

Relationships build

progress

2017 Corporate Social Responsibility Report



About us

CWB Financial Group is a diversified financial services organization that provides specialized service across Canada in business and personal banking, equipment financing, trust services and wealth management.

Headquartered in Edmonton, Alberta, we've offered customized financial solutions for more than 34 years and operate with a clear focus to meet the unique financial needs of business owners.

Through our network of branches, business offices and mobile relationship teams, we help clients grow their businesses, manage their money and realize their financial potential.

Our experts are here to listen to your goals, ask questions and give you individualized guidance and support to help you get there.

Our companies

BANK	TRUST	WEALTH MANAGEMENT
Canadian Western Bank CWB Equipment Financing CWB Franchise Finance CWB Maxium Financial CWB Optimum Mortgage Motive Financial National Leasing	Canadian Western Trust	CWB Wealth Management, which includes Canadian Western Financial and McLean & Partners Wealth Management

About this report

Follow along as we share what makes us who we are. The information included represents new or ongoing initiatives taking place across our group of companies during our most recent fiscal year (Nov. 1, 2016 to Oct. 31, 2017).

Front cover image:

Kathy and Marc Leonard

RailPro

Redcliff, Alberta







Chris Fowler
President and CEO
CWB Financial Group
Edmonton, Alberta



Hello from Chris

Strong relationships with our clients, employees and communities are at the heart of what we do at CWB Financial Group. Our clients know we take a genuine interest in their financial goals and that we're committed to asking the right questions to understand where they are today and where they want to go. This is how we build relationships and provide the right solutions to help our clients achieve their definition of success.

We are – and always have been – a growth company. Our progress is an incredibly important measure of our success. We strive to evolve and enhance our client experience, cultivate a work environment our people love to be a part of, and advance our communities through financial and volunteer support.

We've made great strides this year to build on our exceptional client service. I'm always pleased to hear our clients' share how we've helped them succeed. I am proud they recognize our industry expertise and our get-it-done attitude as two reasons we're the best bank for them. Take Marc and Kathy Leonard, the couple on this report's cover. Marc, president of RailPro and a CWB client for more than a decade, has worked with us to expand his business and get his family into their new home. He appreciates that his relationship team at our Medicine Hat Branch are real people (and not just number crunchers) who listen to what he has to say. He feels they've supported and encouraged him through the early stages of his business to today and appreciates that CWB has focused on removing barriers to his success, rather than putting them up.

That's another measure of progress for me – seeing our teams really step up to put our clients first. In my more than 20 years at CWB, I've always seen our people as the driving force behind our growth. This year, we launched a new recognition program to honour our top performers for their incredible efforts in leadership, culture-building and improving our business. Marcia Lindberg is one of our first recipients and is a great example of the leaders we promote within our organization. Her approachable, open style is highly regarded by her team and her focus on coaching helps those around her go above and beyond for their clients.

We're also committed to contributing to the progress of our communities. This year, we gave more than \$2 million to charities and not-for-profit organizations that have a mandate to create healthy communities. I'm incredibly proud of our teams who grew our partnership with the United Way to hit a record high for our corporate campaign, with donations totalling \$630,000. We also introduced a *Week of Caring* to encourage our people to get out into the community and give a few hours of time to drive positive impact on a cause close to their hearts. It was a fantastic week!

Fiscal 2017 was another year of change and progress, and I'm incredibly proud of what we've built and continue to build. I'm so thankful that our clients and people share our vision to grow and I am looking forward to what next year has in store. With a continued focus on relationships, I know it's going to be excellent.



P.S. You can read more about Marc and Marcia's full stories at cwbank.com/blog.



service

builds our **relationships**

We're experts at providing small and medium-sized business owners the financing and financial services they need to grow. Our clients trust us to understand their business, be responsive to their needs and to ultimately help them achieve their goals.



David Dyck
Co-founder, Shift Products
Winnipeg, Manitoba



CWB is actually going to come and get to know you, your business and the product that you're offering. Every time I've gone into CWB, someone always says, 'Hi Dave.' That's been huge for me.

David Dyck

Shift's co-founder



Who we work with

We're honoured our clients value our advice and trust we'll do our part to make their ambitions a reality. We work with some pretty incredible clients whose stories are rooted in hard work and determination. Take, for example, David Dyck whose business, Winnipeg-based Shift Products, grew from a notepad doodle to a high-quality aftermarket semi-truck parts and accessories provider. David and his brother's experience scaling up the business took many iterations to get them where they are today: a successful startup offering a lighter and more durable product than their competitors.

Our clients have innovated, tried new strategies and have learned from their mistakes. Clients like the Firkin Group of Pubs, who have successfully stretched beyond their primary footprint in Ontario and ventured into the United States to open several locations in airports. By looking deeply into and updating their customer experience to reflect current trends and diner preferences, they've been the only Canadian restaurant brand to successfully move into this space.

Talk to our clients and they'll tell you how CWB Financial Group's expertise, solutions and personal approach have translated into strong relationships that grow alongside their business.

Accessible service

We continue to strive to create an inclusive environment where clients from all backgrounds can work with us. That's why we offer a number of accounts and perks to students, seniors and others with basic banking needs:

A flexible, low-cost chequing account for as little as \$4 per month



Access to services via our no-fee *Gold Leaf Plus®* account for clients aged 57+



Waived monthly account fees for youth under the age of 18 or students pursuing post-secondary education



Financial learning seminars and bonus offer on GIC investments as part of our seniors' appreciation week



We also maintain wheelchair-friendly branches and provide a variety of sit-down banking options.

When language is a barrier, we do our best to engage one of our 75+ bilingual employees to offer streamlined service. For our businesses operating in Quebec, like National Leasing and CWB Franchise Finance, literature and documentation are available in French.

Key efficiencies and partnerships

To us, banking needs to be easy for our clients. To achieve this, we implemented new measures that resulted in more efficient and expertly tailored service to meet their needs.

Our new core banking system celebrated its one-year anniversary. This new technology has allowed us to focus our efforts to develop broader and deeper client relationships that go beyond highly valued lending solutions.

We partnered with Payfirma, a merchant services provider, which now gives our clients more access to advanced analytics and reporting for their business. We also created a 'centre of excellence' of in-house experts who provide specialized support for commercial real estate, corporate lending and franchise finance services clients.

Building a bank for savers

On April 18, we rebranded our online banking division to Motive Financial (previously Canadian Direct Financial).

With no physical branches, this online banking portal is the perfect platform for personal banking clients looking to save. It also removes physical barriers for clients who cannot access one of our 42 branches and has the capability to open accounts online using digital technology to send and receive e-signatures.

We offer:

- Extended hours for your convenience
- Online account opening
- No-fee accounts
- Attractive interest rates that appeal to savers – young and young at heart

Our teams are always looking for new ways to enhance our client experience. Whether it's through technology, process improvement or new service offerings, we're committed to meeting our clients' needs. This year, we took steps to introduce an 'innovation lab' within Motive Financial, where we can test new products and services in a virtual setting. Once deemed successful, offerings may be rolled out to our broader client base in the future.

Securing your information

Keeping our clients' information secure is a critical part of our job. That's why we've expanded our technical security services team this year, while also integrating a new firewall. We're well positioned to proactively manage potential issues as they arise so your banking is always protected.

Maintaining your privacy

Effective September 1, we updated our privacy policy. Clients now have the choice on how they want to receive marketing materials and if they would like their personal information shared within CWB Financial Group.

We also have a chief privacy officer in place to monitor applicable rules and regulations to ensure compliance and to implement and maintain best practices across our business.

Information about our privacy policy is available at any of our branch locations or online at cwb.com/about-us/privacy.

Complaint resolution

Mistakes happen, which is why we're prepared to take the right steps to resolve any issues. If a client is unhappy with their experience, we encourage them to speak first with the applicable branch, department or regional manager. From there, we have a thorough complaint resolution process that includes our centralized complaint handling office, an independent ombudsman and support of an industry alternative dispute resolution service.



From past experience, I've found that banks generally don't have a clear understanding of the restaurant industry and our vision. But CWB not only had the vision, but also the knowledge and understanding of the industry, which enabled them to put a financial package together for helping us grow that made sense for both parties.

Larry Issacs

Director of Marketing
Firken Group



The background of the page is a photograph of a crowd of people at what appears to be a stadium or a large gathering. A large, semi-transparent teal rectangle is overlaid on the left and center of the image, serving as a backdrop for the text.

people

build our **relationships**

From day one, CWB Financial Group has focused on our people. We know it's their hard work, commitment and genuine caring that build the relationships so important to our business.



Farnaz Tahmasebi
Vancouver Sun Run
Vancouver, British Columbia



My reasons for joining and remaining a part of CWB are simple: the people, support, opportunity, and personal/professional development. It is an organization that genuinely values its employees and it shows!

Niskah Earl

Senior Manager

Retail Banking, Red Deer



Cultivating diversity

All great employers understand that creating a diverse and inclusive work environment is critical to employee engagement. Creating diverse teams continues to be a focus at CWB Financial Group with strides made this year toward better understanding of unconscious bias among our leaders, and a commitment to the *WeNeedBoth* pledge that encourages both women and men to participate in gender advancement panels. We hosted three panels on this topic this year in recognition of International Women's Day, and had excellent employee participation. We remain committed to the 30% Club, a global organization which aims to promote more women to senior corporate roles. In 2017, women represented 27% of our Board of Directors, surpassing our interim goal to achieve 25% by 2018.

Celebrating multiculturalism

We also continued to host multiculturalism events and cultural celebrations in our offices and branches. Canada's 150th birthday gave us an excellent opportunity to celebrate. We did so through a virtual storytelling trip across the country and uncovered insightful stories from our people about why they came to, or stay in, Canada and what they love most about our nation. Our people also took part in initiatives honouring this celebration such as summer reading contests, family picnics and a scholarship contest where we awarded five post-secondary scholarships to eligible employees' family members.

25 years in Saskatoon

In May 2017, our branches in downtown and north Saskatoon celebrated their quarter-century with a client event featuring toasts and cake. We've sure come a long way in this community since acquiring Saskatchewan Trust in 1992.

Ongoing learning

To enhance the knowledge and operational skills of our employees, we're proud to offer a variety of in-house professional development programs and learning opportunities. Many of our learning resources are located on our intranet and online Learning Centre and provide our people the opportunity to increase their skill set and expertise through in-class sessions, webinars, workshops and learning materials. We provide support and guidance to teams wanting to improve their overall effectiveness in areas such as team building, communication and conflict resolution.

We strongly value career enhancement and believe it's the catalyst to our next generation of leaders. Our *Management Associate Program* advances our new grads to account managers. In 2017, we had 11 employees go through the program and be promoted in areas such as staff lending, commercial, equipment finance and retail. In the spring, we also ran talent forums in Vancouver, Calgary and Edmonton. Developed for highly-valued junior employees, attendees had the opportunity to network, take in panel discussions with senior leaders and participate in self-directed groups.

Supporting our people

Our employee assistance program provider offers channels for employees to access support, guidance and resources to help them manage challenges in the areas of life, family, money, work and health.

To provide mental health support, National Leasing launched *Wellness Wednesdays*. Every third Wednesday of each month a series of wellness activities takes place for employees, including yoga and healthy snack day. Speakers are also brought in to present on topics such as mental health, nutrition and work/life balance. We also launched the *Zen Zone*—a space for employees to practise mindfulness, meditation or simply to just take a break. Employees have used this space every day since its reveal.

Improving communication

As we continue to grow, there are always new and exciting initiatives taking place. To ensure our people are well informed and have line of sight into what’s coming down the pike, we created new communications platforms. Our internal television show *The Bottom Line* airs every month and highlights our latest undertakings. We also launched our e-newsletter, *The Weekly*, which presents the week’s most prudent information and *Ask an Executive*, a weekly Q&A forum to give employees the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered by executive team members.

Work, rest and celebrate

We know good work/life balance is the key to productivity and happiness. All employees receive at least three weeks of vacation each year and are also entitled to a *CWBalance*. This perk gives employees an extra paid day off once a year to spend time on something important to them.

And because our people are always embarking on some pretty amazing initiatives, we honour their efforts through our *Pillars of Excellence Awards*. As a nomination-based program, employees are recognized monthly and annually for their contributions, performance and leadership. Our recipients are our prime achievers who go above and beyond and contribute to our four pillars: people, support, clients and financial.

Congratulations are extended to our quarterly and annual winners:



Andrea King	Crystal Nicholson	Kunal Sharma
Angie Chavez	Gwen Milano	Lesley Koskinen
Arno Klein	Heather Miller	Megan Tower
Arshila Makhani	Jeremy Robinson	Paul Jacobson
Barbara Petz	Joanne Daniels	Raymond Letendre
Brittany Marceniuk	Kate Lister	Stefanie Dharmawan
Bunny Gallant	Kim Forseille	Steve Campbell
Carmen Dignazio	Kelly Coley	Wendy Gerlitz
Cherisse Hochreiter	Kelly O’Rourke	



Aaron Drever	Heather Miller	Lesley Koskinen
Brandy Ito	Jason Chae	Marcia Lindberg
Brittany Marceniuk	Kendra Spezowka	Raj Jairath
Crystal Nicholson	Kevin Wai	Sam Ferguson



I always believe that relationships with colleagues are the starting point to success. We have great people in our office who genuinely care about each other. It’s our people that keep me going at CWT.

Jason Chae

Relationship Manager
Canadian Western Trust
Vancouver





Tricia McGarrigle,
Aman Dhot,
Sanya Karmali and
Simone Grewal
Vancouver Sun Run
Vancouver, British Columbia

National Leasing celebrated exceptional performers with the R.M. Chipman Award, named after the company's founder. Congratulations are extended to Janet Seniuk, Julie Chaput-Johnson, Manivone Sivilay, Michael Jocson and Oana Robson-Flatt.

Having fun

Although we work hard, we like to play hard too, which is why our teams make a point to have fun often.

Friday mornings are spent with breakfast get-togethers in many of our locations. Edmonton's corporate office celebrates every Friday with doughnuts and pastries – teams come together and get to know one another, often chatting about the week that's passed and the weekend ahead.

At McLean & Partners Wealth Management, employees have a scheduled opportunity to get to know each other and their President & CEO, Kevin Dehod. *Tuesday Tea with KD* has been a hit since it launched this year.

Not only do CWB Optimum Mortgage employees love to dive into cake to celebrate our employees' birthdays, but we do a treat-a-week in the summer. We also celebrate the holidays with a variety of events such as Easter egg hunts or Cinco de Mayo celebrations in May.

Monthly lunch and learns are held by Canadian Western Trust, where individual departments share insights on our operations and best practices. We also take our normal 'coffee breaks', with leadership, where employees learn about critical news or fast-moving projects.

We also like to come together to participate in fun community events like Canada's largest road race, the *Vancouver Sun Run*. As the Corporate Team Division Sponsor, over 50 CWB Financial Group employees either laced up to run the race or gave out swag, shared financial and fitness aspirations among participants, and cheered on 40,000 plus runners.



I'm contributing and am able to see that impact. This is an engaging, continually challenging and forward-thinking organization that I'm proud to work for.

Rachel Liem-Smith

Talent Acquisition Specialist
Fredericton



charitable impact

builds our **relationships**

We take pride in actively participating in the growth, development and sustainability of the communities where we operate. For us, this means helping out our charitable and not-for-profit partners through volunteerism and financial support.

ROPE FOR
HOPE

Presented by



CANADIAN
WESTERN BANK

MAKE C



Rejean Roberge and

Patrick Gallagher

Make-A-Wish's Rope for Hope Fundraiser
Edmonton, Alberta

Our priorities

Our community investment program is aligned with our business goals and strategies, and has been designed to ensure our contributions have the greatest impact possible. We're focused on helping local charitable and community organizations fulfil their respective mandates in the areas of:

- Education
- Health research and promotion
- Community development

Within these pillars, we're committed to supporting:

- Financial literacy
- Access to post-secondary education
- Curriculum development for business-related educational programs
- Health research and disease management focused on children and youth
- Recreation and physical activity
- At-risk youth
- Attainable housing
- Arts and culture

Our giving commitment

We're committed to putting a minimum percentage of annual net income, based on a five-year rolling average, back into the communities where we operate to support charitable and not-for-profit organizations in any given year. This year, we supported our community and charitable partners across Canada with donations and sponsorships totalling more than \$2 million.

Week of Caring

In October 2017, we introduced a new initiative to enable our people to volunteer in our communities. Our inaugural *Week of Caring* drew 600 employees to local charities, resulting in more than 1,500 volunteer hours over the course of a week. Encouraged to volunteer with a charity close to their hearts, our employees gave back in a variety of ways: sorting donations, meal service, tree planting and seasonal outdoor cleanup.

McLean & Partners made snack bags for kids who would otherwise go hungry through Brown Bagging for Calgary's Kids.

CWB Wealth Management's team in Vancouver spent quality time supporting the needy in the Downtown Eastside. Employees participated in the *French Playtime Program*, allowing them to interact with young children in French through storytelling, crafts, songs, and movement and nature. Meanwhile, other employees volunteered at the Downtown Eastside Women's Shelter, where they sorted donated items, folded laundry, served lunch, cleared tables, cleaned floors and reorganized the kitchen.

Ramping up for United Way

CWB Financial Group employees raised more than \$325,000 for the United Way, a 56% increase over our previous campaign. Employees stepped up with personal donations to access a new \$100,000 in corporate matching and planned various activities and events to raise additional funds.

We also gave an additional \$305,000 to United Way Winnipeg through National Leasing employees' generosity.

Grant support

Our *Employee Volunteer Grant* program provides a donation to the causes our employees care about. Employees who spend 30 or more hours volunteering throughout the year are awarded a \$300 grant for the charity or community organization of their choice. In total, CWB awarded 68 grants totalling \$20,400. Recipients included Girl Guides of Canada, Christmas Bureau of Edmonton and the Calgary Stampede Foundation.

The *Funds for Fundraisers Grant* awards matching dollars for pledge-based fundraising in support of registered charities. Employees apply solo or as a team and are awarded a matching contribution from \$250 to \$5,000 depending on the number of CWB Financial Group employees participating. We funded 43 applications totalling \$41,226 to organizations such as the Terry Fox foundation, the Heart & Stroke foundation, the MS Society of Canada and Make-A-Wish Foundation's across Canada.

Giving back

Giving back to our communities is a big part of what we do. In July when the forest fires spread through the B.C. Interior, not only did our employees step up to help, but we provided \$25,000 in corporate donations to the United Way Thompson Nicola Cariboo and the Canadian Red Cross.

Canadian Western Trust gave nearly \$1,600 to BC Children's Hospital. Funds were raised through employee-led bake sales, 'Jeans Day' raffles, silent auctions and a number of other fun team events meant to not only raise funds, but to also foster a fun and collaborative culture.

From May to October, 34 employees rappelled down some of the tallest buildings in major Canadian cities to raise more than \$55,000 for the Make-A-Wish Foundation's *Rope for Hope*. Over three years of partnership, coming to completion this year, our employees raised more than \$200,000.

From July 28 to August 13, National Leasing sponsored the Canada Summer Games in Winnipeg. As part of the sponsorship, we ran a campaign called *Art of the Games*, a live art series capturing the legacy of the Games on canvas, culminating with a live art auction. The auction raised almost \$15,000 and all proceeds went to KidSport. In addition to the campaign, National Leasing's employees donated 400 volunteer hours to help make the Games a success.

CWB Maxium Financial took part in a variety of volunteer initiatives that included: a *Drive to Survive* campaign, in response to homelessness, where volunteers delivered meals in an outreach van; *Grow a Mo for a Bro* where they raised \$3,000 during *November*; built cat shelters at the Ontario SPCA; and, sorted food at their local food bank.



United Way Winnipeg is incredibly grateful for National Leasing's long-time partnership in creating a better Winnipeg. Their workplace fundraising campaign is one of the city's top 50 – generosity that has touched thousands of lives in our community. It's an incredible testament to the caring and compassion National Leasing inspires in our community

Connie Walker

President and CEO
United Way Winnipeg



The background of the page is a photograph of a lush green field with some trees in the distance. A large, semi-transparent teal rectangle is overlaid on the left and center of the image, serving as a backdrop for the text.

sustainability

builds our **relationships**

Waste management continues to be a key focus. We commit to this through abiding by our sustainable practices and ongoing partnerships with stakeholders that are helping decrease our environmental impact.



Community Volunteer

Roots for Trees

Edmonton, Alberta

Photo courtesy: City of Edmonton



When we use the phrase 'it's time to roll up our sleeves and get dirty' at a bank, it's normally just a metaphor. This time it was for real. The opportunity to green up a city area with my colleagues was an invigorating experience I didn't expect when I joined CWB.

Marcus Miller

Senior Communications Advisor
Edmonton



Reduce, Reuse and Recycle

Every year, we strive to ensure our waste management processes are managed and followed rigorously by encouraging our employees to reduce, reuse and recycle. In our Edmonton offices, we have designated areas for employees to recycle their cardboard, paper and bottles. There are recycle areas on every floor and in our lunchroom areas to encourage participation. We have formal bottle recycling programs as well at many of our locations, with all proceeds sent to different charities around our communities.

We always actively recycle our old technology, such as computer monitors, laptops and printers, through the Electronic Recycling Association. In 2017, we recycled more than 220 individual items after they were securely wiped, refurbished and donated for reuse by Canadian charitable organizations.

Paper management

Our paper usage continues to decline drastically through our cutback in printing reports:

Management Proxy Circular reports



Annual Reports



Not only did we save by reduced printing but, by using our paper shred service on every floor in our offices, we have saved 2,339 trees company-wide.

In October, National Leasing's Environmental Committee held *Paper Awareness Week*. The week was full of educational events, information and contests to help reduce paper usage at our company's head office.

Responsible lending

Potential environmental risks are evaluated as part of the regular due diligence of our credit granting process. Although we're committed to supporting our clients in growing and expanding their businesses, applications are denied if we identify potential environmental risks that cannot be resolved to our satisfaction.

Sustainably environmental

When we build a new branch or renovate a space, we like to ask ourselves: can we do this greener and how can we do it more sustainably? When we make improvements, we use features such as lights-on sensors, LED lighting and energy efficient mechanical systems where possible. These actions result in our spaces being more ecologically friendly, thus reducing our environmental impact.

In November 2016, 33 of our employees aged 18 to 40 joined Edmonton's NextGen for *City Jam*, an event targeted to drive community volunteerism. Volunteer activities taken on by the team included an evening with *Roots for Trees*, the City of Edmonton's program that aims to plant 16,000 trees each year.



For information about CWB Financial Group's corporate governance practices, see our 2017 annual report available online at **cwb.com/annual-report** or in print at one of our locations.

Our most recent public accountability statement is available at our locations or online at **cwb.com/public-accountability-statement**.

