



We launched our annual GC Summit series in 2020 to provide a forum for General Counsel and Chief Legal Officers to join their peers, to discuss matters of shared interest across a range of organizations and industries and to provide a platform for collaborative learning in a supportive, collegial environment. Last year, we explored the environmental, social & governance revolution, which is having an increasingly important impact on the role of the corporation within society and, naturally, the role of the General Counsel within the corporation. This year's Summit focused on how the role of General Counsel can enhance organizational impact and contribute to organizational strategy, culture and decisions in this age of disruption. We were honoured to have over 160 prominent legal leaders in attendance at this year's Summit.

In this report, we capture discussions and key take-aways from our two panels who shared perspectives on business opportunities in Canada and globally, and discussed how to convert risks into opportunities to pursue organizational growth and prosperity.

Thank you for being part of the conversation and we look forward to seeing you at the 4th Annual GC Summit in February 2023!



Dave LeonardChief Executive Officer, McCarthy Tétrault



The Third Annual General Counsel Summit

General Counsel as Growth Leader in the Age of Disruption: Report and Key Takeaways

Hosted by McCarthy Tétrault – June 2, 2022

Leadership in a Time of Uncertainty: Finding the Silver Linings

In her opening remarks, **Judith McKay**, Chief Client and Innovation Officer at McCarthy Tétrault, herself a former general counsel, commented on the crucial role GCs have and the organizational impact they can make in this age of disruption. The goal of the Summit was to facilitate sharing ideas, providing valuable insights and connecting GCs nationally with their peers.

In his introductory remarks, CEO **Dave Leonard**, McCarthy Tétrault LLP, commented on how the last two years have been a whirlwind for business leaders. A pandemic that shut down much of the world, debates about the future of work as we discovered the power of Zoom, a reckoning about systemic racism in our world and workplaces, an invasion of Ukraine that challenged business leaders to again consider where they should and should not do business. Layer on all of that, the challenges posed by increased awareness of climate change and business leaders are grappling with both existential questions like, 'what is our moral role in this war, if any' and risk management questions like, 'how do we minimize supply chain disruptions caused by the pandemic or war?'

These events that capture the daily headlines create both threats and opportunities. The 2022 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: The Geopolitical Business¹ revealed that 6 in 10 respondents want businesses to add 'geopolitical' issues to their agenda. Comparatively, 85% and 77% of respondents feel firms should include environmental and societal responsibilities, respectively, in their strategies.

At the same time that business leaders are worrying about the basics, they are also being asked to help solve pervasive global challenges. General counsels have a critical seat at the executive table. Now, more than ever, they are uniquely positioned to offer significant value to the direction of corporate strategy and are empowered to bring risk and opportunity to leadership.

Dave Leonard facilitated a panel discussion featuring leaders of organizations that champion and help businesses not only succeed but thrive in Canada and beyond:

- Janet De Silva, President and Chief Executive Officer, Toronto Region Board of Trade:
- Karl Tabbakh, Regional Managing Partner, Québec, McCarthy Tétrault
 LLP and Chair of the Board of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce.



Janet and Karl provided their perspectives on business opportunities in Canada and globally, on the ways to extract economic and societal value from the knowledge economy and on how Canadian companies are spearheading innovation within their organizations and the broader industry to generate advanced products, services and outcomes. The panel also explored the role of public/private partnerships in providing a platform for long-term sustainable growth in Canada.

Global Community: Pressing Global Issues

One of the common characteristics of the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, climate change and other pressing issues is that they all have global implications. In this context, Canadian companies have been called upon to take a stand on difficult matters which can lead to companies being forced to weigh reputation against profitability. We saw, for example, at the beginning of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, companies abandoning their operations in Russia, sometimes voluntarily and sometimes under pressure or to comply with sanctions or simply to meet the expectations of popular sentiment.

Panelists kicked off the conversation by mentioning that companies are currently focused on solving challenges that the world is facing and positioning themselves to take advantage of future opportunities. Supply chain disruption is a severe problem right now for Canadian businesses – in 2021, Canadian manufacturers were hit with approximately \$10 billion in lost sales coupled with increased costs of approximately \$1 billion. This impacts competitiveness and sustainability making it paramount that Canadian businesses use advanced technology to address congestion around movement of goods and improve competitiveness.

Working with all levels of government is an important factor in addressing the frictions Canadian manufacturers are

currently facing. Canada currently has a great opportunity for on-shoring, but if competitiveness challenges are not fixed, the United States will be better equipped and the reshoring opportunity could potentially be missed.

Canadian businesses are recognized as global leaders in artificial intelligence research. The opportunity lies in translating that research into deployment for the benefit of our economy. As it pertains to the climate economy, for example, Canada has the potential to be a global powerhouse. This potential can be leveraged by focusing on initiatives that will (i) solve issues for the Now, and (ii) make Canada competitive globally for all sizes of businesses. For example, addressing the emissions challenges and collaborating to find a solution to this issue would give Canadian businesses a great competitive advantage.

The bottom line is that Canada needs to increase its internal competitiveness to create a platform for more investment and incorporate geopolitical considerations as a key element in decision-making. Companies themselves need to take these issues into account instead of leaving them for governments and chambers of commerce to deal with on their own. In particular, general counsels must be aware of geopolitical challenges as they directly impact business, strategy and companies' involvement in the global economy.

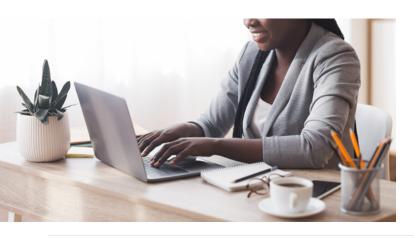
Addressing the Labour Shortages

The panelists continued by acknowledging that Canada is missing opportunities to grow its economic competitiveness by failing to appropriately incorporate highly skilled immigrants in the workforce. Canada is a great attractor of skilled labour through immigration; however, this does not always translate into filling the available roles.

Upon arrival in Canada, skilled immigrants face barriers preventing them from being repositioned in their fields of expertise which, in turn, hinders our ability to take advantage of skills that could grow Canada's regional economic competitiveness. Work needs to be done to better recognize the evolving nature of skills demand and supply and how skills in foreign localities can be quickly acknowledged and incorporated into our labour pool.

Additionally, the panelists emphasized that Canada's approach to talent recruitment is more passive than is the case with some other countries. Canada needs to adopt an active approach to recruiting qualified people, as the level of global competition for attracting skilled labour is very high. The advantage we have as a country is that Canada's selling brand is very strong and we have the ability, through policy making, to remove barriers for skilled workers to enter the workforce.

Another avenue for addressing the labour shortage is investing in talent development. Previously, talent shortages were not an issue so generally, Canadian businesses did not develop the practice of investing in talent in Canada. It is crucial, however, that we begin doing so. Among other things, the benefit of investing in current talent is that employees become an instrumental resource for recruiting new talent as they can speak to their experience of developing their skill set in a culture that invests in talent and thus helps regenerate the human capital of the company.



- "Labour shortages are not a COVID thing; there are fundamental demography and immigration aspects to this issue so it is very important to consider it as a risk to your business when deciding how to deal with labour shortages."
- Karl Tabbakh, Regional Managing Partner, Québec, McCarthy Tétrault LLP and Chair of the Board of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce

Energy: Local Capability vs Global Economic Opportunity

As an energy producer, Canada has an opportunity to help address the energy supply issue arising from the Russia-Ukraine conflict. The panelists emphasized the importance of being proactive rather than reactive in order to capitalize on opportunities such as the one presented by the energy supply struggle.

The approach to the energy sector must be intentional and strategic and the strategic thinking used in businesses needs to be present at the higher levels of government. Current events are revealing the disconnect between world's dependence on Russian gas and the lack of infrastructure required for Canada to be a credible ethical partner to supply world's energy needs. Building infrastructure cannot happen immediately – failing to develop Canada's local capability and strategize with a focus on geopolitical issues results in missed opportunities.

An area in which Canada is positioned to develop its local capability to serve a global need is electric vehicles. Taking advantage of the country's position depends on Canada's ability to implement a capable grid system and procure the components required to establish a viable market. The challenge lies in the fragmented approach to developing a viable market place. Companies, and general counsels specifically, play a key role in developing a more cohesive approach to organizing and implementing a proactive strategy to benefit from on this opportunity.

Growth & Competitiveness: How do we implement a robust economic action plan?

Panelists reflected about the fact that as societies around the world begin to acclimatize to potential long-term co-existence with the virus, the 'new normal' has begun to emerge. This has ignited the race to re-assert industrial and technology competitiveness and potentially re-order the global economic landscape.

The panel emphasized that Canada's global competitiveness is not a new topic – it was front and centre prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and, now that we are emerging into the 'new normal', finding a solution to the competitiveness and growth problem in Canada must become a priority again. The silver lining in this challenge is that Canada has what the world needs. Taking advantage of this unique position requires us to prioritize economic growth and wealth creation and elevate this issue as a matter of national security.

In order to achieve this, domestic businesses need to prioritize growth and competitiveness and work with business associations, such as the Chamber of Commerce, to convey this message to all levels of government. The federal government needs to be involved in long-range competitive growth strategies to address the critical crisis our country is facing today.

One of the challenges in partnering with the government to address this crisis is opening lines of effective communication. The panelists had two main suggestions for doing so: (1) utilizing associations such as the Chamber of Commerce to be a strong voice conveying businesses' message to all levels of government; and (2) building coalitions to create a common voice and add weight to the issue(s) that are paramount across industries.

The panelists suggested combatting populism that inhibits growth by talking about profitable Canadian companies in a different light. With our aging population, retirement savings and pension funds are of critical importance. Profitable companies should be applauded for securing retirement rather than being viewed as self-serving. It is difficult for companies themselves to change this narrative, but organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce can be the voice for them.

GCs can position themselves as change agents by pushing these messages forward within their organizations which will, in turn, influence the government agenda.

- If there are pain points in your business that are connected to an ecosystem, let's have a conversation about how we can bring you together, put the data behind the problem and create the narrative around why the issue is important and what it will take to solve it. You don't have to do it by yourself."
- Janet De Silva, President and Chief Executive
 Officer, Toronto Region Board of Trade

Cyber Security: Is Canada taking this threat seriously enough?

Globally, we have seen more frequent examples of international conflict being waged on the digital front, whether it be through disinformation campaigns, cyber espionage or cyber attacks. The panel discussed whether Canadian executive teams are taking this threat seriously enough, whether the investments they are making to mitigate exposure are proportionate to the risks, and what more can be done to address this risk on a global scale.

The panelists agreed that companies are very exposed on this front and in terms of risk management, cyber security should be very near the top of the list. The magnitude of attacks illustrates how critical this issue is. Currently, all levels of government take a different approach to this issue which is not effective. We need to create a united platform to simplify the processes for managing this risk. However, we cannot fight this company by company or province by province; it must be addressed collectively.

It is a risk that every GC needs to prepare for and information sharing and collaboration are essential.

Converting Risks into Opportunities to Pursue Growth and Prosperity

Workforce shortages, supply chain disruptions and climate change affecting overall operations, responding opportunistically, innovatively, and ultimately, taking risks in the time of crisis is crucial for success.

Christine Lonsdale, Partner, Litigation Group, McCarthy Tétrault LLP, moderated a panel discussion where prominent GCs discussed their strategies and practical tactics in their role as general counsel in ensuring purposeful growth and prosperity in challenging areas including environmental, societal, food, health, financial and cyber security. This conversation featured:

- Lilac Bosma, Senior Vice President and General Counsel, HSBC Bank Canada;
- Daniel Holden, Senior Vice President, Human
 Resources and General Counsel, Nestlé Canada;
- Miranda Lam, Chief Legal Officer and Senior Director, Business Development, Acuitas Therapeutics Inc.;
- Miguel Simard, Senior Vice President and Chief Legal Officer, Export Development Canada.
- In every single risk, there are going to be opportunities and in every single opportunity, there are going to be risks.



The most important piece in discerning the aspects of any given situation is to keep a curious and open mindset."

 Lilac Bosma , Senior Vice President and General Counsel, HSBC Bank Canada

Morphing Risk into Opportunity

6

Panelists began by discussing how risk can morph into an opportunity. They agreed that what matters most is to keep a curious and open mindset. A GC's role is to give a sober second thought when challenges arise but panelists cautioned against approaching problems in a binary way and jumping to conclusions. Difficult situations should be viewed as experiments, learning opportunities and occasions to re-determine the best way to address a challenge and take advantage of an opportunity.

If the approach to difficult situations creates an atmosphere of fear and paralysis, you automatically eliminate opportunities. Training individuals within your organization not only on what they should avoid doing, but also on how to identify alternatives leads to discovering risks that can actually be taken. Giving individuals the freedom to experiment and be open to failure changes how you look at risk and creates opportunities that would otherwise be missed.

Risks that are industry-wide are actually opportunities for competitive advantage, challenging lawyers to move away from pure legal analysis to a broader risk analysis, showing where their businesses can go, rather than where they cannot. Understanding the business is crucial to transferring risk into opportunity.

Panel members agreed that seeing opportunities when confronting a risk or challenge is a skill that can be learned. On a practical level, thinking of challenges as the starting point rather than the stopping point to achieve a business objective can be catalytic to a good outcome. Understanding the 'why' on a deeper level is where the opportunity lies and to do so, GCs and their clients must foster an environment that enables discussion about the underlying problem and systemic issues that need to be addressed.

- "If you have a system that is producing really risk-averse people, there are elements of that system that are designed to produce those outcomes. You've got to strip out what is driving those things and put in incentives that will encourage people to be more open to taking risks."
- Daniel Holden , Senior Vice President, Human
 Resources and General Counsel, Nestlé Canada

Creating a Culture that Drives Innovation

It is easy to see risk a threats instead of as opportunities for innovation. If the legal team has a zero risk mentality, that will bring paralysis to the organization. GCs should not systematically say No, but should instead present the risks and try to figure out how those can be efficiently managed. Empowering individuals within the legal team to take risks that can be managed in turn empowers other stakeholders to take risks that drive innovation.

In order to foster innovation, it is important to create an environment where people can make mistakes and learn from them. The blame game is an innovation-, productivity-, culture- and creativity-killer – and, usually, the mistake itself is not the problem, it is what is done afterwards that is the issue. As leaders, GCs should take a gracious and curious approach to mistakes as opposed to judgment and punishment.

The panel commented on how younger generations are drawn to purpose-driven organizations. They see a company's mandate as why they come to work every day. Culture change can be driven by creating a supportive structure where assessing and taking calculated risks to drive innovation is part of performance goals.

- "People are drawn to purpose-driven organizations they see a company's mandate as the reason why they come to work every day. It is really important for people to feel their organization is supporting them in assessing and taking risks day in and day out"
- Miguel Simard , Senior Vice President and Chief Legal Officer, Export Development Canada

It has been said that every system is perfectly designed to produce the outcomes that it is producing. Instead of providing Yes or No answers, it can be worthwhile to provide risk assessment answers that are more nuanced so that the legal department is not perceived as closed off, but rather as a part of the team driving innovation through well-assessed risk taking.

Panelists also provided several practical pieces of advice:

- 1. Ensure that you bring to people's minds what you want them to be thinking about when they have to make a decision;
- 2. Identify your supporters as well as the people who could be problematic to your cause early on in order to diffuse those issues in advance;
- 3. Ensure that people are aware that their interests and opinions are being taken into account to create an empathetic decision-making process; and
- 4. Remind people of how executives, and GCs in particular, are trying to achieve the company's strategic objectives and emphasize how decisions further such objectives.

Collaborating with Outside Counsel to Develop Opportunities

Panelists went on to discuss the role of outside counsel in identifying areas of opportunity. Outside counsel often have a macro-level view of the industry and should be at the forefront of legal trends, compared to GCs who have a more micro-level view of their company's business. The best way to collaborate is to explain to outside counsel how your specific business works, the business's goals and its blind spots.

GCs have a role of translator and connector between outside counsel and their shared clients' business partners. Leveraging outside counsel regularly requires GCs to take on the role of translator and connector between outside counsel and the C-suite. Oftentimes, GCs translate the assessment outside counsel has provided and connect what is happening from an executive level perspective internally to give outside counsel necessary context of what is useful and practical for the business.

Panel members agreed that it is important for legal departments to showcase the innovation coming from their members to illustrate the value that they bring to the corporation. They also mentioned that fostering a culture of storytelling allows the legal team's brand to come across. A missed opportunity often arises after surmounting a very difficult challenge when team members do not want to think about it anymore. That is precisely the time when the team needs to discuss how to frame and promote that success story because it will strengthen the legal team's brand.



ESG: An intersection of risk and opportunity

The ESG space is an intersection of risk and new opportunities, especially in light of rapidly evolving societal issues that are disrupting the status quo. It is a relatively new concept that presents a great opportunity for outside counsel to provide guidance. Companies need to create a roadmap of where they want to go and how to manage new risks and new opportunities, but they need an outside view to gauge benchmarking.

Fundamentally, ESG is an exciting growth area where the corporate world has an opportunity to encourage and implement change. It is an evolving area that people are racing toward, but sometimes it is important to slow down, ask questions and make sure companies are achieving their goals. This is an area of huge opportunity for GCs to drive positive change by taking on the role of the conscience of their organization.

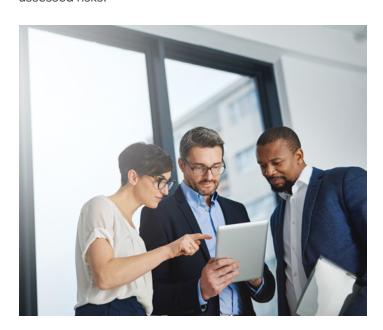
- "There are periods where you have to live with uncertainty. These periods present a huge opportunity for legal teams to encourage your organization to embrace ambiguity by communicating a clear road map of what will happen while you're in that grey state."
- Miranda Lam , Chief Legal Officer and Senior Director, Business Development, Acuitas Therapeutics Inc

Using the Grey Zone to Enable Risk-Taking

The panelists agreed that embracing ambiguity in the grey zone creates a huge opportunity for risk-taking and innovation. Often, not many people in an organization will have the courage to play in the grey zone, but those who do – in a risk-adjusted way – can really accelerate positive outcomes.

Moving out of the black-and-white, yes-or-no space and into the grey zone comes down to culture and communication. There will inevitably be times of uncertainty but communicating a roadmap for what will happen in these times brings comfort and encourages people to embrace the opportunities that arise from ambiguity.

The panel unanimously encouraged lawyers to recognize the grey zone is larger than it first appears, to be open to embracing ambiguity and to have the courage to take wellassessed risks.



8 The 3rd Annual GC Summit

Pulse Check Polling

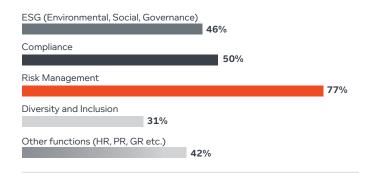
To gauge feedback from everyone in attendance both in person and virtually, Judith McKay, Chief Client and Innovation Officer, McCarthy Tétrault, led summit participants through a number of key questions relating to how the role of the GC has continued to evolve. The results provided insight into how complex general counsels' roles are, especially in uncertain times.

What do you see as the greatest opportunity coming out of the pandemic?



The survey identified the top five greatest opportunities coming out of the pandemic as: (1) flexibility; (2) empathy; (3) agility; (4) people; and (5) flexible work. These opportunities are all dependent on culture. Consider how to integrate these topics in the legal department and the organization as a whole to align company culture with embracing these opportunities.

Which of the areas do you see GCs now being responsible for?



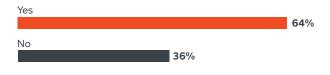
The majority of respondents said GCs are now responsible for risk management. This is unsurprising in the wake of the pandemic. While risk management requires GCs to assess and mitigate risk, it also presents an opportunity to embrace ambiguity and become a catalyst for positive outcomes.

What is the best way to build credibility with your executive team?



GCs and legal teams are required to take into account a multitude of factors to build credibility with their executive teams. The majority of respondents indicated the best way to build credibility is to provide creative solutions to business problems. This goes hand-in-hand with creating opportunities out of risks and embracing ambiguity. It also an area of opportunity for marrying the macro-level perspective outside counsel provides with GCs' micro-level perspective to provide creative solutions to unique business problems.

Would you be interested in being part of a national working group of general counsels to help influence public policy on competitiveness and economic growth in Canada?



While the results are by no means unanimous, a significant majority of respondents were interested in being part of a national working group to help influence public policy on competitiveness and economic growth in Canada. The hesitation may be due to disenchantment with the ability to open effective lines of communication with all levels of government in order to actually influence public policy or could be based on skepticism that a national working group of GCs would be able to agree on one or two major issues of focus since the industries in Canada are so diverse.

Regardless, the response indicates that participants believe a national working group of GCs could influence public policy on competitiveness and growth and organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Toronto Region Board of Trade can help open the lines of communication with government to enable change.

Closing Remarks

Godyne Sibay, Managing Partner for the Ontario Region at McCarthy Tétrault LLP, closed the discussion, and thanked panelists for the rich conversations while providing opportunities to see general counsels as vital contributors to the executive team with unique vantage points as leaders, strategic partners and culture creators. She noted that general counsels who focus on solving problems and seeing the opportunities in risks improve the lives of their clients and the organizations they serve. Godyne encouraged participants to stand together to build a platform to ensure Canada's global competitiveness.

We thank you for joining us and hope to see you next year.



Thank You To Our Panelists & Moderators:

Session 1: Leadership in a Time of Uncertainty: Finding the Silver Linings

Janet De Silva, President and Chief Executive Officer, Toronto Region Board of Trade

Karl Tabbakh, Regional Managing Partner, Quebec, McCarthy Tétrault LLP and Chair of the Board of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce

Dave Leonard, Chief Executive Officer, McCarthy Tétrault LLP

Session 2: Converting Risks into Opportunities: Shifting the Organizational Mindset

Lilac Bosma, Senior Vice President and General Counsel, HSBC Bank Canada

Daniel Holden, Senior Vice President, Human Resources and General Counsel, Nestlé Canada

Miranda Lam, Chief Legal Officer and Senior Director, Business Development, Acuitas Therapeutics Inc.

Miguel Simard, Senior Vice President and Chief Legal Officer, Export Development Canada

Christine Lonsdale, Partner, Litigation Group, McCarthy Tétrault LLP

GC Roundtable Breakout Discussions – Maximizing Strategic Decision-Making Impact: Tales from the Trenches

Cam Belsher, Partner, Business Law, McCarthy Tétrault LLP, Toronto

Wendy Berman, Partner, Litigation, McCarthy Tétrault LLP, Toronto

Nancy Choi, Partner, Business Law, McCarthy Tétrault LLP, Toronto

Shane D'Souza, Partner, Litigation, McCarthy Tétrault LLP, Toronto

Alyson Goldman, Partner, Business Law, McCarthy Tétrault LLP, Calgary

Christine Ing, Partner, Technology, McCarthy Tétrault LLP, Toronto

Pavan Jawanda, Partner, Business Law and Co-Head, National Tech M&A Group, McCarthy Tétrault LLP, Vancouver

Hartley Lefton, Partner, Business Law, McCarthy Tétrault LLP, Toronto

Wendi Locke, Partner, Business Law, McCarthy Tétrault LLP, Toronto

Jennifer Longhurst, Partner, Business Law, McCarthy Tétrault LLP, Toronto

Clemens Mayr, Partner, Business Law, McCarthy Tétrault LLP, Montreal

Anca Neacsu, Partner, Business Law, McCarthy Tétrault LLP, Montreal

John Osler, Partner, Business Law, McCarthy Tétrault LLP, Calgary

Robert Richardson, Partner, Business Law, McCarthy Tétrault LLP, Toronto

Farhiyah Shariff, Partner, Business Law, McCarthy Tétrault LLP, Calgary

Sonia Struthers, Partner, Business Law, McCarthy Tétrault LLP, Montreal





4th Annual GC Summit

We are incredibly fortunate to work with exceptional general counsel and in-house lawyers across the country and we thank you for your support and trust throughout the year. We value opportunities to meet with you face-to-face, and hope you can join us for the 4th Annual GC Summit in 2023.

Send a note to **Judith McKay**, McCarthy Tétrault's Chief Client and & Innovation Officer (jmckay@mccarthy.ca) and we'll be sure to let you know when registration opens for our fourth annual event. We welcome your ideas for speakers and topics to explore.

About McCarthy Tétrault LLP

McCarthy Tétrault LLP is a premier full-service Canadian law firm advising on large and complex transactions and disputes for domestic and international clients. The firm has offices in every major business center in Canada, and in New York and London. The firm's industry-based team approach and depth of practice expertise helps our clients achieve exceptional commercial results.



mccarthy tetrault

VANCOUVER

Suite 2400, 745 Thurlow Street Vancouver BC V6E 0C5

CALGARY

Suite 4000, 421 7th Avenue SW Calgary AB T2P 4K9

TORONTO

Suite 5300, TD Bank Tower Box 48, 66 Wellington Street West Toronto ON M5K 1E6

MONTRÉAL

Suite 2500 1000 De La Gauchetière Street West Montréal QC H3B 0A2

QUÉBEC CITY

500, Grande Allée Est, 9e étage Québec QC G1R 2J7

NEW YORK

55 West 46th Street, Suite 2804 New York, New York 10036 United States

LONDON

1 Angel Court, 18th Floor London EC2R 7HJ United Kingdom