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# Tech Talent Report 2021

| Taking the Pulse of Today's  
| Tech Workforce in Canada



# In this report, you will learn:

- **What innovation means** to Canada's tech workforce
- **Where tech workers think Canada currently stacks up against other countries** and how we can accelerate our role as a global innovator
- **How remote work can empower innovation** and where tech talent need more support
- **How innovation can transform society** for the better
- **Where Canadian tech firms currently stand on diversity and inclusion** - and what they need to do better
- **Actions tech firms can take now** to reflect tech talent's views

# Who did this study include?



501 people surveyed  
across Canada



Full-time or part-time  
employees in the tech  
sector



Current students who plan  
to work in the technology  
sector, including  
engineering, data science,  
software design and  
development, and app  
development



English and French  
respondents

# Canadian tech organizations have a massive opportunity to innovate for good and deliver impact where it matters most.

## It starts with listening to tech talent.

At Intuit, we believe technology can power prosperity for the economy, small and medium-sized businesses, and ultimately, all Canadians. That's what motivates us to create financial technology solutions that address real-world, human challenges and propel growth.

Intuit empowers its people to bring their whole selves to work which has led to being consistently ranked as a top workplace in Canada. Coming out of an especially challenging year, we wanted to take the pulse of tech workers across the country to better understand their views on important topics ranging from innovation to diversity and inclusion. Canada has a vibrant pool of highly skilled tech workers - we have the ability to think differently by tapping into the diversity of our workforce, cross sharing and learning from one another.

As you read on, you'll gain insight from people in the tech sector, what they think is working well and where they believe organizations have opportunities to improve. In many cases, the insights are heartening and show that Canada's tech community is on the right path. However, there is a massive opportunity ahead of us to scale technology for good and strengthen the backbone of our economy.

The arrival of 2021 brings with it a renewed sense of optimism. In the wake of COVID-19, I believe this is Canada's moment to shine when it comes to innovation, and the role we play in enabling tech talent to lead with purpose and velocity to deliver impact where it matters most.

**David Marquis**  
VP & Country Manager of Intuit Canada.



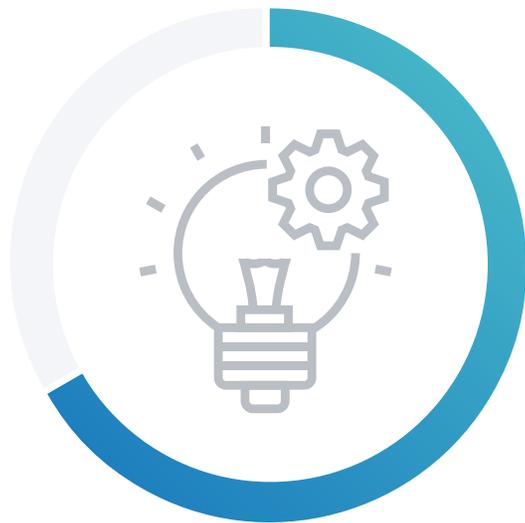
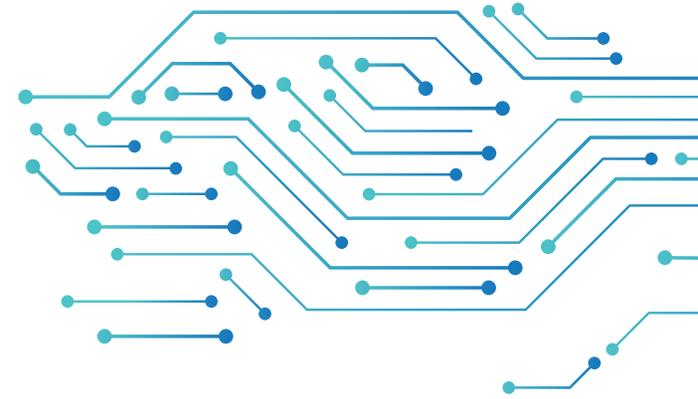
“(Innovation means) new ideas that allow us to continue improving the way we live our lives.”

Survey respondent,  
Alberta



# What Innovation Means to Canada's Tech Workforce

We asked tech workers what innovation means to them - and for most, the idea of reinventing technology and finding new ways to use technology stood out.



2 in 3

say innovation means "new ways to use tech or reinventing tech."



34%

say improvements to technology, products, services, daily life or business outcomes



22%

say "creative, unique or groundbreaking". **Female talent** are more likely to say this (28%)



18%

say more efficiency or speed

# Tech Talent Tips



**Be customer-obsessed.** Fall in love with the customers' problem and develop a deep empathy by walking in their shoes. Empower tech workers to spend time with customers regularly to inspire innovation.



**Build diverse teams representative of your customers.** Creating teams with various backgrounds, life experiences, skill sets and world views helps organizations create products and/or services that meet and exceed customers' needs. Diverse teams have a greater potential to drive radical change and innovate.



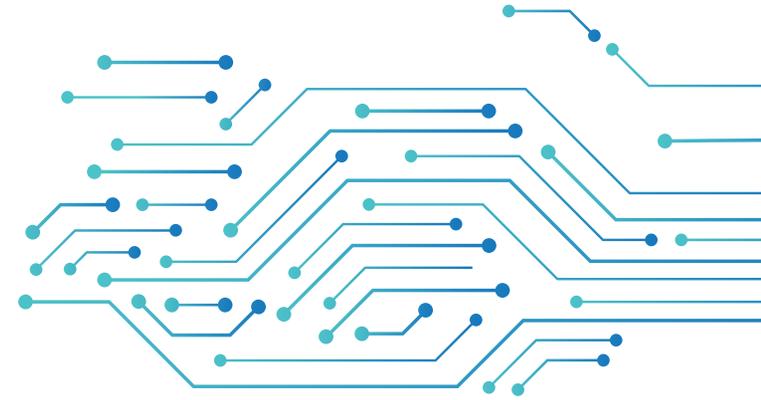
**Test and learn.** Create an environment for tech workers to think big, test new ideas, and learn fast. Allowing teams to share what innovation means to them will shape the way they approach a problem, disrupt existing processes, and lead to new impactful solutions for customers.

# Innovation Catalysts

Innovation Catalysts at Intuit commit 10% of their time to using Customer Driven Innovation and Design for Delight (D4D) principles in how they work, coaching others along the way. Teams apply D4D to bold new ideas in their daily work, continuously delighting customers as a result.

**Discover more about Design for Delight.**  
[intuitlabs.com/design-for-delight](https://intuitlabs.com/design-for-delight)

# How Canada Stacks Up: Canadian Innovation on the World Stage



The technology sector is continuing to grow in prominence in Canada. It both contributes significantly to our national employment and economic growth, and allows the country to shine on the global stage. At \$94 billion, the information and communication technology (ICT) sector's GDP accounts for 5% of the country's overall GDP. The sector also consistently outperforms the overall economy in output, employment and innovation growth.<sup>1</sup>



**Our survey reveals that the majority of Canadian tech workers feel positively about Canada's role in global innovation right now.**



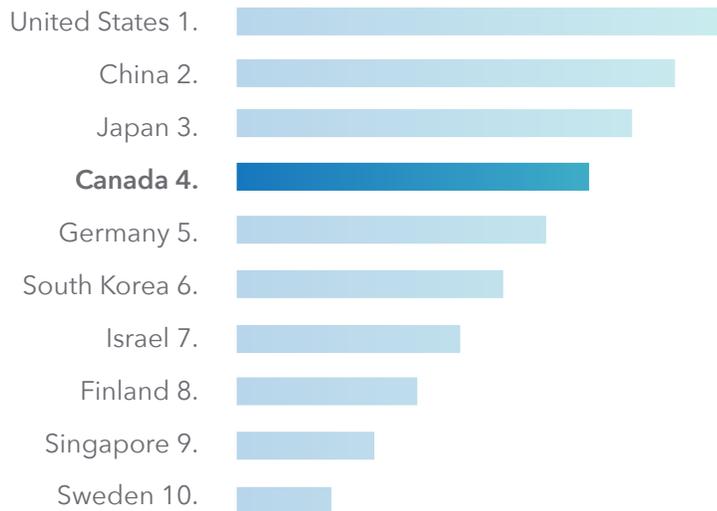
## 4 in 5

say the Canadian technology industry contributes to global innovation.

## Where Tech Workers Rank Canada on Innovation

When we asked where Canada falls on a list of 22 countries, survey respondents put us close to the top, behind only three others: the United States, China and Japan.

- #1  United States
- #2  China
- #3  Japan
- #4  Canada



While in the eyes of tech talent, Canada is forging ahead as an emerging leader in global innovation, there's more the sector could be doing. Here are some strategies tech workers feel could improve Canadian innovation on the world stage.

## Forge Partnerships to Share Knowledge



73%

say technology organizations should be seeking out and forging partnerships to share knowledge, internally and externally to advance Canada's impact on global innovation.

## Support Education, International Talent and Global Collaboration



59%

partner with educational institutions to broaden the range of tech-focused classes



56%

help best-in-class international talent work in Canada



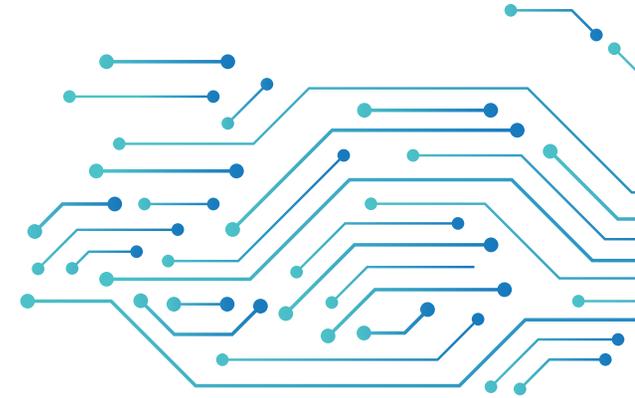
43%

encourage collaboration and integration with the firm's offices abroad\*

\*For multinational companies.

## Fuel Innovation with Financial Support

Tech workers we surveyed also point to financial contributions as a way tech organizations in Canada can contribute more to global innovation. Close to half said providing financial support such as scholarships to students entering tech will help contribute to more global innovation.



## Support Startups, Small Businesses, and Students



48%

startups, through donations, mentorship or consultation time.



46%

small businesses in technology, through grants programs.



45%

technology students, through scholarships.



nearly  
1 in 4

also say charitable donations for tech-focused learning opportunities in developing countries could help organizations contribute more to global innovation.

# Tech Talent Tips



**We're stronger together.** Have an open door policy when it comes to partnerships guided by a shared mission. Invest in partnerships with advocacy organizations, educational institutions, and tech peers to expand the scope of your impact.



**Make financial support a long-term priority.** Create scholarships, grants, or free training opportunities for technology students. Consider providing grants that support entrepreneurship, and build relationships that motivate employees. Investments now will pay off in years to come.

## Supporting Underserved Communities

The technology sector can make a difference for underserved communities. Intuit's Prosperity Hub program creates jobs, provides training, and takes on income inequality in communities around the world.

**Learn more about Intuit Prosperity Hubs.**  
[intuit.com/blog/prosperity-hubs](https://intuit.com/blog/prosperity-hubs)

# Empowering a Remote Workforce

2020 will be remembered as a landmark year in the shift to remote working. This transition to working from home does not seem to be a major barrier to innovation based on our survey results.



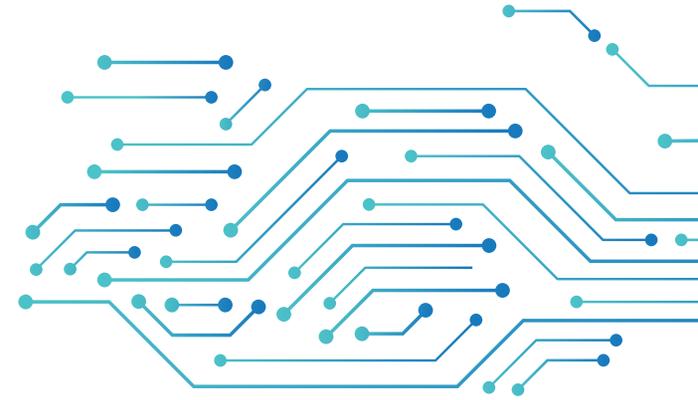
86%

want to keep working from home at least once a week even after pandemic measures relax.



3 in 4

feel the tech industry is doing well at enabling innovation and creativity among employees working from home.



## What Would Make WFH Work Better?



67%

providing virtual training information or reimbursement



60%

supporting mental health and wellness with comprehensive benefits



60%

encouraging employees to be open to new ideas, even if they're against the norm



58%

providing more flexibility in work hours

# Tech Talent Tips



**Plan for a hybrid work model.** Given the desire to continue working from home at least some of the time, organizations should plan ahead now for a hybrid model that supports virtual collaboration and creativity. Understanding the unique needs of every employee will be key in building a flexible model that attracts and retains top talent.



**Create new ways to collaborate.** Set time for unstructured brainstorming and put virtual tools in place for idea sharing.



**Reimagine work / life balance.** Room to breathe encourages creativity and innovation. Shorter, uninterrupted working hours, policies that discourage evening emails, meeting-free days, and creating access to childcare opportunities are all great strategies for evading burnout and fueling creativity.





“(Innovation means) developing products that advance society for the better.”

Survey respondent,  
Ontario

# Innovation For Good: Technology's Role in the Betterment of Society

In addition to believing their industry has a positive impact on global innovation, the vast majority of tech workers surveyed also feel strongly that innovation plays an important role in the betterment of society.



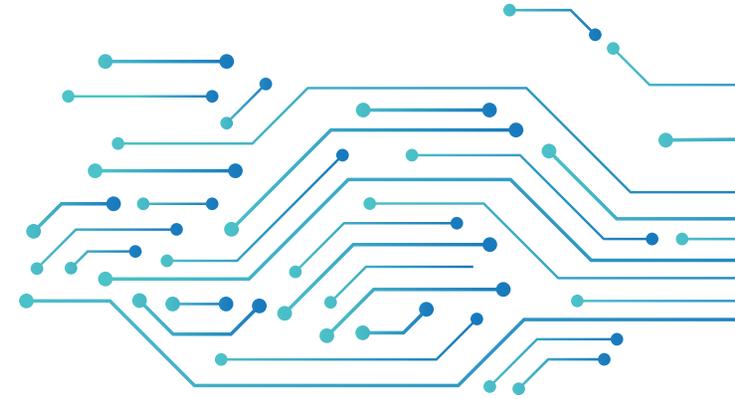
85%

agree that the Canadian technology industry contributes to the betterment of society.



## What more can be done by Canadian tech to contribute to the betterment of society?

For many surveyed, the answer lies in supporting innovation that helps the private sector scale - especially with entrepreneurs and small businesses.



## How Can Tech Organizations Improve Society?

 68% supporting startups

 66% supporting small businesses

 61% creating more jobs

## Ways Tech Firms Can Contribute to the Private Sector

 55% providing tools and solutions to launch, grow or run their businesses

 47% making financial contributions, such as grants

 45% providing relevant information and resources about finances

# Accelerating Startups

The Intuit Prosperity Accelerator, in partnership with Highline Beta, helps startups pilot innovations addressing specific financial prosperity challenges facing consumers and small businesses in the wake of COVID-19.

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## PROSPERITY ACCELERATOR

Powered by  Highline Beta

Learn more about the Intuit Prosperity Accelerator.

[www.intuit.com/ca/prosperity-accelerator/](http://www.intuit.com/ca/prosperity-accelerator/)

## Helping Everyday Canadians with Everyday Challenges

Similar to believing tech organizations should support growing businesses with tools, information, and financial contributions, tech workers also feel supporting everyday Canadians with similar solutions contributes to a better society.



53%

say technology firms can contribute to society by supporting everyday Canadians with tools, solutions, information, and resources to help manage their personal finances.

# Stepping up to Fill a Need

In partnership with Woodgreen and Prosper Canada, Intuit Canada launched a virtual tax clinic for low-income Canadians. This pilot program offered coaching, mentorship, and general tax support from trained volunteers made available by phone or video conference.



## Advancing Equal Access & Empowering Voices

The majority of those we surveyed believe the Canadian tech industry has a role to play in improving access to technology and supporting environmental and societal issues. Many feel that tech organizations must empower their own employees to be vocal about societal issues.



57%

encourage equal access across technology in Canada and around the world.



44%

encourage employees to be vocal about societal issues.



1 in 3

increase financial donations for environmental and societal advocacy groups.

# Helping Students Prosper

We want to do our part in giving all students the opportunity to prosper. The Intuit Digital Equity Initiative is helping to bridge the digital divide for 1.5 million students in nine countries.

**Learn more about the Intuit Digital Equity Initiative.**

<http://intuit.com/blog/digital-equity>

# Tech Talent Tips



**Empower your employees to make a difference.** Give employees a platform to share their concerns and leverage their passion to inform how your organization gives back. Offer incentives, such as donation matching or paid time off to volunteer to help employees have a greater societal impact.



**Strengthen your community.** Find new ways for your team to give back by sharing their wealth of knowledge one community at a time. Skills-based volunteering is always in demand and yields tangible results.



“(Innovation means) believing in more that currently exists by developing and implementing new products, services and ideas to improve the current state and the world.”

Survey respondent,  
Quebec



# Inclusive Innovation: Where Canadian Tech Stands on Diversity & Inclusion

Based on our survey results, workers in Canadian tech feel the industry is doing well when it comes to diversity & inclusion (D&I).



83%

say Canada's tech industry is doing well in supporting D&I.

There are no notable differences among ethnic groups. Across the board, the majority feel the industry is on the right track.

## Committing to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The majority of those surveyed see interviewing and hiring practices as the top way technology organizations can do more to support diversity and inclusion.

## How Can Tech Firms Better Support D&I?



70%

increase diversity in applicant hiring, screening and interview practices.



57%

help youth of different backgrounds pursue careers in technology through financial donations and mentorship



55%

provide mentorship or personal development opportunities for employees in diverse or marginalized groups

## How Can Tech Organizations Improve Recruitment Processes?



54%

ensure interview practices and processes are inclusive



49%

make hiring panels diverse



49%

create inclusive applicant screening processes

# Tech Talent Tips



**Support underrepresented or marginalized groups, inside and out.** Invest in programs such as anti-racism and anti-bias training and make these resources available to all employees. Create mentorship and personal development programs for employees in underrepresented groups. Give employee resource or affinity groups (such BIPOC or LGBTQ+ alliances) adequate budget, time and leadership support to carry out their initiatives.



**Take a holistic view of your recruitment and hiring strategy.** Put Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) at the centre of your recruitment and hiring practices, while not disproportionately filtering out candidates with a certain background or demographic. Rethink your assessment criteria, how job descriptions are written and using hiring panels with representation from different groups and parts of the business.

“For us to make the best decisions as an organization and to have the best debates, it’s important that a diversity of voices are heard. As we say at Intuit, diversity is a fact, inclusion is a choice.”

Sasan Goodarzi  
CEO, Intuit

**Learn more about Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at Intuit.**

[www.intuit.com/ca/company/corporate-responsibility/diversity/](https://www.intuit.com/ca/company/corporate-responsibility/diversity/)

# Create Impact Now



## Key Learnings

For tech workers, innovation is about **improving daily life**, and finding new ways to use tech. For some, innovation also means being **creative or game-changing**.



Canada's tech workforce feels good about our role as a **global innovator** - but they expect firms to continue pushing the envelope through **forging partnerships** and providing **financial support** to rising talent entering tech.



Though tech workers enjoy working remotely, they also see room to improve when it comes to learning opportunities and idea sharing. Providing **virtual training, supporting mental health** and encouraging employees to be **flexible**, can help improve their **WFH experience**.



People who work in the sector are **optimistic** about technology's role in **creating a better society**. They see opportunities to make an impact here and abroad, especially by **helping startups and small businesses scale**.



The technology industry in Canada is doing well in terms of **diversity and inclusion** but needs to continue to do more, from improving recruitment practices to developing better strategies for **mentorship and personal development**.

## Tech Talent Tips

- Be customer-obsessed.
- Build diverse teams representative of your customers.
- Test and learn.

- We're stronger together.
- Make financial support a long-term priority.

- Plan for a hybrid work model.
- Create new ways to collaborate.
- Reimagine work / life balance.

- Empower your employees to make a difference.
- Strengthen your community.

- Support under-represented or marginalized groups, inside and out.
- Take a holistic view of your recruitment and hiring strategy.

In 2021, technology organizations and Canada's highly skilled pool of tech workers will be critical to charting the country's path to recovery.

There is a massive opportunity to scale technology for good and we hope that this report serves as a starting point to collaborating and learning from one another.

Together, we can deliver impact where it matters most.

[intuit.com/ca](https://intuit.com/ca)

