

GRIT

a NEXT Canada publication

BUILT WITH PURPOSE

How 10 NEXT alumni are changing the world, for better

FT. NEXT

10

VENTURES:

Hatchways

Making Career Dreams Come True with Shums Kassam and Jaclyn Ling ▶

Flashfood

Eliminating Food Waste

Crescendo

Making Tech More Inclusive

& more



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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

▶ A few months ago, we sat down to plan our theme for the second edition of GRIT. We were just coming out of interviews for this year's Next 36 and were surprised at how many of these young entrepreneurs were building ventures with social impact at their core. Where we'd seen explosions in app-based or AI enabled startups in previous years' applications, we were seeing a new trend - purpose was becoming part of the zeitgeist and driving a new wave of business ideas. It seemed that the world was primed and ready for more ventures "doing good", so we thought we'd dig into our NEXT do-gooders for May's theme. And then the world really changed.

As we, and everyone else, struggled to make sense of this new, virtual, and oftentimes scary world, we knew that our Canadian entrepreneurs would face a lot of adversity and some would need to batten down the hatches. And, what would happen to the ones who wanted to "do good"? Would that fall by the wayside? For some, yes, but for others, they continued to show great resilience and found creative solutions to help others even as their own ventures were being challenged. In total, more than **50 of our alumni fought back** with new products, resources, education and more.

After we at NEXT pivoted to deliver our programs remotely and took a quick breath, we went back to this notion of purpose and where it would fit into our new normal. Well, as evidenced by the last two months, it turns out that without purpose, there's no passion and without passion there are no entrepreneurs. Plus, the world is going to need more good now than ever before - couldn't this present yet another wave of business opportunities for our creative entrepreneurs? Looking to our alumni and incoming NEXT Canada entrepreneurs, we are optimistic the answer is yes.

In the following pages, we talk to **ten of our alumni** who are redefining what it means to be a social impact venture and paving the way for more purpose-driven entrepreneurs. Alumni like Alyssa Atkins who is working to solve fertility barriers. Or Josh Domingues who is re-purposing food surplus and resulting waste from food retailers. Or Lindsay Lorusso who is turning textile waste into fashion for kids. And lest we forget who sparked all of this, we'll take a look at our **class of 2020** - not even a pandemic can stop their drive to build solutions to some pretty hefty global challenges. As a collective, these entrepreneurs are blowing up old myths about "do gooders" and solving societal and environmental challenges, without trading off profitability.

Coming full circle, a lot has changed in two months, but the drive to "do good" and live a life of purpose is alive and well. We still have a long road ahead as we fight to get small businesses and startups back on track, but this could be a good time to press the reset button. To think of new problems to solve and find new ways to create a positive impact for Canada. We hope that the following pages will provide a small dose of inspiration and will remind you of the talented individuals working so hard to make a meaningful impact on this world.



JENN PATTERSON

*Chief Marketing Officer,
NEXT Canada*

#NEXT10

BUILT WITH PURPOSE

► How 10 NEXT alumni are changing the world, for better

There's no better time than now to celebrate the good. Luckily for us, our NEXT alumni make that easy to do. Everyday, their ambitions, resilience and ingenuity power the solutions that make our world a better place to be a part of. Let's celebrate and learn from these 10 alum who are building solutions that are making a meaningful impact on this world, all while contributing to a better Canadian economy.

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HATCHWAYS:

MAKING CAREER DREAMS COME TRUE

*Jaclyn Ling and Shums Kassam (Next 36, 2014),
Co-founders of Hatchways*

Jaclyn and Shums came into Next 36 together in 2014, built Blynk Style, a “pocket stylist” tech startup together, sold to Kik in 2015 and now run **Hatchways** ... together. They’re a shining example of a yin and yang co-founder relationship, each bringing distinct yet complementary skills to their startups. Jaclyn always knew she wanted to be an entrepreneur - when she was 11, she ran her own hot chocolate stands, at 19 she started to generate ad revenues from her personal YouTube channel, then studied finance and entrepreneurship at McGill University. At the age of 22, she started her first tech startup. Now, she brings that entrepreneurial drive, along with strategic leadership, marketing, and business savvy skills to the Hatchways team. Shums developed his passion for writing code and creative problem solving while studying engineering at the University of Toronto, then decided to apply them to entrepreneurship. The pair met in our Next 36 program and have been building solutions together since. After graduating from Y-Combinator in 2019, they set up shop in Toronto and have set their sights on helping hundreds of Canadians pursue careers that may have been previously undreamable.



PROBLEM

Talent gaps in the tech ecosystem.

SOLUTION

Hatchways: Helping new grads, self-taught programmers, and career shifters get their first jobs in tech by evaluating their skills, providing tailored feedback, and setting up interviews with tech startups. In their digital program, aspiring tech talent learn job skills in a simulated startup environment, shaping them into the much needed and sought-after tech talent startups are hungry for.

IMPACT

100+ tech roles filled by “non-traditional” talent across Canada.



COVID SUPPORT

Hatchways found a way to pair talent with creative COVID-19 flattening solutions. [Learn more](#)

 *Learn more about how Jaclyn and team responded to new business challenges presented by COVID-19 on [LaunchPod](#).*

CLOSING CANADA'S TECH TALENT GAP AND HELPING CAREER SWITCHERS ALONG THE WAY

An interview with Hatchways Co-founders, Jaclyn Ling and Shums Kassam, as heard on [LaunchPod](#)

HATCHWAYS IS HELPING PROVIDE ACCESS TO PREVIOUSLY UNATTAINABLE TECH ROLES FOR SO MANY. WHY FOCUS ON THIS CAUSE?

Shums: Being at the intersection of doing what I love - building things - but also doing it for a purpose is beyond compelling to me. The resources out there for the kind of candidate we work with are historically low, so there was a business opportunity there, but also an opportunity to help people. Building Hatchways has been so rewarding. I feel extremely lucky to have found a career I love, working for a purpose I love.

Jaclyn: I strongly agree with Shums in that building your own venture allows you to do it while also focussing on the impact you're looking to have. We started Hatchways by coordinating a boot camp for aspiring tech talent in a matter of days. Neither of us had done this before... but we did it. Coming out of that, I really understood the problem. Half of our group of people were immigrants to Canada, so had no

networks and some weren't fluent in English. The other half of candidates were low-income, often living below the poverty line, and who were finding it hard to make ends meet. It was a very interesting experience where we really found a new understanding of the problem and passion for finding the solution.

Despite the high demand for talent, it's so challenging to get a job in software if you don't come from a traditional background and you aren't a "cookie-cutter" candidate on paper. After that bootcamp, I was sold on doing everything possible to build a solution to this problem.

WHAT ARE YOUR MOST MEMORABLE STORIES ABOUT HELPING PEOPLE PIVOT INTO TECH CAREERS?

Jaclyn: Some of my favorite stories are about helping new Canadians find amazing opportunities. We have a lot of immigrant candidates that come to Canada



or the US. Many arrive without a network in their desired field and while they have previous work experience, their credentials are not recognized by North American companies. However, these individuals are so hardworking and are truly talented developers.

We have immigrants arriving from Russia, Ethiopia, Ukraine and coming from completely different backgrounds like accounting or electrical engineering and then landing their first jobs here. We're able to really be part of that process and see them grow over the span of a year or two. It's crazy watching how far their career trajectory can go in the first few years after landing their initial role. In some cases, we've even seen 50% pay growth after just two years!

Shums: To add to that, my favourite stories are about the candidates that I didn't initially believe in, that end up surprising me by excelling. One specific candidate developed technical skills outside of Hatchways, couldn't get a tech job, ended up working at Tim Hortons for two years, then found Hatchways.

After going through our program and honing their skills in tech and beyond, they landed a tech role almost immediately after our program. We continue to watch their trajectory grow every year.

"My favourite stories are about the candidates that I didn't initially believe in, that end up surprising me by excelling."

HOW CAN EMPLOYERS START TO THINK DIFFERENTLY ABOUT TALENT - TO SEE POTENTIAL POTENTIAL WHERE THEY WOULDN'T HAVE LOOKED PREVIOUSLY?

Shums: Our biggest issue is that people want senior talent instead of technical talent. For example, a company I recently worked with hired their first two engineers who were both Hatchways graduates with no prior work experience. However, when we first met with the company, they were very clear that they only wanted senior talent. We coach employers on getting past certain biases by giving candidates a trial period and seeing how they perform on the job. Our advice is that they test the candidates in any way they can, preferably by making it practical so that they can then judge whether they excel or fall short. As someone who has hired talent, that approach has changed my opinion of many candidates. When we interview candidates or we go through any process, we never do a purely behavioral screen because there are massive shortcomings; you are actually vetting the candidate on something that people with disabilities will fail at.

You have to factor in that people have varied and subjective communication skills and some of these "skills" aren't necessarily a requirement of the tech roles they're after.

 **LISTEN TO THE FULL INTERVIEW ON LAUNCHPOD** ▶





DOUBLE TROUBLE

Twins Lindsay (left) and Alex (right) Lorusso tackle clothing waste with their kids clothing line, Nudnik

NUDNIK:

DESIGNING THE WASTE OUT OF FASHION

Lindsay Lorusso (Next Founders, 2018),
Co-founder and CEO of Nudnik

Lindsay is a self-proclaimed circular economy nerd. After spending 15+ years innovating in the waste management space at Wasteco, she launched her own business, **Nudnik**, with her twin sister Alex (also a waste management alum). She's passionate about combating the growing global waste problem and being a leading example as a circular business for the world and her little ones that will inhabit it's future. Today, this pair of 'waste-chasers' are on a mission to clean up one of the dirtiest industries: fashion. For 2020, the sisters have something "exciting" in store and we can't wait to find out what it is.

PROBLEM

Textile waste from fast fashion.

SOLUTION

Nudnik: Stylish and sustainable basics for kids made entirely from pre-consumer textile waste, diverting all of their (100% organic cotton) materials from landfill and ensuring every garment is 100% compostable.

IMPACT

Where it normally takes 2,700 litres of water to manufacture one t-shirt, Nudnik's process uses zero. Launching 5 new products for the sustainable family in 2020!

NUDNIK JUST LAUNCHED THEIR "DISRUPTOR" TEES

These sustainable, adorable children's t-shirts made entirely from off-cut scraps saved from landfill, are:



Zero waste



100% Compostable



Designed to protect the planet our little ones will inherit

HOW TWO SISTERS TURNED TEXTILE WASTE INTO A SUSTAINABLE AND PROFITABLE BUSINESS

By: Lindsay Lorusso, Co-founder and CEO of Nudnik, as heard on [LaunchPod](#)

Today, business needs to start from a place of sustainability. Consumer behaviour is starting to shift and brands are being forced to catch up. The benefit of being an early or idea stage startup is that it allows you to get ahead of the curve and integrate sustainability into your business model from day one so that you can maintain profitability AND make an impact. While scaling Nudnik, I have learned how to navigate the balance between sustainability and profitability. Here are some crucial steps in that journey that will help you to scale a sustainable venture and drive profit:

1. DEFINE YOUR PURPOSE

Pick something close to your heart and fight for it. There is no motivator more powerful than passion. For me, protecting the people on the planet and being able to be creative and create products or experiences that ultimately don't take away from the health of people or the planet is exciting. Raising young kids in today's world can be scary, with the ever-present threat of climate change and the future health of our planet and species at risk. So, what drives me every day to not just be paralyzed in fear ("eco-anxiety" is a real thing!) is to be able to work on something that is giving back positively as well. If you're driven by your purpose, chances are you'll be more motivated to successfully scale your impact.

2. FIND A BIG PROBLEM AND VALIDATE IT

When we started Nudnik, it was almost like a think tank - we identified textile waste as a solvable problem in the world of waste management and sought out the individuals on the front lines of the industry to validate and solve. We found that textile waste was very similar to plastic waste in that it must be carefully sorted to be recycled. Different textile fibers must be separated, just like how different colours and grades of plastic must be. When you're thinking from a macro-level, this becomes a huge challenge for recycling. There are so many different variations of fabric across the world; either you have a synthetic fabric or a natural fabric and those two separate fabrics need to be recycled differently.

When you combine them, it makes it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to recycle. While working in the waste management industry, I had clients that were generating textile waste here in Toronto, and it was all going to landfill because it wasn't able to be recycled.

"You can make a social impact venture profitable if you're intentional about your business model from the start."

So, Nudnik started off as this idea between my twin sister and I, to solve this problem: How can we take this textile waste that can't be recycled and turn it into something new? How can we give it a second life? From there, we worked with designers. We got their end-of-roll materials. We worked with print shops that would give us t-shirts or sweatshirts that they'd misprinted that would have become waste. We were buying 100 pound bales of gently used adult sized t-shirts and sweatshirts, laying out our little pattern pieces on them and then cutting and assembling them into new garments. This whole process was using different forms of textile waste and turning it into collections.

That initial experience showed us that people cared about what we were doing and wanted to support us by buying our products. Following this, we met Jeanne Beker and got into the Joe Fresh Center for Fashion Innovation, two experiences which propelled us forward... Our idea was timely and on the verge of being SUPER timely. That relevancy really propelled us to move forward with it.

We started to truly think about scale when I came into the Next

Founders program in the summer of 2018. There, I had access to a room full of founders who had already established businesses that were getting to or already at specific scale and scaling even further than that. Being able to learn from these founders had a great impact on

the way we pivoted our business model. Before this experience, we didn't yet have a sustainable business model in terms of really moving that business forward in a global way. Turns out, this problem that we found, textile waste, is not exclusive to Canada. We started to look at textile waste in larger forms than our current outputs to be able to put out a product that was globally scalable.

3. IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES THAT ALLOW YOU TO GROW

The first opportunity we identified was off-cut fabrics. Off-cut fabrics are essentially the remnants of when pattern pieces are cut from stacks of fabric during large scale production. There are always gaps in that fabric and that fabric always ends up either in landfill or burned. The fashion industry creates enough of this off-cut fabric annually to give every person on Earth 6 adult sized t-shirts every year! That is astronomical. Even if we get better with our post-consumer textile waste (by donating etc.) and minimize the pre-consumer end-of-roll textile waste, there's always going to be cutting waste because we're still cutting from rows of fabric and our pattern pieces are all different

shapes. There is always going to be an excess of off-cut fabric. For us, that was the opportunity we leveraged to really create a product line that we could scale and continue to scale.

The second opportunity we identified was partnering with factories overseas. I mean, they have the problem, right? They're either dealing with an environmental cost because they're burning it or they're dealing with a hefty disposal cost because it costs a lot to put fabric in the landfill. So we partner with factories now where we turn those off-cut fabrics into our Nudnik pieces. Here, we help to solve their waste problem while having social impact. It's a win-win for everybody.

You can make a social impact venture profitable if you're intentional about your business model from the start. Build motivation by identifying a purpose for your venture that hits close to home, find a solvable problem within that purpose and jump on any opportunities that allow you to scale.

Learn more from Lindsay and her mentor Jeanne Beker - Style Editor at The Shopping Channel, creative director, author and all around Canadian icon. They discuss how they've helped each other grow, building a sustainable startup and the future of sustainable fashion.



LISTEN TO THE FULL INTERVIEW ON LAUNCHPOD ▶



CRESCENDO:

MAKING TECH MORE INCLUSIVE

*Stefan Kollenberg, Sage Franch, Daniel D'Souza
(Next 36, 2018), Co-founders of Crescendo*

Prior to joining Next 36 in 2018, Sage was no stranger to the tech ecosystem. After studying Computer Science at Dalhousie University, she paved her way through Microsoft from Intern to Technical Evangelist while building her personal brand on The Trendy Techie blog. Being a female in STEM and often subject to the associated tropes and biases, her blog often recapped her experience with discrimination. Enter her passion for making tech more inclusive. After turning her passion into a business model, Sage, alongside her co-founders Daniel “Tuba” D’Souza (also a Next 36 alumni) and Stefan Kollenberg, had a whirlwind first year building their venture **Crescendo** - building it from idea to launch while cohabitating in two apartments in two cities, and living and breathing their company’s mission: to build technology that makes the world more empathetic.



PROBLEM

Discrimination and inclusivity in tech.

SOLUTION

Crescendo: Connects employees with digital resources inside of Slack, personalized to fit their learning needs and workplace context, helping employees understand, communicate with, and interact with people who are different from them.

IMPACT

1,000s of professionals across 15 countries using Crescendo to develop cultural competence.

! COVID SUPPORT

Crescendo has released a free guide to tackling diversity and inclusion in the context of COVID-19.

The guide includes learnings around: care-giving, xenophobia, and mental health. [Learn more](#)

TECH FOR ALL, ALL FOR TECH



NEXT Canada interviews Sage Franch on the mission behind Crescendo, the tech that powers her business and how she balances making a positive impact on society with profitability

WHY FOCUS YOUR BUSINESS AROUND THE LACK OF DIVERSITY IN TECH?

We founded Crescendo to tackle the issues of inequality and workplace discrimination. The professional world is more diverse than ever before, yet marginalized employees still face disproportionate barriers and unfairness that lead to fewer growth opportunities, lower income, and negative impacts on mental health. In recent years the tech industry has come under fire for its unfair treatment of women and people of colour, leading company leaders to recognize the importance of investing in Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) efforts. But while the intention was there, no affordable solution existed to help distributed and global teams implement successful D&I programs at scale.

We chose to focus on this problem because of our own experiences with workplace discrimination and inequality. We know what it's like to work in places where inequality reigns - we're building Crescendo for people like us, so it's really meaningful when we see it making a difference.

HOW DOES TECH ENABLE YOU TO SOLVE THIS CHALLENGE?

Professionals today are hyper-connected, using tools like Slack and Microsoft Teams to share

information round the clock. We saw an opportunity to embed Crescendo right into these tools, to make it easy for professionals to develop cultural competence while they work.

Crescendo sends personalized resources to professionals that help them understand different cultures, leading to more inclusive behaviour. By integrating with the technology that professionals are already using, Crescendo makes it easy for any company to initiate and measure cultural change at a global scale.

HOW DOES SOCIAL IMPACT COMPLEMENT CRESCENDO'S BUSINESS MODEL?

Social impact is at the core of our company's purpose, so it is tightly coupled with our measurements of success. We have built our product in such a way that more usage leads to both increased revenue and stronger social impact. A big component of our platform is microlearning, which helps employees develop skills that lead to tangible D&I outcomes for our clients. The more a user learns through Crescendo, the more likely they are to take inclusive actions at work. We track user engagement and measure the change in D&I metrics over time to see how users' learning journeys are changing the work environment for different groups of people.

ANY ADVICE FOR FOUNDERS LOOKING TO BUILD A VENTURE WITH SOCIAL IMPACT?

Startups have the benefit of flexibility and are usually early enough to be able to retrofit social impact into an existing company, even if social good is not at the core of their mission. To start, founders could think about which causes are important to their customers and see how they can integrate those into their products or services. To devise a meaningful social impact strategy that lasts, the impact metrics should be tied to the company's growth metrics such that the strength of the impact increases as the company becomes more successful.

WHAT'S ON THE HORIZON FOR CRESCENDO?

Founded in 2018, Crescendo now has customers across North America, with thousands of professionals around the world who are using Crescendo to develop their cultural competence. This year, we are introducing new offerings designed specifically for managers and senior leaders, as well as new integrations that make it easy for diversity and inclusion professionals to leverage Crescendo data in their existing systems. Crescendo is the all-in-one platform for maximizing team potential. In the long term, we aim to help every company in the world realize the benefits of a culturally competent workforce.

[LEARN MORE ABOUT CRESCENDO](#) ▶

FLASHFOOD: ELIMINATING FOOD WASTE, CREATING A BETTER WORLD FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

*Josh Domingues (Next Founders, 2018),
Founder and CEO of FlashFood*

After developing his rigour in competitive hockey as a kid and eventually as a CHL player, Josh went to Saint Mary's University and applied his rigour to business management. Josh and his co-founding team spent their careers in a variety of industries: management consulting, finance, and emerging technology. Then, they decided it was time to do something different - something that would create a better world for future generations. That's when they founded **Flashfood**. In recent years, Josh has spoken at RetailTO, pitched on Dragon's Den and been recognized by a variety of food publications such as The Shelby Report, Canadian Food Business and The Packer.

PROBLEM

Food surplus and resulting waste from food retailers.

SOLUTION

Flashfood: Partners with grocery chains to enable them to sell surplus food through the Flashfood app at significant discounts for its users while reducing store-level food waste.

IMPACT

Flashfood employs nearly 50 people and has big ambitions to become the best-in-class food waste reduction solution across the globe.



WHY TACKLE THE GLOBAL PROBLEM OF FOOD WASTE?

At Flashfood, we're working on reducing food waste while providing more affordable food to consumers who need it. The environmental impact of food waste is one of the leading causes of greenhouse gas emissions and is unsustainable for future generations. Additionally, we're seeing a huge number of loyal users who are saving so much money on their grocery bill through Flashfood and in many instances, that's transformational for these families - so, we're also providing a financial solution for individuals.

HOW ARE YOU PROVIDING AN INNOVATIVE SOLUTION TO FOOD SURPLUS AND WASTE?

We're working on everything that we can to put us at the forefront of grocery shopping innovation. One of the biggest innovations we'll enable in the coming years is curated dynamic pricing on items that will nearly guarantee a sale, while providing users with the most useful deals for them.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE IMPACT WITH PROFITABILITY?

The foundation of our business is to reduce food waste. Initially, I thought this would be the main driver for our users to use the app, but what we've seen is a huge number of families that have a hard time affording healthy food for their children. Our financial impact on these families means that their kids are now able to eat healthy food much more often. The trickle-down effects of children who have access to healthy food versus unhealthy packaged food is life-changing.



The environmental impact of food waste is one of the leading causes of greenhouse gas emissions and is unsustainable for future generations.

— Josh Domingues

We're really fortunate that our business model is one in which we're able to do good and drive revenue. In our value generation, we're allowing our users to save money, our grocer partners to reduce food waste and collectively reduce the environmental impact of food waste.

WHY SHOULD OTHER FOUNDERS THINK ABOUT CREATING A MEANINGFUL SOCIAL IMPACT?

Every decision we make, not only as startups, but as people, needs to be from a sustainable perspective. Life isn't possible if the world melts. So to me, there is no proxy for thinking any other way.

CONSIDERING THE CURRENT CLIMATE, WHERE IS YOUR VENTURE GROWTH-WISE TODAY?

Given the world changing recently with COVID-19, our business has certainly been affected. We've had to delay hiring plans, readjust our forecast for the year and be more cognizant of our costs. In lieu of these things in the short term, we're very well-positioned as a company because we're helping grocers reduce their food waste which is more valuable now more than ever before and also helping consumers save tons of money.

For us, COVID-19 will likely expedite our growth over the next 12 months and it's our responsibility to help as many people to save money on their grocery bill as we can. Our mission is more important now than ever before.

LEARN MORE ABOUT FLASHFOOD ▶

ACCESSNOW:

CREATING A MORE ACCESSIBLE WORLD, 26,229 LOCATIONS AND COUNTING

*Maayan Ziv (Next 36, 2016),
Founder and CEO of AccessNow*

Maayan is an entrepreneur driven by activism. From a young age, Maayan challenged norms and worked within her community to increase awareness of disability issues and improve accessibility. Living with Muscular Dystrophy, Maayan is a relentless advocate for creating a more accessible world. After earning a Bachelor's degree in Radio and Television Arts and a Master's degree in Digital Media at Ryerson University, she threw her passion into entrepreneurship and brought **AccessNow** into the Next 36 program. Since then, she has been a regular media commentator on topics such as disability and inclusion. In 2016, Maayan received the City of Toronto Access Award and the David C. Onley Leadership in Accessibility Award in recognition of her innovative solutions and commitment to improving the lives of people of all abilities. Maayan also sits on the boards of the Toronto Arts Council and the Centre for Independent Living in Toronto.

PROBLEM

Lack of accessibility across many retailers, restaurants and more.

SOLUTION

AccessNow: A crowdsourced app to map (and change) the accessibility status of locations worldwide.

IMPACT

Recently raised \$2.7 million from the federal government, totalling \$3 Million raised to date. 26,229 places pinned (and counting) across 34 countries.



WHAT WAS YOUR MOTIVATION FOR CREATING ACCESSNOW?

AccessNow began as an idea during the first week of my entrepreneurship master's at Ryerson University in 2014. The whole week we'd been talking about looking for solutions to problems in our lives, or our families. After wanting to go to this restaurant to celebrate with my friends, and not being able to find out if the place was actually accessible for me, the idea for AccessNow took over and my frustration turned into motivation. Inaccessibility was a problem I'd been facing my whole life and I was now in a program where I had the opportunity to spend a significant amount of time solving it.

HOW DOES ACCESSNOW IMPACT ITS USERS?

Our app allows users to find an accessible space, letting them do something with just a little bit more ease. It's really important to recognize that people who have accessibility needs are dealing with this constant baseline of anxiety just trying to navigate their daily lives. Their basic needs aren't being met and this greatly impacts their confidence. We help people get answers about which daily amenities they can access, which seems very simple, but it's not for these people. Something as simple as finding an accessible restaurant can be a very empowering moment for someone. We contribute to a sense of confidence - which we've heard from a lot of our users - and this confidence can be life changing.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE IMPACT WITH PROFITABILITY?

One of the biggest arguments that we've been making since the beginning is that baking accessibility, or social impact, into your business model is something that in today's world, opens up great opportunity. Frankly because it allows you to reach new audiences. At AccessNow, our sweet spot lies in creating a channel for accessible businesses to connect to people looking for accessible businesses, something that sounds obvious but was never previously addressed in a way people responded to. Recognizing that accessibility matters to your business is almost as important as investing in it.



Recognizing that accessibility matters to your business is almost as important as investing in it.

— Maayan Ziv

**LEARN MORE
ABOUT ACCESSNOW** ▶

LILIA:

SHAPING THE FUTURE OF FERTILITY

*Alyssa Atkins (Next 36, 2013),
Founder and CEO of Lilia*

Alyssa comes from an impressive marketing career with senior positions held at Top Hat and CareGuide, so it's no surprise her branding, communication strategy and pitch are on point. At CareGuide, she helped the company to significantly scale-up in just 4 years. Before her explosive marketing career, her entrepreneurial DNA was evident as a franchisee for College Pro right out of University, followed by her stint as a Next 36'er. She's a shining example of how a strong founder makes a strong startup (just check out the impact she's had with **Lilia**). Today, Alyssa has just finished YC's 2020 cohort and has big ambitions for Lilia. Wishing you could get inside her brain? Just your luck, Alyssa reads... A LOT! Check out her reading list of over 115 books and counting on **GoodReads**. We'll definitely be doing the same.



PROBLEM

Access to fertility testing and information.

SOLUTION

Lilia: "Your egg freezing concierge", helping you figure out your fertility options and make a data-backed decision on next steps. They research your insurance coverage, lay out the process, and give guidance on best clinics. Then, if you're ready, they'll book you into a vetted clinic fast and offer on-demand support.

IMPACT

Secured a \$1.4 million seed round from a series of investors, including YC, Garage Capital, Panache Ventures and Hustle Fund and is the first company to partner with a Canadian hospital to validate hormone comparability.



ALYSSA ATKINS TALKS WOMEN'S HEALTH AND FERTILITY AT TECHTO

Frankly, women's health hasn't changed much in a really long time. We're still using the same practices that were used in our grandparents time. As such, our healthcare system has made incorrect assumptions about the appropriate delivery of care in relation to our modern way of life:

1. OUR SYSTEM RIGHT NOW IS DEFAULT CLOSED - Meaning doctors limit what they tell patients because they're afraid it may cause undue anxiety or stress, leaving people misinformed and unprepared.

2. THE DEFINITION OF HEALTHCARE IS OUTDATED - Now, people care about more than just being alive. They want their healthcare to be proactive and personalized. Our current system hasn't yet taken this into consideration.

3. REACTIVE, NOT PROACTIVE - This is how our current healthcare system works. But, society has changed a lot - women are having kids a lot later in life and yet, we don't have the resources to plan proactively. The reactive design of our system excludes single ladies and gay couples from planning their fertility options proactively.

WHY DOES THIS MATTER? People are making irreversible decisions about their lives. We are without access to information about our bodies that could enable us to be more informed and confident. Lilia seeks to help solve that problem.

**[LEARN MORE FROM ALYSSA
IN HER TECHTO TALK](#)** ▶

Frankly,
women's
health hasn't
changed much
in a really
long time.

— Alyssa Atkins

BIOME RENEWABLES:

IMPROVING THE EFFICIENCY AND AFFORDABILITY OF CLEAN ENERGY, ONE WIND TURBINE AT A TIME

*Ryan Church (Next Founders, 2019),
Founder, CEO and CTO of Biome Renewables*

Ryan is an entrepreneur through-and-through, having multiple patents to his name that span across various industries from fluid mechanics, to healthcare, multi-scaler manufacturing and biologically-inspired materials. Ryan received his Bachelors of Arts from the University of Victoria, then went on to study Biomedical Device Design at the University of Toronto, and obtain a Masters of Design at OCADU. Prior to this, he conducted biomedical research at McGill and UBC, then sought entrepreneurial education through Creative Destruction Lab and our Next Founders program. As the Founder of Threshold Theory, he's extremely passionate about the natural world and how it can translate to innovation and sustainability - he even spent some time as a Wildfire Fighter during his time in British Columbia. All being said, it comes as no surprise that Ryan was recently nominated as a Forbes 30 under 30 in Energy, and has interviewed with top publications like The Economist.

PROBLEM

Efficiency and affordability of clean energy, specifically wind turbines.

SOLUTION

Biome Renewables: A design and engineering firm that employs the power of nature to create a sustainable future. Their biomimetic design process applies innovative thinking to continually improve their products and our world. They pride themselves on their top-to-bottom approach for making their full operation as sustainable as possible.

IMPACT

Their patented PowerCone(R) technology is a revolutionary turbine retrofit that enables turbines to produce 10-13% more power annually with less loads and noise. Within 5 years, they expect to be on thousands of turbines globally, accelerating the global transition to renewables.



Other businesses can think about social impact by using business model canvases that spark engagement within an organization.

— Ryan Church

HOW DOES BIOME RENEWABLES TACKLE BOTH SOCIETAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS?

At Biome Renewables, we are driving a triple bottom line business, focussing on clean energy generation through advances in energy technologies, primarily in wind energy. Biome uses biomimicry; the emulation of biological strategies in design and engineering to glean advances in fluid-dynamics. By making wind turbines more efficient, Biome is accelerating the uptake of wind around the world by enabling lower power prices.

HOW DOES TECHNOLOGY AND SCIENCE POWER THE EFFICIENCY AND AFFORDABILITY OF YOUR SOLUTION?

Inspired by the design of the maple seed key, our platform **PowerCone** technology is a wind turbine hardware retrofit solution that increases AEP (Annual Energy Production) by up to 13%. At the core of wind turbines, root leakage can rob them of power. As such, structural needs at the blade root take priority over energy capture and kinetic energy is lost. Our new device, the PowerCone is a passive turbine retrofit that bolts to the hub of the turbine as an effective turn-key solution that incorporates nature's wisdom to address root leakage. The result is not just more power, but power from a place where no longer blade or smarter software can find it.

HOW IS BIOME BALANCING SOCIAL IMPACT WITH PROFITABILITY?

Biome is in the process of securing its B-Corp certification. We like to maintain KPIs that drive social well-being, along with revenue. This includes a healthy work-life balance, flexible work schedules, and sourcing talent, products and services from our community when possible.

HAVE YOU COME ACROSS ANY RESOURCES STARTUPS CAN USE TO CREATE MEANINGFUL SOCIAL IMPACT?

Other businesses can think about social impact by using business model canvases that spark engagement within an organization. A good example is the **Flourishing Business Canvas**.

SO, WHAT'S NEXT FOR BIOME RENEWABLES?

Biome is in the final phases of testing its first full-scale PowerCone in an operational setting. With this testing complete, we will expand our testing to wind farms, testing on multiple machines, while rolling out the technology on customer assets across North America and Europe. Within 5 years, we are expecting to be on thousands of turbines globally.

[LEARN MORE ABOUT BIOME RENEWABLES](#) ▶

GREENLID:

PROTECTING THE HEALTH OF OUR PLANET AND PEOPLE WITH BIODEGRADABLE PRODUCTS

*Morgan Wyatt (Next Founders, 2015),
Co-founder and CEO of Greenlid*

In Morgan's eyes, the world isn't going to change overnight. But, he believes making small changes in consumption behaviours takes us one step closer to a healthier, sustainable earth. Morgan attended University of Toronto for his undergraduate degree, specializing in Pharmaceutical Chemistry, later completing a Masters at Imperial College London. He completed his PhD at McMaster University in Chemical Biology where he published 11 scientific articles (including in Science and Nature Biotechnology), 7 patents and was recognized with many academic and research-based awards. His expertise in microbial metabolism combined with his drive to build real world solutions led him to create the leak-proof formulation that is used for both **Greenlid** and Biotraps. In 2015, Morgan went full-founder alongside brother and co-founder Jackson Wyatt and business partner Adil Qawi. All within that year, he lead the team through a pitch on Dragons Den and graduated from our Next Founders program. Since then, they were the recipients of the Manning Innovation Award in 2018 and have been featured on Newswire, CBC and The Financial Post.

Learn more about Morgan and his founder story [here](#).



PROBLEM

Harmful plastics and the spread of mosquito-borne illnesses.

SOLUTION

Greenlid: Sustainable products to replace harmful plastics using materials such as recycled cardboard, waste bagasse, palm leaf and sustainably harvested birch and bamboo. Greenlid also developed biodegradable mosquito traps that help prevent the spread of fatal illnesses.

IMPACT

Patented in over 55 countries, biotraps deployed at the 2016 Rio Olympics.



WHY BUILD A BUSINESS THAT IS FOCUSED ON, ESSENTIALLY, CREATING A BETTER EARTH?

Greenlid is split into 2 divisions: Our sustainable, compostable product line which primarily addresses replacing single-use plastics with the best sustainable alternatives and Biotraps, our biodegradable mosquito traps, which are now being deployed on a global scale to combat mosquito-borne illnesses.

For our compostable product line, we act as a North American partner for retailers and the food service industry to redefine their 'picnic' sections (plates, bowls, cutlery, straws etc.) with a focus on replacements to single-use plastic while developing products that make it easier to live a guilt-free sustainable life. With increasing plastic bans (styrofoams, plastic bags, and more), many retailers are looking for a single, sustainable partner that helps meet all current regulations and looks to the future rather than meeting only today's standards. This is where Greenlid provides value with education and solutions to our customers.

On the other side of our business, we have taken our biodegradable leak-proof technology found in our compost bin and applied it to mosquito traps (Biotraps)

that can be deployed easily and inexpensively. The traps mimic the breeding ground of female mosquitoes and kill them after they come in contact with them, resulting in reduced transmissions of any mosquito borne disease (Zika, Malaria, Dengue and others). The traps are inexpensive, costing 10-20x less than our nearest competitor, and easy to deploy. Now, they are being adopted by low and middle income countries where these trap-based approaches were previously cost prohibitive.

HOW DOES SOCIAL IMPACT FIT INTO OR COMPLEMENT YOUR BUSINESS MODEL?

Social impact happens as a direct result of us being able to provide our product to our customers. For every piece of plastic we can replace with a sustainable alternative, we provide a quantifiable environmental impact. For example, a single grocery store switching from selling plastic cutlery to our sustainable birch cutlery can prevent -100kg or plastic entering the landfill - think about multiplying that impact to every grocery store in Canada! For Biotraps, our goal is to partner with governments and build local manufacturing to provide at cost solutions that can be deployed to the masses. Here, our metrics are all focussed on the reduction of infectious disease in the deployed areas, which we actively monitor with our local partners.

WHERE IS GREENLID TODAY AND WHAT IS YOUR LONG TERM VISION FOR GROWTH?

At Greenlid, we want to be leaders in sustainability and provide the best possible solutions to positively affect the environment and human health. We hope our company, through private label partnerships and our branded products, will offer solutions and choices for every day consumers that improve the environment. On the health front, we want to provide Biotraps on a global scale to anywhere still combating mosquito-borne illness. We hope biotraps become part of the vector control toolkit alongside the spraying & fogging of insecticides, and bed netting. Lastly, we hope to build local manufacturing directly in infected countries to bring the cost of our solution down even further.

[LEARN MORE ABOUT GREENLID](#) ▶

MYELIN:



MAKING MENTAL HEALTH INFORMATION ACCESSIBLE AND PERSONALIZED TO ALL

Marise Bonenfant, François Menet, Marc-Olivier Schüle
(NextAI - Montreal, 2019), Co-founders of Myelin

This co-founder trifecta is passionate about providing equal access to mental health information. With combined experience from studies in information science and psychoeducation at the Université de Montréal, working in information security and conducting research at Polytechnique, these co-founders bring a diverse skill set perfect for creating a solution to the lack of real-time, personalized mental health information. Each co-founder has a different reason for being passionate about finding a solution: Marise realized the need for more accessible health information after struggling to find it for herself. François became an Information Security Consultant at 22 to protect non-technical people against misuse of information. Marc-Olivier found his passion while doing his doctorate in psychoeducation at Université de Montréal. Combine their collective experience and passion for mental health information accessibility, entrepreneurial drive and a sprinkling of Next AI - Montreal education and **Myelin** is born.

[LEARN MORE ABOUT MYELIN](#) ▶

PROBLEM

Lack of real time and personalized mental health care.

SOLUTION

Myelin: An AI-powered application curating mental health information from health professionals. Their first prototype helps those on the autism spectrum, providing resources and information necessary for quality care. In addition, they are currently developing an app to assist mental health therapy professionals during COVID-19 confinement.

IMPACT

Won first place in Entreprism - HEC, Invention of the Year from Adriq's GALA DES PRIX INNOVATION 2019 and third place in InnovInc RBC.

! COVID SUPPORT

To help those on the front lines, Myelin has made their app **FREE** for healthcare workers, for a limited time. [Learn more](#)

SEAMLESSMD:



TAKING THE WORRY OUT OF PREOPERATIVE CARE AND RECOVERY

Joshua Liu, Philip Chen and Willie Kwok (Next 36, 2013),
Co-founders of SeamlessMD

They say there is power in threes, and this team's combined skill set proves just that. Josh found his interest in solving problems within the healthcare system right in the middle of medical school at the University of Toronto, which led him to his research at UHN on hospital readmissions. During this time, there was an emergence of mobile technology in the consumer market. He became fascinated by the opportunity to combine technology and healthcare, and embarked on entrepreneurship for the first time by starting a healthcare software venture with a couple of medical school friends. Although that venture didn't pan out, Josh sought out the Next 36 program and met his co-founders, Philip Chen and Willie Kwok, who added important complementary skills that were necessary to launch **SeamlessMD**. Philip, a graduate of U of T's engineering program, also majoring in stats and finance, became SeamlessMD's COO while Willie, with a Master of Science from the University of British Columbia, became the company's CTO. Today, their blended skillset has made up a strong founding team, and allowed them to build a product that has made a major impact on patient outcomes in the Canadian healthcare system.

LEARN MORE ABOUT SEAMLESSMD ▶

PROBLEM

Lack of clarity and personalization of preoperative care and recovery.

SOLUTION

SeamlessMD: Enables hospitals to implement and optimize Enhanced Recovery After Surgery pathways faster and more effectively. They provide the leading technology solution to optimize patient health pre-operatively, accelerate post-operative recovery and monitor at-risk patients post-discharge.

IMPACT

1,000s of patients helped.



COVID SUPPORT

SeamlessMD launched Remote Monitoring For Healthcare Employee Health, quickly pivoting their model to help those on the front lines AND the patients looking for at-home medical advice. [Learn more](#)

BUILT WITH PURPOSE:

CLASS OF 2020

As we open our virtual doors to this Spring's batch of NEXT Canada entrepreneurs, we are inspired to see so many up and coming do-gooders and change makers across our three programs. Here we recognize and celebrate ten up and coming ventures who are working to solve global and social challenges.

1 DEPTH TECHNOLOGY

Harrison Handley, Sanchit Gupta; Next 36

Depth Technology is a deep-sea ocean and marine life monitoring service that ensures that the environmental impact of deep-sea mining companies meets international regulations.



2 EARTHSUDS

Daniel Moll, Marissa Vettoretti; Next Founders

EarthSuds creates single-use dissolvable tablets of shampoo, conditioner, body wash that are made without water and packaged without plastic.

3 ALT TEX

Myra Arshad; Next 36

ALT TEX is overhauling the fashion industry by repurposing food waste to create bio-degradable and carbon-neutral textiles.

4 VITALTRACER

*Azadeh Dastmalchi,
Zahra Zangenehmadar;
Next AI - Montreal*

VitalTracer's smartwatch continuously monitors vital signs and provides health assessment reports for high-risk individuals.



5 WELLNESS WORLD DIGITAL

Eve Staszczyszyn, Next 36

Wellness World Digital is helping students better navigate and book mental health services on campus, while gaining actionable insight for institutions to optimize their wellness networks.





MOMENT

*Edward Chiang,
Sumreen Rattan;
Next 36*

Moment is creating renewable power storage by repurposing electric vehicle batteries, increasing accessibility to safe, reliable and sustainable energy.

MAPINHOOD

*Arjun Mali, Bin Liu;
Next AI - Toronto*

Mapinhood leverages crowdsourcing and AI to empower pedestrians with real time data and personalized navigation for safe and convenient trips on foot.

**TUNE INTO MAPINHOOD'S
EPISODE ON LAUNCHPOD
TO LEARN MORE ▶**

STEADIWEAR

Mark Elias; Next Founders

Steadewear has developed the world's first battery-free tremor stabilization glove for individuals with Parkinson's disease and Essential tremor.



LUCID

*Aaron Labbé, Zach McMahon;
Next AI - Toronto*

Vibe, by LUCID, creates personalized music experiences scientifically designed to help you reduce stress, increase focus, and improve wellbeing.



BLUE LION LABS

*Jason Deglint, Katie Thomas;
Next AI - Toronto*

Blue Lion Labs believes that everyone deserves to know if their water is clean and safe to drink. They are building an AI system to quantify toxic algae in water dramatically reducing analysis time.

ASK A FOUNDER

► We asked a few of our NEXT alumni which resources have been most helpful to them in maintaining their personal and work wellness over the last couple of months. Bonus points for what they are optimistic about for Canadian startups.

FAVOURITE WFH TOOL:



Airtable - the platform was really easy to onboard the team with diverse templates for a variety of projects and it is affordable.



FAVOURITE QUARANTINE BOOK:

The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho

GUILTIEST PLEASURE:



Waking up to "Wannabe" by the Spice Girls



EMILY BLAND ►

Founder & CEO,
SucSeed;
Next 36, 2018



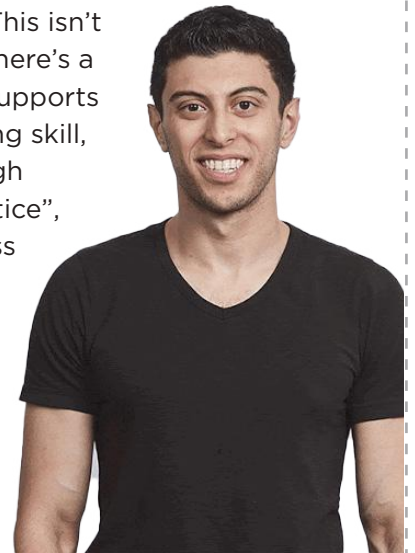
FAVOURITE QUARANTINE BOOK:

21 Lessons for the 21st Century by Yuval Harari

HOW DO YOU MAKE SPACE FOR YOUR MENTAL WELLNESS:



Be human. Reconnect with acceptance, loving kindness, whatever makes your soul sing (for me it's cooking and karaoke singing in the shower like no one is watching). This isn't just fluffy nonsense, there's a lot of science which supports acceptance as a coping skill, connectedness through "loving kindness practice", and hedonic happiness as a correlate to mental health.



MORGAN ROSENBERG ►

Founder & CEO, Resili;
Next 36, 2018

HOW DO YOU MAKE SPACE FOR YOUR MENTAL WELLNESS:



I have lots of plants and post-it notes with gentle reminders to myself around my place. I also make sure to have healthy snacks nearby, and work on the patio whenever possible.

FAVOURITE WFH TOOL: Using my window as a whiteboard. Being able to expand my workspace beyond my computer and into my physical space has always been important to me. It helps me think better and hold more context.



FAVOURITE QUARANTINE BOOK:

The Hard Thing About Hard Things by Ben Horowitz

CHENNY XIA ►

Co-founder, Growth &
Client Experience GotCare;
Next 36, 2014



LOOKING FORWARD, WHAT ARE YOU MOST OPTIMISTIC ABOUT WHEN IT COMES TO CONSUMER MINDSET?

FAVOURITE WFH TOOL:



Google Hangouts, incorporated well with Google Calendar, email and my virtual assistant from x.ai

HOW DO YOU MAKE SPACE FOR YOUR MENTAL WELLNESS:



I'm a new mom and often too busy to incorporate anything extra into my calendar. But, I am enjoying every moment of being with my baby which keeps my mental wellness in check.



NEDA GHAZI ▶

Founder & CEO, *Comfable*;
Next Founders, 2018

FAVOURITE WFH TOOL:



I'm loving **Asana** - everyone is staying on top of tasks and mapping out clearer processes.

FAVOURITE QUARANTINE BOOK:



The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks

HOW DO YOU MAKE SPACE FOR YOUR MENTAL WELLNESS:



I set a routine for work and personal time that keeps everything in my mind well organized so I don't feel disoriented despite the craziness around me.



MICHELLE KWOK ▶

Co-founder & CEO, *FLIK*;
Next 36, 2019



Investors need to be the ones who make the biggest impact here. There are so many entrepreneurs who are smart, driven and want to make a big impact in Canada. But if we don't have access to fair capital, then the pursuit of building billion-dollar businesses will take us outside of Canada.

▶ CHENNY XIA

Co-founder, *GotCare*



As tough as this situation is right now, it has the potential to create a new world. So many of our current systems are broken; if we come together now, we have the opportunity to create a new future.

▶ EMILY BLAND

Founder, *SucSeed*



Virtual care is booming. Toronto is a hub academically through WCH and industrially through our many great startups! Expect to see real change and consumer empowerment in health services.

▶ MORGAN ROSENBERG

Founder, *Resili*

NEW WORLD, NEW RULES OF ENGAGEMENT



*By Jen Couldrey, Executive Director,
The Upside Foundation of Canada;
Co-Founder, The HomeFront*

How our Canadian entrepreneurs can reframe global challenges as opportunities for positive impact in a post-COVID world

COVID-19 has made visible so many things that need to be changed about our world. It has laid bare societal inequities, outdated systems that can't adapt, crucial supply chains with single points of failure, and external dependencies that leave us vulnerable. This is a direct challenge to Canada's entrepreneurs: let's figure out how to solve those problems.

In the noisiest, messiest, fastest changing period we've ever known, our job as leaders remains the same as ever: we must find a way to get above the noise and figure out what's next. Our teams need this of us, our customers need this of us, the world needs this of us. We need to think big picture, look at the trends, understand what a post-COVID world looks like, and start building towards that.

What Canada needs at the other end of COVID is prosperous companies that solve real problems. Companies that have a massive economic impact while not forgetting the other critical roles of companies: to solve the world's hardest problems, provide great jobs, and contribute positively to their communities.

Building something that matters right now requires asking important questions:

- What has this situation clarified for me in terms of what is wrong, outdated, or broken with the world and needs to be addressed?
- What fundamental choices can I make about how I run my business that will ensure that we are having a positive impact in the world around us?
- What resources do I have access to that can make a difference, today and tomorrow?
- What kind of company do my employees want to work for? Do I want to be proud of running?

People speak of a yearning for things to 'get back to normal'. But it's becoming painfully clear that 'normal' wasn't really working for most people. What a shame it would be if we missed this opportunity to press reset. To question the fundamental assumptions about how and why we do what we do. It's time to rethink the way things were done in the old world. Who better to lead that charge but our Canadian entrepreneurs? I look forward to working alongside you to build companies that make a positive impact for Canada and for the world.

*Jen Couldrey helps business leaders build a blueprint for making a positive impact through their business. She is widely known and respected in the Canadian tech community as a champion of social responsibility. As the Executive Director of **The Upside Foundation**, Jen works with founders of scaling companies across Canada who want to make a difference in the world, enabling donations of equity rather than cash.*

The HomeFront is a volunteer-led organization working in partnership with registered charity *The Upside Foundation*, acting as a central hub to help Frontline Healthcare Workers get the support they need during COVID-19. We want to keep our heroes safe and help you to act as heroes as well!

Learn more about how Jen works with startups to help them make a meaningful impact in her discussion with Hubba's Ben Zifkin on **LaunchPod** ▶



By EY's Paula Smith

**CANADIAN
ENTREPRENEURS
ARE
TACKLING UNCERTAINTY
WITH
TECH**



How current and aspiring entrepreneurs can harness technology and transform their business to create a positive impact.

Entrepreneurs are a force to be reckoned with — no matter the economic climate. Although the long-term impact of COVID-19 is still unclear, the unstoppable force of Canada's entrepreneurs is stronger than ever before. With new technologies fuelling their innovation, they're jumping at the opportunity to fill market gaps, improve systems and tackle some of the world's most pressing issues.

EY has a long history of working alongside many of the world's most innovative entrepreneurs through the EY **Entrepreneur Of The Year®** program, and many of these business leaders have found ways to leverage digital tools to unlock new sources of value for companies and communities amid COVID-19.

Companies like **Canada Goose** are shifting factory production from apparel to medical gear for healthcare workers and patients, while others like **Baylis Medical** and **Danby Appliances** are manufacturing new machinery to solve ventilator shortages. Meanwhile, Canada's largest biotechnology company, **STEMCELL Technologies**, is developing cell biology research tools and instruments that support current life sciences research efforts.

Paula Smith, National Director of the EY Entrepreneur Of The Year Canada program, shares how current and aspiring entrepreneurs can harness technology and transform their business to create a positive impact.

HOW CAN ENTREPRENEURS UNLOCK GROWTH BY APPLYING NEW TECHNOLOGY TO THEIR STRATEGIC VISION?

New technologies allow entrepreneurs to think bigger and bolder — and then turn those visions into realities. Robotics, artificial intelligence, blockchain and analytics can unearth new data that can help entrepreneurs drive more meaningful conversations with customers, build operational efficiencies and gain a powerful competitive advantage. They also have the natural advantage of being more agile than larger companies and can use digital tools to experiment or test new products, enter new markets and capture new opportunities more quickly.

WHY IS DIVERSITY IMPORTANT IN EXECUTING A DIGITAL STRATEGY?

There are countless advantages to prioritizing diversity when creating or executing a digital strategy. The first relates to an important truth: technology isn't immune to bias. That's a real problem when you consider how integrated it's become in our personal and professional lives. The talent developing new technologies and innovations should represent the diversity we see in our society to ensure unconscious biases aren't programmed into our future. The second advantage is that diverse teams with unique perspectives can capture more meaningful insight from data. Entrepreneurs that embrace diversity from the get-go and make it a priority as their business grows will create more value.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR ASPIRING ENTREPRENEURS MAKING THEIR WAY INTO THE WORLD OF BUSINESS? HOW CAN THEY PIVOT THEIR STRATEGIES TO MEET NEW MARKET CHALLENGES?

Profound market changes mean entrepreneurial business leaders need to think differently about how to achieve their growth ambitions. It's not enough to only focus on the now — those who want to achieve long-term sustainable growth need to stay agile and prepare for what's coming in the next and the beyond. Entrepreneurs can do this by mastering the full capabilities of technology to experiment and fail with confidence while tackling new opportunities.

Despite the ambiguity of COVID-19, Canadian entrepreneurs continue to be unstoppable forces — approaching problems with the agility and imagination necessary to evolve and prosper. Those with the right strategic vision will take hold of unexpected opportunities to break through uncertainty and create something extraordinary.



How can companies navigate through these unprecedented times? [Learn more](#)

FROM THE **NEXT** COMMUNITY



Optimizing for survival and planning for what comes next

With Brice Scheschuk & Alyssa Atkins

WATCH ▶

COVID-19:
Startup Resources from the NEXT Community

DISCOVER ▶



CleanSlate UV raises \$8.4M as demand for device sanitization increases

MORE ▶



N36 alumni venture, Lilia, raises \$1.4M seed round


MORE ▶



Finding resilience in a time of crisis

A special LaunchPod series ft: Daniel Rodic, Emily Lonetto, Mike Cheng, Jaclyn Ling, Arjun Mali and Bin Liu

LISTEN IN ▶



Our gratitude goes to BDC for providing necessary resources for entrepreneurs during instability and uncertainty. Now more than ever, a strong entrepreneurial ecosystem is critical.


DISCOVER ▶



Navigating VC-founder relationships & spotting growth opportunities

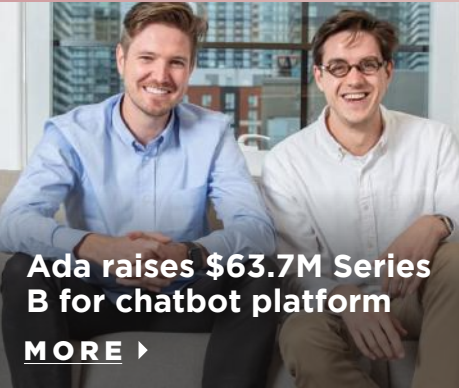
With Jordan Jacobs & Joe Canavan

WATCH ▶



Tecton.ai emerges from stealth with \$20M Series A to build machine learning platform

[MORE ▶](#)



Ada raises \$63.7M Series B for chatbot platform

[MORE ▶](#)



Plastic that saves the planet? N36 startup's novel resin helps industry go green

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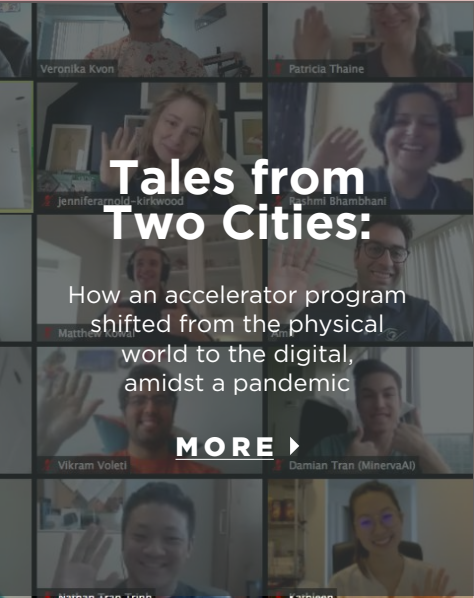
Thank you to Air Canada for continuing to #FlyTheFlag for our country by providing essential support to front line workers and Canadian companies

[WATCH ▶](#)



We share our sincere gratitude to a group of esteemed Canadians who will be providing invaluable counsel to NEXT through our newly established NEXT Emeritus Board of Advisors

[SEE ALL ▶](#)



Tales from Two Cities:

How an accelerator program shifted from the physical world to the digital, amidst a pandemic

[MORE ▶](#)



Thank you!

A special shout out goes to Julian Knutzen for championing NEXT in his role as Research Engineer at Magna. Julian has provided valuable support as an interview judge for Next AI, a participant in Next AI lectures, and for his efforts connecting our alumni with Magna's experts in technology innovation.



Where would we be without the support of our parents? Thank you to Rustom and Zarina Satchu for the recent gift to NEXT, and for giving us our Founding Chairman, Reza Satchu!

THANK YOU

Shoutout to our alumni who have done their part to battle against COVID-19

Despite an incredibly challenging couple of months, we've been blown away by our alumni and ventures who have really gone above and beyond to help others and provide resources for those on the front lines of the COVID-19 crisis. Even as they fight to stabilize their own businesses, we want to recognize their altruism and the power of the collaborative Canadian startup community as they work hard to support others in need.

The initiatives, support and resources outlined below are further proof of the resilience of our Canadian entrepreneurs - we can't wait to see what they build **next**.



CleanSlate UV's CEO Taylor Mann is experiencing overwhelming interest in their UV phone and tablet cleaning product in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. See how his team is minimizing the spread of germs [here](#).



Comfable has developed a coronavirus spread simulator which illustrates the effect of social distancing on slowing the spread of the virus and flattening the curve. Get the Google Chrome extension [here](#).



RockMass has joined Mosaic Manufacturing, ReDeTec, and Glia to help fight the COVID-19 crisis by manufacturing 50,000 face shields to help keep front line medical workers safe. [Learn more](#)



Sampler has launched ComeTogetherTO, an initiative that leverages the sewing powers of their community to crowdsource the creation of 20,000 masks that will help protect Canadians. [Learn more](#)



Tia-Health has launched a Canada-wide partnership with Rexall and will handle all of Rexall's virtual care service for patients to help relieve the current burden on the healthcare system. [Read More](#)



Avail has made their well-being, resilience and support assistant app free to download so everybody can access the most relevant care resources. [Download the app](#)



MakerKids brings its STEM programs to students via MakerKids Virtual, a live, virtual classroom experience that promotes social interaction and important tech skills. [Learn more](#)



Envoi's driver team is bringing health supplements, hand sanitizers, clothes, shoes, baby formula, essentials to our doorsteps so we don't risk bringing in pathogens by going outside ourselves. [Learn more](#)



AccessNow launched a new "Access from Home" feature, which is working to identify, validate and promote businesses that offer services to people at home. [Learn more](#)



Tribe is offering their community platform for free to organizations with a mission to help people during COVID-19. [Learn more](#)

**DISCOVER MORE
EVERYDAY HEROES** ▶

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Marina A. Radovanovic
Marriane Bulger

Operate

D

DO-GOODERS NOMINATED BY OUR COMMUNITY

With the launch of the second edition of GRIT, we asked the NEXT Canada community to help us #CelebrateTheGood by tagging more Canadian leaders, businesses or friends who are working hard to solve some big global or societal challenges - and they delivered! Today we're excited to unveil a brand new spread in the digital magazine dedicated entirely to those who our community has celebrated. Thank you to everyone who nominated, and a special thank you to those who are working to make our country - and beyond - a better place to live, work and play.

MA
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eSight

Fable

DRIZTI

On•Call

Healthy Roots
NATURAL DOLLS FOR NATURAL GIRLS

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H

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Michael Wright

Michele Romanow

Milton Calderon Donefer

Morgan Rosenberg

Muhbdu Mali

Natasha Freidus

Nevell Provo

Nicolas Schiavo

Noora Sherab

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