

## Creativity as a Catalyst for Talent Retention and Economic Growth

By Kelly Hennessey, ABC

Start with a global economy changing from 'goods' to 'knowledge' with highly mobile jobs. Factor in more baby boomers retiring than younger workers arriving to fill their places. Add a next generation mind-set of 'live first, work second' and you have a perfect storm brewing in the talent market worldwide, despite the recession.

Place the labour market shortage within the context of a region already challenged by balancing its history with the need for cost-effective and profitable development and it begs the question: How will Greater Halifax become the region of choice for talent – from here and around the world?

In part, by embracing creativity.

Today the Greater Halifax Partnership is hosting its second Building Our Future event this year called The Art of City Making.

"We've invited author and international city visioning authority Charles Landry," says Stephen Dempsey, President and CEO of the Greater Halifax Partnership. "We're continuing the creative process we began in 2004 when we invited author Richard Florida to town and Rebecca Ryan in 2006 and again in 2007." Dr. Florida's extensive research showed that cities that attract, embrace and encourage creativity are also centers of economic prosperity. Ms.

Ryan's work revealed that Greater Halifax had strong assets upon which to build a region destined for the young and talented.

Charles Landry is regarded as an international authority on city futures and city visioning. Working closely with decision makers and local leaders and acting as a critical friend, Mr. Landry inspires, facilitates and stimulates new thinking so leaders can transform their region for the better.

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**"I believe in our region's ability to link all the parts for a greater whole – creatively and practically."**

*Stephen Dempsey  
President and CEO  
Greater Halifax Partnership*

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"From what I gather, Greater Halifax is a charming region with lots of possibilities," says Mr. Landry. "My work is always focused on what is distinctive, unique and special about a place, and helping leaders within cities transform their thinking so they can plan and act with originality and re-imagine the possibilities. I am really looking forward to working with HRM to help them see what could be new and fresh and balance that with what is valued from the past."

Mr. Landry focuses especially on how the culture of a place can invigorate and enhance its sense of self and confidence as well as grow the economy. His strength lies in helping find original solutions to seemingly intractable urban dilemmas such as marrying innovation and tradition, balancing wealth creation and social cohesiveness, or local distinctiveness and a global orientation.

"HRM's Cultural Plan as approved by Regional Council states we need a strong vision for successful creative space development," says Andrew Whittemore, Manager Community Relations & Cultural Affairs. "We need it on a number of fronts – to revitalize our downtown core, to enhance our business environment so it is easier to grow and attract talent, and to keep and attract a well educated and motivated workforce. We're really looking forward to working with Mr. Landry."

Urban creativity and smart growth. Driving forces behind beautiful space blended with practical application that both attracts and keeps talent – in all its forms – to make Greater Halifax the region of choice for workers from here and around the world.

The Greater Halifax Partnership is the catalyst for economic growth and confidence in Greater Halifax, the economic hub of Atlantic Canada.

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