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Hello and thank you for taking time to read our Impact Report and I hope that you will see what I see — the value of Venture for Canada — to the startup ecosystem, your local community, and to the future of our nation.

My involvement with Venture for Canada began almost 4 years ago when Scott reached out to share what he was working on and the value he felt it could have on future generations in Canada. At the time, he was looking to make some in-roads with potential partners in order to launch in Ontario. Without hesitation, I jumped in to support this great initiative. Why? Simply put, Venture for Canada solves a problem which I have dealt with many times as an entrepreneur — finding the right qualified talent! Furthermore, I knew the community would support this initiative and we sure could not have achieved what we have without them.

In just a few short years Venture for Canada has established itself as a critical component of the early stage growth of startup companies in Canada. There has been considerable engagement from numerous startup partners such as Shopify in our early days to Swept, Clearbanc, FarmLead, and Vidyard today and I encourage all startups across Canada to reach out and leverage the talent pool available through Venture For Canada and help us establish a presence in your community.

This would not have happened without the stewardship of Scott Stirrett and the team he has been able to assemble along the way, including the stellar Board members whom I have the privilege to work alongside and whom I commend for their time and efforts in supporting the vision and mission of Venture for Canada.

Supporting the growth of this organization is fundamental to the growth of our great nation and it takes visionary leaders to get behind Venture for Canada in order to help establish the various programs in each community. To all the community leaders and sponsors as well as supporting government partners and foundations from Atlantic Canada and Ontario — we Thank You! To all Fellows - past, present, and future - I challenge you to Dream! If you can Dream It, We Can Build It! Leverage the Venture for Canada network to accelerate your future.

Parm Gill
Chair of the Board
NOTE FROM OUR FOUNDER & CEO

Dear Friends, Stakeholders, and Supporters,

Today, we are at the most exciting point to date in Venture for Canada’s history.

We live in exciting, dynamic, and uncertain times. Automation will likely affect over half of Canadian jobs in the next decade, RBC’s 2018 Humans Wanted, report claims. As the report states, it’s crucial that Canadian youth are able to develop cross-transferable skills that can be applied to multiple professions as these changes continue to take shape.

To this point, the Business Council of Canada has indicated, more than ever youth require a nimbleness and entrepreneurial outlook to succeed. With the mission to develop entrepreneurial leaders, we believe that working at an innovative Canadian startup enables recent graduates to gain significant “human skills” quickly, experience how to deal with ambiguous situations, and gain exposure to cross-functional roles.

2017 was a year of substantial growth and impact for Venture for Canada. We graduated our first class of Venture for Canada Fellows, and welcomed a new cohort of over 50 recent graduates. VFC’s two main constituents — Fellows and partner startups — continue to express a high-level of satisfaction with the program. Our partner startup employers assessed 100% of the Fellows as meeting or exceeding expectations (with some startups now employing as many as six Fellows at once!) and with over 90% VFC Fellows indicating satisfaction with the program, VFC’s value is proven.

The first three years of VFC consisted proving the efficacy of our Fellowship program model. As this report demonstrates, VFC is creating a positive impact in the lives of young people, while supporting the growth of startups. 2018 will be a year focused on scaling the impact of the VFC program, while maintaining the quality of the program for both startups and Fellows.

With significant new partnerships confirmed for 2018, including the recently announced $1.4 Million funding from the Government of Ontario, we are in a better position than ever to successfully execute on scaling our mission and impact.

Sincerely,

Scott Stirrett
Founder & CEO

VISION

A Canada where more youth develop the entrepreneurial skills to thrive in their careers, with the intended impact of building a more prosperous, innovative and inclusive country.

MISSION

Develop entrepreneurial leaders through providing experiential learning opportunities with the goal of fostering community and economic development.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Venture for Canada (VFC) is a not-for-profit that recruits recent graduates and partners with Canadian startup companies in need of talent. The graduates are referred to as 'Fellows' and spend two years working at a Canadian startup company, enabling the 'Fellows' to gain business skills, network opportunities and experience necessary to grow their own entrepreneurial careers.

The Canadian startup companies benefit from strong talent that they may not otherwise have been able to attract.
MEET THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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GILL GROUP

PRESTON R. AITKEN
HIREUP

VANESSA PAESANI (SECRETARY)
The Folding Chair Group

MEET THE TEAM

Venture for Canada’s team is a diverse group of talented individuals that come from various industries. As of today, our offices are located in Ontario, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia.
Venture for Canada recruits recent graduates from Canadian universities and colleges. Applicants come from various disciplines and backgrounds, and have demonstrated a passion for entrepreneurship and leadership.

On average, 2,000 applicants complete a written application, which consists of a combination of essay questions, as well as submit a two-minute video. The selected applicants then participate in a 30-minute phone interview.

In the final stage of recruitment, selected applicants are invited to attend ‘Fellow Selection Day,’ an in-person, all day event, that is a series of individual interviews and group challenges. 50 judges from a variety of sectors that VFC considers influencers are invited to evaluate the candidacy of the finalists to work at a startup.

Fellows undergo four weeks of training alongside the most entrepreneurially minded graduates in the country. At “Training Camp” they learn about various topics from industry experts as well as experienced entrepreneurs. They also have the opportunity to network and foster lifelong friendships.

Fellows continue to receive ongoing training and support over a two year period. After training camp, Fellows are matched to interview with partner startups based on their expressed interests and the needs of partner startups. After participating in a rigorous interview process, Fellows receive offer(s) and begin work for a partner startup, where they receive competitive compensation.

After spending two years working at a partner startup, Fellows complete and graduate from the Venture for Canada Fellowship program. Fellows remain part of the VFC community, receiving access to support and opportunities to engage with the current Fellows as Alumni.
In 2017, Venture for Canada recruited 60 Fellows.

Breakdown by academic major studied:
- Humanities: 25%
- STEM: 25%
- Business: 50%

35+.post-secondary schools represented

$53K. average salary of a fellow

1:1. male to female ratio

40%. of fellows have international experience
**IMPACT ON FELLOWS**

91% Satisfaction  
91% of the Fellows indicate satisfaction with participating in the program. (2017)

91% Promoter*  
91% of the Fellows indicate they would recommend the program to friends and coworkers. (2017)

97% Continue  
97% of the Fellows would like to continue to work in startups and/or launch their own firms. (2017)

*Promoters include Fellows who gave a score of ≥ 8 to measure how likely they would recommend the program to friends and coworkers.

"When exploring a new venture or looking to make a hire at GrowSumo, the Venture for Canada Fellow community is the first place I look. The depth of talent and ability in the network is really second to none. Last fall, myself and a team of Fellows participated in a government led hackathon called the Student Pathways Challenge. After 3 months of work, we pitched our mentorship tool "Riko" to a group of 200 educators and government employees at MaRS. We ended up winning, and walking away with $30K to seed the project."

- Nico DiPlacido, Venture for Canada Fellow

"The constant inspiration and support from the community, access to a generous and kind network that opened up doors for me to thrive, friends that would go to bat trying to help me fulfill my vision for Emerge, Venture for Canada is transformative to the entrepreneurial journey."

- Lucia Gallardo, a 2017 Fellow, Founder of Emerge, a platform that leverages blockchain technologies to champion innovation in emerging markets.

"Venture for Canada allows you to join the existing community and establish a network of your own. Most importantly, as a Fellow you are playing an important role in contributing to make Canada a more entrepreneurial and dynamic country."

- Shona Nicolle, Venture for Canada Fellow
MEET A FELLOW

"The program and the network of Fellows have allowed me to reach and surpass goals that, before Venture for Canada, I would never have dreamed of setting."

A note from Jeanette Stock, VFC Fellow 2016-2018

Before Venture for Canada, I didn’t see myself as a startup person. The program has fundamentally shifted the scale of my ambitions. The network of Fellows have allowed me to reach and surpass goals that, before VFC, I would never have dreamed of setting.

The companies, founders, mentors, and peers among the Fellows that I have connected with throughout the course of the Venture for Canada program changed that. Everyone I’ve met through the Venture for Canada network shares drive, infectious ambition, and a belief that we can have an impact on our companies and communities.

At Venture for Canada, we push each other to learn and to grow – and it shows. Since joining Venture for Canada I’ve worked at two startups and launched Venture Out (Canada’s first conference for LGBTQ+ inclusion in tech) with a team that includes three other Venture for Canada Fellows. I can’t wait to continue to learn and grow with the Venture for Canada community in the years to come.

Venture for Canada is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to launch a career in emerging areas of our economy. Joining a Canadian startup is one of the fastest ways to sharpen your professional skills and learn the ins and outs of an industry or function.

The cohorts are unparalleled in terms diversity of skill sets, and in the support fellows are willing to give each other as we learn and grow in our careers. The Venture for Canada network is deeply supportive, and provides an amazing platform from which to learn and launch a career.

Jeanette Stock
Venture for Canada Fellow
MEET OUR PARTNER STARTUPS

Clearbanc

Clearbanc would not have been able to grow as fast as we have without the contributions of our Venture for Canada Fellows. I have complete trust in Charlie, Jei and Fan and they’ve grown into excellent leaders within the organization. They are constantly looking for ways to improve themselves, their colleagues and the company as a whole. For example, Fan and Jei started a weekly book club for interested team members to get together and discuss a thought provoking book.

Startups need driven, self-directed problem-solvers who are able to play multiple roles. Venture for Canada Fellows have been the best source of this type of talent we’ve found.

Beauceron Security

Hiring a Venture for Canada Fellow was among the most important steps we took for success in 2017. Since joining the team, Kathryn has played a number of crucial roles in our early stage company. She has helped lead our marketing efforts as well as supported client success and team success initiatives.

The old adage is for early stage companies is hire slow and fire fast. With Venture for Canada, you can accelerate hiring because of their vigorous screening and selection process and you get a team member with a diverse set of skills and a high level of motivation, reducing the risk of having to fire someone for not being a good fit for the team, firm or role. Venture for Canada can help early stage start-ups and even more mature firms significantly enhance their team at a low risk.
BlueLight Analytics

The Fellows that we have at BlueLight Analytics have made a great contribution to the culture and vitality of the company. They are eager to add value by bringing new ideas and are flexible in taking on projects outside of the scope of their roles, as is often required in start-ups.

Venture for Canada Fellows have offered fresh perspectives on existing issues, which has contributed to improving BlueLight’s technologies and processes. This has served to make the company more competitive and has been a key component in recent growth.

LeadSift

We have hired three Fellows from Venture for Canada till date and they have been amazing. Starting from setting up our customer success process, to help scale our Sales process. I would attribute 50% of our success and revenue in the last year to the Venture for Canada Fellows we have hired.

If you want to hire driven professionals with a high integrity then there is no better place than Venture for Canada. The Fellows are the most passionate, ambitious, team players I have ever seen. Each of them are going to be entrepreneurs in the very near future - we can provide them the training with a front row seat into the journey.

FIIX Software

Venture for Canada has filled the organization with bright, coachable, driven and diverse individuals who have had a positive impact across the company.

For startups that want access to very high quality talent for entry-level type roles, Venture for Canada provides an opportunity to bring amazing young people into the organization, who develop and promote very quickly.
IMPACT ON PARTNER STARTUPS

77% of the partner startups assessed Fellows as exceeding their expectations for an entry level employee. 96% of the partner startups indicated they would recommend the Fellowship program to a colleague.

*Promoters include Fellows who gave a score of ≥ 8 to measure how likely they would recommend the program to friends and coworkers.

- **Number of jobs created by partner employers since a Fellow was hired:** 536
- **Investment raised by companies since a Fellow was hired:** $173,225,000
- **Total contributions by partner startups to Fellow salaries:** $5,000,000+
Venture for Canada is dedicated to foster entrepreneurial leaders with the vision to build a more prosperous, innovative and inclusive Canada. The Fellowship program is an entrepreneurial leadership development program that attracts recent graduates and enables youth to develop the skills for the 21st century workforce.

The Fellows have diverse skills that are a huge plus in the largely business minded operations group. The data skills and analytical ability are top tier, including the ability to use CSS, HTML, and SQL have also been a big help.

Venture for Canada Fellows have what it takes to succeed in this kind of environment. They are business savvy, team players, and add value for the team to be more productive than it would be without them.

Venture for Canada Fellows are self starters and take enormous amount of ownership over the work they are responsible for. They have uncovered inefficiencies and taken the initiative to propose new ways to improve the work they are doing day to day.

In 2017, Venture for Canada’s first cohort of 30 Fellows graduated from the program, after finishing the two year Fellowship.
MEET AN ALUMNI

"Venture for Canada isn't a golden ticket; it's rocket fuel and a map. It won't tell you where to go next, but if you have a pretty good idea of what direction you're facing, it will help you get there much faster."

A note from Brendan Coady, VFC Fellow Alumni 2015 - 2017

Venture for Canada was like a rocket-powered-GPS-system for my career; it helped me figure out where I should be going, at 200 mph. I joined the program shortly after graduating, not exactly sure of my next move, but pretty confident which direction I should be heading in. The program felt like the right fit from the first phone interview, and upon meeting the other Fellows, felt like I had finally found my tribe.

Joining Mosaic Manufacturing at such an early stage (five employees) was a risky move, but has proven to be the learning experience of a lifetime. In my position as OEM Hardware Lead, I have been charged with developing the next generation product for the company. Co-leading a team of brilliant engineers, we have taken the product from initial napkin sketches to mass manufacturing, including launching our production overseas. I have experienced first-hand the startup roller-coaster of emotional highs and lows alongside our founders, joined in on top accelerator programs, traveled throughout the US, Canada and Southeast Asia, and felt what it takes to grow a world-class organization with an amazing team.

Venture for Canada helped me find a role that fit my skill set and goals, and gave me endless support through all of the twists and turns over the last three years. The Program easily put my career ten years ahead, and never would I have expected to have the level of impact and responsibility at a growing company that I do now. But perhaps most importantly, the Venture for Canada community has been the support network I never knew I needed. I've been privileged to call many of my peers close friends, and am constantly challenged, humbled, impressed and empowered by their accomplishments and character. The Venture for Canada program was one of the best decisions I've made in my career, and one I will be looking back to for many years.

Brendan Coady
Venture for Canada Alumni
Thank you to our supporters

Venture for Canada is grateful to have a diverse group of supporters

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