

Annual Report 2020/2021

August 2021

A Message from the Chair of the Board of Directors

Haltech is ten years old...hard to believe, but true! While many things have changed in the past ten years, the focus has remained consistent: help our clients succeed, build meaningful and impactful relationships with strong partners in our community, and create lasting and positive impacts on the Region of Halton's economy.

As I reflect on the organization's evolution, it's community's engagement that has made the real difference and turned Haltech's vision into reality. From our first location at Sheridan College to our offices now in Milton and Burlington, the milestones have been many, the learnings voluminous, and the contributions by supporters, countless.

I would like to thank the Region of Halton and the Economic Development teams in Burlington, Halton Hills, Milton and Oakville for their tremendous support. I would also like to thank the talented and dedicated board members, who have given freely of their valuable time and expertise to guide and shape our organization. I also wish to thank Haltech's partners and sponsors for their tremendous contributions, as well as the Ministry of Economic Development Jobs Creation and Trade, who have provided us with the means and support to make this vision a reality. The strength and engagement of our friends and supporters have made us what we are, and will help drive our community forward in recovery after the trials of the last 18 months.

It has been an honour to be part of the evolution of Haltech and our innovation ecosystem in Halton Region and I am excited to see what the next ten years have in store!



Jamie Barron Chair, Haltech Board of Directors

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Shann McGrail Executive Director, Haltech

A Message from the Executive Director

A decade ago, as Haltech hung the open sign and its first clients walked through the door, the world was just beginning to learn about the possibilities of cloud computing, the potential of increased mobility with 4G networks, and exploring the potential of new business models brought about by the sharing economy. The technology has since advanced and business models have been refined to take best advantage of it. Correspondingly, Haltech has advanced and refined the support it offers to meet the region's innovation start up needs.

Anniversaries are an opportunity to celebrate the past and reflect on what matters most as we look ahead. Looking back, we have responded to client feedback to build new programs and delivery models like *Investment Readiness* and *Start Me Up*, supported the increased impact of women entrepreneurs though FedDev's Women's Entrepreneurship Strategy investment program, and piloted innovative ways to open doors for clients to new opportunities. These advances have only been possible through collaboration and partnership. We look forward to deeper relationships across the broader regional innovation center system, bringing new ideas to light with our economic development partners in the Region and municipalities, and introducing new and valuable resources to our clients. We are also excited to be working with new post-secondary institutions bringing their programs to the community this year and beyond.

As the saying goes, the more things change, the more they stay the same. Technology and innovation will continue to advance at rapid speed and entrepreneurs will keep on looking for ways to seize the new opportunities this creates. Through it all, Haltech and the community will be here to listen, respond, support, connect, cheerlead, and celebrate their success!

On behalf of Haltech, a big thank you for being part of the last ten years and I invite you to contribute to what happens next.

Sincerely,

Shann me shal

Shann McGrail

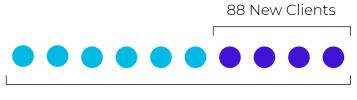
Executive Director, Haltech Regional Innovation Centre



There are too many startup programs out there that only help companies that already succeeded and take credit for their success. You and your team actually help us get there with exactly the right help at the right time, and it is obvious that your heart is in it.

MAJA MAHER, FOUNDER AND CEO OF NOVA INSTITUTE

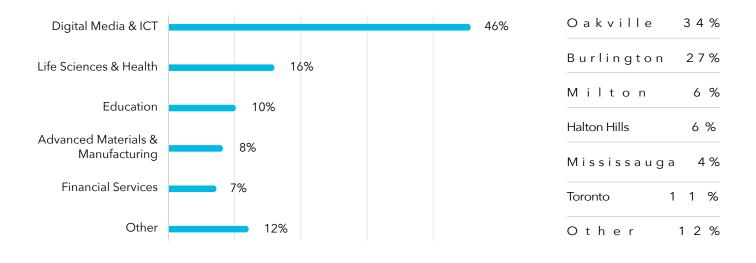
Haltech by the Numbers



207 Active Clients



By Location



By Stage

By Sector

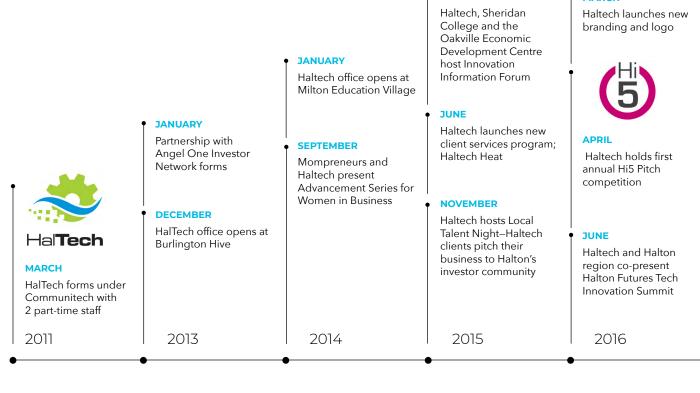
Ideation	Discovery	Validation	Efficiency	Scale
11%	14%	41%	11%	23%



Celebrating 10 Years of Innovation and Growth

In March of 2011, Haltech was formed under Communitech with just 2 part time staff in the Sheldon Levy Centre at Sheridan College's Trafalgar Campus. In August of that year, we were registered as a not-for-profit corporation. By March of 2014, we had grown to include 5 full-time staff members, 4 part-time, and 5 Entrepreneurs-in-Residence.

Today, Haltech provides access to curated education, resources, strategic connections and advisors to 200+ clients annually in the Halton region and beyond. We tailor our approach to fit each client's unique journey and provide the effective and valuable support to help clients accelerate towards their entrepreneurial goals.



FEBRUARY

MARCH



JULY TechPlace grand opening, Haltech moves into TechPlace

OCTOBER

2017

Haltech and Halton region co-present second Halton Futures Tech Innovation Summit

BEYOND BOUNDARIES

JULY

HERhalton

Haltech holds first

annual #HerHalton

WOMEN FOUNDED

CLIENTS

2018

Women's Day Breakfast

MARCH

Haltech receives funding from FedDev Ontario and announces Beyond Boundaries accelerator program for women entrepreneurs

SEPTEMBER

Haltech launches Investment Readiness course

66 WOMEN FOUNDED CLIENTS

2019

JANUARY

Haltech kicks off first cohort of Beyond Boundaries

DMS FUTURE PROOF

JUNE

Digital Main Street Future Proof Community Collaboration launched to support the needs of Main Street businesses and the community during COVID



NOVEMBER

Haltech receives additional funding from FedDev Ontario to expand women's programming

DECEMBER Haltech Enrolls in 50/30 Challenge

145 NUMBER OF VIRTUAL EVENTS HOSTED

2020

2021



APRIL

Haltech launches new and improved client resources page at haltech.ca

MARCH

Haltech launches Diversity & Inclusion committee

207

86 WOMEN FOUNDED CLIENTS

Year in Review

COVID

As another year of COVID passes, we are beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel. As of August 2021, 80% of eligible Canadians are vaccinated and 63% received two doses. Lockdowns have lifted across the country and life seems to be returning to something resembling prepandemic life.

"

Although it's been a challenging period for us and our businesses, the pandemic has highlighted the ingenuity and tenacity of our community.

Haltech was no exception to the impact of COVID-19. As widespread lockdowns gripped much of the world in early 2020, TechPlace was forced to close its doors. In response, we pivoted our content delivery model to be exclusively virtual. This includes both live events via Zoom and ondemand programming with our partner Enable Education.

We would also like to acknowledge the impact on businesses that many of our clients have faced over the past year as GDP declined rapidly by 18% from pre-pandemic levels. In 2020 we held a series of events focused on helping tech start-ups pivot their business models to accommodate this new normal, and continue to connect our clients with the many financial support resources across the province.

Without the exceptional work of our neighboring Innovation Centres as well as the Chambers of Commerce across Halton, we would not be a part of the inspiring and resilient community of businesses we see today. Stay tuned to Haltech for more information about our back-to-office plan.

COVID Success Story Nova Institute



Prior to COVID 19, Nova Institute operated as a Cleantech R&D facility, with their primary offering being in-person education sessions around Cleantech, AI and manufacturing. Since the pandemic shut down forced them to halt their in-person classes, Nova Institute made a dramatic and successful pivot to manufacturing PPE.

Making use of the Beyond Boundaries program and 1:1 advisory services, founder Maja Maher was able to effectively find and hire new employees fast, receive valuable growth and scaling advice in terms of best practices, and what to consider when scaling.

They have recently received their Medical Device Establishment License for importation and manufacturing of Class 1 medical devices, and acquired the Federal Government as a primary client for their mask manufacturing. Since Nova Institute's pivot to manufacturing PPE, their revenue growth has increased 800% year over year since last fiscal.



Despite the pandemic and the pivot to virtual events and programming, we have still been able to connect with our community. This year Haltech hosted 145 virtual events with 2621 virtual event attendees across our programming.



VIRTUAL EVENTS HOSTED



Notable Events and Programs



Digital Main Street Future Proof Program

On September 9th, Haltech and the Halton Region Small Business Centre hosted a virtual Community Mixer to introduce the Digital Main Street (DMS) Future Proof Program. Attendees included Haltech clients, main street business owners and representatives from local Business Improvement Areas (BIAs), Chambers of Commerce and municipal economic development offices.

DMS Future Proof is a new program that is designed to help small businesses recover from COVID restrictions and to help them be ready to thrive in any future economic storms. It includes three streams:

Community Collaboration - connecting RICs and community-based organizations to share key challenges and identifying problems that are impacting our communities and local businesses.

Transformation Teams – individual companies can apply for a 6-week consultation from a Transformation Team to help pivot their business model or plan to take a process from paper to digital.

DMS Lab Pilot Tests - with a goal to enhance collaboration between technology start-ups and BIAs or Chambers of Commerce, companies can apply for funding up to \$25,000 for a DMS Lab pilot project that will run from approval through February 2021.



#HerHalton

On March 10th, 2021 Haltech welcomed over 150 guests to join us virtually in celebrating the fourth annual #HerHalton Women's Day Social. This year's theme "Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future" celebrates the tremendous efforts by women and girls around the world in shaping a more equal future and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. We were honored to be joined by a number of inspiring women who shared with us their thoughts on women in leadership and opportunities for woman founders.



Haltech Hi5 Pitch Competition

On November 26th, 2020, we hosted our 7th annual Hi5 Pitching Competition. Embracing the virtual environment and adopting the tagline 'Pitch with 2020 Vision', the competition showcased 5-high potential Haltech clients who pitched their business to a panel of judges for a chance to win prizes. This year's winner was Cubby, an app-based valet storage solution. Congratulations to Jeffrey Ross, Cubby's Co-Founder and CEO, who accepted the grand prize of \$5,000 cash, \$1,500 worth of intellectual property services from Bereskin & Parr, and an interview with ZoneCast.

Diversity & Inclusion

The Diversity & Inclusion Committee

According to Harvard Law School on Corporate Governance, businesses that are gender, age and ethnically diverse make better decisions 87% of the time. At Haltech, we recognize and acknowledge that there are distinct demographic groups that have long been disadvantaged. We recognize that discrimination against race, age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, mental and physical disabilities, and all other forms are problems both for our organization and society.

"

Haltech is committed to tackling cultural stereotypes both within and outside our organization. We believe that the wide array of perspectives that results from diversity promotes innovation and business success.

From the board to management, employees, and volunteers, our commitment to diversity is led by our diversity champions, who come from all levels of the organization. Our diversity champions make up our diversity committee which is responsible for ensuring our policy regarding diversity is articulated in the day to day running and the strategic direction of the organization.

Some of the responsibilities of our Diversity and Inclusion Committee are to develop, monitor, review and enforce the Diversity and Inclusion policy at Haltech. In addition to this, the committee will be overseeing Haltech's commitment to the 50 – 30 Challenge.



50—30 Challenge

To further establish our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, Haltech has voluntarily enrolled in the 50 - 30 Challenge; an initiative between the Government of Canada, businesses and diversity organizations.

The 50 – 30 Challenge asks that organizations aspire to two goals:

- Gender parity ("50%") on Canadian board(s) and senior management; and
- Significant representation ("30%") on Canadian board(s) and senior management of other under-represented groups: racialized persons including Black Canadians, persons living with disabilities (including invisible and episodic disabilities), Canadians who identify as LGBTQ2, and First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples as founding peoples of Canada are under-represented in positions of economic influence and leadership.

By developing and overseeing these initiatives and policies, Haltech will create and facilitate an even playing field for all members of our community. In doing so, we can reflect the diversity of our customers and markets in our workforce.

For Woman-Identifying Founders

In 2017, only 15.6% of businesses in Canada were majority women-owned. Although over the last 10 years there has been a 30% increase in women-owned businesses, 60% of self-employed women are unincorporated with no employees compared to only 39% of men. Additionally, women are less likely to seek and receive financing than men.

In 2015, Haltech's client base was 9% women founders. Since then, with the creation of women-founder focused programs and initiatives, Haltech now boasts an industry leading 41% women-identifying client base. Through our commitment to diversity and inclusion and our women-focused programming, Haltech continues to pave the way for equal representation and opportunity among tech entrepreneurs in Halton.

Our Programs for Woman-Identifying Founders

Beyond Boundaries

Haltech's accelerator program for woman identifying entrepreneurs to help them grow, scale-up and reach global markets

Roadmap to MVP

A combination of content sessions and mentoring that help women starting tech companies deepen their technology skills and launch their Minimum Viable Product

Advanced Advisory Services

A 1:1 mentoring service for companies that are past the ideation stage and looking to scale by developing a growth plan

Power Panel



In collaboration with Innovation Centres across southwestern Ontario, Power Panels provide an opportunity for women tech and innovation founders to get advice from a expert group of women mentors from a wide variety of sectors and backgrounds and to expand their networks

Success Story

Spero Careers



Spero Careers Canada is a tech start up focused on removing the barriers to employment for the autism community. They are currently developing an online platform called NANAWorks which connects users to employment-focused and autism-specific resources, coaches and training.

Spero was moving into the discovery phase when COVID-19 hit. During this time, Spero joined Haltech's Women Entrepreneurship Strategy (WES) Ecosystem. They made full use of offerings, participating in the Beyond Boundaries program, Roadmap to MVP and 1:1 coaching sessions. The Beyond Boundaries program was beneficial in expanding their business development knowledge, and gaining a better understanding of the overall direction of the company. Through Roadmap to MVP, they were able to gain clarity on development of their product and have more productive discussions with their IT department. The team at Spero are now better able to be strategic in the phases of development, and their NANAWorks platform can roll out effectively and quickly. Through 1:1 coaching, Spero developed a new pitch deck and was able to secure an opportunity to present to the Equation Angels group which they hope will lead to additional funding and networking with more potential investors. With the growth facilitated by these three programs, Spero Careers Canada is poised for growth in the coming years.



Case Study

LookLocal Marketplace

Father and son entrepreneurs, Tim and Jonathon Root, have been publishing LookLocal print and digital magazines since 2013 to help build awareness of local retailers, artisans and community organizations in Oakville and Burlington. With COVID restrictions hurting their community, Tim and Jon started thinking about how they could actively help more local businesses and get the word out to their readers. Through their digital magazine and social media activity, they were already helping specialty retailers with marketing outreach but now they saw the opportunity to design and build a multi-vendor marketplace where visitors could browse and add items to their cart from multiple merchants with the convenience of one checkout.

Quick Facts

Founders	Tim Root, Jonathan Root	
Founded	2013	
Haltech Clients sir	ice 2020	

Haltech Services Utilized

- Digital Main Street project
- Peer2Peer B2B Cohort Participant
- Strategic Connections
- Mentorship
- Education sessions

They enlisted a local developer to work on the new platform and joined Haltech as a client Summer 2020. While beginning the build of their prototype platform, LookLocal applied to the Digital Main Street (DMS) Lab program in hopes of receiving additional support in expediting their roll-out. In November 2020, LookLocal's pilot project was selected as one of four projects to receive support.

Local

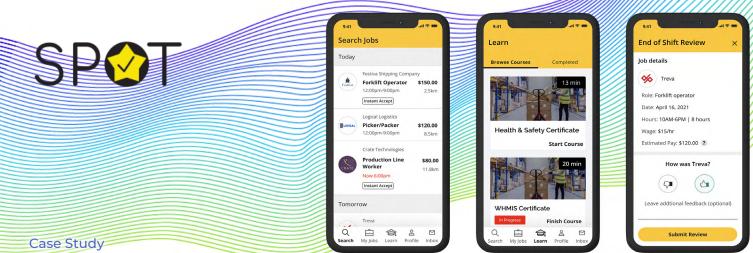
Digital Main Street Lab

Choose To Reus

> The first priority for the DMS Lab project was to polish the functionality of the platform including synchronizing inventory between LookLocal.ca and vendors' e-commerce platforms, offering a variety of shipping options and enabling geolocation functionality and integration with the POS platform to prepare LookLocal.ca to easily scale to other regions and more vendors. Through support from the DMS Lab, LookLocal was also able to hire two new staff; one new full-time staff to handle their social media marketing and customer service and one part-time marketing expert.

Outcomes & Looking Ahead

In 2021, they launched the LookLocal Marketplace. During the four-month pilot study with the DMS Lab, LookLocal was able to onboard 45 local merchants and built an excellent following on social media with over 150,000 impressions. They also had over 10,000 unique visitors to LookLocal.ca and garnered 450 opt-in email subscribers and over 1,300 Instagram followers. As of July 2021, LookLocal has grown to feature over 50 vendors from 11 municipalities across Ontario.



SPOT App

SPOT App is a Social Enterprise mobile app that provides job seekers a Learning Management System for up-skilling, micro-certifications, resume building, training and onboarding through quick access to daily paying jobs; 'learning while earning'. SPOT sells their products exclusively in the retail, warehousing, manufacturing and logistics space who require workers in high turnover industries. As a marketplace, they have partnered with several Vocational Service Organizations (VSO) via Employment Ontario Centers to provide inclusive hiring opportunities to their clients. With these partnerships across Ontario, SPOT can service business needs anywhere, bringing on pre-vetted talent quickly.

COVID-19 Impact

In 2020, COVID-19 impacted SPOT App by pushing their launch date from April 2020, to August 2020 through which they lost a few customers. However, this push back led SPOT to create a better business strategy, seeking more partners, and forging a stronger social impact. SPOT turned the disruption of COVID-19 into an opportunity to further help the economic recovery by putting Ontarians' back to work fast, using their technology to help marginalized Canadians gain new skills through micro-certification, and employment matchmaking.

Over the past year, SPOT leveraged Haltech support through mentorships around partnership building, investor readiness, and pitch practice. This guidance and feedback helped SPOT secure partnerships, win pitch competitions, and find a key advisor. In the fall, SPOT won 3rd place, and fan favorite at

Quick Facts

Founders Darren Perlman, Daniel Copeland	
Founded	2019
Haltech Clients since	2019

Haltech Services Utilized

- 2020 Hi5 Pitch Competition participant (People's Choice Winner)
- Strategic Connections
- Mentorship
- Education sessions

the LaunchYU Accelerator Program Pitch Competition, were accepted into the DMZ Incubator, and won fan favorite at Haltech's Hi5 Pitch Competition. SPOT was also chosen by the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, as a featured start-up at Collision 2021. Outside of this amazing exposure, SPOT secured a partnership with the Canadian Institute of Traffic and Transportation (CITT) to be the preferred hiring platform for their members, they expanded into Alberta, hired their first 10 employees, and received their first government grant. SPOT App's goal for the next few months is to raise their Pre-Series A round, and continue to help people transition and return to their pre-COVID "normal" with new skills and job opportunities.







My Well Self

Brenda Ahenkorah founded My Well Self in 2019 – a digital health learning marketplace and networking space that makes it easy for people to find health providers across the many fields of holistic medicine. On *mywellself.ca*, the public can do general research on a health issue, ask a question and receive responses from a growing data base of trained and vetted practitioners.

Overcoming COVID's Impact

Pilot testing for the platform was about to begin just as the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic shut down Ontario businesses. Web development and acquisition of practitioners were both stalled. Brenda turned to Haltech for support and participated in our Advanced Advisory Services coaching program and our Roadmap to MVP program in January 2021. Brenda was able to connect with MVP program facilitator and tech expert, Reema Duggal who helped her take ownership of her technology space. Through this mentorship she gained confidence in communiating with developers and a better understanding of the technology process and functionality.

Throughout the summer of 2020, Brenda conducted beta testing of her platform and modified her marketing messaging. By November she had a new pitch deck and was ready to launch. My Well Self was chosen as a Haltech Hi5 Pitch Competition Finalist the same month, and received Digital Main Street Community Collaboration funding to pilot test her platform. From DMS, Brenda was able to hire a parttime digital marketing specialist and an inside sales person. By the end of the 14-week pilot project, the team had

Quick Facts

Founders	Brenda Ahenkorah
Founded	2018
Haltech Clients since	2019

Haltech Services Utilized

- Beyond Boundaries
- Roadmap to MVP
- Advanced Advisory Services
- Education sessions

generated new sign-ups of practitioners and consumers with over 120 questions asked, 300 answers from practitioners and 650 comments and responses from the community. As of February 2021, My Well Self was officially gaining revenue.

Outcomes & Looking Ahead

MyWellSelf.ca has now identified opportunities to offer a technology based solution to help practitioners increase their online visibility and book more appointments easier in addition to positioning itself for growth and geographic expansion. As the third wave of COVID-19 continues to keep many practitioners' offices closed to in-person visits, Brenda is leveraging the learning from the DMS Community Collaboration project to enable her to support even more practitioners to build relationships with potential customers and help the community thrive in the months ahead.

New Clients Welcome

Haltech welcomed many new clients through the year. Enjoy the introduction to just a few of them.

Payd Inc. was founded by Jonathan Hillis in July 2019 with a mission of helping students, families, and employees pay for education. With the Payd App, you can use round-up savings, cash-back rewards, investment tools, and crowd sourcing to pay off your loans faster. Payd has grown considerably over the last year, being featured in Founders Beta "Top 27 Hottest Toronto Start-ups" and accepted into Ryerson's DMZ Accelerator.

Cardiotrack

Cardiotrack was founded by Eduardo Serna in April 2019 and became a Haltech client in January 2021 after moving from Monterrey, Mexico to Halton region. Cardiotrack is a disruptive healthcare automatization solution that is making healthcare delivery more efficient. Its mission is to reduce the cost of data gathering and analysis by an order of magnitude through innovation in product design, and enhancements in healthcare workflow. Cardiotrack has already made notable strides in the Canadian Market, including settling its HQ in Canada, completing Health Ventures Level II certification by McMaster University, and developing a strategy to deploy solutions in remote areas especially for first nations population.



ScriptString

Burlington-based ScriptString was founded by Sylvia Gedge in January 2019 with a mission to simplify and disrupt how businesses maximize data and technology using AI. Using the cloud-native SaaS Document Knowledge Management (DKM) Platform, ScriptString helps businesses accelerate data driven decisions and solve common data integration challenges such as manual document processes, system data integrity, and data consolidation. ScriptString has developed significantly in the last year, notably shifting its strategic focus from service provider to software provider first, becoming an Amazon Web Services (AWS) IVS partner, and launching DKM on the AWS Marketplace.



Bits & Bytes



Funding Highlights

- Tsaro received 50k funding from CENGN to optimize elevator`and costs
- Three Haltech clients received funding for social impact projects through the Investment Readiness Program (IRP), including Social Robots \$37.5K, Innovia GEO \$40k, and Ecosystem Informatics \$11.4k



New Products & Launches

- Blue-Zone Technologies Ltd. received drug approval from Health Canada to produce hand sanitizer
- Advanced Test & Automation ATA pivots to build airflow for ventilators
- Clients Qwhery and SaFuture collaborate to release instant SMS COVID text updates



Client Awards & Recognition

- MercerMacKay mentioned as a top global channel PR firm in Canada by Forrester Research
- BestLifeRewarded spoke with MP Pam Damoff and Justin Trudeau about their impact on health and the Canadian economy
- CareGo Tek named on 2020 Growth List by Canadian Business Magazine



Partnership Highlights

- Redbit won Microsoft's 2020 Community Response Inspire Award, and became a finalist in the Social Impact partner of the year category
- Sniper Skin partnered with Professional Athlete and Team Canada Softball Player, Joey Lye
- SPOT partnered with CITT (Canadian Institute of Traffic and Transportation) to be the preferred hiring platform for its members

Board of Directors

Jamie Barron

Chair, Board of Directors, Haltech Partner, Technology & Life Sciences–BDO Canada Director & Treasurer, Interactive Canada

Allison Christilaw

Board Member, Haltech Principal, Ozone Advisory Group Inc. Consultant, Calebco Chair, Board of Directors, Meta Materials Inc.

Marybeth Edge

Board Member, Haltech

Stephanie Mazhari

Board Member, Haltech Manager, Entrepreneurship Services–Halton Region

Sarah Romanuck

Board Member, Haltech Director, Southwestern Ontario & GTA-RBCx

Cameron Hay

Board Member, Haltech Co-Founder & CEO, Dispatch Integration

Anthony Khoraych

Board Member, Haltech CEO, ATA Inc.

Lucie Lalumiere

Board Member, Haltech President & CEO, Interactive Ontario

Steven Leach Board Member, Haltech Owner, Ridout & Maybee LLP

Jim Wilson Board Member, Haltech Senior Vice President, Occupier Services

Daniel Kube

Board Member, Haltech CEO, servicePath

Sponsors



OAKVILLE











Canada

Haltech receives funding through the Government of Canada through the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario.



Funded by the Government of Ontario, Regional Innovation Centres (RICs) help Ontario-based innovators and entrepreneurs clear commercialization hurdles – accelerating the growth of companies so that they can compete and succeed globally and create high quality jobs in our province Partners







:::: Cassio Capital Advisors Inc.



alternawQrk



BARRISTER & SOLICITOR and TRADE-MARK AGENT

PENINSULA





Special thanks to MNP for the help and support in this year's Summer Social and 10th Anniversary event.

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