

Constant Contact Survey Results

Survey Name: SATA Industry Development Goals

Response Status: Partial & Completed

Filter: None

1. Increase the availability and accessibility of angel financing by implementing provincial tax

Answer

A tax credit related to investments in technology-based firms would provide the greatest impact for the economy. Also need to ensure that the entrepreneurs are positioned appropriately for this type of investment. Filling the pipe from both ends.

It depends on the size and form of the incentive.

Please keep fighting for the angel investment tax credit. It is such a good thing.

I don't believe angel investing is an answer to industry development. Opportunities need to be generated through helping those who would create those industries and not through helping angel investors acquire equity in fledgling companies.

The Angel group in Saskatoon and Western Canada for that matter is very small. Because many of the projects take long gestation periods and the finite amount of Angel capital will be depleted before many of the ideas can mature. Flow through share have more potential to truly create ongoing venture funding because the investore base is so much larger.

There are some well established firms across Canada and the US who may be interested in locating/relocating to Saskatchewan that this will not benefit. However, I appreciate the benefit to start-ups which is why I am neutral on this point.

This is one type of government incentive that I believe would make sense.

Investors are what turn ideas into businesses.

We need more incentives from provincial and federal governments to stay ahead as an innovative province and country. The tech sector will always create new jobs therefore governments will always get back more than what they put in!

I can see this being important not just for the larger financing deals, but for companies that require < 250K as well

Given the most recent trend in less research dollars from federal and provincial governments, and reluctance in the financial community this is becoming an essential ingredient that needs to be added to the mix.

Targeted tax incentives are not the way to go. The government's role is to create a business friendly environment and stay out of the way.

SK is at a tremendous disadvantage. BC & MB both have tax incentives.

Saskatchewan should implement a program similar to the one in BC which has stimulated their advanced technology industry

2. Remove regulatory obstacles to growth of innovation-based businesses by creating a process

Answer

Some regulatory obstacles may be necessary - in some instances, it may just be a lack of awareness or understanding.

We almost lost our business due to the Saskatchewan regulatory bodies and the governments inability to respond to our needs.

I'm not sure what barriers this question refers to or if they are important.

While this is likely most true for bio tech and mining projects regulation by definition is a retardent to innovation.

Since relocating to Regina I have found the biggest obstacle to business success has been the procurement process of Government and Crown Corporations. If obstacles could ber removed and give a broader business base more opportunities the benefits would be passed along to everyone involved. Get on with this point.

maybe with some examples of "regulatory obstacles" I would have a different answer.

we still need to balance compliance with innovation, risk with benefits.

The last thing a technical entrepreneur needs when focusing on developing the business are unexpected government hurdles.

Removing obstacles to doing business in the province is very important to all industries.

This process should include SATA as a representative of the industry so that the government understands the negative impact of some of the regulations.

3. Develop a program to support product development and market/business intelligence

Answer

The demand could be higher than current or any new programs can support. I do believe that firms, particularly early-stage, would benefit by receiving market research support. If support means tangible outputs and not just more organizations that charge fees for services then yes it's important.

This could be a great joint venture with STEP where their customer base could be a beta test group for market intelligence.

Although I may be misinterpreting this statement, I am not supportive and programs supporting Saskatchewan companies unless it's completely privately funded. We don't Non-Tech savvy entrepreneurs and SME's need a place to go for cost-effective early stage proof of concept or prototype development.

Isn't this already being done by STEP? I see this as duplicating their effort, unless you are supporting STEP's initiatives.

Since many of the advanced tech industries will be export-based, this may allow some early "acid testing" of new products or businesses. A badly developed product, if then marketed internationally, could become a critical loss for a startup company.

Need more information before I can answer this one. It is important not to duplicate services offered by the private sector.

STEP already provides this.

Business intelligence is very difficult and expensive to gather - as well as time consuming. For start-ups working on a wide range of issues, having this support would be incredibly helpful. This should be an industry initiative and not a government initiative. Product development and marketing is important in every business.

Two areas that should be specially addressed are:

1. Marketing of really innovative technologies.

2. Selling to large companies world wide by small Saskatchewan companies.

4. Increase the integration of Saskatchewan's innovation support system by establishing a first

Answer

I don't feel a first point of contact is necessary, but the innovation support system players need to be connected and aware of what each provides and when to ensure referrals can be done effectively and efficiently.

Seems like this already exists in several forms.

Creating a forum for innovators is very important, but multi portal entry will leverage this better. Use all of the business support orgs. Women Entrepreneurs, CAFE, SYPE, STEP, Very important. Enough said.

Government is often not very useful in terms of an information source. Yes, they often give lots of info, but how to make use of an info dump??? Instead, somebody like STEP is able to be more focused on delivery.

I find that the aggressive entrepreneurs are good at finding the information.

Having a one-stop contact for information and support that is known and used would be helpful. One stop to find all information is a good step in creating a business friendly environment. Lack of coordination is extremely important.

This first point of contact should be SATA and should be networked with other stakeholders that have regional offices.

5. Develop a technology mentorship program for early stage companies to facilitate access to C-

Answer

Building this capability may take some time, but it would likely be very beneficial. make it happen

There is also a tech transfer piece as it relates to tech adoption for our existing businesses. great idea

early stage companies need much broader mentorship than marketing & sales

This could be more useful, depending on how it is done. Here again, I've seen some very good models develop and some very expensive flops.

Any business mentorship is valuable.

Yes, this is important. But I would suggest you utilize an established program, such as the Raj Manek program or others.

Mentoring is a very important and often lacking development opportunity for young

If we don't, our bright young talent may move to where they can get help/guidance.

But - ensure the business advice is not generic - it should be provided (at least in part) by people in the ICT space.

6. Encourage the Crown Sector to become first adopters of technology innovations developed in **Answer**

Need to develop government-industry partnerships for the development of new
question not clear as to how the encouragement would occur - by prov gov
regulation/direction

In some instances I am sure there may be a case for this approach, but I am hesitant to completely agree. Where it makes sense that government do this, then fine.

...But they shouldn't develop it in-house!!! They need to support the development of the expertise in business.

The Crowns should be 100% transparent which includes hiring IT grads from private career colleges in addition for publicly funded institutions.

Encourage crowns to outsource technology innovations and let the company retain the intellectual property on condition they further develop the technology and increase exports of it from that development

everyone needs a first customer

The crown sector should adopt Saskatchewan innovations only when it makes sense to do so. Innovations need to stand on their own merit. Artificially creating Saskatchewan industries on the public's money does not increase Saskatchewan's prosperity.

So long as the innovation makes business sense for the Crowns.

Beta testing can also foster innovation in the Crowns. Get the Crowns to come and explain their pain to the industry asking for solutions.

This sounds like a slippery slope into supporting companies just because the product was developed in Saskatchewan. The crown sector should become adopters of the best technology innovation from around the world and pass those benefits onto the citizens. I would be more in favor of Government helping Saskatchewan-based technology innovators help market their products around the world, especially for startups.

this needs to be an stated inclusion in transparent annual planning by crowns

This is a great suggestion.

The Crowns can be encouraged but should not be forced to adopt technology due to it being SK based when it doesn't really address the business need. Partnering programs ensure that everyone has 'skin in the game'

This could be useful. Here again, it must be done properly.

Good idea to have a local customer base, but be careful, local governments have been slagged for dropping money on losing ideas.

Early adopters - yes definitely. First adopters may not be realistic unless it is matched with some publicly funded risk incentive.

Crowns are the biggest spenders. buying saskatchewan must be a priority.

Products should be used based on their merits. If it is the best product, why would the Crowns and other businesses not use it.

Saskatchewan has a history of innovations that have not succeeded in the market place because of the crown corporations being not willing to be either the first adopters or the early adopters. This pattern must be changed if the Saskatchewan wishes to reach its

7. Allow researchers to own and commercialize intellectual property created at provincial **Answer**

If researchers developed technology while being paid by the taxpayer, why shouldn't the taxpayer reap some benefit? It doesn't have to be a 100% or 0% situation.

Force researchers to team with industry and corporations to commercialize technology developed with public funds. Currently, public sector researchers are allowed to run companies that sell services and products that compete directly with small, innovative companies. Find a way to force the two together. In other words, say that profs can't own and operate private businesses unless they team with another corporation.

ip owned by the government has no commercial value. Set it free so it can grow.
This only makes sense. Who (other than the people who create the intellectual property) have the appropriate understanding and passion for the ideas generated? Shouldn't those who are responsible for the intellectual property benefit and be given the incentive to
Could be a detriment to pure or curiosity based research. Some ability for groups or departments to commercialize could supplement grant money.
This is the Waterloo experience, but entrepreneurial/commercialization thinking needs to be fostered also.

nobody is making any money by refusing to liberate IP, so let's let go
Any development done while in the employment of a lab or gov dept must become the property of the employer. Maybe I am not getting the point here.
if government funding supports the development of products or services, how does the tax payer see the benefit of this investment being owned by the researcher? what is the benefit to the labs, depts or institutions as well? - again, a question of balance
However, needs to be done more like the model in Waterloo. I believe in this model, the researchers are able to license the technology but not necessarily own it. never the less, the Waterloo model has worked very well.
I thought this was already happening with university spin off companies (I'm thinking of IRD in Saskatoon, originally developed through Dr. Bergen's research at U of S). If the IP is owned by the innovator / entrepreneur, s/he can be focused on developing it further, rather Ownership is not as important as favorable researcher licensing terms. Institutions need to have ownership in order to entice them to cover the IP costs during development. However their upside benefits should be limited to ensure they can attract quality researchers.
I am not sure that I could support using taxpayer's money to provide opportunities for others to profit. How do you pick the ones to invest in, because you can't invest in them all? Researchers are already being paid to develop these processes for the University. The Academic institutions should own these properties.
No incentive if it sits on the shelf because the real "brains in the IP" has no incentive.
This policy has already shown great results at Waterloo!

8. Promote the value of the advanced technology industry to Saskatchewan's economy. -

Answer

This should be a benefit of belonging to a business association - the association is knowledgeable about the value to the economy and can communicate it those who need to
Advanced technology can be created anywhere in the world. The "new" economy of countries like Canada is a knowledge based economy and as such, the value of an advanced technology industry outweighs the traditional ideas of what provides value to a regional economy. An economy that relies solely on industries such as natural resources is not diverse enough to continually increase prosperity in the long run.
Very important. This area supplements and extends commodities. Sask could have much more leadership in this area.
Key decisionsmakers are ignorant of the opportunity and realted impact that the AT sector has and can have
If it's a priority for the local economy, the public will understand it's a priority and embrace it. So will provincial in-migrants - a visible advanced technology industry will draw
This is key to growing the sector
I assume the purpose is to promote the industry inside and outside Saskatchewan to attract employees, investors and customers by making as many people as possible aware of the world class activity going on on Saskatchewan.
May keep more of our Bright Young Talent in the Province if they see that the sector is recognized as important. We're more than just natural resources!
It is also very improtant for the province.

9. Increase the number of highly skilled people in Saskatchewan's workforce by working with

Answer

Need to look at ways of developing management expertise as well.

Need to cultivate highly skilled risk-takers.

That's the supply side, but increasing that without increasing the demand side for that labor

This is a catch-22. Highly skilled people will migrate to areas where there is opportunity. Increasing the numbers is not possible without those opportunities in place. Highly skilled people will move-to or be educated and stay in Saskatchewan if the employment this requires listening to young students, perhaps at 10 years old - who will do that? In my experience, a number of very prominent educational institutions are far from "having it right" when it comes to educational offerings. As a company who tries to hire %100 SK AND the Aboriginal community Skilled workers, who actually want to work, are really short in Sask. Essentially, we often do not have the places to put highly talented people to work so there has been a major drain. However, we could underpin this by bringing skilled workers from other parts of the We either develop them ourselves or import them from other provinces or countries. Either way, once there's a momentum, locals will become a significant part of the workforce. Local university programs can point out the local industry waiting for new I can see this being tied to question 1. Offering incentives to train and specialize a Very important to all industries. A skilled workforce is critical to continued economic I do not think involving government immigration departments is nessecary as there are already competitive advantages through the federal immigration program, a possible provincial pilot program may be the answer if a specific need is in place.

10. Increase interaction between SME's and international and large local companies

Answer

Global marketplace that needs to be accessed by local firms.

Need to develop cluster focused collaborative efforts based on strengths.

Need to look at bothe the supply and demand side of the equation.

Exposure to potential clients is important to any SME.

Unless those Saskatchewan developed advanced technologies are world class I am against what sounds like a subsidy for local companies. We have to compete on the world history shows demanding local markets are essential to a challenging business context, without that challenging context companies become uncompetitive

Similar to the Crown Corp idea above, this too would help.

I suspect if SMEs are doing well and holding their on in their industry, they'll be noticed by bigger players.

I am not sure that this is a lot different from number 8.

11. Did we miss an issue that you feel is important to Saskatchewan's advanced technology

Answer

Increase the availability and accessibility of all types of venture financing mechanisms to support commercialization and product development across the Valley of Death - technology partnerships program, protptype development, proof-of concept, scale-up, SBIR-like, etc.

Need to develop an entrepreneurial and innovation/technology favourable policies and business climate supportive of wealth generation for the 21st century.

Need to increase our success in converting research into innovative products and services in the marketplace.

The government should quit jerking industry associations around by endless promising hope then never coming through. There are bureaucrats in place who purport to helping industry but are in fact a hindrance to progress. They need to be weeded out. If they don't have a success story about what they have accomplished over the years they have been in their position, they need to be turfed.

Saskatchewan is lagging badly compared to other provinces whose governments understand the necessity of stepping up to the plate. They are growing. Saskatchewan is stagnating because of lack of tangible assistance over the longer term. When is the Good idea to survey membership, this is crucial to keeping the IT industry moving forward in this province, otherwise the good people will continue to plateau and move elsewhere for

Lobbying federal organizations such as NRC-IRAP for stable and predictable programming. For example we are 15 days into the governments fiscal year and IRAP has already run out of money for their youth internship program. We were planning on hiring new employees with that program and now we need to redo our business plan.

Somebody needs to make some calls to some high level people and find out what the @#\$% is going on - a 15 day window out of 365 day year is not good planning. Most years they run out of funds around November, a good 200 day window. We have to take the guessing game out of these agencies and hold them accountable to their mandates!!!

This needs to be a government of the people for the people - not the other way around! (I cannot call them and say i am done paying my payroll tax for the year, why can they give

- 1) Tangible and direct support to high tech industries and start-ups need to be made available to foster an advanced technology industry.

- 2) A greater investment and focus on research needs to be facilitated. This is where technology innovation begins. The importance of research is often put behind industry short term needs. The fact is that research is what makes practical applications possible and ultimately creates the opportunities that become the new and successful industries. A focus strictly on defined industry technology needs are not opportunities but rather a competition to provide something that any technology company in the world can develop and provide. Research is the primary source of new, unencumbered ideas which have the Offer 100 % funding for pilot projects to individual innovators without the requirement that commercial interests participate in the project.

This will remove the obstacle of new innovative technologies' inability to gain the support of the usually conservative commercial interests.

Funds up to \$ 500,000 should be offered.

Knowledge translation and promotion of high tech research to the general public and gov't would help build champions of research in political circles.

The most important thing missing is a sense of mission for the industry. Think of how one thing: optimizing tillage, drove ag mach innovation for 40 years. What our industry needs is for leaders to pick about a handful of opportunities [not picking companies here, rather opportunities for both big and small to pursue]for the next generation. Three might be: [1] become global leaders in dispersed land-based monitoring of ambient environmental conditions [needed for all manner of science, regulatory, and profit reasons], [2] part of #1 above but also a focus on its own to provide cost effective communication for real time communication/monitoring from dispersed remote/field locations, [3] systems for I wouldn't stop with "Crowns" in section 6. Why not the government directly? There is a ton of specialized technology out there that is required within government (environment, A big issue has been, but seems to have changed as long as we have this government, is the "Can Do" attitude of this government plus the "Business is Welcome" in our very positive social environment. This is a profound change from what we had before. We need to ensure this government stays on track and, if it does, get's re-elected.

SATA should develop a program to encourage more partnerships in the IT industry. The market is small, but to realize more innovation and growth, if private corporations could realize value more readily through partnerships, it could strengthen and advanced the Critical issues in business development are access to people and access to capital. You appear to have covered off people well in #s 5, 8 and 9. The only issue that addresses access to capital is #1 and that focuses only on angel investors, which I would guess would be a very small source of capital in Saskatchewan as a percentage of capital required. Is there anything that could be done by working with the banks to make access to bank capital easier in an industry where bank friendly tangible assets are often not available to

No

We are a very small unit of a very advanced International multi national. Our advanced technology is developed internally.

Make sure that the government sector and crown corporations allow Saskatchewan based ICT companies and SME's to competitively bid on Saskatchewan work. One Treasury Crown has developed a short list of companies that it does business with. Only 3 of the 10 companies are Saskatchewan based while leaving out well qualified Sask based companies. To my knowledge there have been no public tenders for services outside of the 10 companies in the past 2 years. My company is Sask based small enterprise. Even though we have been doing up to \$1M in consulting business in the US, Manitoba, Alberta and BC we have not been able to bid on anything in our home province. Ministers are aware that this is in violation of AIT but nothing has happened to correct the problem. We do not want preference to Sask companies, only the right to bid on SK projects. We No, You have done an excellent job of developing a very good questionnaire with an admirable selection of strategy statements. I could not have agreed more with your identified issues

no

Good Job!

Encourage Government to buy in products or services from our industry and avoid component time and material purchasing behaviors.

12. The next question is specifically related to SATA and our place in the industry. Do you feel that
Answer

Need stable core funding for SATA to support the development of programs and services targeting the needs of SMEs and focused on growing successful companies.

To act as the collective industry voice on issues, legislation and topics of importance to the growth of the advanced technology sector. And to interact with sister or brother organizations in others sectors active in the promotion of business in Saskatchewan (including export of Saskatchewan Products and Services).

Not really important to my current industry.

Someone needs to hold government accountable. In our province the government tends to be drunk on resources and now that the proverbial bar is dry they are taking out their frustrations on all of the other industries (bye bye scn). They are a mean drunk. At a federal level, we are always an afterthought - programs are designed for the east and then they take the money they have spent in the east, normalize it against our population minus A voice independant of government is always important.

I see SATA as a key stakeholder in breaking down barriers to business success in the technology sector but it doesn't seem to be as supportive to organizations that locate into Saskatchewan from other provinces. I also don't see barriers to service procurement changing which may impact the long term viability of smaller companies that see but don't realize the potential of the Saskatchewan market for technology innovators.

coordination can result in cooperation which can be very cost-effective but ONLY if the industry agrees to focus

Ultimately, we live and die by the decisions we make within our companies, but having a voice at the SATA level is important, yes.

Sure - you're our lobbying voice. SATA can fight for the industry as a whole, while individual businesses work for themselves. Great community point.

Providing services to new companies is valuable. SATA needs to have the means to do this to realize this goal

Industry associations are always a great source of support for participants.