

**ASPER**  
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS



**THE ASSOCIATES**

# **SPEAKER BUREAU**

**2024-2025**

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# Michael Anderson

## Founder & CEO

365 Technologies Inc.



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### Industry:

IT Services

### Topics of Interest:

Cybersecurity

Leadership

Entrepreneurship

Startups



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

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

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

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

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

# Manny Atwal

**Chief Operating Officer**  
People Corporation

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**Industry:**

Entertainment, Retail, Sales

**Topics of Interest:**

Strategy

International Business

Leadership

Marketing

MIS / Business Technology



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

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

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

## Chip Batten

**President and Chief Executive Officer**  
Color Ad Packaging Ltd.

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### **Industry:**

Packaging

### **Topics of Interest:**

Supply Chain / Logistics

Strategy

Leadership

Marketing



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

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

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

# Gary Bell

## President & CEO

Calm Air International LP

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### Industry:

Airlines / Aviation

### Topics of Interest:

Marketing

Finance

Supply Chain / Logistics



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

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

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

## **Gary Bernard**

**Head of Commercial and Corporate  
Banking, Manitoba**  
HSBC

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**Industry:**

Banking

**Topics of Interest:**

Finance

Leadership

Entrepreneurship



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

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



## Justin Boonen

**Vice President, Account Manager**  
PIMCO Canada

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### **Industry:**

Financial Services

### **Topics of Interest:**

Finance

Entrepreneurship

Leadership



P I M C O

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

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

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

# André Brin

## Chief Executive Officer

World Trade Centre Winnipeg



### Industry:

Business Services

### Topics of Interest:

Sports Communications

Exporting

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



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

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

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

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

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

## Brian Brown

### Principal

Best Job in the Company Consulting Services

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### Industry:

Consulting Services



### Topics of Interest:

Internal Audit

Fraud

Governance

Risk Management

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

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

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

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

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

# Emily Burt

## Executive Vice President

Cardinal Capital Management



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### Industry:

Capital Management

### Topics of Interest:

Investments

Finance

Women in Finance

Women in Leadership

ESG Investing

CFA Designation



**Cardinal**  
CAPITAL MANAGEMENT

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

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

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

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

**President & CEO**  
People Corporation



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**Industry:**

Group Benefits & Insurance

**Topics of Interest:**

Finance

Entrepreneurship

Leadership



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

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

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

## Scott Crick

**Chief Financial Officer**  
Valley Fiber Ltd.



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### Industry:

Internet Services

### Topics of Interest:

Leadership, Development,  
Coaching and Mentoring  
Working for and with  
Entrepreneurs, and what they need  
to know

Strategic Planning  
Manufacturing, Agriculture,  
Transportation, Telecommunications



Scott Crick has been a business and finance leader for over 25 years, with much of it spent in entrepreneurial SMEs transitioning into next-phase growth. A strong proponent of covenantal leadership, he has often needed to step outside of the traditional requirements of a “typical” accountant to serve the needs of the business.

Scott has worked in agriculture, transportation, and manufacturing. He retains a passion for companies that do “good things” that make people’s lives better. In his current role as CFO of Valley Fiber, he is proud to be a part of a team that is providing underserved rural Manitoba communities with world-class Internet.

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

# Doug Darling

**CEO and Executive Creative Director**  
TripWire Media Group Inc.

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## **Industry:**

Video Production and Animation

## **Topics of Interest:**

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



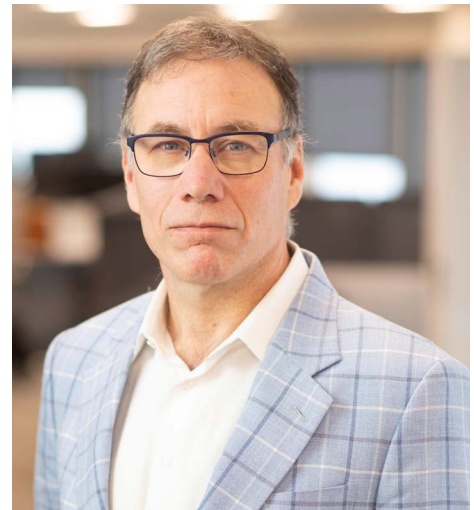
**TRIPWIRE**  
MEDIA GROUP

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

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

## Jaimie Dawson, CPA, CA

**Partner, Assurance**  
Ernst & Young LLP



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**Industry:**  
Financial



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

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

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

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



# Silvia de Sousa

## Partner

Thompson Dorfman Sweatman LLP

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## Industry:

Business Law

## Topics of Interest:

Intellectual Property  
Business Law



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

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

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

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

## Education:

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

## Phillip Dunphy CPA, CA

### Corporate Controller

Neptune Properties Ltd. & True North Foods



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#### Industry:

Real Estate, Private Equity & Agri-Processing

#### Topics of Interest:

Accounting

Finance

Tax



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

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

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

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

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

## Tim Feduniw

### Director, Sustainable Economic Development

City of Selkirk

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#### Industry:

Municipality

#### Topics of Interest:

Actualizing a Sustainable Future



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

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

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

## **Elliot Garfinkel, P.Eng., MBA**

### **Managing Partner**

MCW Consultants Ltd.



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### **Industry:**

Mechanical and electrical consulting  
Professional engineers

### **Topics of Interest:**

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



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

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

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

## Brenda Gibson

### President & CEO

Red River Mutual Insurance

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#### Industry:

Financial Services

#### Topics of Interest:

Accounting

Finance

Entrepreneurship

Leadership



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

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

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

# Melissa Giller

## Founder & CEO

The Mindful Boss Academy

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### Industry:

Consulting / Coaching

### Topics of Interest:

Marketing

Entrepreneurship

Leadership

Women in Business

Communication Skills

Energy Management

Mindfulness / Stress Management



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

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

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

# Benjamin Graham

## President & CEO

Manitoba Blue Cross



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### Industry:

Insurance

### Topics of Interest:

Insurance

Leadership

International Experience



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

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

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

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

# Jamie Hall

## Chief Executive Officer

Habitat for Humanity Manitoba



### Industry:

Not for Profit, Construction, Retail

### Topics of Interest:

Leadership

Ethics

Safety & Health

Not for Profit

Public Sector

Housing and Other Social Issues



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

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

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



# Adam Hanson

## Vice President, Finance

Johnston Group Inc

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### Industry:

Insurance

### Topics of Interest:

Accounting

Finance

Leadership



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

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

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

Adam lives in Winnipeg with his wife and four children.

# Dale Hawthorn

**President & Chief Operating Officer**  
BCV Asset Management Inc.

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## **Industry:**

Portfolio Management/Financial Services

## **Topics of Interest:**

Marketing  
Accounting  
Finance  
Leadership



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

## **Education and Professional Affiliations:**

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

# Rosanne Hill Blaisdell

## President & CEO

Harvard Developments Inc.

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### Industry:

Real Estate

### Topics of Interest:

Marketing

Strategy

Leadership

Corporate Culture

Real Estate Development



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

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

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



## **Candace Hodgins, CPA, CA, MPAcc**

### **Vice President, Commercial Financial Services**

Royal Bank of Canada



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#### **Industry:**

Business Financial Services

#### **Topics of Interest:**

Accounting

Finance

Leadership



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

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

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

## Chris Isford, CPA CA

**Vice-President Finance & Controller**  
Air Canada

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**Industry:**

Air Transportation

**Topics of Interest:**

Accounting

Strategy

Finance

Leadership

MIS / Business Technology



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

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

# Derek Johannson

## CEO

New World Technologies Inc.

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### Industry:

Technology Consulting Services

### Topics of Interest:

Marketing

Entrepreneurship

Leadership

Resilience in Difficult Times



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

### Recognition achieved:

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

# Debra Jonasson-Young

## Executive Director

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

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## Industry:

Entrepreneurship

## Topics of Interest:

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



**Stu Clark**  
Centre for Entrepreneurship  
ASPER SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

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

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

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

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

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

# Jamie Alyce Jurczak

## Partner

Taylor McCaffrey LLP, Barristers and Solicitors



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## Industry:

Law

## Topics of Interest:

Legal

Human Resources

Entrepreneurship

Small Business

Leadership

Marketing

**TAYLOR**  
**McCAFFREY**  
LAWYERS

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

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

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

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

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

**Associate, Operations Analyst, Buildings**  
Stantec

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**Industry:**  
Consulting

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



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

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

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

# Kristen Kennedy

**Regional Vice President**  
BMO Bank of Montreal



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## Industry:

Financial

## Topics of Interest:

Finance

Leadership



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

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

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

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

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

## **Derek Lachaine ICD.D**

**President and Chief Executive Officer**  
TransX Group of Companies

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### **Industry:**

Transportation

### **Topics of Interest:**

Supply Chain/Logistics  
Entrepreneurship  
Leadership  
Strategy



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

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

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

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

# Zhen Liu

## President

SILEX Fiberglass Windows & Doors Ltd.



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## Industry:

Manufacturing

## Topics of Interest:

Marketing

Accounting

Entrepreneurship

Leadership



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

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

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

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

## Shawn MacDonald

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

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**Industry:**  
Financial

**Topics of Interest:**

Supply Chain  
Strategy  
Entrepreneurship  
Human Resources  
International Business  
Leadership  
MIS/Business Technology



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

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

# Vanessa Mancini

## Director of Strategy

UpHouse Inc.



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### Industry:

Advertising/Marketing/Public Relations

### Topics of Interest:

Marketing

Leadership

Strategy

UpHouse®

Vanessa Mancini is the Director of Strategy at UpHouse Inc., a marketing and public relations agency that is proudly 2SLGBTQI+ and female owned. UpHouse is a B Corp that was built upon and exemplifies the tenets of diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility and belonging and seeks to inspire the social consciousness of brands.

She boasts a rare combination of post-secondary credentials: a Bachelor of Arts (Theatre & Film) from the University of Winnipeg, a diploma in Creative Communications (Media Production) from RRC Polytech, and a Master of Business Administration (Marketing & Leadership) from the Asper School of Business.

Similar to her post-secondary journey, she's built her career on gaining cross-functional knowledge through a variety of marketing roles in the agency setting and in-house in the theatre, radio and finance industries. Her core areas of expertise are strategy, account management, media planning, and digital marketing.

Her leadership philosophy is to "know your lines, but don't be afraid to improvise", meaning that it is just as important to understand the script of any task but also be nimble enough to optimize and innovate along the way.

Outside of her marketing career, she volunteers with a local charity cosplay group that raises funds for the Children's Hospital Foundation of Manitoba and is a proud ally of the 2SLGBTQI+ community. She also flexes her acting muscles through commercial voiceover work; you might just hear her on the radio during your next commute.

# Melanie McCreath

## Business Development

Colliers Project Leaders



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### Industry:

Capital Projects

### Topics of Interest:

Finance

Leadership

Investor Relations

ESG

Sustainability

Strategy

Communications

Women in Business



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

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

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



# Nancy McCuaig

## Senior Vice President, Technology, Architecture & Information Security

IGM Financial Inc.

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### Industry:

Financial Services

### Topics of Interest:

Leadership

Technology

Cyber Security



Nancy is the Senior Vice President, Technology, Architecture & Information Security for IGM Financial. She is responsible for enterprise technology architecture, technology infrastructure including network, cloud, cyber security and technology risk, technology operations, service governance and corporate crisis management and business continuity.

Nancy has a Bachelor of Commerce (Honours) degree from the University of Manitoba, Asper School of Business and a CISSP designation from ISC2.

# Martin McGarry

## Chief Executive Officer

Cushman & Wakefield | Stevenson



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### Industry:

Commercial Real Estate

### Topics of Interest:

Commercial Real Estate

Asset Management



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

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

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



# Adam N. Nepon

## Director of Business Development

Legacy Bowes Group Inc. - Tipi Group of Companies



### Industry:

Business Consulting

### Topics of Interest:

Indigenous Economic Development (CTA#92)

Tenacity and Resilience

Neurodiversity - (It's advantage in today's world of business)

Leadership and Community



Adam is the Director of Business Development, part of the TIPI Group of Companies. TIPI has become a "one-stop-shop" for clients by offering professional advisement and access to services including talent acquisition services, human resources services, learning and development services, property and casualty insurance, group pension and benefits, group benefits administration, and a Truth and Reconciliation for business initiative.

As a passionate advocate for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action 92: Corporate Responsibility, being within the TIPI Group of Companies ensures Adam is always working towards Indigenous economic development, and his actions are well guided throughout his personal Reconciliation journey and how this applies to Indigenous economic development. Adam has also joined the Indigenous Chamber of Commerce Board and was elected to the executive board sitting as Vice Chair.

Adam holds an MBA with a specialized degree focused on Indigenous Business and Economy from the University of Manitoba and is a member of Chartered Professionals in Human Resources. Before joining Legacy Bowes, he established himself as an Independent Contractor offering business consulting services and was partner in a healthcare organization from 2019-2021 as the Director of Business Development and Human Resources. He also served as a Senior Talent Advisor for IGM Financial.

Adam identifies as both Ashkenazi Jewish and Red River Metis. As a non-visible minority, he says this has provided him a unique perspective on systemic racism and race-based privilege in society. He looks forward to sharing his experiences and the knowledge he's gained over his career and academic research. His experience includes a background in Sales/Business Development, Human Resources, and Strategic Organizational Planning that spans over several industries.

# Amy Oliver

## President

Amy Oliver + Co

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## Industry:

Venture Capital and Management Consulting

## Topics of Interest:

Leadership

Strategy

Women in Business



A stylized, handwritten signature in teal ink that reads "Amy Oliver + Co". The script is fluid and modern.

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

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

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

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

# Gavin Rich

## President

Tough Duck

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### Industry:

Apparel and Fashion

### Topics of Interest:

Marketing

Supply Chain / Logistics

Entrepreneurship

Leadership

Family Business



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

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

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

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

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



# Nolan Ploegman, MBA

## President & CEO

Concord Projects Ltd.

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### Industry:

Construction

### Topics of Interest:

Finance

Accounting

Sales

Marketing

Human Resources

General Management

Construction Management

Project Management

Real Estate Development and Investing

Property Management



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

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

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

# Calvin Polet

## President

Neptune Properties Inc.

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## Industry:

Commerical Real Estate, Entrepreneurship

## Topics of Interest:

Entrepreneurship

Leadership

Ethics

Strategy / Decision-making



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

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

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

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

# John Proven, CPA, CA

## President

NFI Group of Companies

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### Industry:

Environmental Technology

### Topics of Interest:

Human Resources

Leadership

International Business

Finance

Accounting

Strategy and Planning



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

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

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

# Paul Provost

## President

6P Marketing



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### Industry:

Marketing, Advertising Agency

### Topics of Interest for Presentations:

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



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

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

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

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

# Derek Rolstone

## Principal

Stone HR Strategies

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### Industry:

Human Resources

### Topic of Interest:

Human Resources



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

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

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

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

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

## Colin Ryan, CFA, ICD.D

### Executive Vice-President, Senior Portfolio Manager, Director

Wellington-Altus Private Wealth



#### Industry:

Wealth Management

#### Topics of Interest:

Leadership

Investments



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

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

Colin's community involvement includes:

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

# Reuben Saba

**Vice President, Business Development**  
Medicure, Inc.

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## Industry:

Pharmaceuticals & Healthcare

## Topics of Interest:

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



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

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

## Somia Sadiq

**Founder, Principal Partner**  
Narratives Inc.

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### **Industry:**

Territorial Planning. Impact Assessment.  
Conflict Transformation. Research.

### **Topics of Interest:**

Entrepreneurship  
Leadership  
Trauma-Informed Practice  
Diversity



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

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

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

# Susana Scott

## Founder and President

Brematson & Associates Inc.

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### Industry:

Charity

### Topics of Interest:

Disability

Government Bureaucracy

Entrepreneurship

Leadership



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

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

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

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

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

# Blaine Shewcuk

## EVP, Individual Wealth

Canada Life

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### Industry:

Wealth Management

### Topics of Interest:

Accounting

Finance

Entrepreneurship

Leadership



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

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

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



# Scott Shippam

## President

Shippam & Associates Inc.

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## Industry:

Promotional Merchandise

## Topics of Interest:

Marketing

Entrepreneurship

Leadership

Sales



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

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

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



# Bram Strain

## President & CEO

Business Council of Manitoba



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### Industry:

Business Association / Government Relations

### Topics of Interest:

Leadership  
Government Relations  
Advocacy  
Business & Process of Government



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

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

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

# Shaun Vincent

**Founder and Creative Director**  
Vincent Design Inc.



**VINCENT  
DESIGN  
INC.**

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## Industry:

Marketing/Creative Agency

## Topics of Interest:

Marketing  
Entrepreneurship  
Indigenous Design

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

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

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

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

# Larry Wandowich

**Chief Administrative Officer**  
Rural Municipality of Rosser

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**Industry:**

Development

**Topics of Interest:**

Change Management

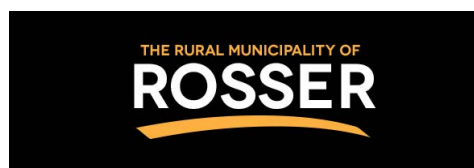
Leadership

Marketing

Business Strategy

Government

Not-for-Profit



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

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

# Grant White

**President, Portfolio Manager**  
Endeavour Wealth Management

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## Industry:

Wealth Management

## Topics of Interest:

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



**ENDEAVOUR**

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

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

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

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

# Denise Zaporzan, FCPA, FCMA, BSP

## President

Asteria Global Inc.

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## Industry:

Consulting, Strategy & Leadership

## Topics of Interest:

Strategy

Teams

Leadership



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

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

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

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

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

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

## Grant Zipursky

**Director/Chief Executive Officer**  
MD Innovative Strategies Ltd.

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### **Industry:**

Health Care Technology

### **Topics of Interest:**

Start ups

Medical Technology



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

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

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

# Joanne Zuk

## Principal and CEO

Joanne Zuk Leadership and Strategy



### Industry:

Consulting (Strategy, Engagement, Facilitation)

### Topics of Interest:

Entrepreneurship

Leadership

Negotiation

Culture Change



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

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

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

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

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