoring and oversight of the bank's rapidly expanding book of credits to high-growth technology and life sciences companies across Canada, the U.S and U.K. He lives in Toronto.

MARK HAINES-LACEY, EMBA'03, lives in Fredericton and is principal and CEO at lead generation company Atlantic Growth Solutions.

KAREN COLE, EMBA'05, Artsci'86, writes, "My heart and home is on the East Coast." It is there that she has started a new position as the executive director at the Atlantic Publishers



Award winners

Meet three alumni recently recognized for achievements in their fields



GEOHERMAL ENERGY

ALISON THOMPSON, MBA'01, received the Centennial Leadership Award from the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Alberta for her work spearheading the growth of geothermal energy in Canada and establishing an advocacy organization to remove industry roadblocks. She lives in Calgary.



HEALTH TECH

JUGGY SIHOTA, EMBA'05, was recognized with four awards in 2021. She was named to WXN's list of Canada's Most Powerful Women; received the Business Transformation Leadership award from WeQual; and was twice recognized by *Business in Vancouver*. It presented her with its Influential Woman in Business award and recognized her as a Health Technology Leader in its BC500 list. Juggy is vice-president of consumer health for Telus Health.



30 UNDER 30

JAKE DANCYGER, BCom'15, and **CYRUS SYMOOM, BCom'15**, were recognized on the *Forbes* 30 Under 30 list for social impact. They lead Vancouver-based software company Clariti, which is focused on digitizing permitting and licensing processes for state and local governments. "In the past 18 months Clariti's revenue has grown more than 50 per cent, the size of the team has doubled to 60, and it has become the trusted software of choice for some of North America's largest state and local governments," Jake says.



On top of the world!

AMY KRAEMER, BCom'15, married Connor Scullion, BSc(Eng)'14, in June 2021 on top of Crowsnest Mountain in Alberta, the peak where they got engaged. "Though we overlapped at Queen's for three years and were on the same ski trip to Stowe, Vermont, we didn't meet until after graduation," Amy writes. "We met while volunteering with the Canadian Ski Patrol at Lake Louise. Since meeting, we've always shared a love of the mountains and adventure." While not the large wedding they had originally planned, Amy says they could not have asked for a better day. The couple live with their dog, Oliver, in Alberta, where Connor is a facilities manager with Canadian Natural Resources Limited, and Amy is a relationship manager at Alberta IoT.

Marketing Association, in Halifax. "I'm really looking forward to this next chapter of my career," she says. "Please reach out if you are a Queen's alumni living here."

MOHAMED JAGANI, EMBA'05, tells us he published a book, *The Profit Pill*, on pharmaceutical and health-care investing that's available on Amazon. He is on the faculty at York University in the new Clinical Research program.

ASHUTOSH CHANDRA, MBA'06, tells us that since graduating he's been working in the airline industry in India. He lives in Karnataka and has been the chief airport officer at Mangaluru International Airport since early 2020. In this role, he led the privatization of the airport and the takeover by Adani Group from the Airport Authority of India in October 2020. He says his wife enjoys living in a small town and being near the beaches, temples and greenery around Mangalore. Daughter Anya is completing school online, and son Ayush lives in Brazil.

DANIEL MONEHIN, AMBA'06, has been appointed to the board of Amex Bank of Canada. He serves on the board's conduct review, audit and risk and HR committees. Daniel lives in Oakville, Ont.

ADAM GORDON, MBA'09, writes "After running auction clerking sheets to the office as a six-year-old and becoming an auctioneer at 16 with my family's

company back in the '80s and '90s, I've recently rejoined the Gordon's Downsizing & Estate Services team as president." Before returning to the family business, Adam was a member of the Canadian and British Armed Forces, worked in management consulting at KPMG, and most recently was COO for online auction platform MaxSold. Adam and his wife, **HEATHER GORDON, BCom'02**, live in The Beach area of Toronto with their children: Abigail (8), Gwendolyn (6) and Tavish (3). "We love spending time with friends and family and are looking forward to new adventures!" he says.

2010s

CHETAN CHANNA, MBA'10, tells us he recently joined Microsoft as a product manager, after eight years in the startup world. He and his wife are living in India with their two-year-old son, Zhyaan. "Due to the pandemic, the last two years have been crazy both personally and professionally but I absolutely loved spending the time at home with my son due to working from home. Looking forward for things to get normal."

Survey says...

REMI OJO, GDB'15, MBA'20, MMA'21, BSc(Eng)'14, and members of his family appeared in three episodes of the CBC game show, *Family Feud* in January 2021. "Can't tell you if we won! You're going to have to watch it on CBC Gem!" he says. Team Ojo consisted of Remi, his cousin Tobi Ojo, cousin Tolu Ojo and her fiancé Francis Atta, cousin Adeola Ojo, and brother Toye Ojo. "Fast money was so fun," he says, but the best part of being on the show was "hanging out and bantering with Gerry Dee."



The Smith community remembers

PATRICIA BRIDGEMAN, BCom'73, died Jan. 27 after a three-year battle with cancer. She was 71. Patricia lived in Westfield, N.J. and ran a business that made custom ornaments and family plaques. She also co-owned one of the largest New Jersey craft Christmas markets. Pat loved cruises; she and her husband, Bob Bridgeman, BSc(Eng)'72, travelled the world. Bob survives her, as do her two children and a granddaughter.

ROBERT TAKER, BCom'74, died Jan. 21 at age 71. Bob worked in the insurance industry from graduation until his retirement. He was an avid reader and enjoyed sharing his love of music and theatre with his wife of 29 years, Margaret-Anne. She survives him.

LAWRENCE KUSIAK, MBA'75, BSc(Eng)'73, died Jan. 3 at age 70. Larry's career was spent in marketing and sales in the specialty-steels industry. Outside of work, he loved rowing. He was a member of Canada's team at the rowing world championships in 1970. He is survived by his wife Diane, two sons and two granddaughters.

WILLIAM THOMAS, BCom'75, died Jan. 14 at age 69. Bill became a chartered accountant after graduation. In retirement, he loved being outdoors, travelling with his wife, Sheila, and spending time with his grandchildren. He is survived by **SHEILA THOMAS, BCom'75**; three children, including Janet Thomas, Ed'07; and eight grandchildren.

ANN SPENCER, BCom'81, died Oct. 31, 2021 at age 62. Ann was a chartered accountant whose summers were spent with her family, sailing and visiting her childhood cottage in Lanark County in Ontario. Ann is survived by her husband George and three children, including Mary Spencer, BSc(Eng)'09, MAsc'11, and William Spencer, BSc(Eng)'11.

PATRICIA KILSHAW, EMBA'05, died Jan. 21 in Victoria, B.C. after a four-year battle with cancer. She was 49. Her career stops included BC Ferries Corporation; pharmaceutical company Aspreva; private investment company Q5; and the BC Pensions Corporation. Nini, as she was known, loved travel, reading, good wine and good food—particularly butter tarts. She is survived by her three children and her partner, John.

Celebrations

Births, engagements, weddings and other reasons to celebrate. Let Smith Magazine know about your special occasion (and share your photos) at smithqueens.com/alumninotes

1. **ROB MARSH, BCom'07**, and his wife, Vanessa, have welcomed Maxwell and identical twins Logan and Chase since marrying in 2019.
2. **ANMOL BAJWA, MBA'15**, got married in an intimate ceremony in one of the pandemic lockdowns in 2020.
3. **FAY MARZUQ, EMBA'09**, her husband, James McLeod, and daughter, Zara, welcomed Nuria Fiona McLeod on April 20, 2021.
4. Game Plan alum **CHRIS DE SOUSA COSTA, GDB'18**, and his wife Dina Awad welcomed a son, Nicholas Zain de Sousa Costa in April 2021.
5. **LEO MASTORAS, AMBA'17**, and his wife welcomed a son on April 27, 2021.
6. **TARYN BERGIN, MBA'19**, Artsci'15 and **MICHAEL CARR, MBA'19** were married on Aug. 28, 2021 at her family cottage, with many fellow Smith MBA grads and spouses (pictured) in attendance.
7. **CAROLINE MIERINS, BCom'14** married **MATTHEW PARROTT, BCom'14**, at the Boston Public Library on Oct. 15. Classmates Roslyn McLarty, BCom'14; Jacqueline Paré, BCom'14; Andrew Dolinski, BCom'14; Chadwick Mitchell, BCom'14; Jonathan Valeriati, BCom'14, GDA'14; and Daniel Sampieri, BCom'14, GDA'14, were in the bridal party.
8. **BETTY WILSON-MACKAY, BCom'88**, and Malcolm MacKay, BSc(Eng)'85, were married in summer 2019. Along with Kristen Wilson, Artsci'18, and Spencer Wilson, BSc(Eng)'23 (pictured), they became the Wilson-MacKay Adventure Family.
9. **KELSEY ROBERTS, BCom'12**, and **JACOB MARTIN, BCom'12**, were married Feb. 20 in Toronto with many Queen's graduates in attendance, including 25 former classmates.





THOMAS SCOTT, EMBAA'13, lives in Denver and recently completed the Georgetown International Business and Policy program, which Professor Marc Busch introduced to the EMBAA class during their studies.

JOHN HUI, EMBAA'15, tells us he was selected by Alumni Spotlight as a Top 100 Entrepreneur in 2022. John is the CEO and co-founder of Twiage, a company that provides novel communication technology to improve

efficiency across critical and non-critical care providers. He is also founder of Rendr, an integrated multi-specialty Chinese physician group dedicated to serving the medically underserved Asian patient population in New York City.

MATHIEU LABERGE, EMBAA'16, recently joined KPMG's partnership. As a partner and regional leader of KPMG's economics and policy practice, he will continue to serve his private, not-for-profit

and government clients in resolving some of their most prominent challenges related to the economy, market and policy environment. Mathieu lives in Ottawa.

SIVAPRAKASH MURUGAMALAI, EMBAA'16, has been promoted to director of consulting for SAP technology advisory services at PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP. He lives in Toronto.

SHARAT CHANDRA, EMBA'18, shares that he

made a move from buildings-engineering consulting to health care, delivering a state-of-the-art 75 bed mental health substance use facility. He also delivered a novel procurement model for the development of Royal Columbian Hospital—the oldest hospital in B.C. And he led the planning and logistics operations for the rollout of Covid-19 vaccines to over 1.8 million people in the Fraser Health Region.

CHRISTINE ROBINSON, MBA'19, was inducted to the newly created Canadian Water Polo Hall of Fame as a member of the 2003 Canadian junior women's team. The 13-player team made history, winning the World Junior Championships—the only world championship title ever won by a Canadian team—with a shootout victory over the U.S. in Calgary.

UMAIR KHAN, MMA'19, was promoted to accounting supervisor at WestRock in November.

2020s

IKA JANISZEWSKI, MIB'20, says she helped organize the largest undergraduate business school

competition in Central Canada as the director of academics for JDCC 2022. The event brought together 300 student delegates virtually from Ontario, Quebec and the Maritimes.

SEKHAR MADDULA, MMAI'20, is excited to share he recently joined NTT Data as a senior director (AI & integration), leading a team of PhDs and AI engineers. Sekhar

lives in Bangalore, India and says a good thing to come from the pandemic has been the opportunity for him to enjoy some great times with his family.

ALURA MCMORRAN, MIB'20, moved to Montpellier, France in 2020 to join the Mars Leadership Experience program at the Royal Canin headquarters. She is currently completing her second rotation in the pet owner experience

New Ventures

Using their expert knowledge, these three Smith grads are growing their own businesses



Zonado

HARJAAP SINGH MAKKAR, BCom'18
SUHAVI MAKKAR, AMBA'20

Zonado.com

Harjaap and his sister, Suhavi, recently launched Zonado, a nationwide network for commercial real estate sellers, buyers and tenants. Harjaap says the idea struck when the two found their realtor father struggling to find commercial investment opportunities for his clients. "Zonado is now being used across the country by hundreds of users and hosts over \$1 billion worth of exclusive commercial real estate opportunities."



Fuzn

AMI TRIVEDI, MIB'21

Fuzn.ca

Ami started her own social media marketing agency, Fuzn, after graduating. "Thanks to Smith I was able to find my passion for marketing while abroad in Germany during my double-degree at the University of Mannheim. Then, after moving back to Canada and finishing my Master of International Business courses, I felt ready and prepared to live out my dream of launching my own company." Fuzn offers social media management-consulting and training services.



Good Hood Club

CHLOE STAINES, BCom'21
ELOISE MCINTOSH, BCom'21

Goodhoodclub.com

Good Hood Club is a charitable loungewear company committed to championing childhood cancer care, notably by donating 50 per cent of profits to the Pediatric Oncology Group of Ontario (POGO). Chloe says Good Hood Club was inspired by Eloise's battle with cancer. Though Eloise is now cancer-free, Chloe says she "often faced bouts of severe discomfort, leading her to recognize the immense importance of physical comfort provided by what we wear."

and insights team, working in CRM. “I feel very fortunate to have gotten this opportunity at the start of a pandemic. I love the sea and sun, so being in the south of France is a great bonus!” Alura writes.

JASJEET MUSHIANA, EMBAA’20, has joined HCL-PowerObjects as a solution director, providing leadership and strategic guidance to the delivery team, driving strategic conversations with client C-suite leadership and managing client relationships. Since graduating, Jasjeet has completed 60 courses for a total of nine certificates from Cornell. Jasjeet has also lost 25 kilograms “thanks to intermittent fasting and keto. This thing actually works! Flip side: a huge wardrobe bill.”

JANANE NAGASIVAKUMARAN, MIB’20, has started a new job at Bell after completing her double-degree at Smith and ESADE. She lives in Toronto.

TAMARA JACOBS, EMBA’21, says she recently joined the Ryerson University human resources team as manager of HR technology and will lead the digital transformation of the department. “It’s an exciting journey and a role that I have been aspiring to for some time. I am so grateful for the EMBA experience and the confidence it gave me to push forward! I am leaning into my training on high-performance team management and leadership to make this transformation a success!”

GBOYEGA OJEBIYI, MFIN’21, tells us he got a job as a financial analyst with Heartland Farm Mutual after graduation. “I have always wanted to work in the financial services industry in Canada,” he writes.

DENNIS ZHAO, MMA’21, has been promoted twice since graduating, something he says he wouldn’t have achieved without the education he received in the Master of Management Analytics program. He lives in Markham, Ont.



Submit your announcements to smithqueens.com/alumninotes to see them featured next issue!

Meet three new alumni

These new Smith graduates are off and running as they build their careers



BRENDA KATWESIGYE BAGANZI, MBA’22, tells us she is heading to Mastercard as an associate managing consultant. She continues to remain involved with her vision care and prescription eyewear company Wazi, which she co-founded in 2016 in Kampala, Uganda.



RYAN BLAIS, EMBA’22, says a lot of big changes have happened since wrapping up his EMBA, including buying out his business partners to take sole ownership of the digital marketing agency nine10 Incorporated, followed by a merger with Image Design and the acquisition of Elle Bell Sales Co. “I also became an uncle again and am happy to welcome Sawyer Blais, my little niece, into the family.”



BYLL CASILANG, MIB’21, has landed a job as a media planner at Starcom in Norway, where he manages a client portfolio of local and international brands, such as Samsung and Peugeot. “The [MIB] program provided me with a unique experience, which allowed me to stand out during the interview process. It took me one week from my first round of interviews to receive an offer.” Byll adds that he’s taken up paddle tennis. “It’s fast-paced, fun and a good workout.”

My other CV

Carolyn Rogers

EMBA'02

Last December, Carolyn Rogers was appointed senior deputy governor of the Bank of Canada, joining another high-profile Queen's alumnus, the bank's governor, Tiff Macklem, Artsci'83. Here, Rogers answers some of our alternative resumé questions—from her first job, to what she's reading, to the best advice she ever got.

Where's your hometown?

I moved a lot growing up so it's difficult to name one place, but I tend to think of Winnipeg as the closest thing to a hometown for me. Most of my family is there now.

Growing up, what did you want to be?

I changed my mind a lot. I can remember wanting to be everything from an architect to a fashion designer to a journalist.

What was your first job?

Keeping stats for my dad's baseball team.

What's your all-time favourite book?

There are way, way too many to pick one. The best I can do is name my favourite that I've read in the last few months, which is *The Premonition* by Michael Lewis.



What are you reading at the moment?

I usually have about three books on the go at any given time. Right now, I am reading *Fight Night* by Miriam Toews, *Talking to Strangers* by Malcolm Gladwell and *The Code Breaker* by Walter Isaacson. The last one was a Christmas gift from my boss.

Your favourite all-time movie is?

The Big Lebowski

What's your motto?

Always leave it better than you found it.

What's the best part of your job?

Being surrounded by smart, interesting people.

What attracted you to a career in finance?

Initially it was a university scholarship. But eventually I discovered it was what I liked to do.

Name one thing that has helped you succeed in your career?

Being focused on helping others succeed.

What do you do when you're not working?

Reading, running, cooking, sailing, yoga, and hoping

someday soon to get back to golfing.

What's one thing that most people don't know about you?

I'm an introvert.

What's your best memory from your time at Smith?

I did an Executive MBA so a lot of it was done online. My favourite memories were the video classes every other Friday and Saturday, where I met up with my team, unplugged from work and had a bit of fun . . . and learned a lot, of course!

Who was a favourite Smith professor?

Julian Barling. He was a pro on tough questions.

What's on your music playlist now?

Lately a lot of Dave Matthews and Dire Straits.

Where is your favourite place to travel?

Maui.

What's the best advice you ever got?

People will forget what you did, they will forget what you said, but they will rarely forget how you made them feel.

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