

Shaping Canada's Future Since 1954

A Living History of Signal49 Research

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Signal49 Research is the country's leading independent applied research organization.

Founded in 1954 as an extension of The Conference Board, Inc. (then known as the U.S. National Industrial Conference Board), we have evolved into a fully independent, non-partisan Canadian institution. We have developed a long-standing reputation as a respected and influential national voice, delivering rigorous, evidence-based insights across economic, social, and organizational research, empowering cross-sectoral leaders to make informed decisions that build a more prosperous future for all Canadians.

In this report, we highlight seven decades of bold research, economic analysis, and dialogue.

Presented by themes, we showcase where we came from, highlighting the impacts we've had on the country from coast to coast to coast and serving as a bridge to the impacts we will have in the future.

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National impact

As a trusted, independent research organization, we have helped inform key decisions in Canadian business and at all levels of government, from federal and provincial to local communities.

We are proud of the impacts listed below. When acted on, our evidence and insights have advanced national prosperity, sustainability, and created more inclusive growth.

1970s–2000s

1974

Establishing a prominent national voice

In 1974, we launched the *Canadian Business Review*, a quarterly publication offering in-depth economic analysis, forecasts, and commentary. Modelled after the U.S. magazine *Across the Board*, the *Review* became Canada's premier economic voice. To maintain its independence, the publication accepted no advertising and was funded by over 700 of our members, including corporations, government departments, and labour unions. It quickly gained prominence as a flagship journal for economic and organizational research in Canada.

1980s

Economic perspective throughout the recession

The 1980s recession called on us to demonstrate our value as a trusted economic advisor. Our chief economist, Thomas Maxwell, became a widely recognized media figure, offering accessible, expert analysis on platforms like CBC's *The National*. Our forecasts helped Canadians and policy-makers navigate the challenges of the recession. In times of economic uncertainty, we have often been the trusted source leaders turn to.

1987

Launch of the Canadian Tourism Research Institute

In 1987, we launched the Canadian Tourism Research Institute (CTRI), a forward-looking initiative that quickly became a leading authority on tourism research in Canada. Through reliable forecasting, strategic analysis, and custom economic modelling, the Institute has empowered governments, businesses, and destination organizations with actionable insights to shape policy, investment, and growth across the sector.

1988

Research on the Free Trade Agreement

As the Canada–U.S. Free Trade Agreement (FTA) loomed in 1988, our commitment to impartial, evidence-based analysis stood out as many other institutions took ideological stances. Our research on the FTA at the time revealed that its impact would be less substantial than government projections, which further reinforced our credibility with both policy-makers and the public.

1989

Goods and Services Tax analysis

In 1989, we published one of the first comprehensive evaluations of the proposed Goods and Services Tax (GST). We provided evidence that the economic impacts of a higher rate would yield declining returns. Our work played a role in the federal government's decision to reduce the proposed rate from 9 per cent to 7 per cent.

1990s

Work–life balance research

A relatively new area of research emerged in the early 1990s with the examination of work and family. We released *Family-Responsive Benefits: The Corporate Decision-Making Process* in 1991, which explored innovative policies and practices to help employees balance work and family demands. We also released *Work and Family: The Employment Challenge of the '90s*, addressing growing concerns about family responsibilities in the workplace. Our focus on this topic continued throughout the decade, and in 1999 we released *The Work-Life Toolkit*, a practical resource for HR leaders and policy-makers to support employee wellbeing through work–life balance initiatives. It emphasized flexible work, reduced stress, and improved retention, reflecting emerging workplace trends of the time.

1991–1992

Recession insights and influence on the 1991 Federal Budget

Throughout 1991–92, decision-makers turned to our *Index of Consumer Confidence* and *Index of Business Confidence* for critical insights into the recession's effects on spending and investment. Through publications and engagement with media and government, our insights helped guide tough fiscal decisions, such as whether and how to tighten spending controls, whether inflation targeting was having the desired effects, and how public sector restraint could be used on the path to recovery. Our indices were referenced in documents such as the 1991 Federal Budget and various departmental plans.

1998

Symposium on fairness in tax policy

Our track record on tax analysis led Revenue Canada to commission a study to understand how Canadians felt about the fairness of the tax system. As part of this research, we hosted a symposium bringing together cross-sectoral leaders to assess attitudes and ideas for dealing fairly with taxpayers. The outcome was a nuanced understanding that fairness in taxation isn't just about rates, but also about transparency, predictability, and administrative treatment. The report and symposium were cited as early examples of applying social research to fiscal policy.

1999

Employability skills framework

This framework defined the essential skills that employers expected in the workforce across all job sectors. It was widely used in educational and training programs to help guide the development of skills necessary for success in the workplace.

2001

Influencing workplace equity

In 2001, we released *Tapping the Talents of People With Disabilities*, a landmark report created with support from the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship. This report provided employers with practical guidance on integrating individuals with disabilities into the workforce. It influenced policies in both the public and private sectors and was referenced in government guides such as Saskatchewan's *Guide to Hiring Persons with Disabilities* and by organizations such as the National Educational Association of Disabled Students (NEADS).

2005

Mental Health Toolkit

In 2005, we released our groundbreaking *Mental Health Toolkit*, designed to support workplace wellbeing. This toolkit aimed to reduce stigma and encourage open dialogue about mental health while offering resource directories for additional support. Its practical approach generated strong demand, leading to additional funding for widespread distribution.

2006

Exploring barriers to competition

As part of our multi-year Canada Project, aimed at improving economic and social wellbeing across the country, we released *Death by a Thousand Paper Cuts*. This report highlighted how numerous barriers to competition enacted by governments were harming productivity in core industries. While some of the barriers are gone, many of the challenges we identified in 2006 persist.

2005–2007

Forecasting the long term

Between 2005 and 2007, our economics team developed comprehensive fiscal forecasting models, along with health and education models, that provided long-term fiscal forecasts for all provinces, territories, and the federal government, helping governments plan for things like health and education spending for the long term. These fiscal forecasting models played a role in the federal government's decision to increase the Canada Health Transfer by 6 per cent and build in a 3 per cent annual escalator for the Canada Social Transfer.

2003–2006

Economic insights during the SARS pandemic

When SARS exploded around the world in 2003 and Canada experienced an outbreak that traced back to Toronto hospitals, we were among the first to highlight how public health vulnerabilities impact the broader economy. Our 2003 report, *The Economic Impact of SARS*, estimated that disruptions to business and leisure travel due to the virus reduced Canada's real GDP by approximately \$1.5 billion (0.15 per cent).

This expertise was brought to light again in 2005, when rising global concern around the avian influenza virus H5N1 prompted our release of *A State of Unpreparedness*. The report highlighted widespread gaps in planning, warned of potential workplace disruptions, and offered strategies to protect employee health and ensure business continuity in preparation for a possible pandemic. This experience helped us and many others to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.



2010s

2010

Assessing multi-billion dollar deals

In 2010, we achieved a milestone in custom research when the Government of Saskatchewan commissioned an assessment of BHP Billiton's proposed \$38.6-billion takeover of PotashCorp. Our report, *Acquisition of Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan Inc.—Risks and Opportunities*, provided an in-depth analysis of the potential economic and fiscal implications. The report was widely covered in the media, including Global News. The Government of Canada used our research in deciding to block the transaction.

2012

Toolkit for Ontario's AODA legislation

Following the enactment of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) in 2005, we were asked by the Ontario government's EnAbling Change Program to develop resources for employers. In 2012, we released the *Employers' Toolkit: Making Ontario Workplaces Accessible to People With Disabilities*, which provided tools for employers to tap into an underutilized labour pool and successfully integrate individuals with disabilities into the workforce.

2015

Forecast of Alberta recession

In January 2015, we were the first to publicly forecast Alberta's recession, recognizing early on that the steep decline in oil prices and cuts in energy investment would drive the province into a downturn—well ahead of others acknowledging the risk.

2017

Long-term care report influencing provincial planning

Our 2017 report, *Meeting the Demand for Long-Term Care in Canada*, played a foundational role in provincial long-term care bed planning and sparked calls for updated analysis reflecting demographic and policy shifts.



2020s

2020

Supporting through COVID-19

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we emerged as a reliable source of timely insight. In response to the growing mental health challenges posed by the pandemic, we launched a video series focused on mental health and conducted surveys on workplace adaptations, providing businesses with critical insights to help navigate the uncertainty of the times.

2021

Launch of OpportuNext with FSC

In 2021, with support from the Future Skills Centre, we launched *OpportuNext*, a data-driven career tool designed to help Canadians match their skills to viable job paths. This platform, free to use for all Canadians, was endorsed by The Honourable Carla Qualtrough, former Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, who said it was a crucial investment in fostering a resilient, inclusive labour force during a time of rapid change and recovery.

2022

Small modular reactors reports influence provincial strategy

Our reports *Financing Small Modular Nuclear Reactors to Commercialization* and *Sustainable Finance for Nuclear Energy* resonated across Canada, with Alberta, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick, and Ontario releasing a joint strategic plan in March 2022 for the deployment of small modular reactors (SMRs). The joint strategic plan drew on our analysis to highlight the economic benefits of SMRs for Ontario and Saskatchewan.

2022

Health research cited in Senate deliberations

Our Value-Based Healthcare Canada publication, *Understanding the Gap 2.0*, played an influential role in shaping federal policy during Senate deliberations on Bill C-64, *An Act Respecting Pharmacare*. The Senate Standing Committee formally requested our research, which was cited during final legislative proceedings.

2022

Breaking barriers for neurodivergent workers

Our research *[Building Workplaces Where Neurodivergent Workers Thrive](#)* has garnered attention from various media outlets and helped to shape organizational practices and policies to advance neurodiversity in the workplace.

2022

Updated Employability Skills Toolkit

We updated our *[Employability Skills Toolkit](#)* in 2022, building on the original 1999 release. This modernized version offered practical guidance and exercises to enhance employability across various life stages and career transitions. The toolkit has been widely used by educational institutions, career development professionals, and community organizations across Canada, including Trent University, University of Lethbridge, and the Vancouver School Board, and has been integrated into curricula and support programs to improve workforce readiness.

2023

Supporting Canada's Northern and Indigenous communities

We are one of the only forecasting units in Canada that provides comprehensive forecasts for Canada's Northern territories. As part of our commitment to Canada's Northern and Indigenous communities, we published *[Indigenous Ownership: Best Practices for Major Project Success](#)*, followed by *[Learning From One Another: Building a Stronger Skills Development Landscape in Nunavut, Northern Ontario, and Yukon](#)*. Organizations and agencies across territorial, federal, and community levels have actively engaged with the findings, using them to inform policy design, guide labour market strategies, and support capacity-building efforts around economic development, housing, equity participation, and youth outcomes.

2024

Disaster support requested by Jasper, Alberta

Our 2024 release, *[Toward a Disaster Recovery Framework for Canada](#)*, identified critical gaps in Canada's emergency management and community resilience planning. The report garnered attention, leading to a direct request from Jasper, Alberta, for tailored recommendations to support their wildfire recovery efforts.

2024

Health research referenced in House of Commons

Our Value-Based Healthcare Canada Centre's report, *[Access and Time to Patient: Prescription Drugs in Canada](#)*, played a key role in House of Commons committee hearings, providing essential data on drug approval timelines. Its insights directly informed national conversations on streamlining access to innovative therapies for Canadian patients.

2024

Immigration report referenced in Senate

Our National Immigration Centre published *[The Leaky Bucket 2024: A Closer Look at Immigrant Onward Migration in Canada](#)*, a landmark study on immigrant retention. The report gained prominent coverage from CTV News, *The Globe and Mail*, and regional outlets. The findings were referenced in Senate statements and actively used during Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) policy consultations.

2024

Innovation Report Card presented to government and used in policy

Throughout 2024, we presented our *[Innovation Report Card](#)* (IRC) at Government of Canada and Innovation, Science and Economic Development (ISED) forums. The presentations included a meeting of 20 associate deputy ministers and the Directors General's Working Group with an audience of 10 directors general and 95 staff. The federal government has referenced the IRC in the development of policy, and ISED division directors have been asked by directors general to include the IRC in their policy and strategy briefings.

2024

Airbnb activity and rental markets report

An important national issue in 2024 was Canada's housing challenges. In response to political steps like bans on short-term temporary rentals such as Airbnb and VRBO, we analyzed the possibility of these bans lowering rental prices. Our research, *[Airbnb Activity and Rental Markets in Canada](#)*, found no compelling evidence that short-term rental activity significantly impacted rents, providing valuable insights into the housing market and rental policies.

2024–2025

Emissions Reduction Plan assessments

In 2024, we commenced economic assessments of the federal Emissions Reduction Plan (ERP) and the proposed oil and gas emissions cap, focusing on Saskatchewan and Alberta. Building on our earlier work on emissions reduction, we released *Impacts of Canada's 2030 Emissions Reduction Plan* in 2025. This report analyzed the socio-economic impacts of the Plan, and the policy framework intended to get us there. We have also integrated greenhouse gas emissions blocks into our national and provincial economic models, allowing us to produce emissions forecasts and explore various scenarios for Canada's transition to a lower-carbon economy.

2025

Centre for Canadian Growth and Prosperity

Amid heightened economic uncertainty and a shifting global landscape, including tensions from the U.S. trade war, we launched the *Centre for Canadian Growth and Prosperity*, intending to shape forward-looking policy and practical solutions to support a resilient and inclusive Canadian economy. Our *Canada in a Changing World* series was released to address key topics related to these challenges, providing expert commentary and analysis. The series garnered exposure in major media outlets, including *Financial Post*, *The Globe and Mail*, and *Wealth Professional*, amplifying the critical conversations on Canada's future economic trajectory.

2025

AI economy report presented at B7 meeting

Our innovation release, *Canada's AI Economy*, which was supported by Microsoft Canada, launched at the B7 (Business 7) meeting in Canada in May 2025. This meeting is the official voice of the business community within the G7 framework and gathered G7 leaders including Canada's Minister of Industry, Mélanie Joly. The launch positioned us as a key authority on AI insights, aligning with the G7's focus on AI-driven economic prosperity.





International development and influence

Throughout the years, our expertise was called on by the Government of Canada to advance economic development, trade capacity, and institutional strengthening abroad. Our international experience highlights the ways our work has fostered cross-border collaboration, supported public sector modernization, and contributed to inclusive growth in emerging economies.

1990s

1990s

Influencing international development as an executing agency

In 1991, our first international projects were the Canada–India Institutional Linkages (CIIL) and the Applied Economic Research Institute Linkage (AERIL) project in China. Both projects promoted institutional cooperation and technical knowledge exchange.

Between 1993 and 1999, we led several high-impact international development projects. These included the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) initiative, where we coordinated Canada's engagement in the APEC Human Resources Development (HRD) Working Group and chaired the Business Management Network to promote sustainable development and executive education.

We also implemented a Public Policy Options project in China, deploying over 100 Canadian experts to support socio-economic reforms, including World Trade Organization (WTO)–compliant policy development. Our efforts extended to Tunisia, where we helped strengthen forecasting capacity, and Morocco, where we worked to modernize both the Ministry of Finance and External Relations. Additionally, we worked with Vietnam and Ukraine to assess and enhance economic modelling and forecasting, promoting effective governance and strategic economic planning.

2000s

2000s

Deeper global engagement

Throughout the 2000s, we led development initiatives across Latin America, Southeast Asia, and Eastern Europe. A key milestone occurred during APEC Phase II, where we advised APEC economies on how to remove barriers to tourism. Additionally, we implemented a WTO-focused trade capacity project across six Asian countries and supported Ukraine's reform agenda through economic benchmarking and fiscal training under the Socio-Economic Performance and Potential Capacity (SEPPAC) program. In Latin America, we successfully delivered the Canada–Americas Trade-Related Technical Assistance (CATRTA) initiative, supporting over 60 trade projects in Colombia, Honduras, and Peru. These efforts built public sector skills, fostered regional partnerships, and promoted gender and environmental integration into economic policy.



2010s

2010s

Continued global influence and impacts in Ukraine

Throughout the 2010s, we strengthened our leadership in international development. One notable project was the Canada–Ukraine Trade and Investment Support (CUTIS) initiative (2016–21), funded by Global Affairs Canada. CUTIS focused on helping small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), including women-led businesses, through export readiness training, market access support, and long-term linkages. The project also improved investment promotion strategies, addressed regulatory challenges, and embedded environmental goals.

Other international initiatives took place during this time, including the Evidence-Based Economic Development Planning (EBED) project in Ukraine, which built multi-level government planning capacity and integrated training into the National Academy for Public Administration. The Canada–Indonesia Trade and Private Sector Assistance (TPSA) project advanced bilateral trade by tackling market barriers, strengthening regulatory knowledge, and connecting SMEs through research, training, and institutional partnerships.



2020s

2025

Global partnerships thought leadership

As global trade relationships changed, our economic experts released a series of thought leadership pieces examining Canada's diversification efforts with Europe, the Indo-Pacific, and other key global markets that have achieved diverse media exposure.

Our research *Beyond Barriers: Deepening Canada-Ireland Trade and Investment* looked at areas where the two countries can strengthen their relationship. The report was a core part of a conversation between the Canadian and Irish prime ministers (PM) and was directly referenced by the Irish PM in media.





Research and forecasts

Our early mandate was clear: Provide business, government, and other Canadian leaders with impartial, data-driven analysis to guide decision-making. During our early operations, we launched several products that would contribute to the development of business insights for decades.

Listed below are the launch dates of products that persist to this day, giving us an unparalleled track record and dataset for key forecasts, indices, benchmarking tools, and publications that help decision-makers navigate Canada's economic and social landscape.

1970s

1980s

1990s

1972

Index of Consumer Confidence

In 1972, we launched our flagship Index of Consumer Confidence (ICC), an important indicator of consumers' optimism regarding current economic conditions, personal finances, short-term employment outlook, and major purchases. The ICC quickly became a crucial tool for companies in the consumer products sector, providing insights into near-term sales trends.

1974

Provincial Outlook forecast

We took an important step toward broadening our economic analysis by introducing our Provincial Outlook forecast. This forecast addressed the unique economic conditions of individual provinces, providing detailed analyses for each one, an area previously dominated by national-level assessments. Since its inception, the forecast has evolved to include both short-term (five-year) and long-term (20-year) projections.

1982

Compensation Planning Outlook

In 1982, we introduced our inaugural Compensation Planning Outlook, offering a comprehensive compensation forecast derived from surveys conducted with Canadian organizations. This report delivers valuable insights into projected salary increases, short-term incentive payouts, and other compensation practices. Today, the Compensation Outlook remains an essential resource for HR professionals, compensation experts, and organizational leaders who rely on it to navigate and adapt to the dynamic pay landscape.

1984

Industrial Relations Outlook (now Labour Relations Outlook)

We launched the Industrial Relations Outlook focusing on the Canadian economic landscape, insights into the labour relations climate, and projected wage increases for unionized workers.



1992

Long-term (20-year) economic forecasts

In the early 1990s, we further solidified our position as economic thought leaders as difficult times called for deeper analysis. We enhanced our national and provincial economic models with deeper demographic projections and a focus on the supply side of the economy. This innovation made us one of the first organizations in Canada to produce long-term (20-year) forecasts.

1998

Metro Outlook (now Major City Insights)

We continued to innovate with new products, releasing our first Metro Outlook in 1998. The Metro Outlook is still one of the only economic forecasts that provides a detailed economic analysis for Canada's major cities.

2000s

2004

Canadian Industrial Outlook Service (now Industry Lens)

To meet the growing demand for detailed sectoral analysis, we launched the Canadian Industrial Outlook Service. These forecasts, based on analyses of domestic and international factors, have become a valuable resource for understanding medium-term industry trends.

2006

Human Resources Metrics

Though we had released smaller trend reports in the past, in 2006, we introduced our first Human Resources Metrics report, providing timely HR benchmarking data across key metrics, broken down by employee group, industry, and sector. The popularity of these reports led to a series of workshops on topics such as Effectively Managing Absenteeism and Strategic Organization Design.

2007

How Canada Performs benchmarking report

We launched How Canada Performs, a flagship benchmarking report assessing Canada's performance against 16 peer countries across critical domains such as education, innovation, immigration, health, and more. This report quickly became a go-to resource for policy-makers, media, and business leaders, providing comparative data that highlighted Canada's strengths and challenges on a global scale. Since launching, the report has garnered millions of views and become one of our most searched releases.

2009

Benefits Benchmarking

We released our inaugural Benefits Benchmarking report in 2009, providing timely insights into organizations' benefits plans, offerings, and strategies, allowing leaders to compare against others in their region and/or industry. Today, Benefits Benchmarking remains one of our most popular HR products.

2010s

2010

Territorial Outlook

Our Territorial Outlook explores the key trends, challenges, and opportunities shaping Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, and Yukon. This release remains one of the only comprehensive forecasts in Canada covering the Northern territories. In 2024, the Yukon Minister of Finance, The Honourable Sandy Silver, rose in the house to formally recognize our outlook, highlighting the trust that governments place in our economic forecasts.

2014

Innovation Report Card

We released our first Innovation Report Card, which assessed Canada's innovation performance relative to 16 peer countries. With Canada receiving a D grade and ranking 13th, the report highlighted the need for increased investment in innovation to drive global competitiveness.

2018

Economic Impact Assessment model

We enhanced our research capabilities with the development of a proprietary Economic Impact Assessment (EIA) model, enabling us to conduct detailed analyses of impacts on GDP, employment, income, and government revenues. This tool greatly improved our ability to conduct in-depth economic impact studies at local, provincial, and national levels.



2020s

2022

Index of Consumer Spending

The Index of Consumer Spending (ICS) launched in partnership with Moneris was first released in 2022, the ICS uses exclusive consumer transaction data to track weekly, year-on-year changes in consumer spending, providing valuable insights into economic activity across the country and the overall performance of the Canadian economy.

2022

Model of Occupations, Skills, and Technology

In 2022, we launched the Model of Occupations, Skills, and Technology (MOST), a projection tool designed to help Canadians prepare for the future of work. MOST provides region-specific forecasts on how industries and occupations are evolving and identifies the skills required to succeed in a changing labour market.

This tool informed our report, *The Labour Market of Tomorrow*, offering data-driven insights into how the pandemic reshaped job growth, skill demand, and automation risks across Canada.

2023

GrowthNow

We released a new economic product, called GrowthNow, in 2023. This monthly report uses current or recent economic data to estimate GDP growth rates for the current quarter before official figures are published. It enables policy-makers to respond more quickly, enhancing the efficacy of economic policies and fostering sustainable growth and prosperity.



Research centres

Working together across areas of expertise and business lines helps us identify the core research challenges that we face. The power of collaboration is reflected in our track record in establishing national research centres. By bringing together cross-sectoral leaders united in their mission for progress, our centres enable us to develop and disseminate research that informs decision-making.

1970s

1990s

2000s

1976

Compensation Research Centre

The Compensation Research Centre (CRC) marked our entry into the field of labour market analytics and compensation trends. This move helped strengthen our influence on HR and labour policy in Canada, further diversifying our research portfolio and solidifying our role as a leader in Canadian business policy analysis.



1991

National Business and Education Centre

We launched the National Business and Education Centre to align education with the evolving needs of the labour market, aiming to enhance Canada's global competitiveness.

1999

Centre of Excellence for Women's Advancement

Our 1997 release *Closing the Gap: Women's Advancement in Corporate and Professional Canada*, examining the systemic barriers hindering women's progression into senior leadership roles, led to the creation of the Centre of Excellence for Women's Advancement (CEWA) in 1999. The Centre played a pivotal role in promoting gender diversity in Canadian organizations. CEWA's contributions included developing the *Gender Diversity Tool Kit*, which included reports such as *Chief Executive Commitment: The Key to Enhancing Women's Advancement*.

2006

Centre for Immigration Issues

We launched Centre for Immigration Issues in 2006, focusing on research and networking related to immigration. A priority of CII was the Business Leaders' Roundtable on Immigration, which convened business and community leaders to support and enhance skilled immigration.

**Research centres throughout the 2000s**

During the 2000s, we led a range of cross-sectoral research centres:

- Canadian Centre for Learning and Development
- Centre for Business Excellence
- Centre for Clean Energy
- Centre for National Security
- Centre for Transportation and Infrastructure
- Effective Work Environments Research Centre
- Financial Services Research Program
- Global Commerce Centre
- Human Resource Development Centre
- National Education and Learning Centre
- Public Enterprise Governance Centre
- Tax Research Centre

2010s

2010

Centre for Food in Canada

The Centre for Food in Canada was a three-year initiative to strengthen Canada's food system through research, dialogue, and cross-sectoral collaboration. We worked alongside a diverse network of stakeholders, including industry leaders, as well as academics, non-profits, and government agencies to develop practical insights and strategic guidance. Key contributions included two Canadian Food Summits and influential reports such as *Household Food Security in Canada* (2013), *Canada's Growing Appetite for Local Food* (2013), and *The Canadian Food Strategy* (2014). While the Centre laid the foundation for national strategic thinking, it also helped catalyze more recent system-level programs, most notably, Canada's Food Policy, launched by the federal government in 2019 to implement long-term, coordinated reforms to the food system.

2010

Centre for the North

We launched the Centre for the North (CFN) in 2010, focusing on sustainable development in Northern and Indigenous communities. By 2011, CFN's policy insights gained national attention, including a testimony before the House of Commons Standing Committee. The 2013 Canada's North Summit attracted over 300 participants, focusing on community resilience with strong Indigenous involvement. By 2018, CFN had published influential reports such as *Cool Ideas: Revolutionary Building for the North* and *Our Land and Our Future: National Summit on Indigenous Youth and Natural Resource Development*, which collectively generated nearly 15 million media impressions.



2010–2011

Centre for Chronic Disease Prevention and Management and Canadian Alliance for Sustainable Health Care (CASHC)

The Centre for Chronic Disease Prevention and Management examined the pressures of chronic diseases on Canada's economy and healthcare system, while CASHC focused on the healthcare system's long-term sustainability.

2011

Centre for Business Innovation

We established the Centre for Business Innovation, which explored barriers to productivity and innovation, producing over 30 publications before closing in 2019.

2018

National Immigration Centre

We founded the National Immigration Centre (NIC) in 2018 to enhance Canada's immigration system through independent, impartial, evidence-based research. Funded by both public and private sector members, NIC has made important contributions to immigration policy in Canada, with the Centre's research mentioned in Senate statements and widely cited in media.

2019

Value-Based Healthcare Canada

We established Value-Based Healthcare (VBHC) Canada in 2019 to help influence and improve Canada's stressed healthcare system. The Centre's aim was to improve patient care and outcomes, cost transparency, and capacity to meet current needs and serve future generations. VBHC Canada research has been presented to Senate and cited during final legislative proceedings.

2020s

2021

Workplace Mental Health Research Centre (now the Centre for Workplace Wellbeing and Effectiveness)

Our efforts to support workplaces and workers continued into 2021, with the launch of the Workplace Mental Health Research Centre. The Centre was created to help leaders navigate complex modern work environments and foster thriving employees and resilient organizations.



2022

Canadian Centre for the Innovation Economy

In 2022, we launched the Canadian Centre for the Innovation Economy, in partnership with MaRS Discovery District, an initiative to drive forward-thinking research and policy recommendations to enhance Canada's innovation landscape. The Centre's research has gained widespread attention and was presented at the 2025 B7 meeting in Canada.

2024

Centre for Business Insights on Immigration

By 2024, we had firmly established our place as a national leader in immigration research. We moved to the next stage with the launch of Centre for Business Insights on Immigration, designed to strengthen employer engagement in immigration and effective management of immigrant talent. The Centre's debut study on immigrant integration in SMEs was followed by the widely cited report Shift in Immigration Policy Goes Too Far. This publication projected serious negative economic consequences from policy changes, fuelling national media coverage and political debate.

2025

Centre for Canadian Growth and Prosperity

In response to a rapidly evolving global landscape, we established the Centre for Canadian Growth and Prosperity (CCGP) to help solidify Canada's global position and future prosperity. Through rigorous analysis and evidence-based insights, CCGP provides the knowledge required to shape policies and practices that will secure a strong, resilient, and inclusive future for all Canadians.



Executive councils

We foster peer learning and sector leadership through our executive councils. Our legacy in this area has spanned key industries such as HR, marketing, innovation, the environment, and public affairs. These communities have united senior leaders to build capacity, surface emerging issues and drive impactful knowledge exchange.

Throughout the decades, we've narrowed in on our councils with the biggest demand and impact. As of 2025, our 15 active executive councils represent over 400 members, including some of Canada's top companies, non-profits, and public institutions.

1970s

1980s

1990s

1975

Council of Human Resources Executives

We established the Council of Human Resources Executives (CHRE) in 1975, which played a pivotal role in promoting peer learning and collaboration among HR professionals across Canada and laid the groundwork for our specialized leadership networks. Due to high demand, this council was divided into an East and West division.

1988

Council of Labour Relations Executives

We expanded our leadership network in the late 1980s with a focus on labour relations, helping members reshape union–management dynamics and building lasting peer relationships in this critical area.

1989

Council of Chief Information Officers

The Council of Chief Information Officers (CCIO) was established to help members discover how CIOs are advancing their organizations in the digital economy.



1995

Council on Corporate Aboriginal Relations (now the Corporate–Indigenous Relations Council)

In 1995, we launched the Council on Corporate Aboriginal Relations with a mandate to promote meaningful corporate–Indigenous relationships through candid, high-level dialogue among leaders from business, government, and Indigenous communities.

1995

Council for Innovation and Commercialization

Also in 1995, we launched the Council for Innovation and Commercialization, supporting Canada's innovation leaders in a peer-to-peer learning and networking forum and reflecting our growing engagement across sectors and institutions.

Councils in the '90s

In the 1990s, our council portfolio included over 20 executive networks spanning national sectors:

Business Leaders' Roundtable
 Canadian Education Leadership Network
 Canadian Training Directors' Forum
 Council for the Management of Innovation and Technology
 Council of Financial Executives
 Council of Human Resource Executives
 Council of Industrial Relations Executives
 Council of Marketing Executives
 Council of Public Affairs Executives
 Council of Senior Legal Executives
 Council of Senior Operating Executives
 Council on Information and Knowledge Management
 Council on Investment Issues
 Council on Total Quality Management
 Council of Strategy and Development
 Environment Management Council
 Global Business Council
 Operating Executives Council on Quality
 Public Sector Executives Network
 Quality Health Care Network
 Quality Network for Universities
 Research Managers Forum
 Total Quality Management Forum
 Work and Family Council

2000s

2000

Council on Workplace Health and Wellness

We established the Council on Workplace Health and Wellness (CWHW) as an exclusive, collaborative, and trusted space for workplace health leaders to share research, evidence, and strategies for advancing employee wellbeing.

2001

Council for Chief Privacy Officers

Created in response to rising privacy concerns, this council supported senior privacy leaders navigating evolving regulations and building trust in data-driven business environments.

2001

Strategic Risk Council

Also in early 2001, we launched Canada's only cross-sectoral forum for business professionals on strategic and enterprise risk management. The Strategic Risk Council (SRC) convenes risk leaders to discuss the practices and systems of risk management.

2003

Council on Inclusive Work Environments

The Council on Inclusive Work Environments (CIWE) was founded to bring diversity, equity, and inclusion leaders together to share insights and shape inclusive strategies that attract diverse talent and foster high-performing, inclusive workplaces.

2005

Corporate Ethics Management Council

Founded in 2005, the Corporate Ethics Management Council helps senior ethics leaders foster integrity-driven cultures and go beyond compliance to build trust and accountability.

Councils in the 2000s

During the 2000s, our council division played a pivotal role in shaping national dialogue, actively leading over 30 executive councils:

Business Network on the Environment	Council on Risk Management
Corporate Community Investment Council	Council on Workplace Health and Wellness
Corporate Ethics Management Council	Energy Policy Forum
Council for Chief Privacy Officers	Government Performance and Accountability Council
Council for Information Technology Executives	Innovation Council
Council for Innovation Procurement	Knowledge Strategy Council
Council for Performance Excellence	Leaders' Forum on Acute Care Services
Council for Security Executives	Leaders' Roundtable on Health: Health Care and Wellness
Council of Chief Information Officers	Maximizing Talents of Visible Minorities Advisory Committee
Council of Chief Risk Officers	National Council of Financial Executives
Council of Human Resource Executives	National Council on Education and Learning
Council of Industrial Relations Executives	Project Management Forum
Council of Public Affairs Executives	Public Sector Executives Network
Council of Senior Legal Executives	Quality Network for Universities
Council on Corporate Aboriginal Relations	Strategic Human Resources Management Council
Council on Healthy Aging	
Council on Regulatory Impact Analysis	

2010s 2020s

2016

Council for Chief Data and Analytics Officers

We launched the Council for Chief Data and Analytics Officers in 2016 to empower data leaders to explore data privacy and ethical challenges while exchanging best practices in analytics, governance, and emerging tech such as artificial intelligence.

2018

Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability Council

Formerly operating separately as the Business Network on the Environment and the Business Sustainability Council, Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability Council (CSRC) explores environmental, societal, and governance trends and leadership strategies to help organizations drive sustainable change.

2022

Emergency Management Community of Practice

Building on the earlier momentum of our Pandemic Response Working Group and the Council on Emergency Management, we transitioned to the Emergency Management Community of Practice in 2022, a groundbreaking initiative that facilitated knowledge sharing and collaboration across both emergency management and business continuity. This forum further extended our leadership role, enabling organizations to learn from one another and implement best practices in resilience and crisis management.

2023

Canadian Council of College Futures

The Canadian Council of College Futures (CCCCF) was launched to support college and polytechnic leaders in shaping future-ready institutions through innovation, reconciliation, and workforce development.



Councils in the 2020s

Throughout the 2020s, we've convened senior executives across 15 leading councils:

- Canadian Council of College Futures
- Compensation Research Centre
- Corporate Ethics Management Council
- Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability Council
- Corporate-Indigenous Relations Council
- Council for Chief Data and Analytics Officers
- Council for Chief Privacy Officers
- Council for Innovation and Commercialization
- Council of Chief Information Officers
- Council of Human Resources Executives (East and West)
- Council on Inclusive Work Environments
- Council on Workplace Health and Wellness
- Council on Labour Relations
- Strategic Risk Council
- The Emergency Management Community of Practice



Convening and dialogue

Through conferences, summits, forums, study tours, and award ceremonies, we unite business, government, academia, non-profits, and society to amplify diverse perspectives and dialogue. These touchpoints have shaped public discourse, strengthened networks, and sparked bold new ideas across sectors.

1950s–2000s

1955

Inaugural Canadian CEO Summit

In 1955, we hosted our inaugural Canadian CEO Summit in Montebello, Quebec. The invite-only summit brought together 40 of the nation's top CEOs. Early attendees included influential leaders from organizations such as Molson, IBM, and the Bank of Canada. Its success sparked growing demand, leading us to host the Summit twice a year until its conclusion in 2001.

1980

Honorary Associates Award

With our mission of building a stronger future for all Canadians in mind, we launched the Honorary Associates Award in 1980. This award recognized individuals who served both their organization and their country with distinction during their working career and made exceptional contributions to business or national economic development. Early awardees included prominent academics, industry leaders, and policy advocates who played a pivotal role in shaping Canada's workforce readiness strategies. The final award was presented to Jacques Ménard, President Emeritus of BMO Financial Group, in 2015.

1990s

Thought leadership in total quality management

Throughout the 1990s, we led study tours across Japan, Europe, and the United States examining total quality management (TQM), customer satisfaction, and organizational effectiveness. We collaborated with major companies like Toyota, Starbucks, Campbell Soup, Federal Express, and Johnsonville Sausages to explore innovative practices. In partnership with Industry, Science and Technology Canada, we published *Total Quality Management: A Competitive Imperative*, which analyzed leading Canadian TQM practices.

Our early work in TQM catalyzed groundbreaking research in Canadian healthcare during the 1990s. In a forward-thinking shift, we expanded the focus from shareholders to patients and hospital operations, placing quality and satisfaction at the centre of healthcare delivery. We led national efforts in patient satisfaction research, adapting validated survey tools, publishing best-practice frameworks, and conducting large-scale hospital studies. Key outputs included "Customer Satisfaction through Quality" (*Canadian Business Review*, 1991) and the *Measuring Up: Patient Satisfaction Survey* (1995).

1991

National Awards for Excellence in Business-Education Partnerships

Alongside the launch of our National Business and Education Centre, we launched the National Awards for Excellence in Business-Education Partnerships in 1991, which recognized success in alliances between business and education. Early winners included the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) for its Pulp & Paper Technology Summer Institute.



2000

National Awards in Governance

In 2000, in partnership with Spencer Stuart, we launched the National Awards in Governance, recognizing governance excellence across Canada's private, public, and non-profit sectors. Honorees included the Bank of Montreal (2001), Mountain Equipment Co-op (2008), and Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority (2009). Insights from submissions fuelled our thought leadership through publications like *The Governance Ideabook* (2002), which featured real-world case studies and innovations. Through these contributions, we positioned ourselves as both a curator and convener of governance best practices, setting benchmarks and filling a recognition gap in Canada. While the program concluded in the late 2000s, its legacy, grounded in transparency, accountability, and innovation, continues to shape governance programming and advisory services.

2010s

2002–2003

TD Forum on Canada's Standard of Living

To address Canada's long-term prosperity, we partnered with TD Bank Financial to host the TD Forum on Canada's Standard of Living in 2002–03. This initiative set national goals to surpass U.S. living standards within 15 years.

2003

Leaders' Dialogue on Leadership

We launched the Leaders on Leadership initiative to tackle emerging leadership challenges. The Leaders' Dialogue on Leadership event brought together 40 delegates from diverse sectors including government, business, NGOs, and under-represented groups to assess Canada's leadership capacity and explore strategies for future development. Insights from this event were captured in the briefing *Leaders on Leadership*.

2006–2008

Study tours to New Orleans, New York and the Pentagon

In 2006, our Council on Emergency Management organized a study tour to New Orleans to explore how organizations navigate unplanned change. Following 9/11, our team conducted a study tour in New York City with a visit to the Pentagon to examine corporate security practices and crisis response.

2009

Launch of Pandemic Response Working Group

The 2009 H1N1 outbreak underscored the urgent need for a dedicated emergency response forum. In response, we launched the Pandemic Response Working Group, an initiative designed to bring together stakeholders to strengthen emergency preparedness and business continuity planning. The group produced key publications such as *H1N1 Influenza: Preparing Your Organization for a Pandemic*, offering practical guidance to prepare for a pandemic.

2010s

Study tours to Boston, New York, and Israel

We continued to lead study tours that reflected our growing reputation for thought leadership, strategic insight, and influence during pivotal national and global events.

In 2014, we led a study tour to New York City focused on lessons from Hurricane Sandy. Our follow-up report, *A Hurricane of Innovation*, examined how the disaster gave rise to creative approaches to community recovery, infrastructure resilience, and survivor support. While we acknowledged the progress made since Hurricane Katrina, we also highlighted continuing governance and coordination challenges, reinforcing our leadership role in shaping the discourse on disaster preparedness and innovation.

Following the stop in New York, we visited Boston to engage with first responders, government officials, and business leaders involved in the response to the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing. Our report, *The Response That Was #BostonStrong*, highlighted the key factors behind the success of the emergency response, identified areas for improvement, and analyzed the novel role of social media in facilitating real-time communication and coordination among emergency managers, law enforcement, and health systems.

We broadened our lens to focus on innovation with our study tour to Israel in 2018. Led by our Innovation and Technology team, the study tour offered lessons from one of the world's leading innovation hubs, providing Canadian business leaders and policy-makers with actionable insights to strengthen their own innovation ecosystems, which were captured in our publication *Lessons Learned From a World Innovation Leader*.

2013

Innovation Summit

We hosted our first Innovation Summit in 2013, titled Innovation for the Corporation, which brought together leaders to discuss the commercialization of research, government policies, and fostering an entrepreneurial culture.

2014

Better Workplace Conference

We launched our Better Workplace Conference in 2014, building on the legacy of the independently run Health Work & Wellness Conference (1997–2013). Since then, it has become a cornerstone of our annual programming, dedicated to advancing organizational culture and employee wellbeing. The forum brings together thought leaders and professionals to share evidence-based strategies for addressing Canada's most pressing workplace challenges.

2015

Canadian Immigration Summit

The inaugural Canadian Immigration Summit took place in 2015, bringing together leaders from government, business, non-profit organizations, and academia to discuss and develop strategies for enhancing Canada's immigration system. By 2018, the summit had become a major policy forum, drawing over 400 participants and featuring a keynote address from the federal Minister of Immigration.



2017

Our Land, Our Future Indigenous Summit

This was the first national summit dedicated to placing the needs, perspectives, and aspirations of Indigenous youth at the centre of conversations on Canada's natural resource development. A report titled *Our Land, Our Future* was published in 2018 outlining plenary sessions, breakout findings, and recommendations for industry, governments, academic institutions, Indigenous communities, and youth.

2018

High point in convening efforts

We reached a high point in our convening efforts in 2018, hosting over 40 in-person events and workshops and facilitating dialogue on a range of issues including immigration, workplace wellness, and strategic foresight. These gatherings created meaningful opportunities for collaboration across sectors and regions.

2019

Study tour to Houston post-Hurricane Harvey

Following the devastating impacts of Hurricane Harvey, we visited Houston, Texas, to analyze the emergency management cycle through preparation, response, recovery, and mitigation. Our report, *Lessons From Hurricane Harvey: Shoring Up the Emergency Management Cycle*, offered practical guidance for improving system efficiency and reducing the long-term economic and social costs of disasters.



2020s

2020

Over 100 webinars hosted

During the depths of the COVID-19 pandemic, we adapted our event strategy to meet new needs for virtual events. In 2020, we delivered over 100 webinars and virtual events. These digital sessions, along with virtual council meetings, allowed us to maintain continuity, foster connections, and provide professional learning opportunities for our community during a time of widespread isolation.

2020

Launch of podcasts

In 2020, we also expanded into audio storytelling, launching four original podcast series. These series were designed to offer valuable insights and keep our audiences engaged during the pandemic: *Carrying On* (2020–22) offered pandemic-era insights, while *Bright Future* explores the social and organizational connections that strengthen Canada. *Leadership Perspectives* features our researchers and economists discussing their work, and the *Future Skills Podcast* addresses emerging challenges in the world of work.

In 2022, we expanded our *Leadership Perspectives* series with *Economics Matters*, focused on economic thought leadership. Collectively, these podcasts brought vital conversations to a broad and diverse national audience and allowed our audiences to access our insights in new ways. Over 150,000 listeners have tuned in to these podcast series.

2021

Virtual study tour to Nordic countries

The pandemic restrictions forced us to move our planned study tour of Nordic countries' world-class innovation ecosystems into a virtual environment. Our release, *Nordic Innovation Champions*, presented lessons for Canadian organizations to improve the country's innovation performance.



2024

Tenth annual Canadian Immigration Summit

The 10th annual Canadian Immigration Summit in 2024 marked a milestone in national dialogue on immigration and integration. The sold-out event featured The Honourable Marc Miller, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, and brought together more than 50 cross-sectoral speakers and hundreds of participants. The Summit focused on urgent issues facing the immigration system and settlement landscape across Canada.



Institutional growth and strategy

These milestones trace the evolution of Signal49 Research,
our structure, strategy, and digital transformation.
These achievements reflect how we've adapted to remain relevant,
resilient, and distinctly Canadian over time.

1950s–1990s

1954

Canadian office founded

The Conference Board, Inc. (then known as the National Industrial Conference Board U.S.) opened an office in Montréal, Canada. Monteath Douglas became the first director and built a small, focused team to research business trends and economic policy. This move reflected the need for more Canadian-specific research during a period of post-war economic growth and industrial change. While initially closely linked to our U.S. parent organization, our Canadian office quickly began developing its own identity by focusing on uniquely Canadian economic and social issues.

1959

International participation

By 1959 we'd established a name for ourselves among Canadian CEOs and were invited to participate in our first international CEO Summit outside North America. Leading CEOs from Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom convened in Torquay, England, to discuss shared challenges and opportunities in the global business environment.

1981

Incorporation as independent Canadian not-for-profit

A watershed moment occurred in 1981, when we became an independent organization, incorporated as AERIC Inc. (Applied Economic Research Institute of Canada). This shift granted us full autonomy over our governance, strategy, and research while maintaining brand continuity through a trademark licensing agreement with the U.S. based The Conference Board, Inc., which allowed AERIC Inc. to use the CONFERENCE BOARD trademark in Canada and to identify itself as The Conference Board of Canada.

1981

HQ relocated from Montréal to Ottawa

In parallel with our incorporation, we relocated our headquarters from Montréal to Ottawa, reinforcing our commitment to operating at the centre of Canada's federal policy landscape.

1992

Founding supporter of the National Quality Institute

Our work on total quality management led to us being a founding supporter of the National Quality Institute (NQI) established in 1992 to champion organizational excellence nationwide. For a time, NQI operated from our Ottawa office. It has since evolved into Excellence Canada, continuing the legacy of advancing performance and quality in Canadian organizations.

1994

Fortieth anniversary

In 1994, we celebrated our 40th anniversary, firmly establishing ourselves as a key player in Canadian policy and business dialogue. Acknowledged for our commitment to non-partisan, high-quality research, we had grown into one of the largest knowledge exchange platforms in Canada, engaging thousands through our conferences, councils, and publications.

1994

Acquisition of The Niagara Institute

In 1994, we acquired The Niagara Institute, which provided leadership training and coaching on communication, inclusion, sales, and business management. The Institute operated as a separate legal corporation with The Conference Board of Canada as its sole member.

1998

Launch of e-Library

We achieved a major digital milestone in 1998 with the launch of e-Library, an innovative platform offering downloadable access to our research through subscriptions or individual purchases. This tool expanded access to our insights and supported informed decision-making across sectors.

2000s

2003

Director's College launched with McMaster University

In 2003, we partnered with McMaster University to launch the Director's College, combining our research expertise with McMaster's academic leadership. The program offered formal governance education for board members and helped shape governance standards across Canada. Although we are no longer involved with the College, it continues to operate under McMaster's DeGroote School of Business in collaboration with its contributing partners.

2004

Golden anniversary

In 2004 we celebrated our 50th anniversary, a half-century milestone that prompted reflection on decades of Canadian influence and leadership. By this point, our work had spanned multiple sectors, and our membership network had grown into one of the country's largest platforms for knowledge exchange and policy insight.

2008–2016

National Capital Region's Top Employers

Reflecting our commitment to leading by example, we were recognized seven times between 2008 and 2016 as one of the National Capital Region's Top Employers.

2009

Solidifying our custom research practice

The 2008 global financial crisis sparked demand for tailored analysis covering sector-specific impacts. In response, we built new relationships and delivered targeted insights that raised awareness of our advanced economic modelling capabilities.

2010s

2014

Establishment of Institut du Québec

In 2014, we partnered with HEC Montréal to establish the Institut du Québec (IdQ), with a mission to enhance public policy in Quebec through evidence-based and accessible research. Focused on economic and demographic issues, IdQ quickly became an influential voice in Quebec's public discourse. By 2019, IdQ transitioned into an independent organization.

2014

Launch of Saskatchewan Institute

Also in 2014, we founded the Saskatchewan Institute, a regional initiative focused on delivering tailored research and fostering evidence-based policy development in Saskatchewan. It addressed key issues such as Indigenous and Northern economic development, innovation, labour markets, governance, and environmental stewardship. The Institute engaged a wide range of stakeholders including government, academia, Indigenous communities, and industry to support sustainable growth and informed decision-making in the province. The Institute remained active through the mid-to-late 2010s.

2018

Economic Impact Assessment model

We enhanced our research capabilities with the development of a proprietary Economic Impact Assessment (EIA) model, enabling us to conduct detailed analyses of impacts on GDP, employment, income, and government revenues. This tool greatly improved our ability to conduct in-depth economic impact studies at local, provincial, and national levels.

Internally, we also realigned our economics department to focus on our two primary lines of business: custom work and forecasting, where we publish about 250 forecasts annually.



2020s

2019

Strategic rebrand and new visual identity

In 2019, we underwent a strategic renewal, which included a rebrand to better reflect our commitment to Canadian priorities. The new visual identity, along with the tagline “Where insights meet impact,” clarified our distinct position as a Canadian research institution.

2019

Launch of Future Skills Centre

The rebrand coincided with the launch of the Future Skills Centre (FSC), a national initiative we co-led, and funded by the federal government. FSC has played a critical role in preparing Canadians for the future of work through research, innovation pilots, and cross-sector partnerships. As part of the launch, we led a cross-country initiative featuring 12 in-person events across nearly every province and territory. The tour engaged over 1,000 skills stakeholders on key issues, helping to shape FSC’s strategic priorities and raising national awareness of the consortium.

2020

Remote-first transition and sale of Ottawa HQ

As remote work became the norm during the COVID-19 pandemic, our organization embraced flexibility by transitioning to a remote-first organization. We made the decision to sell our Ottawa headquarters, further modernizing our operations to reflect the evolving world of work. We implemented policies to support adaptable work environments, ensuring staff could continue to thrive in this new landscape.

2021

Staff enrolled in CAAT Pension

In 2021, we marked an important milestone in institutional maturity as our staff joined the CAAT Pension Plan. This move not only provided long-term security and stability for our people but also demonstrated our commitment to investing in the wellbeing of our team as part of our broader organizational growth.

2022

IAP2 Research Project of the Year Award

In 2022, our releases, *Bridging Communities and Major Projects in Impact Assessments* and *Strong Engagement, Strong Outcomes*, were honoured nationally by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) and later earned us the IAP2 Research Project of the Year Award, which celebrates leadership in community engagement. The international jury praised our research for its clear methodology, impactful results, and practical framework, highlighting our commitment to equitable and participatory engagement.



2022–2023

Expanding our breadth of Human Capital research

Throughout 2022 and 2023, our Human Capital team led a range of custom research projects spanning diverse industries, including the public sector, technology, and environmental sectors.

Key projects included exploring the case for investing in mental health and substance use interventions, studying post-pandemic workplace models in the public sector, analyzing C-suite leadership changes in a major tech company, examining gender-based wage disparities in public sector organizations, and developing an employer toolkit for the environmental and engineering sectors focused on equity-deserving groups.

2023

inFact platform replaces e-Library

One of our largest accomplishments of 2023 was the introduction of inFact, an enhanced digital subscription platform that replaced our former e-Library. As part of a broader initiative to improve digital access, inFact was integrated into a redesigned research platform, new website, and expanded e-commerce system. This transformation changed how clients interact with our insights, providing a more seamless and user-friendly experience for accessing and engaging with our research.

Our inFact platform offers access to more than 10,000 research publications and forecast products.

2023

Future Skills Centre renewal

The Future Skills Centre continued to thrive, securing renewed federal funding after supporting 195 projects and providing training to over 25,000 Canadians. FSC cemented its value as a national skills development initiative, helping Canadians prepare for the future of work.

2024

Growth in custom economic research and continued influence

We continued to expand our custom research portfolio in 2024, delivering 75 economic research projects to a diverse client base, including governments (49 per cent), non-profits (31 per cent), and the private sector (14 per cent). Our custom research remains one of the country's most trusted sources of economic insight across sectors.

Additionally, we produced over 375 subscription research outputs, six op-eds, and 14 podcast episodes. We hosted 52 council and multi-funded centre meetings and eight in-person events, demonstrating our ongoing focus on evidence-based insights and broad engagement across all business channels.

2025

Acquisition of Vicinity Jobs

We expanded our capabilities by acquiring Vicinity Jobs, Canada's top provider of real-time national labour market data. This acquisition adds advanced labour market intelligence to our existing data and research portfolio. It strengthens our ability to shape workforce policy and solidifies our position as a national leader in labour market analysis and forecasting.

2026

We are now Signal49 Research

After decades operating as The Conference Board of Canada, we changed our name to Signal49 Research. Our new name reflects a guiding signal in times of uncertainty; a dependable beacon that leaders can rely on to navigate complexity. Inspired by Signal Hill in Newfoundland and Labrador, and with a nod to Canada and the 49th parallel, it embraces the spirit of innovation and anchors us in a distinctly Canadian point of view while reinforcing our purpose.

Leadership through the decades



Monteath Douglas
(1954–71)



Arthur Smith
(1971–76)



Robert de Cotret
(1976–78)



James Nininger
(1978–2001)



Anne Golden
(2001–12)



Daniel Muzyka
(2012–18)



Susan Black
(2018–present)

Our commitment

Our journey reflects a steadfast commitment to independent, rigorous research, and to building Canada's future. Our history as reflected in this document shows why we are a trusted leader in evidence-based guidance for Canadian policy and business operations. We've helped the nation through recessions, natural disasters, and pandemics with timely research and actionable insights.

Our influence spans economic policy, workforce development, innovation benchmarking, and social progress, providing trusted insight at critical moments in Canada's history.

With a clear vision for the future, we remain dedicated to empowering leaders with insights that drive positive, evidence-based action for all Canadians.

Over the next 50 years, the noise in our systems will grow—amplified by reactive decisions, environmental disruption, and shifting political and economic realities. These pressures will come from within and beyond our borders. Making decisions based on hard evidence has become the imperative of our times.

With approximately 100 economists and researchers, Signal49 Research provides Canadians with the accurate data and rigorous unbiased research they need to navigate complex issues across eight critical arenas—Economics, Education and Skills, Health, Human Resources, Indigenous and Northern Communities, Innovation and Technology, Immigration, and Sustainability. As Canada's leading applied research organization, we publish over 500 research outputs a year, helping to advance education on the critical issues facing our communities, our organizations, and our country. Our Executive Councils bring leaders together to share real-world insights and support evidence-based decision-making. All in service of a stronger, more prosperous Canada.

For more than 70 years, Signal49 Research is where Canada has turned for applied, independent research and meaningful connections. Leaders trust us because we stand apart: objective, credible, and connected.



Where knowledge
inspires action