

Planned retirement of Gord Follett, Vice-President, Bridgewater Bank

On behalf of Bridgewater Bank, the Bank's Board of Directors and our CEO, Don Smitten, I am delighted and perhaps just a little sad to announce that after 45 years of financial leadership, 16 of them with Bridgewater Bank, Gord Follett, Vice-President, Strategic Initiatives, is retiring.

Gord has left a lasting impression on the Bank and on those around him. A day doesn't go by without hearing about his Scottish roots, his family or about an event that only happens to one in a million people – Gord being that one. In the right venue, the people close to him could talk about his outlandish stories for hours. It is said that wherever he goes, a fair-sized thunder cloud follows. That cloud, however, has never stopped him from being a key influencer at the Bank – nor diminished his sense of humour.



Gord's early career included long-stays at both Nortel Networks and Shaw Communications. He joined the Bank in 2004 as Controller and has served as Vice-President since early 2008, leading the bank through a series of market fluctuations. He has been a mastermind through International Finance Reporting Standards, Basel III, the post-2008 fallout, capital requirement shifts and numerous mortgage insurance changes. During this time, he helped the Bank diversify its revenue base through product expansion and most recently through a series of strategic partnerships.

Throughout his time, he aided the Bank's growth in the alternative mortgage industry across Canada and helped expand the deposit channel. As VP Strategic Initiatives, he has led a number of significant programs to help improve overall operating efficiency. "I've always admired his creativity and focus. He has a keen eye for taking things and turning them around in the best interest of the Bank," says Dave Terletski, Vice-President, Enterprise Risk. Known for his adaptability and tenacity, Gord claims to be a chameleon. He has been compared to one of the most iconic and indispensable of implements, the Swiss Army knife – whatever the challenge, he acclimatizes and overcomes. It is a valuable skill that has been complimentary to the executive leadership at Bridgewater Bank.



"If ever there was a void, Gord would fill it," says Robin Klein, Vice-President, Finance. His welcoming and honest nature made for an excellent mentor. Gord's peers, like Robin, can attest to his altruism and ability to challenge a mindset. Always open for a conversation, whether personal or work-related, he imparts an alternate perspective. Gord has always been a good listener, but he is an even better talker. Though known for good conversations, they are also known to be lengthy. Always riddled with unexpected twists and turns, his meetings tend to bring about a smile or two. A lot of those conversations started or ended with his family. His strong family values could be sensed from a mile away. His love for them is unmistakable – just have a conversation with him and you will see. It's the Scottish in him that makes him so talkative and family-oriented, he would likely say.

Gord has built a strong foundation for our financial health and has been crucial to our growth and success these past 16 years. His extensive knowledge of business finance and his natural ability to conceive creative new strategic opportunities, are a rare combination.



"I've never met someone so dedicated to learning, the guitar that is," says Dave. "His persistence to get better, that's where he has my respect." We hope he uses this next stage of his life for his holy grail pursuit of the perfect guitar and fine tune (pun intended) his shredding. May he be able to play for his grandkids one day without damaging their hearing – keep practicing, Gord.

Gord has spent the last year imparting his knowledge in preparation for his departure on Friday, June 12. Gord and I joined Bridgewater Bank within one week of each other. From the beginning, I knew we had something special. It wasn't long before Gord established himself as the soul of the bank. I cannot thank him enough for his many years of passion and service. I wish him all the best in his well-earned retirement.

Sincerely,

Peter O'Neill

Chief Operating Officer