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Case study:

MEDICINE HAT & DISTRICT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The challenge: Businesses and communities across Canada have struggled with the damaging economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In Medicine Hat, Alberta, the pandemic's impact on local businesses was immediate and severe. A survey conducted by the Medicine Hat & District Chamber of Commerce found that 55 per cent of local businesses suffered revenue declines during the period from March to July, 2020, while more than 40 per cent of businesses were forced to lay off employees.

Even more alarmingly, almost three in 10 local businesses said they were unable to operate at a sustainable level of activity.

Partner Snapshot:



- Advocating for business since 1900
- More than 950 businesses served
- 15 policy wins within the last 12 months

Magnet solution: The Chamber Partnership Initiative

The Chamber Partnership Initiative is a joint project between Magnet and the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. Its goals are to create new opportunities for growth, collaboration, and learning, and to help counter the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic by providing local chambers with resources to participate in and help accelerate recovery efforts in their community.

Through outreach efforts coordinated by Magnet, more than 50 local chambers and 725 employers across Canada began using the Magnet platform through the Chamber Partnership Initiative.

The Results:

The [Medicine Hat & District Chamber of Commerce](#) saw 40 employers sign up to use the Magnet platform. The Chamber worked diligently to communicate and market the value of the Student Work Placement Program to these employers, hosting multiple webinars and one-on-one sessions to support members through the application and job posting process on Outcome Campus Connect.

How the Chamber Partnership Initiative works

The Chamber Partnership Initiative empowers chambers to:

- apply for funding support
- promote wage subsidy programs such as the Student Work Placement Program (SWPP)
- facilitate meaningful work-integrated learning opportunities for students
- build cooperative relationships with local post-secondary institutions
- onboard employers onto the Magnet platform

With support from the Future Skills Centre, participating local chambers are given customized Magnet portals. These portals serve as an entry point for employers and job seekers in the chamber's network to access Magnet's job-matching technology and content.

Magnet also developed a series of resources and ongoing engagement strategies, including virtual 'Office Hours' featuring live demonstrations of the SWPP application process, and weekly 'Chamber Strategy Sessions' to share information about the tools and resources available through the Magnet platform.



This summer we were able to take advantage of a student work placement program. We had a great experience working with Magnet and the Medicine Hat and District Chamber of Commerce. Everyone was extremely helpful. They worked with us to find a good candidate and ensured the process with final paperwork was done correctly. The assistance allowed us to get a summer project done at a fraction of the cost

Amy Zuk-Olsen

[F&S Safety Buzz](#)

Thanks to these efforts, 18 students secured meaningful employment with local businesses through the Student Work Placement Programs, their roles subsidized by a combined \$135,000 in federal wage subsidies. These placements led to \$8,900 in funding support for the Chamber.

The Chamber remained in touch with employers, following up throughout the placement term to ensure members were on track and meeting deadlines for funding applications.



Our employers appreciated the hands-on assistance of our team, and the Magnet team, to guide them through the process. The user-friendly platform and access to apply for funding all within one portal made it easy for businesses to get involved.

Thank you for the opportunity to work on this project. You have been an absolute pleasure to work with and extremely helpful. I am amazed at the results.

Lisa Kowalchuk, Executive Director

[Medicine Hat & District Chamber of Commerce](#)

About Magnet



[Magnet](#) is a digital platform founded at Ryerson University. We partner with education, government, technology, and community services to support Canadians with inclusive growth in today's changing labour market.