



BRACE YOURSELVES: CHANGE IS COMING

Written by:

Andrei Florea, Marketing Associate and Editor-in-Chief

It is with great excitement that the NorthBridge team offers a warm welcome to Alby Algranti who has joined us as our new Vice President of Operations. We're looking forward to working with Alby, and to all of the positive changes that he will bring about. Alby was formerly President of Shirlon Plastics and has extensive experience in the manufacturing and plastics industry. With this background, Alby knows not only what to expect from the SR&ED program, but also what you, as a client, expect from us while we are working with you to put together your SR&ED claim.

Much like the transition of spring to summer, there are many changes which are quickly approaching for businesses across the country. How these businesses respond to the changing economic landscape as well as how they adapt to their competitors is critical.

However, planning for the future is not an easy task by any means. It can be difficult to know what the right move to make is or how your decision will affect you later on. Although nothing is ever a sure thing, it is important to mitigate risks by looking at all your available options and weighing what the advantages and disadvantages of each choice will be. This is especially true in a business environment where making a poor decision can set you back behind your competition.



Andrei Florea

Marketing Associate and Editor-in-Chief

Andrei is a Marketing Associate and Editor-in-Chief at NorthBridge Consultants. He has years of experience and keen insights into branding companies to stand out from the competition.

When facing decisions such as hiring new employees, purchasing new equipment or moving into new markets, it can feel a bit overwhelming. However, by having the proper information in place, those decisions don't feel quite as daunting. By having one less thing to worry about, you'll have more freedom to consider the things that matter most to your business such as achieving business goals, expanding to new markets or increasing productivity and profits.

In this issue, we will hear from our new VP at NorthBridge on how to best utilize funding programs that are available to small and medium sized enterprises to help achieve your business' goals. Also, we'll hear some words of wisdom on how to improve your company's innovation as well as some ways on how to offset a bit of the cost from hiring new workers.

On behalf of the NorthBridge team, we wish everyone a prosperous and productive summer!

FOUND MONEY: IT'S MORE THAN THE LOOSE CHANGE IN YOUR COUCH

Written by:

Alby Algranti, Vice President of NorthBridge Consultants

Challenges for manufacturers and businesses in Canada are unrelenting. Between higher operating costs relating to labour, significant property taxes, more stringent safety requirements, and higher freight costs coupled with the near parity of our currency with the US dollar, there are many obstacles which create an uneven cost structure for Canadian businesses compared to foreign competitors.

Innovation has been a long standing staple for Canadian businesses in order to facilitate differentiation over foreign competitors. Finding ways to offset some of the inherently higher costs associated with doing business in Canada can be critical for a company's growth and sustenance.

NorthBridge is continually seeking out beneficial programs that can help financially supplement various company initiatives. Typically, businesses apply for government funding based on actions they are already looking to undertake. This includes initiatives like hiring an export sales manager, expansion of a facility or exhibiting at a trade show.

Approval of specific funding opportunities for your company may be the support needed to make a strong move toward improving business performance. Our goal is to maximize the funding available to businesses, fueling additional growth and innovation. The potential to receive government funding for something you are already planning on doing makes a lot of sense, right? These are the types of actions that can provide the key separation between you and your competitors.



Alby Algranti

Vice President of NorthBridge Consultants

Alby is dedicated to supporting the advancement of Canadian companies by identifying and leveraging innovative research and technology based funding options.

Along with the Scientific Research & Experimental Development (SR&ED) program, there are various government initiatives available for funding across various regions and industries; these include business expansion, hiring, technological advancement, capital expenditures, development of export sales, marketing to increase exports, etc.

The challenge and the opportunity is that there are literally hundreds of accessible funding programs in various forms including, grants and tax credits that change on a frequent basis. Funding programs have specific application timelines and finite financial resources to allocate resulting in difficulties for funding identification and compliance.

Our experience has shown that the arduous and time-consuming application processes and lack of awareness about existing programs are the main reasons that companies hold off on participation in government funding programs.

With multiple NorthBridge managers having at least 10 years of extensive hands-on manufacturing experience through ownership, we understand the challenges as well as the opportunities businesses need to act upon for growth and improved financial performance.

With the success we have experienced, our team is ready to help find much more than loose change for you in your company's couch.



“ Whether you're a manufacturer of windows, a developer of digital software or even a producer of baked goods, there is room to advance your business using government funding to help finance such activities.



Niro Raganathan B.Sc.
Client Manager

Niro strives to provide companies with the knowledge and information about funding initiatives that suit their needs. Read Niro's take on industry and market news on the NorthBridge Government Funding Blog.

WHERE IS ALL THE INNOVATION IN CANADA?

Written by:

Niro Raganathan, Client Manager

In order to make the next leap forward in advancing your business, companies must make the decision towards investing in innovation and R&D. An article completed by Ottawa based think tank, The Conference Board, reported on the quality of life in Canada in comparison to other developed countries and graded Canada poorly in terms of innovation within the country.

With a grade of “D”, the article states that Canada ranks second last in the amount Canadian businesses spend on R&D and venture capital expenditures. However, the country does well in terms of the quality of scientific research and ranks 8th on a global stage in terms of the Canadian government's R&D spending on businesses in the form of tax credits, loans and grants. Yet R&D spending by Canadian businesses has dropped from 1.29% of GDP in 2001 to 0.89% of GDP in 2011.

The investment of staff, capital and time into R&D and innovation can be a deterrent for companies to undertake as it can disrupt the productivity of the business and become an overall cost burden without guaranteed success. Nevertheless, in order to remain competitive on a global stage, innovation and R&D by Canadian companies is a must and as such the Canadian government has invested in several government programs to encourage businesses to take on the R&D risks, while reducing their financial load.

With funding programs such as SR&ED, IRAP, SOFII, AgriInnovation and OIDMTC, the question remains: Why aren't more companies taking advantage of these programs to develop R&D and innovation within their business?

Whether you're a manufacturer of windows, a developer of digital software or even a producer of baked goods, there is room to advance your business using government funding to help finance such activities. Eligible innovation and R&D activities that are applicable for funding include:

- Adapting existing technologies;
- Developing new products in existing or new end markets;
- Extending machine capabilities beyond standard processing parameters;
- Improving product reliability;
- Modifying product design;
- Developing new technology;
- Improving processes in production and testing;
- Advancing unproven technologies.

Once you have identified an eligible R&D or innovation project, it's time to find out what government programs the project and business may qualify for. Government programs have various criterion on who may be eligible to apply and conditions range from size of the company, organizational structure, scope of the project and even the location of the facilities. Also, each initiative has different eligible costs, deadlines to apply and when costs can be incurred.

It is therefore critical to fully understand your project and the program criteria prior to applying. NorthBridge Consultants can help alleviate your time and resources required to identify and complete government funding applications and ensure you receive full value from government funding programs.



GOVERNMENT FUNDING TO HIRE RECENT GRADUATES

Written by:

Melanie McConnell, Client Manager



Melanie McConnell B.Comm

Client Manager

Melanie leverages over 5 years of customer service experience to build strong relationships with clients. She specializes in workforce development programs and strives to ensure her clients receive the funding entitled to them.

Step outside and you might find that the daisies and lilies are blooming, the sun is shining brightly in the sky, and the smell of fresh-cut grass is in the air, these are all signs that summer has finally arrived. Alongside summer's return come thousands of university and college students who have just graduated and are looking for work.

These fresh out of school graduates are eager and looking for work experience in their respective fields. For employers, recent graduates bring fresh ideas, willingness to learn, and are ready to work hard in order to prove themselves. However, hiring new employees can be costly for businesses due to tight hiring budgets. Luckily, the government offers a variety of funding programs that can help offset some of the wage costs involved during the hiring process.

There are 3 main government funding programs available to assist companies in hiring recent graduates which are:

The Graduate Enterprise Internship (GEI) formerly known as iSTEM, is a 6 month internship program for students in Science, Technology, Engineering or Mathematics (STEM) programs. This program is offered by FedDev Ontario and assists students in gaining work experience in their respective fields. Eligible companies could receive up to \$10,000 for the hiring of an undergraduate or college student, and up to \$15,000 for the hiring of a graduate student.

The NRC Industrial Research Assistance Program (IRAP) offers a program to small to medium sized companies (SMEs) in Canada called the Youth Employment Program. Companies working on research, development and commercialization of technologies can hire a recent graduate to assist with these projects. The graduates must be from a post-secondary institution and be in the field of Science, Engineering, Technology, Business or Liberal Arts. Internships must be between 6-12 months in length and the program will cost-share a portion of the salary costs of a post-secondary graduate.

The Mitacs Enterprise is a 6 month internship for graduates of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics disciplines. Mitacs will facilitate the matching of qualifying participants (interns) with SMEs operating in Southern Ontario. Eligible companies could receive up to \$10,000 for the hiring of an eligible Bachelor and college graduate and up to \$15,000 for the hiring of a Master's and Doctoral graduate.

Through these non-repayable hiring grants your business can get the extra help it needs at the price it can afford.