

SMEs

TOMORROW'S CHALLENGES



O Chevreuril Tavern, Sherbrooke

This SME's recipe for success: reinvented classics, personalized service and a warm atmosphere in a vibrant neighbourhood. Lastly, the contribution of local artisans and the close attention paid to every detail make this a well thought-out and coherent concept.



In Québec, small and medium-size enterprises account for more than 99% of commercial establishments and employ a sizable part of the working population. SMEs are therefore important economic vehicles. However, considering the ageing population, issues in connection with qualified labour and the difficulty in finding financing, the SME environment is becoming more complex.

How do entrepreneurs avoid the pitfalls that await them while seizing business opportunities in today's context? See how you can overcome your greatest challenges and jockey for position.



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FINANCING: AVAILABLE SOURCES

By Dany Grimard, Vice President, Eastern Quebec, Business Development Bank of Canada

When a good business opportunity comes up, many investors are willing to offer a helping hand. However, they need to be properly identified, approached and convinced. Here is an overview of available financing sources based on project and business type.

“...it’s not uncommon for applicants to get their lenders involved in their strategic review committee.”

Financing sources are just as abundant as entrepreneurs’ needs. Entrepreneurs can start by tapping into their own funds, of course, and those of their family and friends, but unless they happen to be surrounded by particularly wealthy and generous people, these resources quickly dry up!

If you’re looking for “traditional” financial services, financial institutions are the way to go. Banks and credit unions are ideal for lines of credit, point-of-sale payment systems, payroll services or term loans secured by a company’s tangible assets (buildings, equipment). However, they’re less interested in financing intangible elements, such as marketing initiatives, mergers and acquisitions, working capital, stock redemptions, or other growth- or succession-related needs.

For this type of financing, government agencies can be approached, such as [Canada Economic Development](#), the [Ministère de l’Économie, de la Science et de l’Innovation \(MESI\)](#), [Export Development Canada \(EDC\)](#), the [Association des centres locaux de développement du Québec \(ACLDQ\)](#), the [Société d’aide au développement des collectivités & Centre d’aide aux entreprises \(SADC+CAE\)](#), or [Futurpreneur Canada](#). A complete list is available on the [Centre des petites Entreprises pour consommateurs](#), including assistance for certain regions and minorities.

There are also financial institutions that specialize in addressing specific needs, such as the [Business Development](#)

[Bank of Canada \(BDC\)](#), the [Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec \(CDPQ\)](#), [Farm Credit Canada](#) and many more. Last but not least are venture capital corporations, including the [Fonds de solidarité FTQ](#), [Fondaction](#), [Novacap](#) or [Ange Québec](#).

Requirements

Regardless of a company’s specific needs, lenders have certain expectations of business leaders. First is the ability to convey their vision and identify the challenges they will face. Effective communication is such an important factor that it’s not uncommon for applicants to get their lenders involved in their strategic review committee. Entrepreneurs can expect to be asked questions, and they need to provide transparent answers. No one likes to be presented with a *fait accompli*!

Aside from their vision, applicants will be evaluated based on their knowledge of the market and the distinctive benefits they intend to contribute. Their sense of innovation and creativity will also be examined, as well as, and most importantly, their leadership skills. Lenders will look at whether applicants are well-supported, internally and externally. Do they have a solid network? Are they thorough in presenting their business plan? Do they respect their commitments? Will they be able to evolve on both a personal and professional level as they move forward? These are the types of question that come into play in the financing process.

Steps in the application process

1. PREPARATION

A financing application isn’t prepared alone. It’s crucial to involve the company’s management committee and partners, including accountants, mentors and external networks. Through discussions, a financing strategy can be established based on the specific needs and business model. The presentation should be succinct but cover all key points, including the target clientèle, the business’s financial situation and the position of the competition. The idea is to justify the application as clearly as possible. And of course, the company needs to explain how it intends to repay its financing.

2. MEETING

In person, entrepreneurs need to be both succinct and convincing. About 15 minutes should suffice to pique the lender’s interest without going into the minute details of the business plan.

3. QUESTIONS

After providing an overview at the initial meeting, entrepreneurs must be prepared to answer specific questions. Instead of waiting for them, though, it’s preferable to take a proactive approach. From the start, entrepreneurs should ask lenders what information is required to evaluate the application and follow up to ensure all key aspects are covered. It’s up to applicants to lead the initiative and to rally lenders to their cause, not the opposite.



Evaluation of the file

From a lender’s perspective, there are several recurring selection criteria. First, the business owner’s profile: track record in terms of success and failure, internal and external teams, vision of the future within the company, succession plan, etc. And the company’s potential: business plan, strategic management, competitive advantages, financial outlook.

Obviously, numbers play a key role. In addition to the soundness of its financial statements, the business must prove its ability to re-inject funds as required and to settle its debts as they come due. Its credit history will need to be taken into account, as well as its financial ratios and any investments the entrepreneur is willing to make.

Last point: financing guarantees. The lender will assess their value and useful life; its intention is not to collect the guarantees, but to finance a project that ensures the business’ success and longevity. ■



Financing at each stage

A business’ stage of development determines the type of lenders it should meet with and the way it should prepare its plan. Here is a summary table of the different strategies to use.

DEVELOPMENT STAGE	USUAL LENDERS	VALUED QUALITIES	PITFALLS TO AVOID
Start-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Government agencies → Financial institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Full knowledge of the business plan → Ability to communicate your passion and demonstrate your expertise → Contact network that will support your success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Understated intangible costs in the needs assessment (commercialization, marketing, etc.)
Established business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Financial institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Solid financial statements → Sources of current success → Future prospects → Organization of an advisory committee with seasoned members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → No diversification of financing sources → Complacency... A competitor can show up unexpectedly!
Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Financial institutions → Specialized institutions → Venture capital funds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Detailed cash flows with needs forecasts → Detailed action plan → Good operating credit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Underestimated working capital needs → No contingency plan if the project fails
Exports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Export Development Canada (EDC) → Specialized institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Solid financial statements → Prospects for success in the target market → Profile of foreign suppliers, customers and partners → Accounts receivable financing strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Poor understanding of the target market’s cultural context or regulatory aspects → No protection against foreign exchange risk (currency fluctuations)

SUCCESSION PLANNING: A MATTER OF LONGEVITY

Collaborator Vincent Lecorne, head of the Centre de transfert d’entreprise du Québec

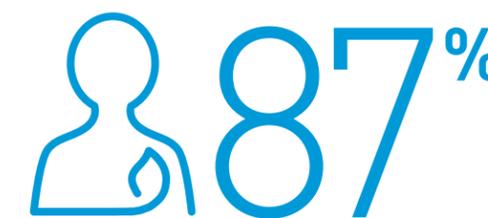
The transfer of a company doesn’t happen overnight. Entrepreneurs should carefully plan their departure to ensure the continuity of what they’ve spent so many years building. Here are the essential steps for a successful succession.

According to a [recent report](#) by the Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montréal, Québec currently has an “entrepreneurial deficit.” Up to 10,000 businesses could close their doors within the next decade because there’s no one to take over; 80,000 jobs and \$8.2 billion of GDP are at stake.

The problem may even be worse than it appears because of the taboo surrounding succession. A lot of executives hide their intention to leave to avoid raising any concerns among their employees and partners.

Others keep putting off the decision until later.

All sorts of scenarios are at play, whether it’s a 70-year-old in a hurry to exit the business, a younger person with a decade still ahead of her, or a serial entrepreneur on his third company. Yet they all have one issue in common: maintaining profitability and jobs. In a province where 87% of private sector employment is with SMEs, succession isn’t just a matter of estate ownership; the entire population depends on it.



OF THE JOBS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR ARE GENERATED BY SMEs

Source: BTMM report

For entrepreneurs, managing growth comes more naturally than managing succession. Opening up new markets or launching new products is far more exciting than planning the transfer of the business to a child or selling it to a third party. But too much is at stake when it comes to succession for it to be handled at the last minute. Here are the key steps to succession planning.

1 Start today

No entrepreneur can escape it: one day or another, you'll have to pass the baton. The more you wait, the more likely you are to find yourself facing unfavourable conditions and unfortunate consequences. It's best to prepare while you're still at the top of your game, rather than when you're close to retirement or, worse, grappling with an illness.

2 Choose the appropriate form

Succession can take many forms. There are four main formulas: transfer to family members, sale to a third-party purchaser, executive/management buy-out or employee buy-out. In the lattermost case, a cooperative is the most popular model and can take on many different forms.

Over time, certain options are no longer available, while others become necessary. What's important is to take the time to approach the interested parties and discuss each option, which is why starting the process early on is crucial.

3 Communicate effectively

Talking about the possibility of a departure can often be alarming to employees, suppliers and partners alike. It's essential to reverse this perception of succession into a positive strategy. It's not an ending; it's a new beginning. It's just one phase in the life of a business that extends beyond the individual destinies of its founders.

The emotion associated with change can then give way to an optimistic view of the future.

4 Find a buyer (where applicable)

If you opt to sell your business, you have to find the right buyer with favourable terms and conditions. Patience is required, because this is sometimes a long process.

Aside from looking to friends or family, you can consider competitors interested in growth by acquisition, suppliers eager to maintain their market access, or clients who want to integrate vertically.

For a fee, a consulting firm can act as broker and use its contact network. Other agencies offer help for free. The [Centre de transfert d'entreprise du Québec \(CTEQ\)](#) has a directory of potential buyers, selected for their ability to go into business in a variety of sectors and regions. Published this year, the directory already contains over 1,500 names.

"A buyer's entrepreneurial skills are, of course, a decisive factor when it comes to the company's continued operations. That said, the buyer's relationship with the seller throughout the transition is just as crucial, which is why CTEQ provides a full range of information, training, support and consulting services to ensure the integrity of the transfer process," explains Vincent Lecorne, head of CTEQ.

5 Educate yourself

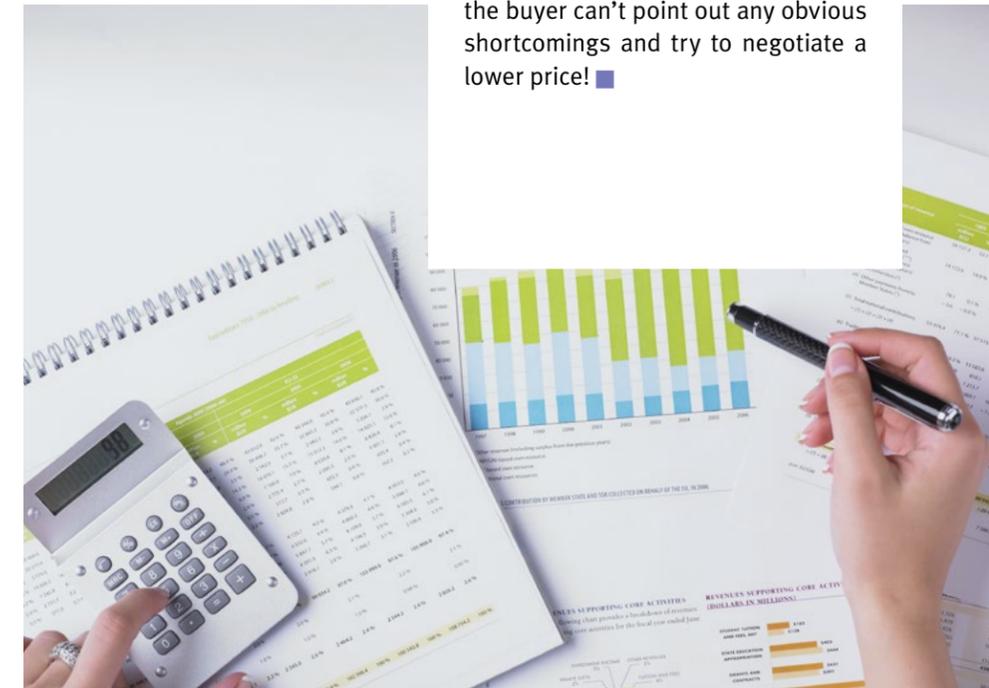
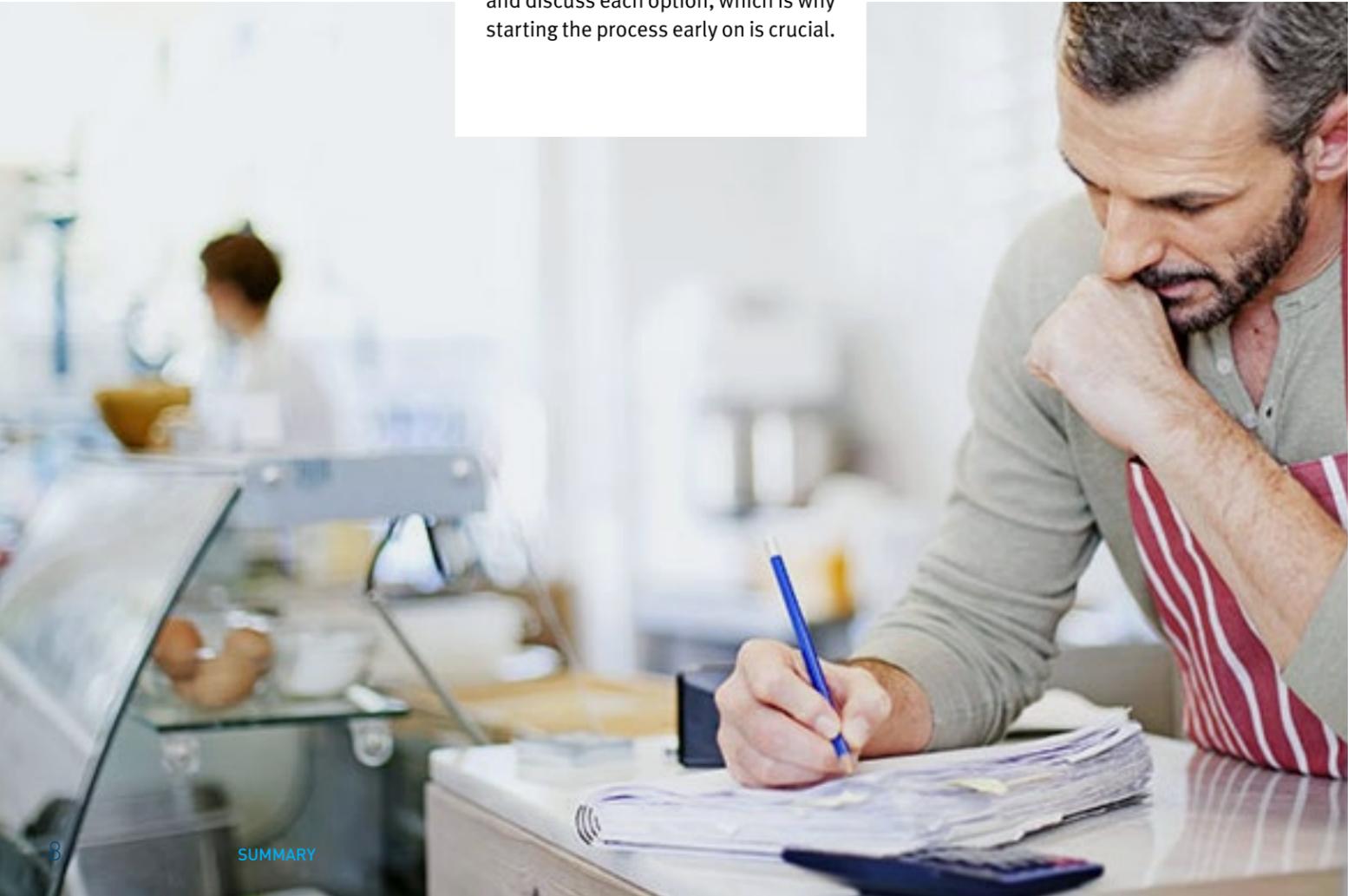
Identifying a buyer is only part of the process; you also need a solid understanding of every aspect of succession so that the transfer is carried out properly. The company's bankers, lawyers and accountants should be involved, because each of them has a vital perspective. They also have access to networks where you can find the expertise you need (or even a buyer).

Aspiring buyers can take the "Succès Relève" (successful succession) course offered by the [Centre de transfert d'entreprise du Québec](#) which provides a comprehensive picture of all the steps to follow.

6 Assess and add value

Business owners are attached to their companies and often overestimate their value. But what is the real market value? Chartered Business Valuators (CBV) can answer this question objectively, the same way real estate brokers help owners value their homes. In some sectors there are established valuation methods that account for goodwill, sales, assets in place, and so on. For example, a hair salon is worth approximately the sum of its last three years of sales.

Before a valuation, you may want to upgrade your facilities and equipment, get your accounting books in order, conduct an intellectual property audit (patents, trademarks), and carry out other due diligence procedures. Then, the buyer can't point out any obvious shortcomings and try to negotiate a lower price! ■



CASE STUDY: MIEL LABONTÉ

REDUCING COSTS INTELLIGENTLY

SWEET IDEAS FOR STEEP BILLS

Collaborator Jean-Marc Labonté, President of Miel Labonté Honey



A well-known Québec brand, Miel Labonté Honey is also a model of intelligent cost management. Faced with difficult market conditions in the honey industry, the Victoriaville company is killing two birds with one stone by transforming sources of expenditures into opportunities for improvement.

Over the last several years, the bee population has been decimated. Their numbers are in decline around the world for reasons that scientists do not yet fully understand. To top it all off, drought is afflicting Prairie beekeepers, who produce 80% of Canada's honey. This has resulted in steadily rising prices.

"We cannot pass these increases onto consumers indefinitely. Even a 5% change is devastating for them. We must find other ways to stay profitable," explains Jean-Marc Labonté,

president of the Victoriaville business founded by his father in 1937.

Some companies could have been tempted to take out the axe and radically cut costs, at the risk of reducing the product's quality. Jean-Marc Labonté chose another path. "Our solution was to focus on quantity without reducing quality. The more volume we pack, the more our costs drop," he explains.

This is easier said than done. To continue to grow amidst the turmoil, Miel Labonté Honey multiplied its initiatives on every front.

"Our solution was to focus on quantity without reducing quality."

1 Expanding the customer base through diversification

"Some consumers have tasted traditional honey and decided that they didn't like it. But honey is like wine or beer: it takes many forms," says Jean Marc Labonté.

Clover, creamy, blueberry or organic eucalyptus honey: by widening the palette of flavours, we are attracting new enthusiasts. "People enjoy trying new things; it's a good way to increase consumption per capita," says Mr. Labonté.

2 Maintaining trust with suppliers

The weak Canadian dollar benefits exporters, who are paid in a stronger currency. This is not the case for Miel Labonté Honey, which sells only in Canada. This means that its suppliers could be tempted to favour international clients.

"Thankfully, we have known them for over 30 years. Even if they gain more by selling abroad, they put stock aside for us because they are grateful for our loyalty. We respect them and in return they respect us."

3 Offering tools to retailers

Anyone who has been to Québec's major grocery stores knows Miel Labonté Honey's displays.

Positioned in an autonomous space off the shelves, they stand out through their eye-catching natural wood design.

"We bring an aesthetic touch that pleases grocers," says Jean-Marc Labonté, who takes advantage of his displays' location to offer honey candy, mustards and sauces from [Bonté Inc.](#), his brother Simon's company.

4 Heating more quickly and less expensively

Honey becomes granular when stored, so it needs to be melted before it's packaged. This delicate operation requires constant temperature control to avoid burning the product. The operation used to take 16 hours with an oil-fired dryer. Since it has switched to natural gas, the company has cut wait times and costs.

"Melting now takes a dozen hours for 15,000 pounds of honey, and it costs us 40% less annually," says Jean-Marc Labonté.

5 Innovating with employees

Like any production chain, the Miel Labonté Honey plant requires regular maintenance and modernization, which incur costs. But rather than investing in expensive new equipment, the company is innovating by improving processes. Most ideas come from employees.

"Most of the 10 or so employees have been with us for 25 years. Their involvement is essential to the company's well-being, production is part of their daily reality and most of the improvements of our methods come from them," says Jean-Marc Labonté.

There is no need for a plenary meeting: discussions are spontaneous and decisions are made quickly. By multiplying these "little experiments," Miel Labonté Honey is gaining the agility it needs to compete with the industry's major brands.

"We therefore have to use our ingenuity to improve our efficiency." ■



MOBILITY: COUNTLESS OPPORTUNITIES ON THE HORIZON

More powerful than ever before, mobile technologies are becoming a must for companies of all sizes and in all activity sectors. How can Québec SMEs benefit?

“How can Québec SMEs benefit?”

Mobility is now ubiquitous in our daily lives. Always at our fingertips, it connects us. 24 hours a day. According to [ComScore \(2014\)](#), it has also become our main way of accessing the digital world; it now accounts for 60% of the time people spend in front of a screen, outstripping computers.

With young people, the wave is becoming a tsunami: according to an [SSI survey](#), almost half of those aged 13 to 18 spend more than 4 hours a day on smartphones or tablets.

This is of course having an effect on commerce. Already, 4 out of 5 consumers shop with their mobile devices ([ComScore](#)), and 4 out of 5 retailers claim they actively invest in mobile commerce (according to [Internet Retailer](#)).

But invest in what? Here are a few major trends that are set to define the role of mobility for SMEs in the coming years.

 **80%**

**CONSUMERS USE THEIR
MOBILE DEVICES TO SHOP**

Source: ComScore

On-the-go advertising

Mobile advertising is also booming. According to [eMarketer](#), it is expected to account for up to 72% of digital advertising spending for American businesses by 2019.

Advertising on search engines is a good way to take advantage of the benefits of mobility. As such, Google lets you “buy” certain keywords based on consumer context. Consumers can see different ads appear depending on where they are and the time of day, and all of this can be pre-programmed thanks to Google’s «enhanced campaign» tools ([How to Optimize AdWords Campaigns](#)).

Social media: Even better with video

Mobility allows social networks to significantly increase their reach. According to [CEFRIQ](#), in Québec, 91% of people aged 18 to 44 use them. Their favourites are Facebook (62%), YouTube

THE SOCIAL MEDIA DARLINGS: FACEBOOK AND YOUTUBE

(57%), LinkedIn (17%), Twitter (10%) and Pinterest (9%). The same study showed that 40% of adults say they take into consideration the opinion of their friends on social media when shopping, and 30% regularly consult these networks before making a purchase. Therefore, companies that want to reach potential customers cannot afford to ignore these platforms.

Video has become the most popular way to generate interactions with consumers on social media. According to Facebook, it is a «new universal language», and 65% of videos are viewed on mobile devices.

In 2014, video broadcasting soared by 75% on Facebook, helped along by the new autoplay feature: users don’t have to do anything for the video to start playing, and they can click to hear the audio.

It’s not surprising that in 2015, over half of Canadian advertisers planned to invest more in mobile video, according to the [Advertising Bureau of Canada](#). Mobile video is not just on the rise—it is being viewed at the same time as other types of media; according to [eMarketer](#), 53% of Americans regularly watch videos on their mobile devices while the TV is on!

Websites adapted to mobile screens

Online visibility was already a priority for SMEs, but it’s no longer enough. They also need to appear on their customers’ screens at the right time and in the right way.

The most effective and least expensive method is to adapt websites to mobile screens. Google offers an [assessment tool](#) with recommendations on the best practices to adopt in an environment where users browse using only their fingers. For example, text should be readable without unnecessary zooming or swiping, hyperlinks should be sufficiently far apart, and multimedia content should be compatible. It is important to follow these tips, because the search juggernaut displays the better adapted pages first in its mobile search results. Also, did you know that since April 2015, Google penalizes websites that are not mobile-friendly?

Mobile payments: For speed, loyalty and security

People have been talking about mobile payments for a long time. Aren't devices we always keep in our pockets perfectly positioned to play the role of virtual wallet? But manufacturers, banks and operators have to come to an agreement, which takes a lot of time and negotiation.

In 2015, the stars finally seemed to be aligned for mobile payment; according to [Deloitte](#), it is at a "tipping point." It won't replace credit cards, but it will be used to make small purchases in just a few seconds. For retailers, the main advantages are speed (the contactless and PIN-less transaction is made using radio frequencies between the point-of-sale device and a chip in the phone) and the link with loyalty programs (purchases are automatically charged to

customers' accounts, and customers do not have to show their membership cards).

The Apple Pay system, which is set to arrive in Canada by the end of 2015, is generating a lot of buzz. Android devices will have the Android Pay system.

These new technologies are giving millions of consumers access to mobile payment; people just need to take their devices out of their pockets to shop. These systems are compatible with most point-of-sale devices with radio frequency technology, which is already used by some credit cards.

50%

OF THOSE AGED 13 TO 22 SPEND MORE THAN 4 HOURS A DAY IN FRONT OF A SMARTPHONE OR TABLET

Source: SSI survey

The Internet of Things: When machines start talking to each other

A more distant but very promising trend, the Internet of Things, is an ecosystem of machines and sensors that exchange all sorts of data, often through our mobile devices, to better anticipate our needs.

One of many examples, from the road sector: a bridge could detect freezing rain on its surface and "tell" cars, which would then adjust their owners' driving.

It is one more step toward the famous "smart city" we have been hearing about for years.

A few significant initiatives have begun to pave the way for the Internet of Things.

Hyundai's embedded [Blue Link](#) application warns parents of their children's dangerous conduct on the road. Ford's [EcoDrive](#) project detects excess fuel consumption and alters driving as a result. [Mercedes' Intelligent Drive](#) system can even take control of the steering wheel, brakes or gas pedal if its sensors or cameras detect hazards.

Another trend with plenty of potential: wearable computing. Designed in Québec, the [Hexoskin](#) shirt measures heart rate, breathing, oxygen consumption, activity level, acceleration, pace and rest periods to draw up a fitness dashboard in real time.

As you can see, mobile technologies are opening the door to a world of possibilities. They already follow us everywhere, from the bottoms our pockets to our bedside tables. Tomorrow, mobility will drastically change the daily lives of consumers and businesses, as well as how they communicate, interact and buy and sell. That's why it's so important to keep up with trends! ■



[Hexoskin.com](#)

IN QUÉBEC, **91%**

OF PEOPLE AGED 18 TO 44 USE SOCIAL MEDIA

Source: CEFRIQ

CASE STUDY

RECRUITING AND RETAINING EMPLOYEES IN THE REGIONS

Collaborator **Martin Cousineau**, President of Lobe Santé auditive et communication

Attracting and retaining talent is a problem for all companies, but in the regions the challenge takes on colossal proportions. One solution is to prioritize employee development based on a global approach, as did Lobe Santé auditive et communication.



For President and CEO Martin Cousineau, the greatest error a leader can make is approaching recruitment exclusively as a human resource issue. “The most important element for employees is an organization’s culture: its atmosphere, its environment, its purpose. All our employees contribute to this culture.” That is the profound belief of Mr. Cousineau, who opened his first clinic in St-Georges-de-Beauce in 2002 and who has since opened more than 30 others throughout the province.

Within this approach, an employee’s motivation is emphasized, as opposed to functions or compensation. It is based on clearly expressed values. At [Lobe](#), these values are harmony, solidarity, integrity, rigour, perseverance and especially creativity.

“We often see people leave their jobs after about three years, but if we make an effort to constantly renew ourselves, they no longer feel like they are always doing the same thing. That’s why for us, the greatest source of stability is change,” says Mr. Cousineau.

Health professionals often describe their work in terms of actions: operate

“The most important element for employees is an organization’s culture...”

on patients, perform exams, make a diagnosis, adjust hearing aids, and so on. However, by putting things in perspective, they gain a more comprehensive understanding of their role.

Beyond actions, a purpose

“A painter doesn’t talk about his brush, but his work of art. Similarly, our job is not giving out pills or treating ears: it’s making a difference in people’s lives. Ultimately, we treat people. That is our true purpose,” says the entrepreneur.

Of course, setting forth values and a purpose is not enough to get employees to commit to them. You also have to put them into practice on a daily basis. At Lobe, this translates into state-of-the-art equipment as well as opportunities for advancement and development.

As soon as they are hired, new recruits follow an integration curriculum to dive right into the Lobe culture. Then they are assigned a sponsor who will help them develop their skills. The support process between employees continues on an ongoing basis throughout their careers within the company thanks to coaching and mentoring programs, training seminars and conferences that connect the network’s members.

“We have many opportunities to discuss our practices, target points to improve and come up with solutions together. This drives the innovative spirit forward, which in turn motivates people,” says Mr. Cousineau.

Sharing the culture outside the company

The company has created [Lobe University](#), an internal training centre where it imparts auditory health sector trends, treatment perspectives, and the latest American and European advances.

Lobe’s culture extends to the general public through a [magazine](#) distributed in colleges, hospitals, grocery stores and clinics, in which professionals share their knowledge on hearing health, hearing aids for adults and children, language development or treatments for ear infections or disorders.

“These efforts generate word of mouth that goes well beyond our company. The public knows that Lobe is a place where we innovate and develop,” says Mr. Cousineau.

The terrain is thus favourable when the time comes to approach students looking to start a career in auditory health. Lobe offers the most promising students scholarships, as well as the

THE COMPANY HAS CREATED A TRAINING CENTRE WHERE IT IMPARTS AUDITORY HEALTH SECTOR TRENDS [...]



opportunity to spend time in the clinic so they can experience the company’s culture firsthand.

“Before they even finish their studies, they discover a practical context with real patients. Their experience turns them into ambassadors, which fosters recruitment. It’s a virtuous circle!” ■



Here, 80 of the largest entrepreneurs in Québec share their experiences and help other entrepreneurs become better leaders and accelerate the growth of their companies. The entrepreneurship school is a pre-eminent site due to its ability to implement optimal conditions for transferring and sharing experiences and knowledge between different generations of entrepreneurs to contribute to their progression and optimize their company’s results. www.eebeauce.com



A MATTER OF LOCATION

Collaborator [Éric Painchaud](#), Senior Architect and President and CEO of [Éric Painchaud Architecte et Associés](#).

Some entrepreneurs find original solutions for recruiting far from major centres. For architect [Éric Painchaud](#), remote collaboration is the way to go.

[Éric Painchaud Architecte et Associés](#) employees can work on any project from any of the firm’s offices, in Saguenay, St-Georges-de-Beauce or Terrebonne.

“Our type of work allows us to telecommute in the purest sense of the word—from home, for example. We can contribute remotely thanks to a flexible collaboration structure,” says the entrepreneur, who opened his first office in 1986 in Jonquière. Today, the

firm employs some 40 specialists in graphic design, interior design and architecture.

“Regional SMEs all face the same problem: qualified personnel often want to work for major national companies, for the government, or in cities. My solution is to offer them the flexibility to work in various locations,” he continues.

Standing out in the eyes of employees... and clients

The common point of all three branches is that they offer a superior quality of life, at a reasonable distance from major centres and without traffic problems. The pay is the same in every region, and it is accompanied by a group pension plan.

Next, it’s leadership that makes the difference.

“Leaders need to know how to involve and motivate their troops. In my case, I encourage discussions on creativity and innovation, so we can stand out in our clients’ eyes. The status quo and hierarchical barriers are unacceptable in a company like ours. We must constantly exchange ideas to review our ways of doing things and ensure that none of our projects resembles another.”

“...qualified personnel often wants to work for major companies...”

