



Canadian Chamber Unveils Top 10 Barriers to Competitiveness for 2015

Either we act urgently to improve our competitiveness or we will pay a high price in lost jobs and prosperity. Three years ago, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce launched its Top 10 Barriers to Competitiveness.

In collaboration with its network of chambers of commerce and boards of trade, the Canadian Chamber has been drawing attention to the barriers that are holding back Canada's progress and has been urging all levels of government to act more swiftly to improve our country's ability to compete globally.

Today, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce unveiled its Top 10 Barriers to Competitiveness for 2015. Some of the issues are new while others have been on the list since the beginning.

"Since launching this initiative, we have made great progress in furthering our competitiveness agenda on a number of issues. However, the barrier our members continue to identify as being the greatest impediment to the success of Canadian business is the skills gap," said Canadian Chamber President and CEO Perrin Beatty.

"There is a lot of work ahead. The federal government and several provincial and territorial governments have also named this issue as the country's biggest challenge. We need to work together and make real progress in 2015."

Addressing the Top 10 Barriers to Competitiveness will go a long way towards restoring Canada's competitiveness.

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2015 Top 10 Barriers to Competitiveness, continued

The Canadian Chamber is calling on its own membership, on governments, on educators, on labour organizations and others to tackle and overcome these barriers.

Effectively addressing these 10 barriers will sharpen Canada's competitive edge and allow us to prosper in the global economy. "Tolerating these barriers, or self-inflicted wounds as we call them, is not an option," concluded Beatty. "The challenge for 2015 is to build on this progress and start closing the gap between Canadian businesses and our international competitors."

Silos in skills development: Canada is not producing enough graduates with the skills needed for its economy. There are shortages and high demand forecast in a wide range of occupations. As a result of dramatic restrictions, the Temporary Foreign Worker Program no longer presents an effective path to meet short-term labour shortages. In the medium to long term, our education and training systems play a pivotal role in equipping us with people with the right skills.

With a demographic reality about to hit our labour market, we need stronger efforts to coordinate between the silos of education and employers. Improving the links between education and employment is not the responsibility of educators and governments alone. Employers are directly implicated. We need to break the silos.

Entrepreneurs lack capital for Canada's fastest growing companies: One of the most critical determinants of competitiveness is access to capital, especially for start-ups and companies moving from innovation to commercialization. These fast-growing companies often depend upon venture capital (VC) as the lifeblood needed to take a company from idea to market. Canada's VC industry is still small and punching below its weight, particularly when compared to much larger VC industries in the U.S.

During the course of 2014, the Canadian Chamber spoke with dozens of entrepreneurs leading fast-growing companies who say one of the biggest hurdles they face is securing capital to take their companies to the next level. In 2015, the Canadian Chamber will advocate a number of initiatives to boost incentives to expand the overall pool of capital and to attract more angel investors and international funds to Canada.

Lack of clarity regarding duty to consult with Aboriginal peoples: Canadian governments have a duty to consult and accommodate Aboriginal peoples when proposed developments have the potential to impact their constitutionally protected rights. However, governments are increasingly relying on project developers to assume responsibility for large parts of community consultation and accommodation. This has led to situations where proponents have no clear direction on the extent of the consultation and accommodation required.

This year, the Canadian Chamber will explore alternatives to the current scenario for resolution of the development consultation process, which currently seems headed towards lengthy court challenges to produce jurisprudence that guides proponents, opponents and governments.

Internal barriers to trade: The lack of a single domestic market in Canada is a serious and self-imposed weakness in the Canadian economy. Tariff barriers between provinces are banned by the Canadian constitution, yet the national economy is fractured by a host of non-tariff barriers, particularly in procurement, energy, agriculture and transportation, and in the mobility of labour. The federal government must promote more meaningful sanctions against jurisdictions that practice protectionism against other Canadians while supporting those that embrace free internal trade.

Canada's tax system is too costly and complex: Canada over-relies on income and profit taxes rather than on taxes on consumption, which are relatively easy to collect and are least harmful to growth. Canada's tax code is also overly complex and imposes significant compliance costs on businesses and consumers while governments spend billions of dollars each year administering and enforcing convoluted tax laws.

Canada must undertake a comprehensive review of its tax system with the aim of reducing its complexity and improving the way it raises tax revenue.

2015 Top 10 Barriers to Competitiveness, continued

Canada's export infrastructure is not meeting our needs: Public investment in infrastructure has not kept up with Canada's economic needs. Now Canada's investment needs far exceed the availability of public funds. Bringing infrastructure in Canada back to the level needed to support prosperity will require an ongoing commitment by all levels of government, an active engagement with private sector stakeholders and a greater appreciation of the opportunities that exist for Canada to be more competitive through more modern public infrastructure.

Canada is uncompetitive in the world's tourism sector: Canada has slid from the seventh largest tourist destination in the world to the 18th. Today, it is too often a high-cost, high-hassle destination with aging attractions infrastructure and inadequate marketing. Canada's travel and tourism sector is critical to its economy, and the government must both invest in national marketing initiatives and address Canada's inefficient visa system, the very high cost of air travel in Canada and its layers of regulations, fees and taxes.

Innovation rate is not sufficient to help manufacturing rebound: The best way for Canadian companies to compete and win in modern manufacturing is through a strong commitment to innovation. This appears to be a continuing challenge as Canada's innovation rank, a key component of competitiveness, is troublesome. Canada is ranked 22nd by the World Economic Forum. Canadian manufacturers will need to invest more aggressively in disruptive technologies. However, the innovation policy framework that exists in Canada is not sufficient to overcome a number of serious barriers for the manufacturing sector.

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce will explore recommendations to reconcile the disconnect between industry and institutions, find a mechanism to support the commercialization of new technology and look at options to support business in the adoption of new technology.

Territorial businesses don't have the tools they need: The federal government has a critical decision to make regarding Canada's territories if it is to fully leverage their economic potential. That decision is whether or not to provide territorial businesses with the tools necessary to increase their economic footprint. The result would be more financial independence for the territories and a more competitive Canada.

Canada is missing out on foreign trade opportunities: Canada's prosperity depends on access to international customers and participation in global supply chains. Faced with a small domestic market, exporting is often the only way to grow sales and build economies of scale. Moreover, sourcing from and investing abroad allows companies to exploit unique technologies, skill sets and cost advantages. However, Canadian businesses are not globalizing as quickly as their peers.

To support the expansion of Canadian companies abroad, the federal government needs to build on recent success and take steps to conclude the next wave of high-quality trade agreements and strengthen Canada's system of trade promotion and economic diplomacy.

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce is the vital connection between business and the federal government.

It helps shape public policy and decision-making to the benefit of businesses, communities and families across Canada with a network of over 450 chambers of commerce and boards of trade, representing 200,000 businesses of all sizes in all sectors of the economy and in all regions.

Consult [the Canadian Chamber's Top 10 Barriers to Competitiveness document](#).

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Winnipeg gets Canada's first LEED airport; YWG in gold elevation

Previously published in *Construction Canada*, February 17, 2015

Winnipeg James Armstrong Richardson International Airport has become the first Canadian airport to achieve certification under the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program. Photo © Laird Kay

Winnipeg Airports Authority and Stantec Architecture have worked together to create Canada's first Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)-rated airport.

The Winnipeg James Armstrong Richardson International Airport was recently certified LEED Silver under the Canada Green Building Council (CaGBC) program.

"The building meets the needs and expectations of 21st century air travellers, and based on the LEED energy model, it is estimated the building will achieve a total greenhouse gas reduction of more than 5000 tonnes per year," said Stanis Smith, Stantec's executive vice-president of buildings. "When compared to code, this is equivalent to taking 1000 cars off the road for one year."



Winnipeg James Armstrong Richardson International Airport has become the first Canadian airport to achieve certification under the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program. Photo © Laird Kay

The airport is one of 17 LEED-certified terminals in North America, and one of 24 worldwide.



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Japan's High-Wire Act

By Peter Hall, Vice-President and Chief Economist February 19, 2015



Thrill-seekers have had a seven-year heyday. The global economy's gyrations have provided ups and downs that have tested the strongest stomachs, and the ride is not over. Among the current exhibits are the fiscal high-wire acts that grew out of the crisis. The most popular have been the Southern European variety, with their penchant for teetering impossibly, before magically regaining their footing. Far less dramatic has been the act half a world away.

Japan's show has been primarily for a closed, domestic audience. This has given the appearance of a more staid, controlled situation. Is it, or have we ignored this particular act at the risk of miscalculating its consequent perils?

Europe's fiscal fiascos were highlighted by the 2008 economic and financial crisis. Maastricht rules were for the most part reining in even the region's worst fiscal sinners. But Japan's story began much earlier. Back in 1990, on the strength of a long post-war growth cycle, Japan's fiscal picture was exemplary. Its debt-to-GDP ratio was 69 per cent, close enough to Europe's guidelines for sustainability, and net government debt was about as close to zero as possible.

Others worried about Japan's ascendancy, and its rising global financial clout. The late 1980s saw Japan gobbling up prime assets across the planet, with no apparent end. It seemed Japan could do no wrong.

Recession jolted the good times. Japanese property – seen by most as a no-lose investment strategy – suddenly faced plunging prices. Lower demand shocked the globally-efficient multi-nationals and revealed a far-less-efficient layer of smaller businesses in the domestic and export supply space.

This mix of events sent the financial sector reeling into a series of largely unsuccessful stop-gap measures. Meanwhile, the economy had to absorb the effects of an ageing population, a phenomenon that few developed economies had yet encountered.

As a result, Japan ventured into the ultra-low interest rate world, and is still there. A second response was wave after wave of fiscal stimulus. A quarter century on, this strategy has taken Japan from a model of fiscal management to a global Achilles' heel. The national debt-to-GDP ratio has ballooned to 245 per cent, and rising. By contrast, Greece's debt, at 175 per cent, is now in retreat, thanks to strict austerity measures.

Japan's net financial liabilities used to take it off the hook. However, they too have soared, and now stand well above Greece's, at 140 per cent, and rising. Many will argue that although these ratios seem impossibly high, the debt is mostly domestically owned, and thus not vulnerable to jittery foreign financial markets, currency fluctuations and the like. Analysts will also point to Japan's foreign net creditor position as an important source of capital. These arguments are credible, but debt levels this high still have significant effects.

First, the sheer volume of the debt consumes a disproportionate amount of available savings. Put another way, the need to service public debts is crowding out funds that might otherwise be used for private investments. It also calls into question future availability of funds. Eventually, according to IMF estimates, Japan's debt will rise to the level of total available savings – suggesting a needed new foray into international markets. Second, the debt mountain creates a huge vulnerability to the prospect of higher future interest rates. Low borrowing costs have long been the norm, but recently the spread on Japan's 10-year bonds against 10-year bunds has closed – and it's not because bunds are falling. Something is happening at the long end of the market that could be suggesting a rising risk premium.

The scenario is precarious. Anything that interrupts current rhythm could distract the tightrope-walker, with serious consequences. So far, Japan has been able to skillfully manage its predicament, but it appears to be running out of time.

The bottom line? Revived global growth may be just in time to avert a high-wire accident. Growth helps – but is no substitute for the structural changes that have turned things around in Southern Europe. This is one we'll be keeping our eyes on.

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Afternoon: Hazard Assessment
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Morning: Fall Protection
Transportation of Dangerous Goods

Afternoon: Emergency Response
Fire Extinguisher

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11

Afternoon: Flagging

THURSDAY & FRIDAY, MARCH 12 - 13

Two-day: Traffic Control Coordinator

TO REGISTER, PLEASE CONTACT

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Training Schedule

Winnipeg

February

COR™ Leadership in Safety Excellence, **Brandon MB**
 COR™ Principles of Health & Safety Management, **Brandon MB**
 COR™ Auditor, **Brandon MB**
 Committee/Representative Training (1/2 day AM)
 COR™ Leadership in Safety Excellence
 COR™ Principles of Health & Safety Management
 COR™ Auditor
 COR™ Auditor Refresher 1/2 day AM
EXPO North, Thompson MB

March

Prime Contractor 1/2 day AM
 Safety Administrator 1/2 day PM
 WHMIS 1/2 day AM
 TDG 1/2 day PM
 Train the Trainer
EXPO South

April

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 Feb. 5 - 6 St. John Ambulance
 Feb. 6 MHCA Office
 Feb. 9 - 10 MHCA Office
 Feb. 11 MHCA Office
 Feb. 12 - 13 MHCA Office
 Feb. 17 MHCA Office
Feb. 24 - 26 Thompson

March 3 MHCA Office
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 March 4 MHCA Office
 March 4 MHCA Office
 March 4 MHCA Office
 March 5 - 6 MHCA Office
March 24 - 26 Victoria Inn Hotel & Convention Centre

April 9 - 10 MHCA Office
 April 27 - 28 MHCA Office
 April 29 MHCA Office
 April 30 - May 1 MHCA Office

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26	27	28	29	30	1	2
3	4	5 COR Leadership in Safety Excellence	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14 Training (taglines)	15	16
17	18 COR Leadership in Safety Excellence	19 COR Leadership in Safety Excellence	20 COR Auditor	21 COR Auditor	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	

For the full calendar of upcoming training schedules, visit www.mhca.mb.ca/worksafely

February 19, 2015 Manitoba Infrastructure & Transportation www.gov.mb.ca/tgs/contracts/tenders/index.html

C.O. X15336 - REHABILITATION OF EXISTING BRIDGE

Location: Over Crystal Creek on PTH 3A Tender Availability: Currently available
Tender Due: 12:00 Noon, February 20, 2015 Owner: Infrastructure and Transportation Phone: 204-781-2648
The work shall consist of the rehabilitation of the existing R.C. and T.T. Bridge over Crystal Creek on Provincial Trunk Highway 3A located in the NW 1/4 Sec. 13-02/12W, in the Municipality of Louise.

TENDER NO. 6530 - JACKING CONCRETE CULVERT

Location: PTH 24, Rapid City to PTH 10 and PTH 10, PTH 24 to Jct. PTH 16E Tender Availability: Currently available
Tender Due: 12:00 Noon, February 24, 2015 Owner: Infrastructure and Transportation Phone: 204-945-3637
The work involves supplying and installing precast concrete culverts by jacking at seven (7) locations and filling existing corrugated metal culverts at seven (7) locations, in the Municipalities of Oakview and Minto-Odanah. Major items of work include:

- 272.9 m of Jacking PC Concrete Cuylverts (Modified) (Various Diameters)

C.O. X31283 - CARP EXCLUSION STRUCTURE REPAIR

Location - Over Crooked Creek, Vicinity of St. Ambrose Tender Availability: Currently available
Tender Due: 12:00 Noon, February 25, 2015 Owner: Infrastructure and Transportation Phone: 204-391-3621
The work shall include providing winter road access across Clandeboye Bay including 2.6km over lakes and 0.8km over land to the Carp Exclusion Structure over Crooked Creek. It also includes the loading, hauling and placement of Clay, geotextile and Rip Rap to repair blown out sections of the dyke adjacent to the structure.

C.O. X33045 - SHORELINE RIP-RAP AND ACCESS ROAD GRADING

Location: Synder Dam Tender Availability: Currently available
Tender Due: 12:00 Noon, February 27, 2015 Owner: Infrastructure and Transportation Phone: 204-945-3773
The work shall consist of grading the site access road to Synder Dam and the placement of Rip-Rap in select locations along the shore of the Souris River.

TENDER NO. 6528 - APPLICATION OF PAVEMENT MARKING PAINT

Location: Various Locations, Province of Manitoba Tender Availability: Currently available
Tender Due: 12:00 Noon, February 24, 2015 Owner: Infrastructure and Transportation Phone: 204-945-3637
The work consists of applying pavement marking paint at various locations within the Province of Manitoba. Major items of work include:

- 2 300 line km of Roadway Lines - Painting Yellow
- 2 850 line km of Roadway Lines - Painting White

TENDER NO. 6529 - PAVEMENT CRACK REPAIRS

Location: PTH 10 (PTH 60 - 16th Street in The Pas), PTH 10 (Overflowing River - 10.0 km South of PTH 60)
Tender Availability: Currently available Tender Due: 12:00 Noon, February 19, 2015
Owner: Infrastructure and Transportation Phone: 204-945-3637
The work consists of crack routing and sealing asphalt pavement on Provincial Trunk Highway 10 from Provincial Trunk Highway 60 to 16th Street in The Pas and Provincial Trunk Highway 60 in the Municipality of Kelsey. Major items of work include:

- 140 000 m of Crack routing and Sealing

City of Winnipeg (As of February 19, 2015)

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TENDER NO. 130-2015 - SOUTH AREA - SOUTH, RESTORATION OF WINTER BOULEVARD CUTS

Tender Availability: Currently available Tender Due: 4:00 PM, February 25, 2015
Owner: City of Winnipeg Phone: 204-986-2491

TENDER NO. 113-2015 - EAST AREA - SOUTH, RESTORATION OF WINTER BOULEVARD CUTS

Tender Availability: Currently available Tender Due: 4:00 PM, February 26, 2015 Owner: City of Winnipeg

City of Winnipeg (As of February 19, 2015)

www.winnipeg.ca

TENDER NO. 128-2015 - SOUTH AREA - NORTH, RESTORATION OF WINTER BOULEVARD CUTS

Tender Availability: Currently available Tender Due: 4:00 PM, February 26, 2015
 Owner: City of Winnipeg Phone: 204-986-2491

TENDER NO. 114-2015 - EAST AREA - NORTH, RESTORATION OF WINTER BOULEVARD CUTS

Tender Availability: Currently available Tender Due: 4:00 PM, February 27, 2015
 Owner: City of Winnipeg Phone: 204-986-2491

TENDER NO. 121-2015 - 2015 LOCAL SIDEWALK RENEWALS AND ASSOCIATED WORKS

Tender Availability: Currently available Tender Due: 12:00 Noon, February 27, 2015
 Owner: City of Winnipeg Phone: 204-986-2491

TENDER NO. 126-2015 - NORTH AREA - SOUTH, RESTORATION OF WINTER BOULEVARD CUTS

Tender Availability: Currently available Tender Due: 4:00 PM, March 3, 2015
 Owner: City of Winnipeg Phone: 204-986-2491

TENDER NO. 117-2015 - NORTH AREA - NORTH, RESTORATION OF WINTER BOULEVARD CUTS

Tender Availability: Currently available Tender Due: 4:00 PM, March 4, 2015
 Owner: City of Winnipeg Phone: 204-986-2491

TENDER NO. 59-2015 - RENTAL OF ROAD AND CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT FOR 2015

Tender Availability: Currently available Tender Due: 4:00 PM, March 4, 2015
 Owner: City of Winnipeg Phone: 204-986-2491

TENDER NO. 117-2015 - NORTH AREA - NORTH, RESTORATION OF WINTER BOULEVARD CUTS

Tender Availability: Currently available Tender Due: 4:00 PM, March 4, 2015
 Owner: City of Winnipeg Phone: 204-986-2491



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Manitoba Infrastructure & Transportation www.gov.mb.ca/tgs/contracts/tenders/index.html
 (as of February 19, 2015)

TENDER NO. 6527 - SOUTH DIKE REHABILITATION, GARDENTON FLOODWAY, (PHASE 1)

Closing: February 12, 2015	Results:
Westech Contracting Inc.	\$264,900.00
(M) Tervita	\$429,312.60
(M) Accurate HD Ltd. (COR™)	\$451,425.00
(M) Dirt Pro Inc. (COR™)	\$578,237.89



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NEWS UPDATE: SEE WHAT'S COMING TO THOMPSON & WINNIPEG IN 2015