

A Winning Mix

Growing opportunities here at home



The Manitoba Investment Forum is designed to help us help ourselves. The idea was born on the Prairies in 1997 when Nesbitt Burns hosted two similar events - one here and one farther west. They were outstanding successes and the Winnipeg event is now an annual showcase of opportunity.

The concept is simple - creating as many winners as possible. Explains Tom Waitt, senior vice-president and divisional

director of Manitoba and Saskatchewan for Nesbitt Burns and the father of the Forum: "We bring exciting local opportunities before investors who can make an exceptional return on their dollar while ensuring our kids have jobs here in Manitoba in the future."

The Forum is the first chapter in an untold story. "What we've done is bring Manitoba companies big and small, senior and junior, old and new into one forum," says Waitt. "It works not only for the inves-

tor but for the companies themselves who mentor and help each other showcase their talent."

Promising, aggressive Manitoba companies, headed by talented entrepreneurs, need cash to grow. It's far cheaper for investors to buy into these firms, as a part of their investment mix, than park all their cash in the inflated exchanges in Toronto, New York and elsewhere.

These two groups don't often meet. The companies poised to grow don't often get a chance to tell their story to a receptive audience. That's the purpose of the Forum - it brings growth companies and investors together in a winning mix.

Waitt, who has four children, also has longer horizons. "When my kids graduate it would break my heart if they had to leave Manitoba to find a job. If I don't do my part now to build our economy I'll have no one but myself to blame in a few years if my kids move away."

The first Manitoba Investment Forum, held in November 1997, attracted more than 30 companies seeking capital and several thousand investors. Together they started creating opportunities in their own backyard. By the end of the day every firm had received a benefit.

Says Chuck LaFleche, president of Momentum Software Corp.: "We were looking to raise about \$2 million and I had 16 people come up to me afterwards saying they're interested. In that 20 minute presentation I accomplished what would otherwise take a lot more time."

Such resounding endorsements are expected again at the second annual Manitoba Investment Forum, **October 9, 1998**, at the Winnipeg Convention Centre.

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Tom Waitt at the Parking Paystations display at last year's Forum.



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