

PRESIDENTS' REPORT

Organizational Forces Shaping the Canadian Mid-Market Right Now

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Executive Summary



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In his quarterly letter, Stratford CEO Jim Roche noted that while artificial intelligence is rapidly reshaping how organizations operate, one thing has not changed in the mid-market: the importance of relationships.

Organizations that remain close to their customers and communicate clearly what differentiates them will continue to have an advantage that technology alone cannot replicate. Strong execution and strong relationships still go hand in hand.

This observation naturally raises another question. If trust, differentiation, and execution remain the foundation of mid-market success, what enables organizations to deliver on them in an environment where change is accelerating?

To explore that question, Stratford's business unit presidents offer three complementary perspectives.

- Colleen Kelley, President of Management Consulting
- Pierre Côté, President of People & Culture
- Jordan Pynn, President of Intellectual Property Strategy

Each brings a different lens to the same challenge: helping organizations strengthen the capabilities that allow them to adapt, compete, and grow.

Together, their perspectives highlight three organizational forces that are increasingly shaping how mid-market organizations position themselves for the years ahead.

→ [Watch interview snippets from these and other interviews on our YouTube channel](#)

Adapting the Organization to AI

Artificial intelligence is often introduced into organizations as a technology initiative, but its real impact appears somewhere else.

AI changes how work is performed across the business. Processes evolve, decision cycles accelerate, and new capabilities emerge. Organizations that approach AI primarily as a technical project often struggle to capture its broader potential. The technology may be deployed, yet the organization itself does not change.

A more effective approach is to view AI as an organizational capability. Leaders begin experimenting with the tools themselves, teams identify where workflows can be improved, and business processes evolve alongside the technology. Over time this learning compounds.

Organizations that start early develop a deeper understanding of where AI creates value and how it should be integrated into the business. For many mid-market organizations, the question becomes straightforward: Is AI being treated as a tool, or as a capability that will reshape how the organization operates?

PEOPLE & CULTURE

Leadership Systems That Support Execution

Growth strategies often assume organizations can execute at the pace required to achieve their objectives. In practice, execution frequently depends on how leadership teams operate together.

Many mid-market organizations are led by capable individuals with deep expertise in their respective areas. As companies grow and complexity increases, leadership systems must evolve as well. Decision rights, accountability structures, and collaboration across teams become increasingly important.

When these elements lack clarity, decisions move upward through the organization, and CEOs become the default point for issues that could otherwise be addressed across the leadership team. This dynamic slows execution and concentrates pressure at the top of the organization.

Addressing it often starts with looking closely at how leadership systems are designed. Do decision frameworks provide clarity about authority and accountability? Does the organization have the leadership depth required to support its strategic ambitions? These questions increasingly shape how organizations strengthen their ability to execute.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Intellectual Property as Enterprise Value

Innovation continues to be a major driver of value in the modern economy. Yet intellectual property often remains underdeveloped within mid-market organizations.

Patents may be filed when inventions appear, trademarks pursued when products launch, and trade secrets given limited attention. Approached in this way, intellectual property becomes reactive rather than strategic.

A stronger approach connects IP activity directly to business strategy. Innovation efforts are mapped to competitive positioning, protections are aligned with target markets, and teams understand how ideas should be documented and safeguarded.

This discipline becomes particularly important during periods of investment, fundraising, or acquisition, when intellectual property is subject to greater scrutiny. Organizations that manage their IP strategically tend to build stronger foundations for long-term enterprise value.

Strengthening the Organization Beneath Strategy

Taken together, these three perspectives share a common thread.

External changes in technology and markets create new opportunities and risks, but the organizations that respond most effectively tend to be those that strengthen the internal systems supporting their strategy. Leadership teams evolve how decisions are made, new technologies are integrated into how work gets done, and innovation is protected and developed intentionally.

When these elements align, strategy becomes easier to execute. When they do not, even strong strategies can struggle to deliver results.

Continuing the Conversation

The perspectives shared in this Presidents' Report reflect themes emerging across Stratford's three business areas.

In the months ahead, Stratford's consultants and advisors will explore these topics in greater depth, sharing practical insights on leadership capability, AI adoption, governance, and intellectual property strategy.

Together, these perspectives are intended to help mid-market leaders strengthen the organizational foundations required to adapt and compete in an environment of accelerating change.