

NEW YEAR NEW NORMAL



PHOTO COURTESY OF CBC

Q&A with *Dragons' Den*

Dragons' Den's **Jim Treliving, Manjit Minhas, Arlene Dickinson, Lane Merrifield, Vincenzo Guzzo, and Michele Romanow** weigh in on how entrepreneurs and small businesses have adapted to the new normal and how Canadians can continue to support our economy as we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Having just filmed season 15 of *Dragons' Den*, how did you see entrepreneurs adapt to the new normal?

Lane Merrifield We definitely had a very different season this year. First of all, there are a lot more entrepreneurs out there. This pandemic has forced a change in so many people's lives and we saw that in the Den. We saw a lot more people, story after story, saying, "This an idea I've thought about for years, this is something I've wanted to do for years, and I finally had the time, the ability, and the space to take it on."

Jim Treliving Everyone who came in the Den was a reflection of having had time to think and look at their life in a different way — that's the biggest change I felt.

Michele Romanow The world has done a whole 180 on us! This year, we've seen entrepreneurs being more adaptive and resilient than ever.

Manjit Minhas Canadian entrepreneurs have pivoted and adapted with new strategies to not only survive but to thrive. Many are creating new products using existing supply chains to serve their existing customers and finding new customers in creative ways.

Arlene Dickinson What makes entrepreneurs special is that they see opportunities where everyone else sees obstacles. Entrepreneurs are problem-solvers, so they're often undaunted — and even excited — by problems.

Vincenzo Guzzo If I look back to past seasons, entrepreneurs were simply pitching their idea or product. Now entrepreneurs are pitching their idea, how they've adapted for today, and how they're going to adapt for tomorrow.

Why is it important for people to continue supporting and investing in small businesses?

Michele Over 40 percent of Canada's GDP is from small businesses. Small businesses are the backbone of the economy and our communities.

Jim The backbone that we've got is now changing daily. Big isn't necessarily the best anymore. It's something you have to look at and ask, "Is smaller better?"

Lane Entrepreneurs are on the bleeding edge. They're the innovators. They're the job cre-

ators in times like these, when our world is rapidly shifting and when the solutions that have worked for decades no longer work.

Vincenzo When you're small, you're an idea-minded business. As a corporation becomes bigger, there are efficiencies in those sizes but there are inefficiencies when it comes to innovation. Without small businesses and without entrepreneurship, the economic development of a country is stale.

Manjit Small businesses are important to the economic and social fabric of our society, and we all play a part in their survival. When you shop local, your dollars stay in the community and help local development. This is called the multiplier effect.

Arlene Think about the restaurants, clothing stores, coffee shops, art galleries, and all the other small businesses that make up the fabric of our communities and add to the rhythms of our daily lives. Lots of these places are at real risk of not surviving the winter. Now is not the time to be shy — call the places you love, the places you picture yourself when this is all over, and ask what you can buy from them now. ■



The Dragons share more expert advice on adapting your strategy, transforming your business, and building resilience in the full interview at innovatingcanada.ca.

Transformation in a Time of Crisis

Phil Taylor

If a business didn't have a digital presence before the pandemic, it more than likely has one now. In fact, Salesforce estimates that the pandemic has led to 10 years' worth of e-commerce adoption in the past 10 months. Crises, it's often said, inevitably have a transformative effect on those experiencing them. This applies no less to businesses as it does to societies and individuals.

Today, a consensus among business leaders has emerged. They believe there's no going back to what we knew as normal. For example, remote work is with us to stay even after the recovery. How does that affect business culture and budgets for remote productivity tools? What do we need from our digital infrastructure

to cope with the extra demands of remote work? As work-life integration has accelerated on an exponential scale during the pandemic, so too has the importance of ensuring and nurturing the well-being and mental health of our employees.

Unique challenges faced by small businesses

For small businesses, adaptation at scale is more challenging in terms of resources, cost, and technical expertise. How will Canada, as a whole, help its national economic engine rise to meet these unique challenges? Small businesses need different tools and resources than medium-sized businesses. How do we create

specific solutions for each group?

The pandemic has left profound economic scars upon the Canadian economy, and indeed, the global economy. Looking forward, there are no easy answers. Canada must be bold and innovative, and must avoid the temptation to seek comfortable solutions in an increasingly uncomfortable world. ■



Phil Taylor
Managing Director of External Communications, Canadian Chamber of Commerce

In the Midst of the Pandemic, the Workplace Revolution Is Here

Society is in the midst of a modern-day workplace revolution as COVID-19 completely resets how and where we do our jobs.

Darryl Wright

What started as a short-term reaction to the pandemic is quickly becoming a long-term shift for many organizations. Flexible work arrangements are likely to be a permanent feature in the future of work. Those already on or beginning their journey of redefining the future of work must consider many factors.

Reorganizing the workforce in a way that makes sense

Old-school attitudes about productivity continue to persist. A recent EY survey found that 55 percent of organizations believe remote workers are less productive than their in-office counterparts. Remote workers may be juggling personal and professional demands — especially if they have children or aging relatives requiring care at home — so what's important to measure are deliverables rather than traditional measures of productivity. Leaders should assign clearly defined tasks or projects and communicate regularly with employees to see if they're struggling.

As the pandemic stretches on, organizations must also assess who truly needs to return to the office. Assessing employees' current responsibilities will help determine which employees should return — for example, employees who are client-facing or who need

access to in-office systems and data. If a job must be performed at the office, then the reasons should be clearly communicated to the employee. Otherwise, many workers will expect flexible work arrangements to continue.

Accommodating workers and creating a positive culture

Businesses must also listen to their staff about where they feel most productive and take steps to accommodate them. Each worker is different, and some employees may

Leaders need to be in close virtual proximity to drive greater empathy and support.

long to return to the office. If so, organizations can consider hot desking — multiple workers using a single physical workstation during different time periods — while ensuring sanitation and safety protocols are strictly followed. Otherwise, they'll need to increase office space to allow for physical

distancing and to ensure employees' health and safety.

Workplace culture is another important consideration. It can be tough to build bonds and culture when people are working remotely, but it is possible. Companies must communicate regularly and ensure they're keeping people engaged. Leaders need to be in close virtual proximity to drive greater empathy and support. In the recent EY survey, a large majority of employers — 75 percent — said they intended to create moderate to extensive changes to professional learning and skills development. Equipping managers and employees with the right skills to be productive in a remote environment, and with access to educational resources to respond to future changes, is a keen focus.

These types of efforts are likely to build positive morale and improve office culture, which can also play a key role in attracting talent. In the new normal, companies that become adaptable are more likely to become those that thrive. ■



Darryl Wright
Associate Partner, EY Canada People Advisory Services



For more workforce insights or to connect with EY's People Advisory Services team, visit ey.com/ca/returntowork.

This article was sponsored by EY.



Make Working from Home Work Better for Your Employees

When COVID-19 forced Canadians to start working from home, many thought it was a short-term solution. However, a recent survey reveals that most Canadians have new expectations about the future of work, and those expectations are all about choice and flexibility.

Melissa Vekil

Many Canadians don't want to work from home permanently, but they don't want to return to the office full-time either. The *Work from Home Productivity Study* by ServiceNow, a leader in workplace digital transformation, found that 89 percent of Canadian office workers want to continue working from home after the pandemic is over, for nearly two thirds of the time — about 14 business days per month.

But whether it's technology barriers or caring for others, staying productive while working from home isn't always easy. Remote work creates a greater need for support from employers, yet nearly half of Canadians say their employer has a lot to learn when it comes to setting staff up to work remotely. The good news is that employers have an opportunity to meet some of these challenges directly, to keep productivity — and spirits — high.

"Initiatives like reimbursement programs for office supplies are key to helping staff succeed remotely," says Marc LeCuyer, General Manager of ServiceNow. "But productivity is about more than just checking items off the to-do list. Employers need to find ways to keep their company culture alive too if they want their teams to feel motivated."

Digital experiences matter to Canadians

While technology is critical to enabling work and connecting employees to their colleagues, more than a third of Canadian employees say their biggest barrier to productivity is tech issues. A quarter feel they would be more productive with access to software that enables communication, collaboration, workflow management, HR technology, and remote onboarding.

Offering the right technology — plus benefits like flexible hours — can go a long way towards making employees comfortable, according to LeCuyer.

"While employers may be intimidated by the upfront cost and myriad options available when it comes to tech solutions, they need to engage their HR and IT departments to solve these gaps in the employee experience," says LeCuyer. "It's a business challenge that employers in every industry need to consider right now."

As companies manage the return to work, they'll need the right tools to support health and safety, and to make ongoing remote work successful. ServiceNow can support your organization as you master work-from-home effectiveness and facilitate a safe return to the workplace — whenever and however that happens. ■



To learn how ServiceNow can support your organization, visit servicenow.com.

This article was sponsored by ServiceNow.



Marc LeCuyer
General Manager,
Canada,
ServiceNow

servicenow

Small Business, Big Change: Innovation in Canada's Entrepreneurship Community

Kayla Isabelle

As the COVID-19 pandemic progresses, it's vital to celebrate the Canadian entrepreneurs who are disrupting their industries and delivering thoughtful, innovative solutions to consumers. However, it's equally important to support these entrepreneurs through the current crisis and to collectively empower them to thrive.

Startups helping Canadians

Adversity is fuelling innovation in Canada's entrepreneurial landscape despite the pandemic. These innovations have resulted in a number of new tools that are helping consumers navigate the pandemic, such as:

- **VitalTracer**, co-founded by Azadeh Dastmalchi, launched a medical-grade smartwatch that continuously measures all vital signs and provides cardiac monitoring,

while also serving as an early-stage COVID-19 prediction solution.

- **Canamasq**, co-founded by Audra Renyi, is a transparent face mask that allows people with hearing disabilities to read lips and see facial expressions.

Tools and resources for entrepreneurs

Across the country, individuals and organizations have been working to promote and empower entrepreneurs, their employees, and Canada's collective startup community.

Amid growing mental health concerns, platforms like Snapclarity have pivoted to provide specialized COVID-19 mental health resources for entrepreneurs. Acknowledging the growing importance of local networks, Startup Canada's Communities program supports the connec-

tivity and promotion of healthy entrepreneur-led communities across the country. Startup Canada also offers a number of supports for underrepresented entrepreneurs, including resource guides for women and Indigenous founders, the THRIVE Podcast for Women Entrepreneurs, and weekly Twitter-based #StartupChats, as well as unannounced 2021 programming. ■



To learn more about resources for entrepreneurs and innovation in Canada's entrepreneurial landscape, visit startupcan.ca.



Kayla Isabelle
CEO,
Startup Canada

Small Businesses Get High Value from Samsung Tech Solutions

Innovative IT-ready and mobile solutions from Samsung offer the perfect support for SMBs looking to adapt to our new normal.

Tania Amardeil

In a notoriously difficult year, Canadian small- and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) have faced innumerable hardships. From being forced to shift online to connect with customers, to transitioning employees to work-from-home environments, such challenges have highlighted the fact that when it comes to business technology adoption, many SMBs are still behind the curve.

"The need for a digital transformation has definitely accelerated due to the pandemic," says Jennifer Safruk, Vice President, Mobile Division for Samsung Electronics Canada. "As we look ahead to the new year, adopting a mobile-first strategy can help small businesses pave a path to success and meet consumer expectations."

Smart tech designed with SMBs in mind

Many Samsung Mobile products and features cater to SMBs, with multi-functional technology that can help them enhance their productivity and efficiency.

"SMBs' productivity impacts their bottom line," says Safruk. "They need reliable, adaptable tech that works in different environments to get the job done right." A smart mobile solution like the recently-launched Galaxy Note20 5G smartphone allows employees to take their work on the go and multitask seamlessly, thanks to its advanced processor, a long-lasting battery,¹ and an S Pen to make notes or sign documents.

"SMBs also benefit from solutions that help augment their mobile ecosystem," says Safruk. With Samsung DeX, Galaxy users can easily shift from remote working to a desktop-like environment by connecting their Galaxy device to a compatible monitor or TV.

Choosing secure and reliable devices from the start can help businesses avoid many risks. In fact, according to Statistics Canada, one fifth of businesses have experienced a cybersecurity incident, 19 percent of which were small businesses. Samsung Knox helps keep your data secure and is built into all Samsung smartphones and tablets and most wearables, affording businesses better protection against intrusion, malware, and malicious threats.

Investments that work as hard as you do

The Samsung ecosystem of products and ser-

vices means that your Galaxy devices integrate seamlessly, helping businesses create smart, connected workplaces that enable employees to reach their full potential — even remotely. Employees can easily navigate across PC and mobile environments through their smartphones, tablets, and wearables, helping to maximize productivity and efficiency.

"As we look ahead to 2021, we know remote working will continue to be important and business owners will need flexibility out of their tech," says Safruk. "For small businesses and entrepreneurs, investing in mobile solutions that can meet more than one need — such as tablets that allow you to sign contracts with a stylus, provide a PC-like experience, or create an easy video conferencing experience — can help ensure that those investments work as hard as they do."

The Samsung Galaxy Book Series of laptops packs a range of features into each powerful device and offers great tools for SMBs. Whether used for creative work, participating in video conferencing, or simply to help optimize productivity, the various options available all have a lot to offer.

By offering an innovative and interconnected ecosystem of IT-ready mobile solutions with a broad range of capabilities, Samsung provides high-tech tools for SMBs in an era of rapid change. Digital transformation is within reach, and business owners can breathe a sigh of relief. ■

¹Based on average battery life under typical usage conditions. Average expected performance based on typical use. Actual battery life depends on factors such as network, features selected, frequency of calls and voice, data, and other application usage patterns. Results may vary.



Learn how Samsung innovations can empower your business at shop.samsung.com/ca/samsungsmb.

This article was sponsored by Samsung.



Jennifer Safruk
Vice President,
Mobile Division,
Samsung
Electronics
Canada

A Clear Path to Digital Transformation

Canadian SMBs can thrive in a post-pandemic world by choosing the right tech solution providers.



Data shows that

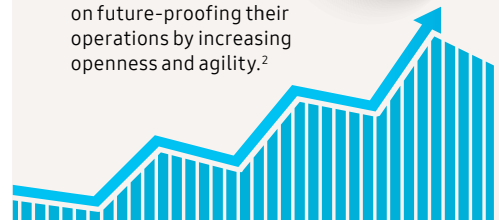
31.4%

of SMBs have prioritized remote work technology as part of their ongoing operations.¹

The world's business leaders recognize the benefits of an open approach to using mobile.

83%

of business leaders agree their companies should focus on future-proofing their operations by increasing openness and agility.²



Sophisticated use of smartphones and tablets is already enabling greater employee performance and productivity.²

Businesses using advanced devices and apps see **15%** greater productivity and **29%** higher profitability than those restricting the use of mobile to basic functions such as email, calls, and scheduling.



87%

of today's business leaders believe collaborative mobile tools will unlock the flexibility and productivity that are critical to meeting the needs of both employees and customers.²

The innovative ecosystem of products and services from Samsung can provide efficient, high-tech, connected solutions that help you work smart.

SAMSUNG

¹Business Resilience and Recovery During COVID-19, Startup Canada, 2020
²Next Mobile Economy white paper, Samsung Canada, 2019