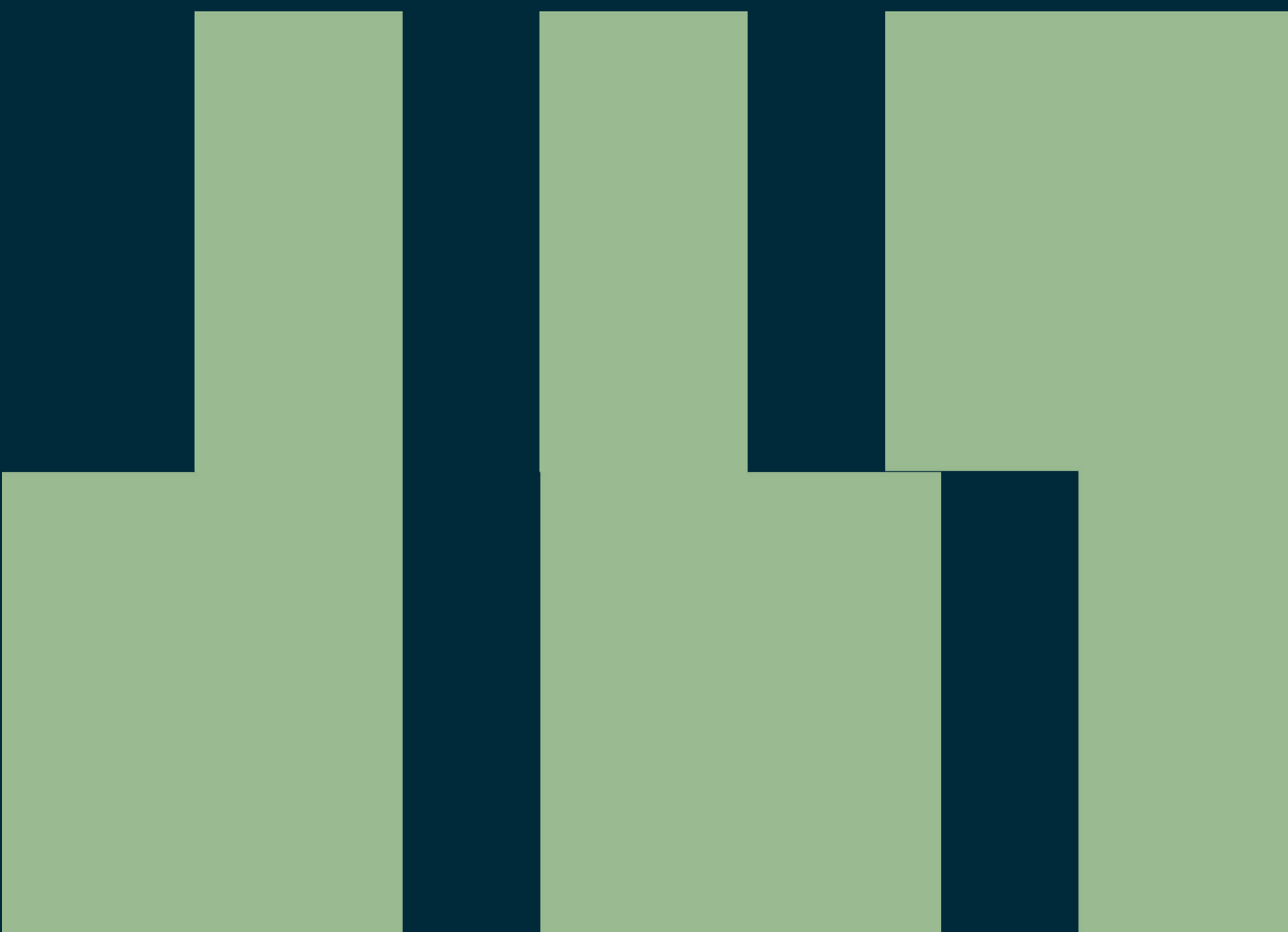


SBBC 



Build.
Grow.
Thrive.



We are excited to have you here today at the Roundhouse Community Centre for a packed day of engaging discussions, inspiring speakers, and networking with a community of like-minded entrepreneurs.

Small Business BC is proud to deliver this free day of education with support from our partners, BCAA Small Business Insurance.

Our agenda focuses on the challenges that you, our small business community, face when starting or growing a business. We'll be covering topics as diverse as small business strategy and planning, leveraging marketing trends to help you grow, expansion via export, and strengthening your digital presence.

Event overview

A vertical timeline on a dark blue background. A central orange vertical line has small orange circles at each event point. To the left of the line are the times, and to the right are the event titles.

8:30 AM	Registration and Networking
9:15 AM	Opening Remarks
9:30 AM	Innovation in Life and Business
10:45 AM	Market Research Trends
12:00 PM	Interview with Josh Nilson
1:00 PM	Lunch and Networking
2:00 PM	Driving Digital Success
3:00 PM	Growing Your Market
4:00 PM	Closing Remarks

About

About Small Business BC

Small Business BC is an independent nonprofit resource centre that provides holistic support to small businesses throughout their entire journey. We exist so every BC business has someone in their corner - whether you need practical advice or a source of inspiration. Our goal is to elevate every BC business to achieve their end goals - whatever they may be.



About BCAA Small Business Insurance

BCAA Small Business Insurance provides customizable coverage options so you only pay for what you need. Feel confident that you're protected while your business continues to grow. Plus, we've made it easy to quote, purchase and make a claim online with support along the way if you need it.



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Event Program

8:30 AM

Registration and Networking

9:15 AM

Opening Remarks

Tom Conway, CEO at SBBC

Melanie Zikatano, Acting Senior Associate
Manager at BCAA

9:30 AM

Innovation in Life and Business

Join Nathan LaFayette, a previous NHL player, business owner and now Chief Insurance Officer at BCAA, in a discussion about how innovation has played a role in his life and what lessons he has learned. With innovation and change often comes risk which is where small business insurance can provide you the protection you need so you can continue to grow your business. You'll receive an introduction to what small business insurance is and why it is an important part of your business development.

Nathan LaFayette, Senior VP & Chief Insurance
Officer at BCAA

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10:45 AM

Market Research Trends

Wondering how to take the guesswork out of your business decisions? Market research offers all the data you need to succeed - you just need to know where to look.

Presented by SBBC's Market Research Analyst, Mark Eversfield, this session will teach you how to use tools like Google and ChatGPT for market research. You'll discover how data can help you understand the opportunities and threats in your industry, alongside key tips for making sense of the data.

**Mark Eversfield,
Market Research Analyst at SBBC**

12:00 PM

Interview with Josh Nilson

Josh Nilson is a Métis from Willow River, BC. He is the founder of Maskwa Investments which focuses on early-stage seed funding and advisement with a focus on Indigenous tech businesses. Prior to that, he was a founder at East Side Games (ESG), making mobile games like Trailer Park Boys, The Office, Ru Paul Drag Race Superstar and more. Josh has been working in tech since 2002 and was recognized as one of the most influential business leaders in the province as part of the BC500 in 2021, 2022, and 2023. Josh was named Person of the Year 2022 at the BC Tech Technology Impact Awards. He currently works in the technology and interactive media spaces and will always stop for pugs.

Presenter: Josh Nilson, Founder of Maskwa Investments

Interviewer: Natiea Vinson, CEO of the First Nations Technology Council

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1:00 PM

Lunch and Networking

2:00 PM

Driving Digital Success: Strategies for Small Business to Succeed Online

As the world shifts towards digitalization, it's no longer a matter of "if" but "how well." In this session, delivered by Digital Main Street, we'll explore essential digital strategies for attracting more customers and driving growth in 2024. You will gain insights into key themes and trends crucial for your online presence to help you not only attract but keep more customers through building an authentic community, enabling personalization, staying at the forefront of innovation and more.

Darryl Julott,
Managing Lead for Digital Main Street

3:00 PM

Growing Your Market

If you want to grow your business, exporting provides a proven pathway for success. Take the mystery out of the process and join us as two Export Advisors walk you through the basics.

You'll learn about the free Export Navigator program, the benefits you'll enjoy from exporting, and some key supports you can lean on to get started.

Peter Wright and Denan Kuni,
Regional Export Advisors at Export Navigator

4:00 PM

Closing Remarks

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Speakers

Thank you to all of our speakers for their time and expertise that make **Build. Grow. Thrive.** possible.



Tom Conway | Chief Executive Officer, SBBC

As an experienced business owner himself, Tom understands how having access to education, support and resources can make all the difference when starting and growing a company.

Tom brings with him more than 25 years of senior leadership experience including advocacy, fundraising and governance. He ventured into small business when he started a partnership with his husband and launched a food service company in Chicago, Illinois. Later they moved to California where Tom became the president and CEO of Easter Seals Central California. He then served as the Pacific U.S. Regional Director of YPO, part of a global network of over 25,000 CEOs where he managed two Boards, 60+ local chapters and a global management team. After moving to Vancouver in 2016, Conway served as the Executive Director for the British Columbia Schizophrenia Society before joining SBBC.

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Nathan LaFayette | Senior Vice President & Chief Insurance Officer, BCAA

Improving customer outcomes is the starting point for Nathan's insurance decisions. Critically important in an industry navigating climate change, taking on risk in a region with large earthquake exposure, and migrating to the digital channels customers prefer.

Nathan pursued a professional hockey career in the 90's while attending university and being a founding partner in a sports injury health clinic. He then turned his attention to the insurance industry as a founding partner in a startup Travel Insurance managing general underwriter later acquired by AIG. Nathan progressed to Senior Vice President, worked in Toronto and New York, and held leadership roles in accident & health, travel, and personal property over a fifteen year tenure at AIG. Nathan then joined Willis Towers Watson where he helped shape a single, national personal lines and small commercial insurance business integrated into the broad organization's value proposition.

An advocate of diversity, equity, and inclusion with a passion for Purpose, Nathan is a comfortable communicator who believes financial sustainability is only valuable if companies can invest back into the communities in which they do business. A former NHL player and past guest on Hockey Night in Canada, Nathan frequently speaks out about diversity in sport

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Mark Eversfield | Market Research Analyst, SBBC

Mark is the Market Research Analyst at Small Business BC. He teaches both primary and secondary market research techniques, guest lectures on market research, and provides market research coaching for small businesses. He has also authored economic impact studies on the technology and agrifood industries for communities in BC and managed data sets for an economic development project called BizMap. After graduating from the University of Victoria with a degree in Economics and Psychology, Mark gained his experience in market research through companies such as MarCon Research, BC Stats, Western Diversification Canada, and Small Business BC.



Josh Nilson Founder, Maskwa Investments

Josh Nilson is a Métis from Willow River, BC. He is the founder of Maskwa Investments which focuses on early-stage seed funding and advisement with a focus on Indigenous tech businesses. Prior to that, he was a founder at East Side Games (ESG), making mobile games like Trailer Park Boys, The Office, Ru Paul Drag Race Superstar and more. Josh has been working in tech since 2002 and was recognized as one of the most influential business leaders in the province as part of the BC500 in 2021, 2022, and 2023. Josh was named Person of the Year 2022 at the BC Tech Technology Impact Awards. He currently works in the technology and interactive media spaces and will always stop for pugs.

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Natiea Vinson

CEO, First Nations Technology Council

For over a decade, Natiea Vinson has worked across academia, social enterprise organizations and the public and private sectors to advocate for institutional innovation, reconciliation and Indigenous renewal. Currently, Natiea Vinson is the CEO of the First Nations Technology Council where she leads a team of 30 to advance digital equity and digital transformation to all 204 First Nations across the province. A member of the Tk'emlúps te Secwepemc, Natiea is grateful to live on the traditional and unceded territory of Xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam), Swxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səlilwəta (Tsleil Waututh) Nations, also known as Vancouver, BC.



Darryl Julott | Managing Lead, Digital Main Street

Darryl Julott is the Managing Lead for Digital Main Street, bringing a wealth of expertise in fostering Public-Private partnerships and driving initiatives that enhance small business growth through technology adoption, and digital transformation. Under his leadership, the Digital Main Street program has empowered over 100,000 businesses to date, facilitating their digital transformation journeys. A veteran entrepreneur and retail innovation expert, Darryl combines his extensive experience with a passion for innovation, positioning himself as a thought leader in the intersection of retail, technology, and digital transformation. In his spare time, Darryl enjoys coaching youth sports and volunteering with youth mentorship organizations, as well as other charities.

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Peter Wright | Export Advisor, Export Navigator

Born and raised in Vancouver, Peter has extensive experience working with businesses in B.C. His hands-on approach to export advising ensures the client's needs are paramount. Peter has worked in diverse fields, including policy analysis, business development, investment attraction, grant writing, and consulting, so he is well-positioned to assist businesses with their growth plans. Having also worked in government at the federal, provincial, and municipal levels, Peter has extensive connections with officials domestically and internationally. He enjoys collaborating with businesses of all sizes and encourages companies to reach out so he can help them thrive. .



Denan Kuni | Export Advisor, Export Navigator

With over 25 years of experience in various fields of international economic development, Denan is a passionate and versatile leader who strives to create positive social and economic impact through his work. Denan's core competencies include global business development, program and project management, government and industry relations, indigenous and community relations, and global operations management.

He provides high-quality and innovative advisory services, leveraging his extensive international network and deep knowledge of best practices and trends to help Indigenous businesses access new markets and opportunities.

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