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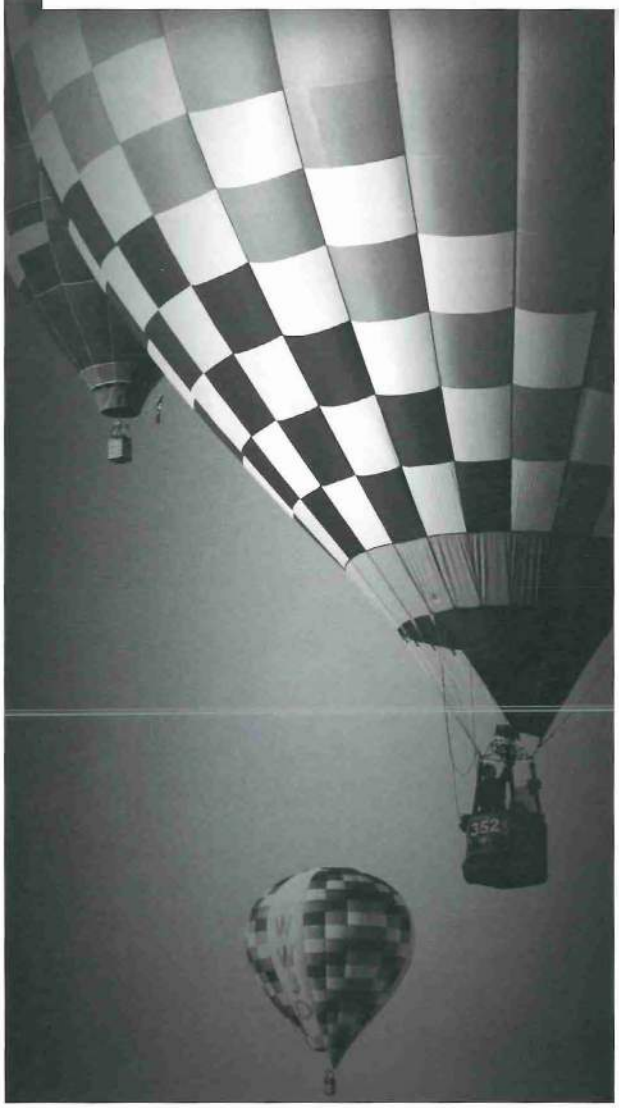
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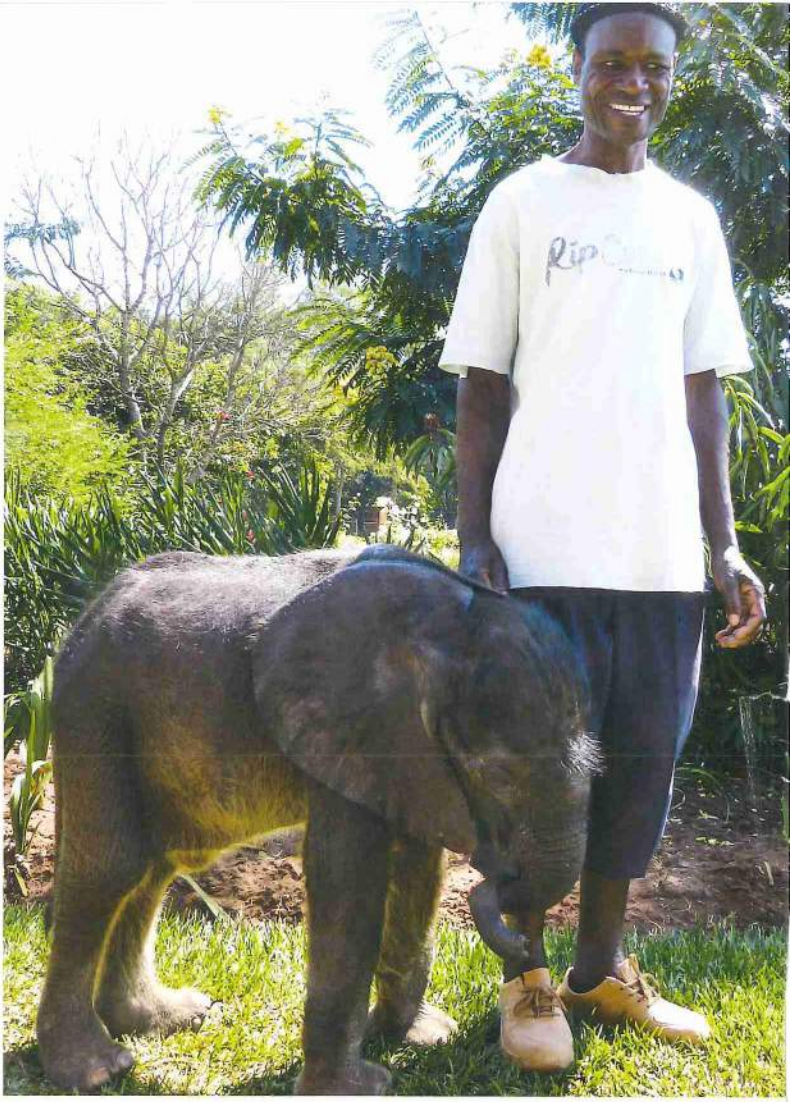
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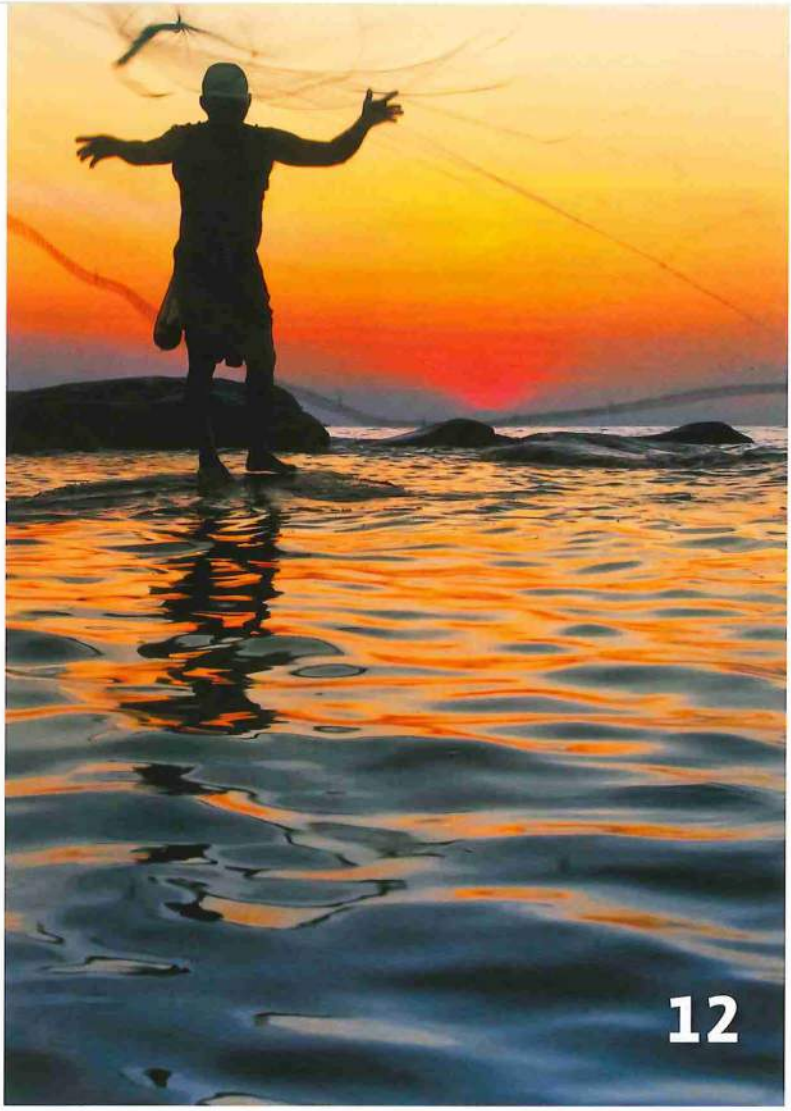
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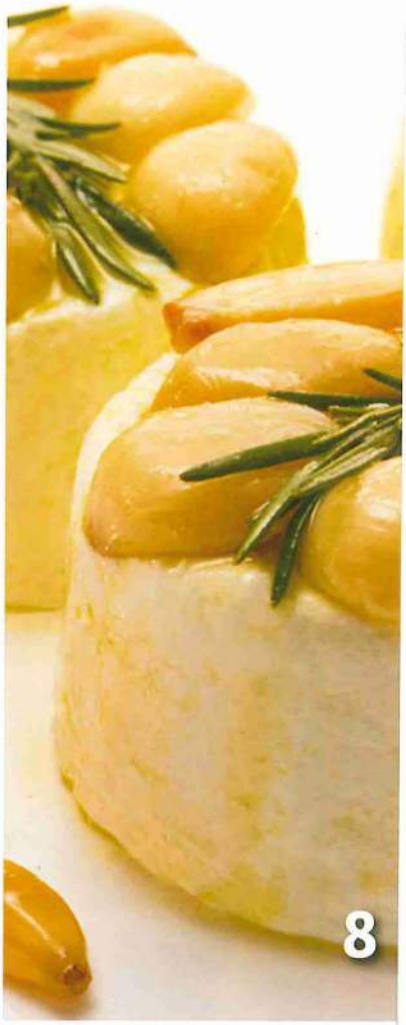
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Smile and Say "Cheese!"

Vision, respect and a desire for a fresh start enabled one man and his family to indulge in a little nostalgia

by Carol Crenna » photography by Ron Watts

WHEN DAVID WOOD launched his namesake, the David Wood Food Shop, in downtown Toronto in 1984, he couldn't have imagined that a decade later he would be crouched in a field trying to milk an ornery sheep on an island at one extreme of the country.

While back then David specialized in imported cheese for his three stores and catering company, the kind of cheese he makes today by hand wasn't even a consideration. "European products were thought to be the finest back then, there were few North American artisan creameries except for a couple of surviving cheddar makers in Ontario," David remembers.

In 1990, after a business slump, David moved his family to Salt Spring Island on British Columbia's coast, seeking both a fresh start and a landscape that was reminiscent of his past. Born in Scotland and educated in England before moving to Toronto, David spent much of his early years on a Scottish island. Today, the pastoral views of sheep grazing in a field act as a reminder of that time.

David purchased 20 acres of serene pasture on the quiet, picturesque Gulf Island and spent the next six years learning to be a farmer after deciding to become a specialty producer of sheep and goat cheese.

"First I had to learn how to look after a sheep and then to hand-milk one, which is one of the hardest things I have ever done," he says. "I learned by borrowing my neighbour's cow, which is much easier to milk. Sheep-milking is finicky and, particularly those not used to being milked, put up a fight; milking sheep in Canada was rarely done back then." Of course, David also had to learn to make cheese, build the facility, get the license and develop the business. In 1996, the first piece of cheese was finally sold.

Today, his Salt Spring Island Cheese Company, which employs David's 28-year-old twins (Josh and Daniel), sells products in specialty and grocery stores in Vancouver, Victoria, Toronto and Calgary, and is expanding in Ontario, Quebec and the Pacific Northwest. He currently sells over a dozen varieties, churned from field fresh cream, with a new cheese added each year. Cheeses include decadent white truffle chèvre, tangy olive and rosemary feta, spicy chili feta, blue Juliette Camembert, hard cheese called Montaña, and pungent washed-rind cheese called Romelia. "We don't sell cheese that customers put in their kids' lunches," David explains. "We make cheese that people buy as gifts or serve to guests at a dinner party."

David consciously limits the growth of the small-to-medium-sized creamery to retain a hands-on operation. This motivation also brought him to **Island Savings Credit Union**'s Ganges branch for his banking. "It is a nice small-town alternative to the Big Five. Over the years, we have developed a very good relationship. We know them as the people we bank with and as our neighbours, who come to the Saturday market and buy our cheese."

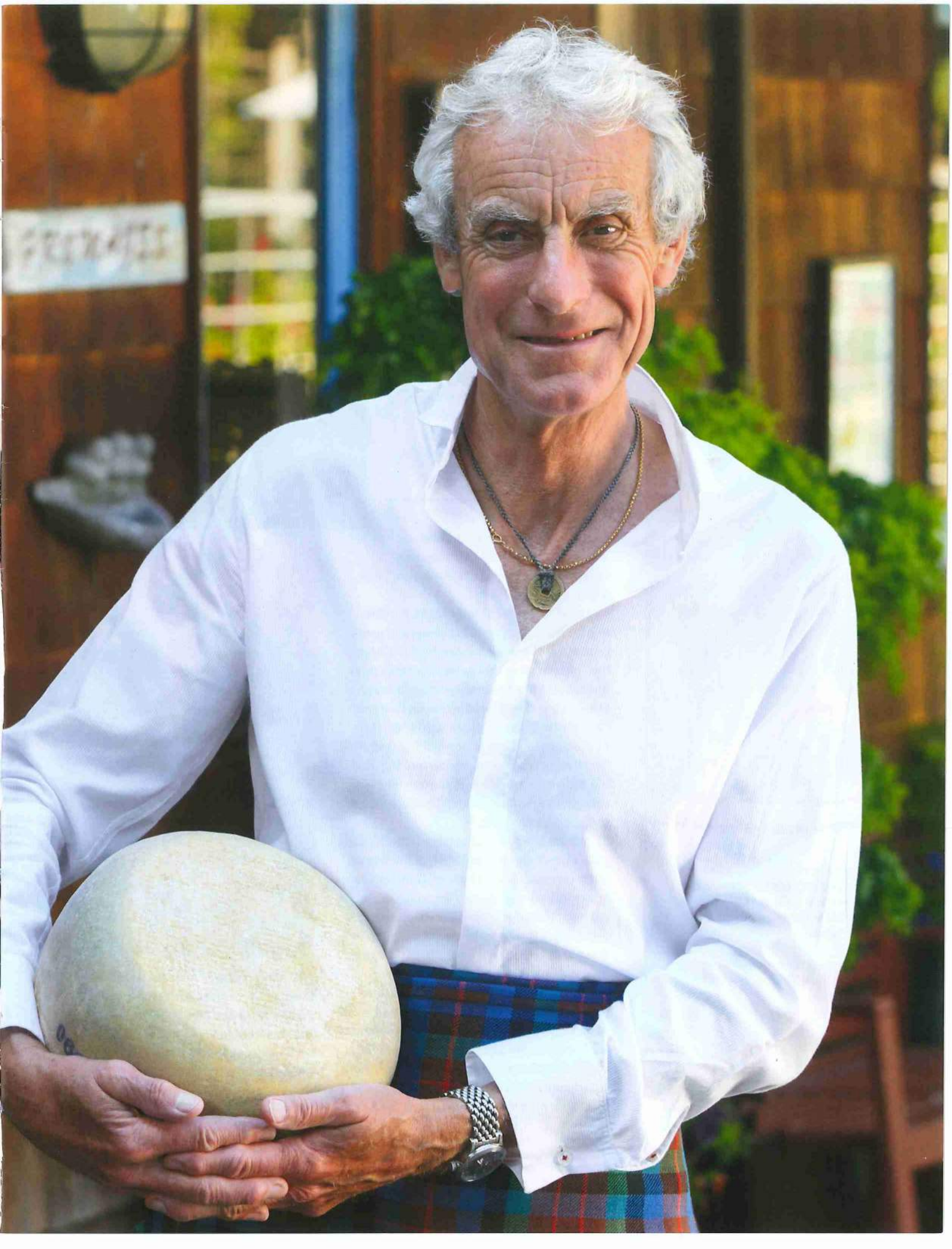
When plans were underway to expand to other markets, David went to Island Savings for help. He says what attracted him was that the credit union was "very cooperative and respectful of us as people and what we are trying to accomplish."

At the time, the small-scale regional winery boom was just beginning and David felt that the next market wave would be specialty cheeses; a natural complement. He was right. According to a 2009 Natural Capital Resources Inc. study, about 400,000 tonnes of cheese is produced a year in Canada — and more than half is specialty cheese.

All of David's cheese is handcrafted in small batches using traditional methods, with no machinery. "Cheese, like wine, moves up a scale of distinction. Commodity varieties like mozzarella are at one end and high-end specialty



RIGHT: David Wood is the president and owner of Salt Spring Island Cheese Company, which specializes in handmade cheeses made from local milk.



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IF YOU HAVE TROUBLE deciding what cheese to pair with a certain occasion, David's guide to world cheeses should help you on your way.

CHILI FETA: This spicy, salty cheese can be grated on pizza or added to a sandwich. It can even add a bit of spice to an eclectic cheese plate.

MONTAÑA: The hard sheep's milk cheese is a treat to be savoured. Try it with quince, a traditional companion to sheep milk cheese.

BLUE JULIETTE: This Camembert pairs well with red wine. The best way to enjoy this cheese is by itself or on a cheese plate.

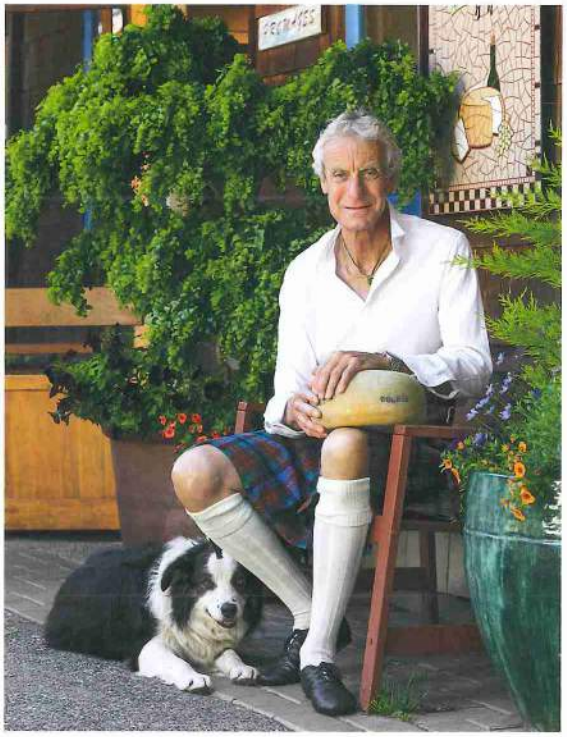
BASIL CHÈVRE: Ideal on its own on a cheese plate. The distinctive look and mild basil flavour can be enjoyed by all.

cheeses — where opportunity lies — are at other end. Much like wine, this cheese can be distinguished by a particular region, maker and year."

David rents 35 additional acres to offer tourists a vista of 50 grazing sheep and goats, capturing his boyhood memory. "I still enjoy the animals, which are more decorative than functional," he explains. Several years ago, David stopped milk production on the farm. "We were trying to do too many things, compromising our ability to do anything really well. We now concentrate on cheese making, and buy milk from small family farms where people care about the animals and, therefore, we get very good quality milk."

A quarter of Salt Spring Island Cheese Company's products are sold locally at the Woods' farm, regional fairs and at local farmers' markets. Most sales happen in the summer tourist season. "There is nothing like the connection with people at the market; many customers say that our cheese is their favourite in the world," he says proudly.

What does David like best about his business? "In addition to simply loving to work with milk, I enjoy the fact that all employees come to work at my home. The manufacturing facility is next door to our house, which creates a warm community. And I like making a contribution that keeps people on the island employed." E

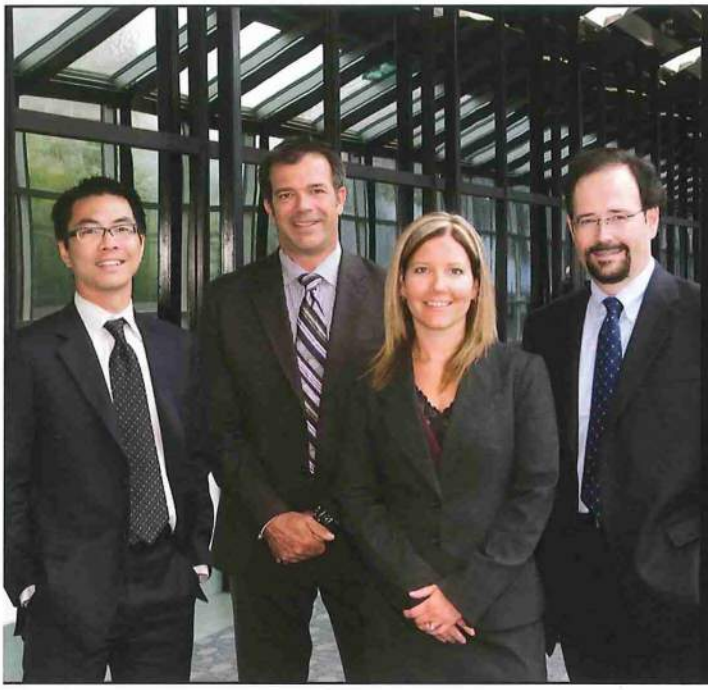






TOP: David relaxes in the sun with his dog Buster. ABOVE: The distinctive flavours of the garlic chèvre and blue Juliette Camembert cheeses from the Salt Spring Island Cheese Company make them a popular favourite across Canada.

Ron Watts, (cheese) Salt Spring Island Cheese Company



Protecting Member Information

Strengthening IT security critical for credit unions.

Information technology (IT) security governance is increasingly important to credit unions and their members. Forward-thinking credit unions are seeking assurance that their IT security environment and governance meet, or exceed, stakeholder expectations. To accomplish their goals, they also need best industry practices, aligned with proven security frameworks such as ISO27001/2:2005 and the CobiT IT Security Baseline. An information systems security audit can tell you where your credit union stands today in terms of IT security and governance, and provides a baseline for making improvements.

The growing interest in IT security is no surprise. The cost of a security breach can be severe, resulting in unfavourable media coverage, exposure to liability, and loss of members and stakeholder confidence. It's also expensive. Credit unions incur hard costs to fix the problem, return to normal operations and prevent such incidents from happening again. There is also a cost to win back members and repair your reputation.

"IT security begins with identifying exactly where you are at risk, then implementing controls to mitigate the risks. Based on our leading practice methodology, MNP's Credit Union team takes a systematic approach to address IT risk exposure. We can evaluate the controls in place to manage those risks to critical information assets, and to meet the requirements of industry, regulatory and compliance standards and internationally accepted IT security and risk frameworks," says Geoffrey Rodrigues, Partner, Enterprise Risk Services, MNP.

MNP works directly alongside your credit union's internal audit group in a truly collaborative fashion throughout the assessment. This allows the MNP team to provide assistance where it's needed while giving you full access to the team's specialized knowledge and expertise, including knowledge about best practices aligned with proven security frameworks.

"Ultimately, the audit produces a prioritized list of gaps in the IT security environment, as well as practical recommendations for implementation to close the gaps and reduce risk," explains Shelley Legin, Credit Union Consulting Lead with MNP. "MNP's consulting professionals can also provide a strong facilitated framework to strengthen IT governance at the board of directors level." This one-day session is designed to achieve greater alignment of credit union IT resources with the strategic direction of the credit union, and drive higher returns on IT investments.

Ensuring credit unions protect themselves and their members comes naturally to MNP, which has been working with credit unions across Canada for more than 65 years. "As organizations, we share the same philosophy," says Annette Kuckartz, National Credit Union Leader with MNP. "We're built on relationships and strongly believe in supporting the many communities in which we both work. IT security is critical and we are proud to assist our clients in achieving their goals."

To find out what MNP can do for you, contact Shelley Legin, Credit Union Consulting Lead, at 778.772.8009 or at shelley.legin@mnp.ca, Annette Kuckartz, CA, National Credit Union Leader, at 1.877.500.0778 or annette.kuckartz@mnp.ca, or a local team member:

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Castin A WIDER Net?

Consultants search for the right fit for the credit union and the community

by Valerie McTavish

"I HAD AN IN-PERSON or telephone conference on 28 occasions and, generally, the average time of those would be a couple of hours," says John Morton, chair of the board at the $190-million Williams Lake and District Credit Union (WLDCU), recounting the time he spent recruiting a new CEO this past spring.



"Additionally, some travel, some other research work, but that was actually active contact work with members of the committee, candidates or Marie-Claire [the recruiter]. And I had 900 emails in those three months," Morton says, laughing a little. "I'm glad it only took three months."

Replacing a CEO at a credit union doesn't just take time and effort. It also requires the board to look beyond the search and consider the future of the organization.

For the three-branch WLDCU, the process started with looking at about 40 people. It was then narrowed down to 20 candidates who took part in conference calls with members from the Executive Search Committee. The final two candidates met with the management team in Williams Lake before their final interviews with all the directors of the board, not all of whom live in the northern B.C. town.

Morton considered the process to be quite streamlined and expected it to take longer than three months from start to signed contract. The board had been given 90 days' notice from their outgoing CEO in mid-February. Even with an efficient process, they had to tap an interim CEO until the successful candidate, Jim Zimmerman, started this August.

Investment and Time

This was fast. Marie-Claire Seebohm, a people solutions consultant with Central 1 Credit Union, says it typically takes at least five months. "It's a very involved, expensive process for the credit union, not just the recruitment but also bringing the person up to speed and giving them a chance to imprint their strategy and their legacy on the credit union's success. All that takes a number of years to get rolling. It's quite an investment," Seebohm says, adding that boards generally expect a five to 10-year commitment from their new leader.

While many credit union professionals in the United States are concerned about an executive exodus brought on by baby boomers entering into retirement, John Daniel, manager of talent acquisition at Ontario's Meridian Credit Union, believes here in Canada there is no cause for worry. "We need to make sure that we are diligent. We need to stay on top of it and look at the information we have in terms of our demographic, but it's not something that we think is going to have a huge impact on this organization."

Seebohm believes there will be an increase in openings at the CEO level in the next five years, but feels there is ample talent to fill those positions. Stacey Huberman, also a consultant with Central 1's people solutions department, agrees. "It's a slightly different market than in other industries because of the valued space of a credit union. This attracts some people and not others. They do tend to be very good employers who pay in a fair or generous way."

Succession Planning

The more tangible shift resulting from baby boomers hitting retirement age is an increase in succession planning. "We are seeing credit unions that are being very proactive in putting together succession plans and identifying the executive positions that will be turning over," says Annette Kuckartz, the national credit union leader for Calgary-based accounting and business advisory firm Meyers Norris Penny (MNP).

Succession planning is different for every organization depending on the size, the board, and the leadership. For larger organizations like the $7.8-billion Meridian, which has 252,000 members and 44 branches, it requires regular maintenance. Daniel explains, "We also annually go through a workforce planning process to make sure that we are looking at the demographics and various different graphics of our

Kapuk Dodds/getty

workforce." This workforce plan, paired with the succession plan, becomes crucial for training and retention.

In a smaller organization, a process like that may not be feasible. "We work with credit unions that have three or five staff members and the CEO is the only management role," says Huberman. She says that as a result, making succession and workplace planning a success is "a real challenge" because there may not be the opportunity to build somebody from within who could take over the role.

Hiring from Within

Small credit unions aside, there are often internal candidates when it comes time to recruit a new CEO. Internal candidates can be an excellent choice given their fit within the community, their knowledge of the credit union system and values and, potentially, their existing relationship with the board. However, Huberman cautions that it can be a double-edged sword. "The board members may know them already and not see them as someone who could be a community leader."

Morton believes it is very important to consider internal candidates; however, he gives the following advice about handling the situation. "You have to give respect to someone internally because, for one thing, you want the person to continue in their job if they are unsuccessful. One of the questions that we actually asked the external candidates was, 'How do you handle working with an unsuccessful internal candidate?' Their answers were important."

Retaining an outside firm or consultant to handle the search is another way to help the board stay objective. John Daniel handles executive and director-level hires at Meridian but retains someone for senior-level placements. Much of that is based on the resources that recruiting at that level demand. "The value is that they can put 100 percent of their dedication into it. These are pretty intense searches. It's a lot of conversations. It takes a lot of time to get to the level of people who are interested," he says.



"It's a great exploratory process for a credit union, although it takes time and is a huge commitment from the board members."

– Marie-Claire Seebohm, *people solutions consultant at Central 1*

A search firm can also help the board reassess the role of the CEO. Seebohm says, "They also spend quite a bit of time talking about their strategy and their need for the same or different types of skills from their new CEO. That deepens their shared understanding and commitment to a specific strategy that they may have at that point in time. It's a great exploratory process for a credit union, although it takes time and is a huge commitment from board members."

All of this work comes from a board that is likely to be a mix of people with varying degrees of management experience. Huberman says this can lead to some trepidation with the process.

"They often say at the beginning of the recruitment that they are not confident; they don't know how they will choose a CEO. They come out of it feeling like they have a really clear understanding of that work, probably better than they did in their whole tenure on the board working with their previous CEO. And so they gain a tonne of knowledge, as well as the ability to work with the new CEO, but it's a big, big task for them," she explains.

That task is not just selecting a new leader, but charting the course for the credit union's future — and that may include mergers. The people solutions' consultants encourage boards to face the merger question head on. Seebohm and Huberman feel that during the process of reassessing strategy it behooves the board to talk about what a merger might look like for them and if it could be a potential path for them now or in the near future. The answers dramatically impact the type of CEO that a credit union may be seeking.

Building Confidence

While saving time and refining the big picture are formidable benefits of using consultants, WLDCU's Morton says reassurance throughout the process is invaluable.

He's been through executive-level searches before and when comparing the experiences he says, "I think the biggest difference was our level of confidence that the process was proceeding in an efficient manner and was designed to produce the best possible outcome. At the end of the process we are absolutely confident that we have the best choice available." He further explains, "In the past we made some good decisions but we still wondered at the end of the day, 'could we have done better?' This time we had a high level of confidence."

Part of that confidence comes from working with consultants who understand the importance of finding the right fit. "You look for fit with the role and the community," says Seebohm in describing her approach.

"The community fit is key for more regional, local credit unions. In smaller communities the [credit union] CEO is sort of a representative of that organization in their community and everybody knows everybody."

In WLDCU's case, it was also about the candidate's comfort with Williams Lake. The board wanted to ensure that the chosen candidate would see the small city as home, as the person's new community and as a place to build a life. Interestingly, the credit union urged candidates to bring their families to the final interview in Williams Lake.

When Zimmerman and his family showed up a few days in advance of the final interview, it exemplified the kind of commitment to the community the board was looking for in a candidate. And that simple action may be why Morton is so confident in the board's decision. E



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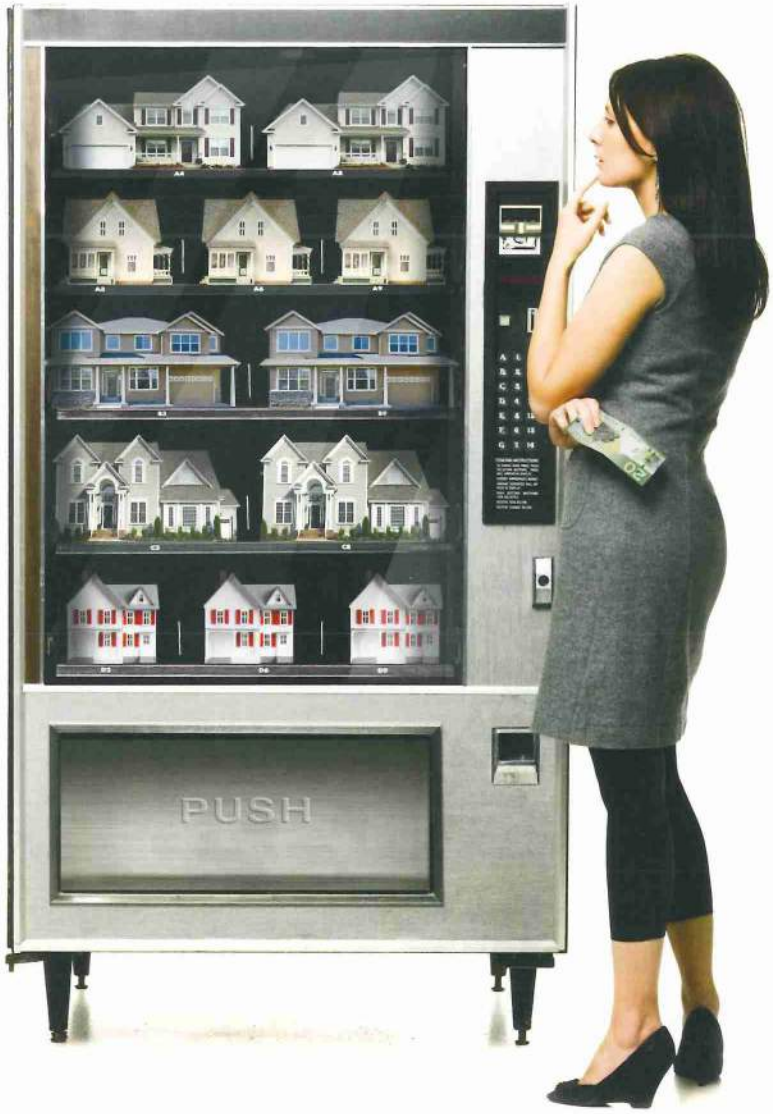
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Ethical investing



It's in Canada's DNA but a misconception by advisers could be hindering progress

BY TOM GIES

Ethical investing is hardly a new concept for Canadians. In fact, according to Eugene Ellmen, executive director of the Social Investment Organization (SIO), a national membership-based organization that promotes socially responsible investment (SRI) in Canada, it is "in the DNA of Canada's credit unions." It all began 26 years ago when **Vancouver City Savings Credit Union** (Vancity) launched the Ethical Growth Fund, the first product in what would become Ethical Funds — a mutual fund family that was founded in 1992 and owned by the provincial credit union centrals. In 2007, Ethical Funds joined forces with Northwest Funds (owned by **Desjardins Group**), with the goal of creating one of the country's fastest growing mutual fund companies: Northwest & Ethical Investments (NEI), co-owned by Desjardins and the provincial centrals. Today, the two fund families continue to operate under their own corporate brands.

Getty images



NORWAY'S SOVEREIGN FUNDS

WORTH OVER $600 BILLION, the Norwegian Government Pension Fund, set up in 1990, became a driving force for climate change and human rights issues after the establishment of an Advisory Council on Ethics in 2004 by royal decree.

Ironically, it is funded by Norway's oil and gas industry, yet it is advocating for greener policies with companies in which it holds shares, including Shell and BP. Specifics include measuring emissions of greenhouse gases and setting targets for reducing them. With such massive investments, the fund cannot only put green issues on agendas and make shareholders' proposals, but it can also work with other parties to change board composition.

The fund is managed by Norges Bank Investment Management (NBIM), part of the Norwegian Central Bank on behalf of the Ministry of Finance. It was designed to be an investment for the long-term, but with the idea that it would be possible to draw on it when required. Despite its name, the fund has no formal pension liabilities, and it hasn't been determined when the fund may be used for future pension costs.

Interestingly, only four percent of the fund is available for government spending, with another one percent available during a "crisis." Still, some Norwegians want to spend more of the fund on research and infrastructure.

On the divestiture front, Norway's pension fund has divested from Canada's Barrick Gold and the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, as well as 30 firms involved in environmental degradation or controversial labour practices.

Since its beginnings Ethical Funds has embarked on a journey that has resembled the long path of recycling. "It started in the 1970s but didn't really become mainstream until recently. Raising awareness slowly led to behavioural change," explains Don Rolfe, president and CEO of **Central 1 Credit Union** and former CEO of Ethical Funds from 2003 to 2007.

Ethical Funds has been a driving force of the SRI agenda: channelling assets into responsible and sustainable companies, exerting influence in the markets through shareholder action, and investing in enterprises with community and social impact. While support for the SRI movement is high, further education and a platform to offer information is essential.

Rolfe believes that to increase awareness of the benefits of SRI funds, financial advisers must be prepared to address this topic with clients. "Most mutual funds are sold, not bought. People entrust their money to an institution and they need to understand what they are investing in," he says.

Without the concept of socially responsible investing on the table, many people are simply unaware of the shareholder engagement work that goes into such investment products as those offered by Ethical Funds. Bob Walker, vice president of Ethical Funds at NEI, agrees that change needs to start with the financial advisers and points out that in some countries, such as Australia, mutual fund salespeople are required to ask clients if they would consider SRI products.

Walker says that Ethical Funds continues to build SRI awareness through its sales team, working the gamut from financial planners to point-of-sale materials to wholesalers, "focusing on engagement to establish ethical outcomes."

For his part, Ellmen also concurs that a major barrier to growth in the retail sector is the lack of awareness of SRI by advisers and dealers. Yet he believes that "as client demand grows and industry awareness increases, more and more advisers will be getting on board." He also believes that credit unions are, once again, at the forefront of this change and well aware of the benefits of SRI.

"Credential Financial, QTrade Financial Group and Desjardins Group are committed to SRI. And many credit unions, such as Vancity, **Assiniboine Credit Union, Alterna Savings and Credit Union** and the Desjardins Group, have made SRI a key part of their sustainable wealth management strategies," explains Ellman. To help speed up the process, Rolfe suggests that "clarity of purpose is required," adding that "people need a product that creates passion; an emotion."

> "Most mutual funds are sold, not bought. People entrust their money to an institution and they need to understand what they are investing in."

Performance Misconception

While passion creates interest, performance is key and since the very beginning there has been a great debate about SRI and its performance. In late 2011, a *Toronto Star* article claimed that funds with SRI mandates have "below average track records," according to Morningstar Ratings, which relates the risk-adjusted performance of a fund to its peers.

To determine a fund's rating, the fund and its peers are ranked by their Morningstar Risk-Adjusted Returns (MRARs) for each of three time periods: three, five and 10 years. For each time period, if a fund scores in the top 10 percent of its peer group, it receives five stars (High); if it falls in the 10 to 32.5 percent range, it receives four stars (Above Average); a score of 32.5 to 67.5 percent earns a fund three stars (Average); while those in the 67.5 to 90 percent receive two stars (Below Average); and the lowest 10 percent get a one-star rating (Low).

Ellmen adamantly refutes the notion that SRIs are underperforming. "It's a persistent misconception by advisers that SRI reduces performance. Yet there is a large body of evidence, ranging from the performance of SRI indexes to the major studies on broker and

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academic research conducted by the UN Environment Program Finance Initiative to our own recent study on Canadian SRI funds, that it is possible to invest according to SRI principles and earn competitive rates of return. Many SRI investments outperform their conventional benchmarks."

Ian Bragg, director of research at Social Investment Organization, also notes that more than a quarter of the SRI funds have not been around long enough to be rated by Morningstar, with very few having a ten-year performance lifespan. "It's a bit of an apples to oranges comparison to compare funds that have benefited from the overall strong market growth from 2002 to mid-2008 and funds that have been created more recently," he explains. "There are several SRI funds that do achieve the above-average four-star Morningstar rating."

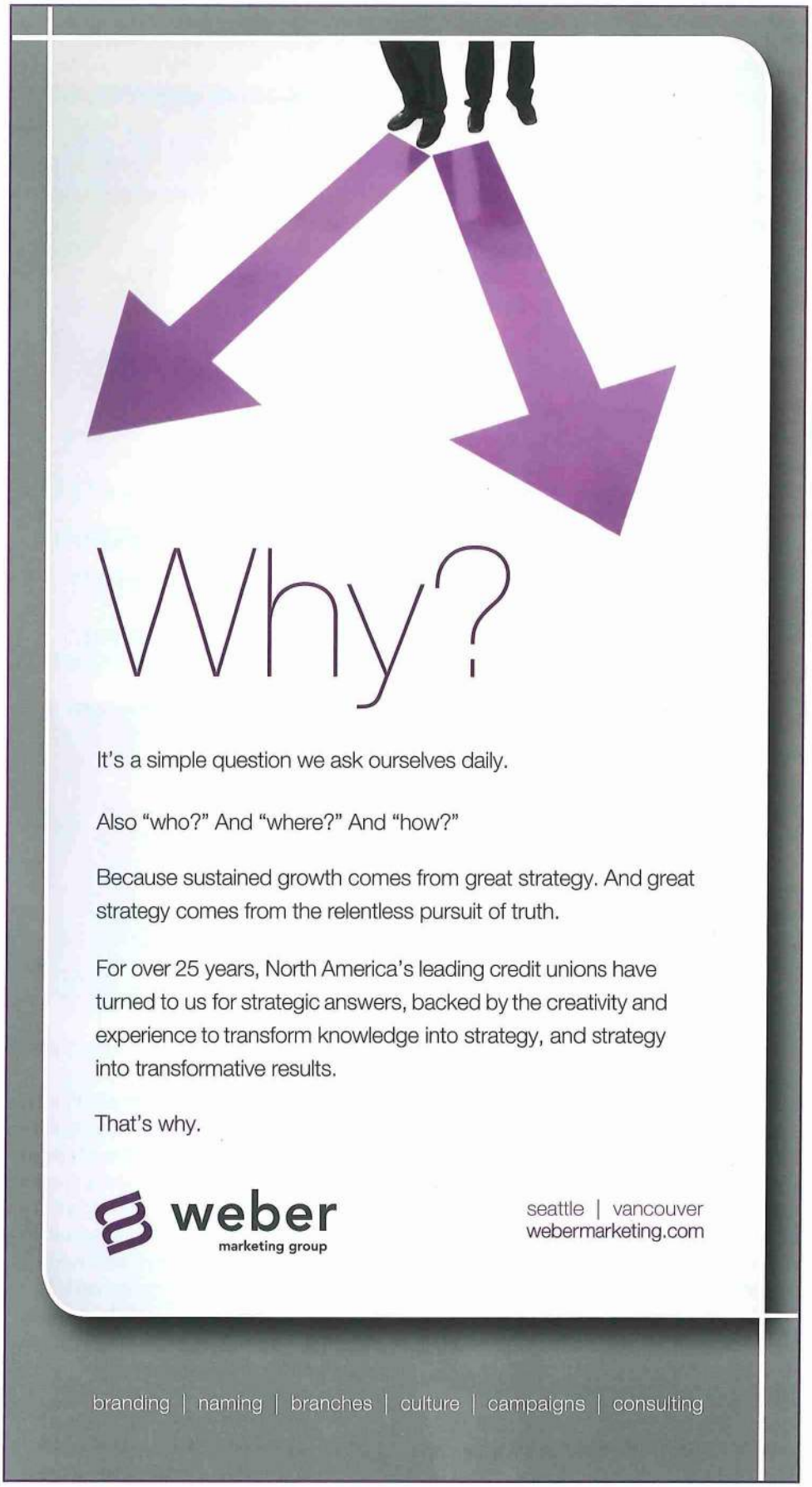
Lower Risks

When it comes to risk management, there is "lots of evidence to indicate that SRI funds perform just as well as conventional funds and that we offer a lower risk," says Walker.

Last year, Ethical Funds announced it was going to engage with 60 companies worldwide in 2012. Michelle de Cordova, director of corporate engagement and public policy at NEI Investments and Ethical Funds, reports that some improvements have been recorded. For example, North American energy producer Encana has improved its handling of concerns around its fracking [hydraulic fracturing] operations.

She also points to improvements at mining giant Barrick Gold, which was encouraged by Ethical Funds to "adopt a free, prior and informed consent policy to ensure social licence for operations impacting indigenous people," according to its website.

"We've been engaging Barrick Gold for a few years around the issue of improving their management of community relations and human rights. Like most mining companies, they're fine with getting ore out of the ground. The challenge is around government relations and with the community surrounding their sites, so we met with the company in February to talk about implementing a human rights impact



assessment (HRIA)," explains de Cordova. "Essentially, it's similar to an environmental impact assessment. We ask about community relations issues and the potential for these issues to infringe on human rights." Ethical Funds is encouraging Barrick Gold to publish the findings of HRIAs across all the company's operations.

Another positive has been setting up a corporate social responsibility (CSR) board with recognized experts, such as former diplomat Robert Fowler, who is Canada's longest-serving ambassador to the United Nations; Aron Cramer, president and CEO of Business for Social Responsibility; and Elizabeth Dowdeswell, former executive director of the United Nations Environment Program. "These positive steps help to lead the industry," de Cordova adds.

Interestingly, Barrick Gold ousted its CEO Aaron Regent the day de Cordova talked to *Enterprise*. "It does raise concern for us because of the recent positive changes," responds de Cordova. "In the messaging of the CEO change there was a statement about maximizing share value. We're invested for the long term. As shareholders, we're focusing on the long-term value of the company, so we're keen to encourage Barrick Gold to follow through on their plans for the HRIA rollout, and to take the advice of their advisory group to keep working on human rights and community relations," she says. "We'll be following up."

Ethical Funds has also been working on the conflict-minerals issue in the Democratic Republic of Congo since 2010. Mineral deposits of gold, tungsten, tin and tantalum, which are used in laptops and smartphones, are being fought over by armed groups in the Congo — and some well-known companies are caught in the middle, including Research in Motion, Apple, Nokia, Samsung and Motorola. RIM has adopted policies to address the issue and maintains that responsible due diligence trumps the boycott of these minerals that are being called for by some activists, de Cordova explains.

Multi-year Process

Then there's the conundrum surrounding the much-publicized Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline project, which has faced widespread



"As shareholders, we're focussing on the long-term value of the company."

– Michelle de Cordova,
NEI Investments and Ethical Funds



opposition to the proposal of sending bitumen via pipeline from Alberta to Kitimat, B.C.

In the case with Enbridge, Ethical Funds (whose Ethical Balanced Fund holds Enbridge shares worth about $6 million) issued a proxy alert regarding legal, operational and reputational risks around First Nations' opposition. Ethical Funds has lauded Enbridge on other fronts for its renewable energy investments and greenhouse gas reduction strategy. Still, despite the carrot-and-stick approach, Ethical Funds' motion was voted down, with 60.8 percent against, 28.5 percent in favour, and 10.7 abstaining.

"We are in the very early stages here of a multi-year process and almost 40 percent of investors have indicated they do not support management's position on our proposal. That is a huge number given that many investors blindly follow management recommendations on most shareholder proposals," Walker points out.

Widespread media coverage once again helped raise awareness of the work that SRI can do from the inside. "We engage and we focus on ethical outcomes. If we were to divest, we would no longer have a voice. You can't change a company you don't own. We fully intend to continue to be a force for change," says Walker.

Ellmen adds that this process takes time but will succeed. "Many fund companies and advisers tell us that clients are asking for SRI. We believe that the trend to ethical consumerism is a major driver of this. Just as consumers are demanding fair trade coffee, organic and natural foods, and electric and hybrid cars, they are also beginning to think about their investments, and the ways that their investments can address important social and environmental issues.

"This is part of a much wider shift that is taking place in which people everywhere are asking for more corporate responsibility and accountability. You see this in the Occupy movement and in the recent public protests in Quebec. Issues such as the BP oil spill, the subprime crisis and the ongoing bank scandals in the UK all remind people that it is important to think about alternatives to business as usual," comments Ellman.

As for a timeline on the change, Ellmen points out that the financial services industry has been "centuries in the making," adding that he is "delighted to see mainstream players joining the movement, including the CPP Investment Board, the Caisse de dépôt in Quebec and the B.C. Investment Management Corp.

"SRI funds are becoming much more sophisticated in their analysis and activity. Corporate engagement, and best-of-sector and thematic investments all promise to offer SRI investors a wider range of investments in the future [that are] matched to their social and environmental values," Ellmen notes.

Ultimately, what we are seeing is a "two-track approach," explains Ellmen. "The retail side of the industry is expanding rapidly in

(both pages) istock

its sophistication and skill sets, with institutional investors increasing the capability of the mainstream in a broader, but slower way. This should mean fairly solid short-term growth by the SRI funds in the retail industry and slower, but broader adoption of SRI by the mainstream over the long term."

All in all, Ellmen is "fairly optimistic" about the future of SRI. "We recently had record attendance at our annual conference, with more asset managers, fund companies, researchers and advisers than ever before. SRI represents an area of optimism in an otherwise bleak mood in the financial industry.

"But we believe that a focus on accountability and responsibility points to a way out of the current problems involving finance and investment. It may take years, or even decades, to fully take hold, but we believe that we're on our way." E

Additional reporting by Natalie Bruckner-Menchelli



STEPS TO DELIVER SUSTAINABLE VALUE

ETHICAL FUNDS uses an Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) program to provide investors with a picture of the possible risks and potential for profit associated with every aspect of an investment. The program uses the following four-step process:

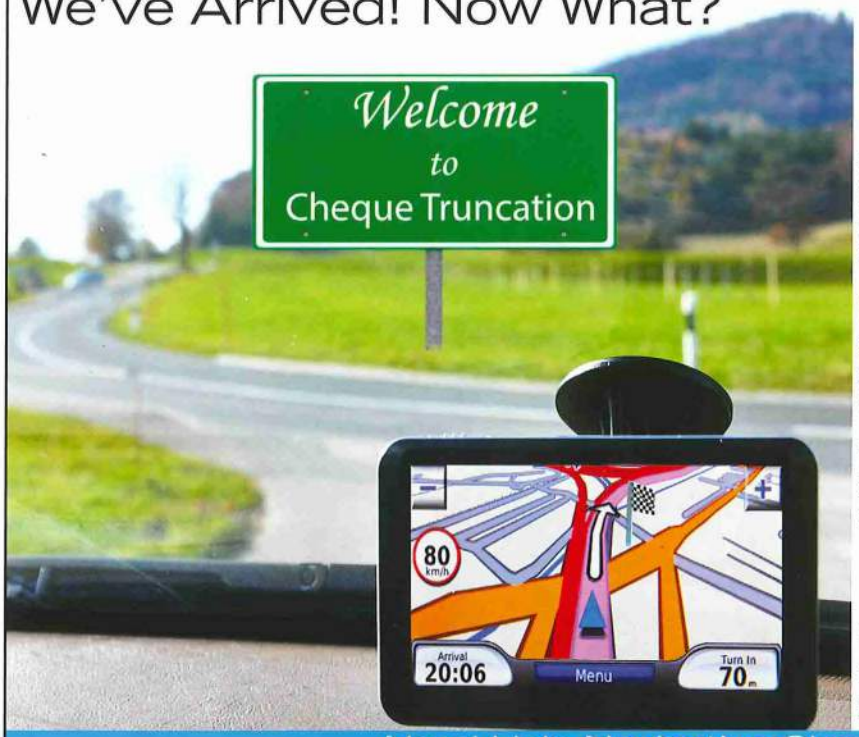
1. EVALUATION. Companies involved primarily in tobacco, weapons or nuclear power are not considered for evaluation. If a company fails to meet minimum environmental, social and governance standards, it is excluded.

2. ENGAGEMENT. Engaged companies are encouraged to improve their environmental, social and governance performance. As active shareholders, Ethical Funds can communicate concerns directly to company management and directors.

3. RESEARCH. Ongoing research into emerging trends, issues and risks informs the evaluation process and flags factors that may present significant advantages or disadvantages.

4. PUBLIC POLICY AND STANDARDS. By engaging with the organizations and people who create the policies and set the standards by which all companies operate, Ethical Funds can promote change on a broad scale and encourage sustainability.

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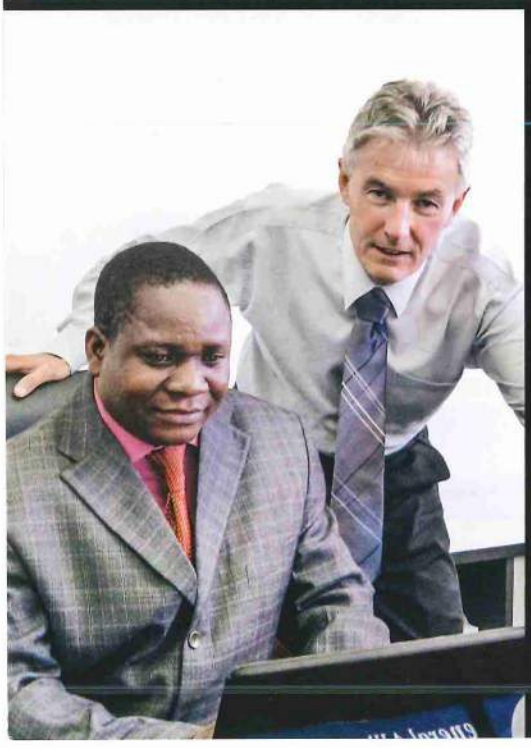
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Developing A Mobile Revolution

A volunteer trip to work at Malawi's largest Savings and Credit Cooperative opened one couple's eyes to technological advancements being made in the world's 11th poorest country.

BY WENDY GLAUSER

IT WAS DURING A VACATION in Hawaii that Paul and Noella Duncan from Nanaimo, British Columbia, had a revelation that would have them venturing on what was to become the trip of a lifetime. "We were renting an ocean-front condo in Maui and I said to Noella, 'This is great, but there's got to be more to life than walking on the beach and looking at whales and turtles and enjoying ourselves.'"

Paul and Noella had retired a few years earlier after working for credit unions for a number of years. Paul had worked as CEO of **Coast Capital Savings Credit Union** and chief financial officer at **Coastal Community Credit Union**, and Noella had worked as a receptionist and administrator for a number of credit unions. However, when faced with a life of retirement ahead of them, the couple wasn't ready to sit back and relax.

Paul decided to put in an application with the **Canadian Co-operative Association** (CCA) for both him and Noella to work as volunteer coaches. Each year, the organization sends several dozen volunteers to developing countries, including Malawi, Uganda, Ghana and Mongolia, to help strengthen cooperatives and credit unions. Paul says that with his experience "stabilizing in-the-red credit unions," the CCA thought he would be a good fit at **Finance Cooperative Limited** (FINCOOP), Malawi's largest credit union, with 38,000 members.

The year prior to the couple's arrival, Paul says the credit union had suffered liquidity issues and was under management of the country's regulator. However, when the pair turned up at FINCOOP's head office in April this year, any preconceived notions they may have had about branch staff feeling "demoralized" were quickly put to bed.

"Sure, the cafeteria in the office was basically a closet with a sink and a hotplate, and members' records were being kept in an outdoor shelter, but everyone was very enthusiastic about ideas and changes," says Paul.

During their two months in Malawi, Paul and Noella worked alongside FINCOOP staff to reorganize and secure the records system and ensure reports to the regulator were sent on time. "They were all so excited they were being asked for their input," recalls Noella. "One of the accountants in particular just soaked up Paul's advice like a sponge. She kept saying, 'Before you leave, I need to know how to do this.'"

Noella says she was pleased to have played a part in boosting employee engagement by introducing the concept of staff parties. "We used to have Friday afternoon parties at work all the time for things like birthdays, but I don't think they've ever had anything like that," she says.

Embracing Mobile Technology

Paul and Noella didn't just see changes in the branch. They also noticed that a mobile revolution was going on around them. "The first thing we were told when we got there was we would have to get a cellphone," recalls Noella. "People were walking down the street talking on phones just like in any other city," adds Paul. On every block, Paul says young women were sitting in the shade, often with babies in their arms, selling cellular airtime to customers.

Like many African countries, Malawi has embraced mobile technology. "It has leap-frogged the landlines and gone directly to cellphones," notes Paul. And waiting in the wings to take advantage of the mobile financial services revolution is the **Malawi Union of Savings and Credit Cooperatives** (MUSCCO) — the central for **Savings and Credit Cooperatives** (SACCOs) in the African nation of 16 million people. According to Daniel Imfa, information technology manager at MUSCCO, the organization recently acquired software from Nairobi-based software solutions company Craft Silicon that will enable MUSCCO to roll out mobile banking options for its 39 affiliated credit unions.

"The technology will allow rural Malawians to work much more efficiently," says Imfa. "We have customers who will walk for several days from their village to fill in a loan application form. Then the credit union staff will say, 'Can you come after a week to check whether that loan has been approved?'"

Imfa says he and his team have already completed the first phase of the new technology's roll out, which will digitize records, improving on the previous paper system. "It could take a whole day sometimes to locate a customer's personal file and assist them. Now, within five minutes, the financial status of the customer is known," says Imfa.

The second phase involves being able to send updates to users via text message. Meanwhile, the customer will be able to call an automated banking service 24/7. "You type a number and it gives you the

TOP ROW: A visit to a Chikondi orphanage. Raw tobacco at Malawi's auction house. Volunteers at the orphanage. MIDDLE ROW: Locals doing their laundry in the river. BOTTOM ROW: Paul (right) oversees operations. The main branch in Lilongue. Chisomo, the only teller at the Kalawe branch. Erecting mobile masts in Malawi.

Paul and Noella Duncan, (bottom right) Travel Ink/getty

WHAT IS MOBILE BANKING?

Mobile banking enables members to perform daily banking activities, such as view account balances, transfer funds or pay bills, using a mobile phone or smartphone. Think Mobile Web, Mobile App or Text Banking.

instructions, like 'press 1 if you want to do a transfer' or 'press 2 for your balance,'" explains Imfa.

While Imfa says MUSCCO is still acquiring the capital to take the technology to the next level, he is hopeful its implementation will expand the reach of credit unions, while expanding the market share for subsistence farmers. "We've seen the lives of farmers improve to the point that they can afford to build decent accommodation and they're buying fertilizer and ox carts. We're contributing to that," he says.

According to Brian Branch, president and CEO of **World Council of Credit Unions** (WOCCU), similar leaps in technology are being witnessed across the globe. WOCCU has been involved in providing training and financial support to bring mobile banking services to remote communities in the Philippines, Ecuador, Peru, Mexico and Kenya.

As part of WOCCU's rural outreach model, the organization is training and equipping credit union field officers to travel to remote communities to deliver services using mobile technology. The objective is to expand the networks of existing credit unions to reach rural, underbanked populations, reversing a lack of access to financial services.

Branch offers Mexico as an example, saying, "25 percent of credit union portfolios are self-employed entrepreneurs." He says the cost savings in transport and time, combined with the interest return and credit access, will significantly help small, family-owned operators grow their capital. When it comes to mobile banking, Branch says WOCCU has stressed the importance of a phased roll out, which allows credit unions to grow their rural base over time without huge initial investments.

As a result of its success, California-based **Ventura County Credit Union** (VCCU) decided to model its mobile pilot program on a WOCCU development program in Mexico. Now, VCCU staff visit farmers on site with iPhones and a handheld printer to assist labourers with everyday financial transactions.

NEXT STOP: Mobile Payments

It's not just mobile banking technology that developing countries are embracing. Interest is growing in utilizing mobile payment technology to further extend financial services to communities. According to Imfa, the new software acquired by MUSCCO contains modules that will enable members in Malawi to "start enjoying mobile payment facilities in the very near future."

Here in Canada, the adoption of mobile payment technology is in its infancy, but progress is being made. According to Oscar van der Meer, **Central 1 Credit Union**'s chief technology and payments officer, Canadian credit unions understand the importance of being able to integrate existing technology — from those used by smartphone makers and telecommunications companies to suppliers of credit and debit card terminals.

In May of this year, a set of voluntary, secure, and open guidelines were released for the development of mobile payments at point-of-sale terminals in Canada.

The Mobile (Payments) Reference Model provides a framework that "will enable the development of software applications that allow consumers to enter into the same transactions that they currently do using payment cards, but do so with their mobile phone," the summary document states. The guidelines focus on mobile devices that use near-field communication (NFC) technology to execute payments.

"Technology is not sitting idly by. The music, newspaper and book industries have seen radical changes," says van der Meer. "Indeed, traditional banking institutions are recognizing that if they don't invest in mobile payment infrastructure, Internet companies will beat them to the customers." He goes on to point out that Google Wallet and Paypal Mobile are already making strides in North America.

"The challenge for financial institutions is that implementing [mobile payment systems] is a cost increase and you can't say, 'Well, we can close our branches because we're doing everything online,'" says van der Meer. "They still need the branches, they need mobile and they need ATMs."

While mobile payments equate to more convenience in places like Canada, for many in the developing world, general advancements in mobile technology are making banking possible, as Paul and Noella witnessed during their trip. Paul believes that there is a lot we can learn from each other. "It's not like Canadians know everything and Africans know nothing. It's about how can we learn from each other," he says. E

The Mobile Wallet Moves One Step Closer

IN MAY, Rogers Communications and CIBC announced that they plan to launch the first joint mobile payment solution later this year, allowing CIBC customers to use their Rogers smartphone to pay for credit card purchases at contactless point-of-sale terminals.

ACCORDING TO the MasterCard Mobile Payments Readiness Index released in May, Canadians are extremely ready and willing to engage in mobile payments, but they may not have all the tools they need and they also lag behind other countries in the actual usage of mobile payments. The Index analyzed the state and adoption of mobile payments across 34 countries worldwide. Some of the highlights include:

CANADA ranked second on the Index with a **score of 42**, ahead of the United States and behind only Thailand, which leads with a score of **45.6**. The average score was **33.2**, with a maximum score of **100**.

15% of Canadian consumers are willing to use a mobile device to buy merchandise. **27%** of Canadians profess familiarity with using mobile devices to shop online, compared with an Index average of **20%**.

For more information on the Index visit: http://mobilereadiness.mastercard.com/canada

WHAT ARE MOBILE PAYMENTS?

Mobile payments provide a method to pay for goods or services using a mobile device. Think Google Wallet or Isis Wallet.



We Love IT...and it shows.

A full-service IT shop, Celero provides complete banking solutions, IT planning, systems integration, hosting, support, maintenance and professional services to meet the diverse needs of financial institutions of all sizes. Along with this, Kim and the rest of the Celero team provide straight-forward uncomplicated advice helping you make the most of your technology, so that you can meet the unique needs of your customers every day. It's this combination of passion and performance that resulted in the successful conversion of more than 100 prairie credit unions from four different legacy retail banking platforms to a single platform in less than three years – a Canadian financial industry first and one of our most visible successes. But we also have much more to offer including:

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With a growing appetite for rebranding, the pros and cons of using the term

When it comes to brand identity, **Sunova Credit Union** likes to keep things short and sweet.

» In 2008, Selkirk, Manitoba-based Sunova went through a rebranding that involved changing its name from South Interlake Credit Union. This was not only a massive departure from the four-word handle it had used for decades, but the credit union decided that its new logo would simply read 'Sunova', without the term 'credit union.' » "The name is modern, young and fresh, and it can stand alone," says Vanessa Foster, director of marketing. "We wanted some-

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experts advise it is time to weigh 'credit union'

BY NICK ROCKEL

thing that was going to work well with naming-rights opportunities; something that was easily recalled," Foster explains. "The brand that we have now is more reflective of what the organization is all about." » With the new name, Sunova (which had long ago expanded beyond Manitoba's South Interlake area) also shed its anchor to a geographic region. In the four years since rebranding, the credit union has opened branches in Winnipeg and nearby Oakbank, and its assets have grown more than 50 percent to just over $809 million. "It has spawned a whole new look for the organization and helped break into the city market," says Foster.

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sunova

"Before deciding to downplay the term 'credit union,' Sunova did its homework and . . . found its service and products were bigger draws than the promise of membership in a cooperative."

South Interlake
Credit Union Limited

RIGHT: Vanessa Foster, director of marketing at Sunova. TOP: Example of the rebranded Sunova logo. BOTTOM: The original logo.

Before deciding to downplay the term 'credit union,' Sunova did its homework and, through market research, found its service and products were bigger draws than the promise of membership in a cooperative. Foster also notes that there was no pushback from members about the name change to Sunova.

Many Canadian financial services cooperatives, including Sunova, have dropped 'credit union' from their name, often replacing it with less confusing terms like 'financial' or 'savings.' For these credit unions, the goal is to attract new members by more clearly positioning themselves in the marketplace.

ALL IN THE NAME

Critics, however, advise that there's value in the credit union brand and warn that discarding it could leave consumers even more baffled.

There's no simple answer to the question of whether or not the term 'credit union' should be kept in a brand name, says Mark Weber, CEO of Seattle-based Weber Marketing Group, which delivers branding and marketing services to several Canadian credit unions. Talking to prospective members, however, Weber and his colleagues often find that awareness of credit unions and the range of services they offer is very low among those aged 18 to 35.

"In that challenge lies tremendous opportunity," says Weber, whose firm recently opened a Vancouver office and has renamed more than 40 credit unions throughout North America. "I think some of the Canadian credit unions are stepping into that opportunity with some pretty exciting brand positioning."

For most of Canada's five biggest credit unions, that positioning doesn't include using 'credit union' in their logos. In B.C., **Vancouver City Savings Credit Union** is known as Vancity, **Coast Capital Savings Credit Union** goes by Coast Capital, and **First West Credit Union** operates as Envision Financial and Valley First. In Ontario, **Meridian Credit Union** calls itself Meridian. The lone holdout in the top five, Edmonton-based **Servus Credit Union**, keeps 'credit union' relatively small in its branding.

Marketing consultant Tim McAlpine thinks this branding trend is a mistake for the credit union system. "Credit unions are a cooperative band of underdogs trying to differentiate themselves collectively from the banking world," says the president and creative director of Chilliwack, B.C.-based Currency Marketing, which mostly works with U.S. credit unions.

McAlpine praises advertising campaigns by **Central 1 Credit Union** for clearly showing credit unions as an alternative to the big banks. "And yet our largest credit unions have dropped the credit union name," he says. "It started at the top and it's just making its way down until ultimately, from a consumer point of view, 'credit union' will be even more difficult to understand."



Sunova

ADDRESSING COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

A common misconception about credit unions is that they only extend credit. Another is that they exclusively serve union members. But replacing or dropping 'credit union' isn't the solution, argues Gene Blishen, general manager of B.C.'s **Mount Lehman Credit Union** and a staunch defender of the term.

"I don't know what a 'financial' is. I don't know what a 'group' is," Blishen says. "I think some of these other credit unions had gotten to the stage of not knowing who they were, and so then they accepted whatever the marketing consultants would say."

McAlpine, a board member at Mount Lehman, laments credit unions' appetite for what he calls "Star Trek names" in place of geographic ones. If they want to address the regional limitations of their names, jettisoning 'credit union' shouldn't be part of the deal. "No bank would change the word 'bank,' even though in many cases it's a bad four-letter word," he explains.

BRANDING ROADBLOCKS

Still, some credit unions say the term presents too many branding roadblocks for them. As far back as the late 1980s, **First Calgary Financial Credit Union**'s name was First Calgary Savings. During an eight-month project that led to its 2010 rebranding, president and CEO Paul Kelly and his team weighed changing the second part to 'credit union' or 'financial.'

After surveying members and non-members about how they perceived it, as well as credit unions in general, First Calgary Financial chose the latter. Why? For starters, the survey revealed that Alberta's second-largest credit union had a fairly low profile in the Calgary region — its target market. "As well, the term 'credit union' wasn't understood by Calgarians," says Kelly, noting that awareness of credit unions is higher in other parts of Canada. "In our market, and our attempt to draw new members from the Calgary population in general, the term 'financial' was well understood."

The name change is part of a strategy to compete with the Big Five banks and provincially owned ATB Financial. When a member joins, First Calgary educates them about what the credit union is and does, Kelly explains. "At the end of the day, we have to do what's right for us in our market," he says of the naming decision. "For the strength of the Canadian credit union system, having a strong, growing First Calgary is a big plus."

In June 2011, Toronto-based **Luminus Financial Services & Credit Union** changed its name from Starnews Credit Union. The 5,000 member credit union, which is now an open-bond organization that focuses on employer-





George De La Rosa, CEO, Luminus Financial

based groups, had long served *Toronto Star* employees. But with newspapers in decline, it needed to find new businesses to serve and to join forces with other credit unions, says CEO George De La Rosa. "The Starnews name was very specific to the *Toronto Star* and the newspaper industry, so that obviously was going to be a stumbling block for us in growing a little bit further."

Before changing its name, staff, members and the board were interviewed. "From the research that we got, it almost didn't matter whether we would have the credit union name in there or not," says De La Rosa. "We also found that a lot of people associated the credit union name with the fact that they had to belong to a union in order to bank with us."

Michelle Nelson, president of Saskatoon-based Tap Communications, worked with Luminus on the rebranding. She presents another point of view. "The reason why credit unions are sometimes choosing not to use 'credit union' in their name is because they want to be sure that they get included in the right category of people's minds," she says. "They want to be counted as a financial institution. More particularly, they want to be counted in the category of bank."

GEOGRAPHICAL DIFFERENCES

In Saskatchewan, the public clearly understands that credit unions offer banking services, Nelson says. "But in Ontario, we were discovering that no, the name 'credit union' is actually a barrier. It means that you're not on that list."

"The reason why credit unions are sometimes choosing not to use 'credit union' in their name is because they want to be sure that they get included in the right category of people's minds."

– Michelle Nelson, president, Tap Communications.

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Still, another Ontario credit union kept the term after a name change. In 2008, the recently merged Kenora District Credit Union and Lakewood Credit Union rebranded as **Copperfin Credit Union** with help from Weber Marketing Group.

After much debate, Copperfin decided to include 'credit union' in its logo, but less prominently than its two legacy credit unions had. "We believed there was still some value in the term and the brand around credit unions, but we wanted Copperfin to be the prominent piece," says CEO Dennis Alvestad.

Can those who don't follow Copperfin's example keep their identity as a credit union intact? "I would argue absolutely, if that's the strategy you deploy to roll your brand out and position yourself in the marketplace as a credit union — as a cooperative," Weber says. "And if you do so, you have to do it really, really well, because you're overcoming this issue of a lot of people not knowing what a credit union is."

As Blishen sees it, part of the problem is that credit unions have no equivalent to the term 'banking.' "The key probably is education and I don't think it's necessarily the marketplace," he says. "I think it's the credit unions themselves and the staff and the directors that need to understand what a financial cooperative is, which is a credit union."

Blishen is encouraged by Vancity's recent decision to increasingly incorporate the 'credit union' logo in its visual identity. According to Vancity's vice-president of marketing Richard Seres, the 'credit union' logo will be appearing in "select communication touchpoints," including letterheads, business cards and exterior signage. "Where we are today, there's a lot of relevance for the credit union brand," says Seres. Disillusioned with traditional financial services, people are looking for alternatives, he observes. "So there's a lot of opportunity right now for credit unions to say, 'Hey, we're different. There's something unique in our business model that's worth taking a look at.'" E

(De La Rosa) Cheryl Penney



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Cooperating in building the future

By Corey Van't Haaff



The importance of face-to-face conversation in a wired world

Time for Another Meeting?



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MEETINGS ARE FOR TAKING MINUTES and wasting hours. Not according to Ruth Maccan, Chilliwack City branch manager at **Envision Financial**, who says the concept of real conversations, in real time, is even more important in today's wired world where staff members are being continuously bombarded by electronic information. "Emails don't go deep enough. The power of an effective meeting goes beyond that," she says.

While a 2005 survey by Microsoft found that out of 38,000 workers, 69 percent believe meetings were "a total waste of their time," Maccan says nothing could be farther from the truth at Envision Financial, part of **First West Credit Union**, B.C.'s third-largest financial services cooperative. For Maccan, meetings play a big part in her life. "I absolutely love meetings; it's a big part of being a manager."

A study by Professor Richard D. Arvey at the National University of Singapore found that group processes and outcomes that require coordination, consensus, timing, and persuasion of others are less effectively accomplished using computer mediated communication modalities. Arvey discovered that face-to-face business meetings, which provide human contact, appeal to our primitive need for social interaction.

To get the most out of the meeting, however, Maccan says that what happens in advance is as important as the encounter itself. She sets out her expectations and timelines in an agenda, which she circulates well in advance, and starts each meeting with the WIG.

"WIG is our Wildly Important Goal," explains Maccan. "Our WIG is 'member growth' so the first ten minutes of our meetings are about our successes. I ask specific people to share their achievements — their secrets and tips."

Bringing balance to a meeting is essential, says Maccan, as is ensuring that the manager isn't the one doing all the talking. "There's buy-in to the meetings as it isn't just me; account managers, for example, talk about their own area of business. Insurance can give a three-minute product knowledge piece."

Nick Sidor, director of corporate affairs and corporate secretary for the **Cooperative Housing Federation of Canada**, agrees. As someone who lives in meetings, he says that a great meeting boils down to two things. "You have to ensure all voices on a subject are respectfully heard and there has to be clarity in the decisions that a meeting collectively reaches."

This is where the quality and talent of the chair comes into play. "Essentially, the chair earns the confidence of the meeting participants — that the meeting will be even-handed and their voices will be heard. People won't feel they need to interrupt to be heard," says Sidor.

He advises to clearly restate decisions so participants are fully aware of what was finally decided. Maccan agrees, adding that respecting time limits for each agenda item is extremely important, even if that means tabling debate until the next meeting.



Following the meeting, sending out a summary with answers to outstanding questions and outlining an action plan may help staff understand the benefits and invite future participation, as well as avert the groans and eye-rolling that so often follow the mere mention of a meeting. E

Ruth Maccan's Five Steps to Successful Group Meetings

1. Create an agenda in writing and be specific about the participation you expect.
2. Send that agenda to all participants in advance of the gathering.
3. Plan each meeting with at least two other speakers.
4. Ensure the agenda motivates people so they are ready to provide feedback.
5. Follow up on commitments made to create future trust.

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Natalie Bruckner-Menchelli



Poor posture can have a major impact on your health

Heads Up

STAND UP STRAIGHT! Stop slouching! When your mum nagged you when you were a kid, not even she could have realized how progressive she was being.

It turns out poor posture could be the culprit for more than a bad back. Bad posture can lead to tension headaches, gastric reflux, tense jaw muscle (TJM) disorder, carpal tunnel syndrome, fibromyalgia, insomnia and even depression.

Ian Horseman, a chiropractor specializing in spinal rejuvenation therapy, posture correction and shockwave therapy at The Posture Clinic in Peterborough, Ontario, says that people are beginning to understand that the way we sit or stand not only impacts us physically, but can also take a mental toll.

While the connection between posture, the nervous system, and our emotions is still very much in its infancy, Horseman says Canada is currently at the forefront of a major chiropractic movement that focuses on the relationship between the body and the brain.

Neutral is Best

"Sitting at a desk for eight hours a day is unnatural," says Horseman. "If you sit for more than two hours at a desk, you are changing your physiology. Your body looks for efficiency, your muscles start to shorten and change their tissue. As your head moves forward, your shoulders start to roll in, then the pressure impacts your chest and rib cage, which impacts your breathing, increasing your blood oxygen levels and your blood pressure."

A study released earlier this year by the Center for Biomedical and Life Sciences at Missouri State University found that people who spend hours in front of a computer tend to "lean in and hunch over." This puts tension on the neck muscles, resulting in pain signals being sent to the spinal cord that actually change the sensitivity of the nerves that are involved with the pain of TMJ disorders and migraine headaches.

While regular stretching and setting up an ergonomically correct workstation helps, Rob Williams, a kinesiologist, posture specialist and movement coach in Vancouver, British Columbia, says that proper posture starts with stabilizing the inner-unit core system.

Williams, who owns Performance Posture Group, a multi-disciplinary posture clinic, agrees that Canada is at the forefront of a new movement in understanding that almost every part of your body can be negatively affected by posture.

"People need to understand that it starts in the centre, with a neutral spine and pelvis and a strong, stable core. It is very simple. The smartest practitioners I know agree that neutral is best. The core is a complex system of muscles and connective tissue that supports and moves your body. Your core has to work properly. You can't expect to perform at your best in poor alignment or with an unstable centre," says Williams. "Physiotherapist Alex McKechnie of the Toronto Raptors has a great saying, 'You can't shoot a cannon out of a canoe,'" he adds.

Williams, who has worked with a number of high-profile sports athletes, National Hockey League players, like Toronto's Andrew Cogliano of the Anaheim Ducks, and celebrities including Ryan Reynolds and Chris Pine, says that whether you are an elite athlete or a sedentary individual, the same theory applies.

"At my clinic we take pictures of people before and after we've corrected their posture, and they are shocked at the difference. Actress Tori Spelling was a classic example when we shot a segment for her reality series. Even her husband commented on how much better she looked in the after shots. It is all about stepping back and taking a global look at how you carry yourself."

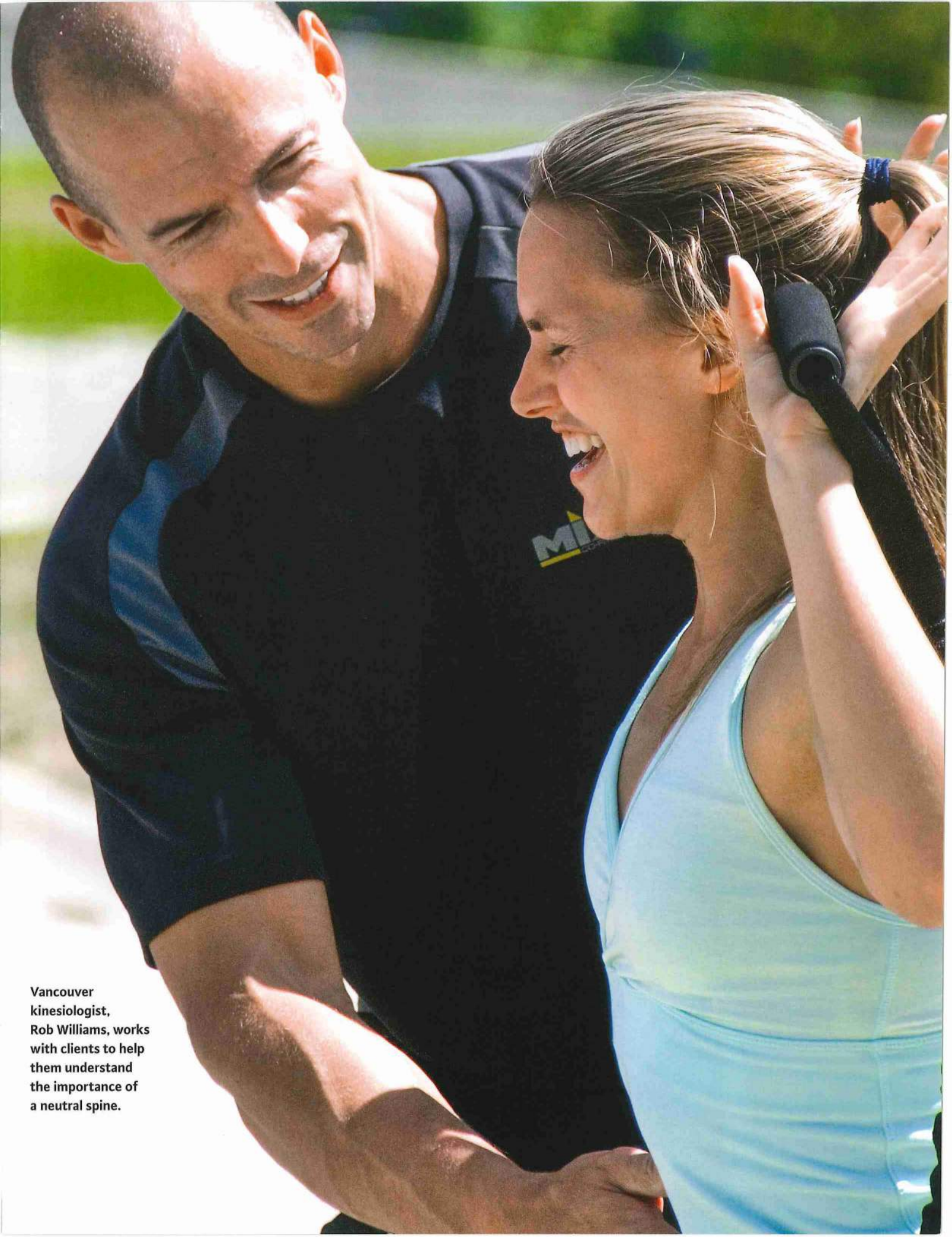
Williams believes that society as a whole needs to be educated to understand that optimizing the body position during any activity will result in enhanced comfort and performance.

Both Williams and Horseman agree that a change in behavior is desperately needed, particularly in a society where we are increasingly more inactive, spending hours in front of the computer or watching TV. "I see myself as a dentist of the spine. I will teach you to floss and brush, give you the tools to ensure optimal health, but I won't brush your teeth for you," concludes Horseman.

TIPS FOR Optimizing Posture

- **Stand with your back against the wall, with your head, shoulder blades and buttocks touching the wall and your feet a few inches away from it. The head and spinal curves should be neutral. Practicing this a few times a day will help increase awareness of how to align the body, says Williams.**
- **Set a reminder on your computer to stretch every 20 minutes even while seated, or stand up or walk around when you are on the phone to help stabilize your core, suggests Horseman.**

istock, (opposite) Performance Posture Group



Vancouver kinesiologist, Rob Williams, works with clients to help them understand the importance of a neutral spine.



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OFFICE Ergonomics

Are you sitting comfortably? Then we'll begin.

THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO (U of T) has compiled step-by-step guidelines on office ergonomics, based on those from the Canadian Standards Association (CSA). Here are some of U of T's top tips for moderate (three plus hours a day) to intensive (five plus hours a day) computer users.

Office Chair: Your chair should include a backrest, armrest, and a stable seating surface. Armrests reduce the strain on the shoulder and neck muscles when working with a keyboard and/or mouse, while the backrest is designed to reduce slouching.

The most preferable workstation enables you to vary your posture regularly throughout the day.

Seat Height: The height must adjust to allow you to place your feet firmly on the floor or a supportive footrest.

An adjustment range of 380-520 mm will allow 90 percent of people to find a comfortable sitting height while wearing shoes.

Seat Pan Depth: The pan depth must be such that the user can maintain contact with the backrest in the lumbar area and avoid increased pressure on the back of legs and behind the knees.

The seat pan depth should be less than 430 mm and there should be space, about the width of a clenched fist, between the front of the seat pan and the back of the knees.



Adjustable Armrests: These are recommended for moderate and intensive computer users, however, armrests should not impede access to the work station or arm movement.

Computer Work Station: You should sit directly in front of the monitor. The mouse or pointing device should be located next to the keyboard, and at the same height, to minimize reach.

Computer Monitor: The viewing distance should be about arm's length away when seated comfortably in front of the keyboard, and the computer screen should be positioned such that the top of the screen is at eye level or slightly lower.

Vision Breaks: Take frequent vision breaks by glancing away from the monitor and focussing on a distant object for 10-15 seconds for every 30 minutes of computer use. E

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Cherry Pick Your Message

Irrelevant marketing messages have members reaching for the delete key

By Lyndsie Bourgon

IN TODAY'S INTERNET AGE, the number of avenues available to compete for consumer attention has resulted in a world that is oversaturated with marketing messages. In turn, consumers are becoming less tolerant of interruptions by irrelevant information and are more likely to hit the delete key.

"Irrelevance is the kiss of death," says Randall Craig, author of *Social Media for Business* and president of 108 ideaSpace, a Toronto-based consulting company. "Because of the Internet, there's been a fundamental shift in sensitivity and filters [to marketing messages]. As a result, people are so bombarded with information of all types and, if it doesn't get through their filters, it's lost."

Craig says moderation is key and to only reach out to members when necessary and with the right products. "Follow market research 101," says Craig, encouraging the use of focus groups and surveys, as well as adopting less formal methods like social media.

For Canadian credit unions, this has meant broadening their horizons in terms of targeted marketing. "Being relevant means being where the member is," explains Bryan Mavrow, senior vice-president of marketing at **First West Credit Union** in Langley, British Columbia.

"Financial institutions touch everyone's lives, from young kids to seniors, so we have a broad spectrum of demographics and it's tough to step back to see who we should target and focus on."

First West has taken on a number of different strategies to avoid irrelevance. It revisits its digital creative and online presence on a weekly basis. It has also taken up buying ad space as part of contextual online advertising, where it places advertisements, such as a mortgage ad, next to targeted content, perhaps a story on housing prices.

"This all fits the model of being less interruptive and more adaptive to what people are doing," says Mavrow. Earlier this year, First West used Facebook as a "hyper-targeting" tool to draw in a younger audience. Those between the ages of 18 and 24 in the Fraser Valley area were targeted on the site, leading to 3.9 million ad impressions and about 8,400 unique visitors to the Facebook contest during the three-week campaign.

Alberta's **Servus Credit Union** has also been spending a lot of time considering the issue of relevance. "We talk about it a lot," says Gail Stepanik-Keber, chief marketing officer. "We spend a lot of time diving deep into what it is that members value. Anything they don't value is irrelevant."

For a 2011 campaign, Servus launched an entirely new website, "Young & Free Alberta," to promote awareness about the credit union to younger members. On the site, Servus entices youth audiences to podcasts, videos, blogs, and Facebook messages in an effort to communicate on a level that's more comfortable for them. Perks on the site include free tickets to concerts and festivals.

"Be attentive to the ever-changing member," advises Stepanik-Keber. "Pick a few avenues, because you can't do it all."

RANDALL CRAIG'S TOP 5 MARKETING RELEVANCE TIPS

1 **Focus on their need, not your requirements:** Prospects don't care about you, they only care about how you can solve their problems.
2 **Fish where the fish are:** No matter how great your message, if it is delivered in the wrong venue, nobody there will care.
3 **Keep the noise down:** Too much of a good thing is not a good thing. Too much of a bad thing can kill your brand.
4 **Start a conversation and then listen:** If no one responds to your request for feedback and perspective, then it is not likely relevant.
5 **Test your approach:** There is no 100 percent right way. Whenever possible, do market testing of messages, venues, and other variables.

Luc Latulippe