

Magnet Network Live Regional Insights Report

Spotlight Atlantic Canada

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Executive Summary

Atlantic Canada offers a clear view of how demographic, economic, and technological forces converge to shape the future of work in Canada. While the region faces long-standing pressures—aging populations, thin labour markets, constrained immigration pathways, rural workforce shortages, and seasonal volatility—it also demonstrates how collaboration, adaptability, and community-rooted innovation can produce strong and sustainable results.

At Magnet Network Live – Spotlight Atlantic Canada (MNLSpotlight AC), a broad cross-section of leaders gathered in St. John's to explore these dynamics. The room included representation from provincial governments; publicly funded universities and colleges and private training institutions; employers from tourism, care, technology, and manufacturing; Indigenous economic development organizations; newcomer-serving agencies; labour; technologists; community partners; and national workforce organizations.

Within this broad participation, Magnet curated a set of anchor voices to ground the conversation. Contributors from the College of the North Atlantic, Holland College, Keyin College, Memorial University, the Newfoundland Workforce Innovation Centre, Government of New Brunswick, Hospitality NL, and several regional SMEs offered first-hand accounts of the pressures and opportunities shaping their communities. National partners, including Palette Skills, Excellence in Manufacturing Canada, ECO Canada, Electricity HR Canada, BioTalent Canada, and Venture for Canada, connected regional insights to national workforce trends, data, and policy conditions.

Magnet designed MNLSpotlight AC as a two-part engagement beginning with early conversations in the spring and culminating in the September convening. This structure built trust, continuity, and a richer evidence base. Magnet also partnered with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to align the Spotlight with the AI & Small Business Conference and OECD Roundtable, ensuring Atlantic perspectives informed broader national and international dialogues on digital adoption and productivity.

Across interviews, panel discussions, collaboration lounges, and post-event surveys, several themes stood out:

- Collaboration is not optional in Atlantic Canada; it is the region's operating system.
- Training succeeds when delivered in the rhythm of work and aligned with employer needs.
- Youth mobility, aging demographics, and newcomer retention shape labour realities more than any single policy decision.
- SMEs adopt technology when tools resolve operational pain points, not when they promise transformation.
- Indigenous-led models illustrate how economic development, cultural stewardship, and long-term workforce planning reinforce one another.
- Policy, data, and program structures often lag behind the region's readiness to innovate.

Context & Purpose of the Report

Magnet Network Live is a platform for shared learning, cross-sector intelligence, and systems design. Following the success of MNL24 in Toronto's Distillery District, the 2025 MNLSpotlight Series expanded to Atlantic Canada, Manitoba, and Alberta to illuminate how regional conditions shape workforce and innovation strategies.

The Atlantic Spotlight had four primary goals:

1. Develop a shared understanding of the region's labour and innovation landscape.
2. Highlight structural pressures and emerging strengths across Newfoundland & Labrador (NL), Nova Scotia (NS), New Brunswick (NB), and Prince Edward Island (PEI).
3. Identify how training, technology adoption, demographic change, and employer needs interact.
4. Connect regional insight to a national systems lens and explore opportunities for collaboration and demonstration.

Magnet structured the event to encourage candid dialogue rather than formal presentations. Collaboration lounges created space for cross-sector exchanges. Curated panels highlighted perspectives from educational institutions, employers, labour representatives, Indigenous organizations, policymakers, and community groups. Local musicians, SMEs, and cultural partners reinforced a central truth of the region: economic and social life move together.

This report reflects four commitments:

- To synthesize insights from interviews, discussion notes, survey responses, and real-time observations.
- To offer analysis that identifies prototypes and policy considerations ready for exploration.
- To position Atlantic Canada's contributions within a coherent national narrative about workforce innovation.
- Contribute to a national body of insight alongside reports on MNLSpotlight Manitoba and MNLSpotlight Alberta, that strengthens the emerging picture of what a connected, Made-in-Canada workforce system requires.

Insights & Signals From Across Atlantic Canada

The conversations across NL, NS, NB, and PEI revealed a region that understands its constraints yet continues to innovate from within. What emerged was not a single storyline but a set of interconnected signals that explain how the Atlantic ecosystem is adapting under demographic, technological, and economic pressure. These signals were echoed across panels, collaboration lounges, interviews, and post-event discussions, and were reinforced by the regional partners Magnet engaged in advance of the event.

Collaboration emerges naturally in Atlantic Canada

Collaboration surfaced as one of the region's defining characteristics. Leaders from the College of the North Atlantic (CNA), Holland College, Keyin College, NLWIC, and several employer groups described collaboration not as a project but as the way the system functions. CNA partners explained how training, industry outreach, and community partnerships often move together, with shared decision-making rather than territorial boundaries.

In Nova Scotia, long-standing coalitions between industries, colleges, and labour continue to shape workforce transitions. The Government of New Brunswick emphasized how cross-department cooperation, especially between skills, immigration, and economic development, has strengthened their ability to respond to labour market pressures. PEI contributed examples of institutional agility in employer-oriented training, describing how small-scale ecosystems can coordinate quickly when demand fluctuates. Together, these patterns illustrate a regional ecosystem that behaves as an interdependent network rather than a collection of isolated actors. This interconnectedness reduces friction, accelerates adaptation, and creates the conditions for regional models that could inform national strategies.

Training emerged as another critical signal. Across the four provinces, learning is becoming more integrated within the workplace. CNA leaders pointed to employer-designed microcredentials embedded directly into operational settings. Holland College described how rapid curriculum alignment allows programs to remain in step with industry needs. Keyin College highlighted the advantages of agility within private training institutions, noting that employers increasingly want programs that respond to real-time challenges rather than general up-skilling and development.

Work and learning continue to converge

Several organizations in NS and NB reinforced the same point: workers do not have the luxury of stepping out of employment for extended periods, and employers cannot afford the loss of capacity. Training that lives within day-to-day workflow (rather than adjacent to it) is proving more durable and more attractive. This pattern signals a broader transition toward work-integrated learning and competency-based systems that respond to lived realities rather than traditional program structures.

Demographic pressures reinforced the urgency of this shift. Partners across New Brunswick described persistent challenges retaining youth, even as the province attracts more newcomers and interprovincial migrants. Nova Scotia echoed concerns about youth mobility, particularly as housing pressures influence where young families settle. PEI emphasized its seasonal population fluctuations and the resulting need for workforce strategies that reflect cyclical availability. Newfoundland and Labrador detailed rural shortages, uneven participation rates, and the growing importance of older workers in maintaining service capacity.

Newcomer-serving organizations across the region articulated a consistent message: employment alone does not secure retention. Housing access, transportation, family pathways, place attachment, and community belonging shape long-term decisions about staying. Labour leaders also underscored the economic importance of older workers, noting that many sectors, tourism, care, trades, rely heavily on experienced workers who require different supports than early-career entrants. These insights reveal demographic change not as a temporary condition but as an enduring design constraint that workforce systems must build around.

Technology adoption closely tied to accessibility and immediate needs of SMEs

Technology adoption conveyed a more optimistic signal. Interviews with SMEs across NL, NS, NB, and PEI showed that small businesses are experimenting with digital tools that resolve immediate operational challenges. Hospitality businesses in NL described how scheduling and communication tools help stabilize labour in seasonal industries. Retail and services firms in NB explained that workflow management systems have reduced administrative load. Several SMEs in NL and NS spoke about the potential for lightweight AI-enabled tools to streamline customer service or compliance requirements. These patterns show that SMEs are open to technology when it is accessible, reduces friction, and aligns with existing workflow. Despite assumptions that rural or small-scale economies lag in digital adoption, Atlantic Canada is building grounded lessons about what “readiness” looks like, less about transformation and more about utility. These lessons will be essential as national AI and digital strategies evolve.

Local leaders call for flexibility in policy and funding

Finally, partners emphasized policy conditions that influence whether regional experimentation can scale. NB representatives described immigration allocations that fail to match sector needs, producing bottlenecks where employers have jobs but cannot secure workers. NS and PEI highlighted how funding structures sometimes limit collaboration, making multi-institutional delivery unnecessarily difficult.

Several post-secondary and training partners across the four provinces pointed to fragmented labour market data systems that do not reflect the region's functional interdependence. Indigenous economic development voices, including those reflecting on the Nunacor model (see spotlight section of this report), described how culturally grounded workforce strategies cannot thrive within rigid program templates. These observations show that while Atlantic Canada is innovating from within, policy environments often lag behind the region's readiness to advance more agile, integrated models.

Across these insights, a pattern becomes clear: Atlantic Canada is developing solutions that respond directly to lived conditions. The region is not only navigating constraints; it is producing models with national relevance. These signals offer early indicators of what a future workforce system will require; collaboration as infrastructure; training embedded in work; demographic strategies built around belonging; technology aligned with operational needs; and policy environments that support rather than constrain experimentation.

Forces Shaping the Region's Workforce Future

Atlantic Canada's workforce landscape is shaped by several structural forces that influence how partners design, adapt, and collaborate. These forces appear differently across NL, NS, NBk, and PEI, yet together they define the conditions under which innovation must occur. When viewed as a system rather than four separate jurisdictions, the region reveals patterns that explain both its constraints and its capacity for transformation.

Interdependence

Labour mobility across the four provinces is not an aspiration; it is already the operating norm. Employers in NB described recruiting workers from NS and PEI to stabilize seasonal industries. NLWIC and CNA spoke to students who move across provinces for specific credentials or employment opportunities. PEI's tourism partners noted that their sector relies heavily on mobile workers who cross borders in response to seasonal demand. These movements illustrate a regional labour market that behaves as a single system, even when the policies, funding models, and credential frameworks governing that system remain provincially bound. This interdependence presents both promise and friction; the region is well-positioned to design shared solutions, but doing so requires governance and data structures that reflect mobility rather than restrict it.

Colleges as workforce integrators

CNA, Holland College, Keyin College, and institutions across NS and NB have become central actors in economic transitions. Discussions with CNA underscored how the college has become a conduit between employers, communities, and government, especially in rural and remote areas where traditional programs struggle to reach. Holland College emphasized its capacity to redesign curriculum quickly when employer-needs shift, and Keyin College described new models of embedded, employer-aligned training that bypass the delays of conventional program cycles. These institutions are filling critical gaps in a region dominated by SMEs. They connect labour supply to real-time demand, support innovation readiness, and extend access to learning into communities outside major economic corridors.

The importance of sectoral realities

Sector dynamics represent a third force that shapes how the region adapts. While the pressures differ across provinces, the underlying themes are shared. NL partners highlighted persistent shortages in skilled trades and the strain placed on rural industries by demographic decline. NS partners pointed to the care economy, where retirements and rising demand collide, creating shortages that cascade into other sectors. NB discussed the pace of digital transformation among local employers—particularly how small firms struggle to keep up with emerging expectations for data and automation. PEI described the volatility of tourism and its reliance on seasonal labour mobility, as well as the parallel demand for stable, year-round skills pipelines in hospitality and care. These sector pressures expose the limits of existing systems but also illuminate natural entry points for pilots. Each sector scenario—tourism in PEI, care in NS, trades in NL, digital adoption in NB—offers a context where shared, cross-provincial models could be tested and refined.

Belonging and community capacity

Interviews with newcomer-serving organizations made it clear that retention hinges on much more than employment. Housing constraints in Halifax and Charlottetown, transportation gaps in NB, and childcare shortages across the region all influence whether newcomers and young families choose to stay. Labour representatives emphasized the stabilizing role of older workers who continue to anchor many industries, yet those workers also require support to adopt digital tools and transition into flexible or hybrid roles. These insights reveal that workforce outcomes flow directly from social infrastructure. Economic development and community development cannot be separated; they operate as a single system in which belonging for newcomers, youth, and older workers is a critical determinant.

Values-based participation

A final force is values-based participation, shaped by cultural identity and regional character. The design of MNLSpotlight AC made this clear. Local musicians framed the program, community vendors supplied goods and services, and the event environment reflected the cultural texture of St. John's. This was not incidental; it illustrated how economic strategies resonate more deeply when they reflect place. In conversations across all four provinces, partners emphasized that workforce innovation must align with local histories, expectations, and cultural landscapes. Whether it's PEI's relationship-driven employer networks, NL's strong ties between community and training institutions, NB's bilingual and multicultural identity, or NS's deeply rooted industry clusters, cultural context influences which models take root and which falter. This force is subtle yet decisive: systems that ignore cultural identity rarely sustain momentum.

Together, these forces reveal a region being reshaped by mobility, collaboration, demographic change, cultural identity, and sector transformation. They also show that Atlantic Canada's conditions are actually design signals. They point toward the type of workforce system the region is ready to build: one that is integrated, community-anchored, employer-aligned, and responsive to lived reality. Understanding these dynamics is essential for designing strategies that strengthen participation, support innovation, and contribute to long-term regional resilience.

Potential Pathways for Regional Action

The conversations across NL, NS, NB, and PEI revealed a region that is not waiting for new programs or federal frameworks to chart its path. Atlantic Canada is already designing, testing, and refining models that reflect lived conditions: small labour markets, shifting demographics, practical technology adoption, and a deep tradition of collaboration. What emerged across interviews, roundtables, and post-event reflections is a set of prototypes with real traction, initiatives that are grounded in local experience but carry national relevance.

One of the strongest signals came from the region's micro-credential and work-integrated learning ecosystems. CNA, Holland College, Keyin College, and NS-based institutions each described variations of the same shift: training is migrating into the flow of work. CNA's team noted that employers "won't release workers for multi-week programs anymore," prompting them to deliver on-site modular training in seafood processing, trades, and health-support roles. Holland College shared how they now revise curricula in near real time with employers in agriculture, IT, and hospitality. Keyin College emphasized how their programs evolve alongside local industries, particularly in tech and digital transformation, where program cycles used to lag years behind employer need but now adjust within months. NS community colleges described how flexible programming has become a competitive advantage for both students and employers.

These examples show a region quietly building a shared model: training that is employer-shaped, short, stackable, and anchored in operational reality. A regional micro-credential infrastructure, coordinated but based on specific industry sector needs, would reduce duplication, smooth learner movement across provinces, and create an evidence base that supports national WIL strategies. The interest from employers in all four provinces suggests readiness for such alignment, not as a theoretical exercise but as a response to acute workforce pressure.

Age-inclusive workforce

Demographic conditions have prompted a second prototype: an age-inclusive workforce strategy that treats older workers as a central asset rather than a peripheral consideration. NB survey respondents and labour representatives spoke of older workers as "the backbone of rural employment," especially in transport, trades, fisheries, education support roles, and care. In NL, employers shared that their most reliable shift coverage often comes from workers aged 55-70. PEI tourism leaders noted that older workers stabilize seasonal operations during periods of youth out-migration. NS partners raised a related challenge: older workers feel increasingly excluded from digital-first recruitment and scheduling systems, even when they are willing and able to work.

The critical role of older workers also points to the ongoing development of a regional strategy where older workers receive tailored digital support, flexible scheduling options, and structured pathways into mentorship and part-time leadership roles. This is not a social program, it is a productivity and retention strategy. Given the depth of demographic pressure across the region, Atlantic Canada is well-positioned to design a national demonstration of age-inclusive workforce participation.

Sector-specific digital adoption

SME technology adoption emerged as a third prototype, one shaped by pragmatism rather than aspiration. Across the transcripts, small business owners echoed variations of the same theme: they adopt digital tools when the tools reduce friction. A PEI tourism operator described the impact of automated scheduling systems on reducing burnout and stabilizing staffing. An NL retailer explained how AI-enabled inventory tools helped maintain margins during supply fluctuations. NS businesses described using workflow automation to manage compliance and reporting demands. NB SMEs highlighted that digital adoption accelerates when training is delivered “side by side” with operational tasks, not in abstract sessions.

Together, these examples reveal a region where SMEs are willing early adopters, but only when solutions are accessible, clearly applicable, and aligned with daily realities. A coordinated Atlantic SME readiness cluster could document adoption paths, map shared barriers, and support peer-to-peer learning across sectors. This would help federal and provincial partners understand what “practical digital adoption” truly looks like outside metropolitan centres.

Talent Mobility

Talent mobility surfaced as another opportunity for regional action, an insight shared most strongly by NB and NS contributors but visible across all four provinces. Employers recruit across borders; students follow program opportunities; tradespeople move with seasonal or project-based demand. Yet administration systems rarely follow this movement. Credentials remain siloed, data systems don't speak to each other, and program rules often restrict cross-provincial collaboration. One NB participant noted that “the system behaves like four provinces; the labour market behaves like one region.”

A regional talent mobility framework, focused on aligned credentials, shared labour market intelligence, and mutual recognition of training would formalize what is already happening informally. Such a framework would allow employers to match talent to opportunity more efficiently and enable workers to move with less friction. With its scale, geography, and demographic conditions, Atlantic Canada is an ideal testbed for this model.

Newcomer retention

Finally, newcomer retention emerged as one of the clearest and most urgent prototypes. Interviews with settlement agencies, employers, and community partners repeatedly illustrated how fragile retention can be. Housing shortages in NS and PEI, transportation gaps in NL, and childcare pressures in NB shift the equation for newcomers, even when employment opportunities exist. One NL newcomer support worker summarized it well: “People stay when they see a future for their families, not just a job.” Survey data reinforced this point, highlighting belonging, family pathways, and community attachment as decisive factors in retention.

A regional newcomer retention initiative, grounded in community connection, employer partnerships, family-support models, and housing strategies, could demonstrate how smaller jurisdictions can retain the people they work so hard to attract. Unlike large metropolitan centres, Atlantic communities can offer something valuable: deep connection and meaningful participation. With coordinated effort, the region could turn this into a differentiating strength.

Across all these pathways, one pattern stands out: Atlantic Canada already possesses the ingredients for a high-functioning regional workforce system. The question is no longer whether the region can design new models. It is how to align, amplify, and scale the models already in motion. The work ahead is to connect these prototypes into demonstrations, build data and shared infrastructure to support them, and create the feedback loops that allow insights from one province to inform the others.

What emerges from these conversations is a region that is not only responding to its conditions but shaping approaches that could inform Canada's broader workforce transformation.

Policy Considerations for Regional and National Alignment

If the emerging prototypes illustrate what Atlantic Canada is ready to build, the policy landscape reveals where momentum accelerates, and where it stalls. Across interviews, transcripts, and post-event reflections, partners repeatedly described a mismatch between the region's collaborative, adaptive behaviour and the rules that shape talent attraction, training, and workforce participation. These conditions do not prevent innovation, but they slow it, and they make clear where policy alignment could have outsized impact.

Responsive immigration policies

Immigration surfaced as the most immediate friction point. Employers and workforce agencies in NB and NL described the same pattern: job-ready candidates who are unable to be hired because allocations, occupational categories, or timelines do not reflect actual demand. This challenge was especially visible in health support roles, construction, hospitality, and care sectors, areas where NS partners reported similar constraints. In the interview transcripts, one employer summarized the issue plainly: "The talent exists. The jobs exist. The rules do not allow them to meet." These are not minor administrative hurdles, they directly restrict economic capacity. A more flexible regional immigration policy, particularly one responsive to the realities of small labour markets, would allow Atlantic employers to match talent to opportunity with far greater precision.

Flexible funding models

Funding models also shape what is possible, and what is unnecessarily difficult. Colleges across NS, PEI, NL, and NB spoke about the challenge of responding quickly to emerging employer needs while navigating funding structures designed for slower, more siloed systems. CNA and Holland College both highlighted the strain created by rules that restrict shared staffing or collaborative program delivery, even when institutions already operate as de facto regional partners.

Keyin College noted similar barriers when trying to build tech-focused programming with employers whose demand shifts faster than traditional approval cycles allow. Several leaders also reflected on a growing misalignment between the skills and readiness they expect from incoming learners and what students are actually arriving with, suggesting a gap in intentional pathway planning to prepare learners for evolving labour market needs. These constraints work against the region's natural strengths. A funding environment that encourages joint programming, pooled placements, and flexible delivery would amplify the collaborative culture that already defines Atlantic Canada.

Consolidated labour market information

Digital and data infrastructure emerged as another critical area where policy has not kept pace with practice. Every province treats labour market intelligence as a jurisdictional asset, yet the labour market itself operates as a regional system. Employers recruit from neighbouring provinces; learners move fluidly between institutions; and skills needs converge across borders. Several partners noted that provincial systems “speak different languages,” making alignment burdensome even when goals are shared. A regional, or interoperable, data spine linking labour market intelligence, employer demand, and training availability would transform planning across the region. Magnet’s existing infrastructure, built to connect systems at national scale, provides a practical foundation for such alignment. Policy, however, must authorize and enable integration for it to occur.

Conversations also highlighted the need for policy environments that recognize Indigenous-led workforce innovation as a core economic strategy, not niche programming. The Nunacor example (included in the spotlight section of this report) illustrates the strength of models rooted in cultural grounding, community ownership, and long-term economic planning. Their approach to integrating training, employment, entrepreneurship, and governance is not an exception. It is a blueprint for how holistic workforce systems can operate. Policy frameworks that support Indigenous-designed pathways, rather than overlaying standardized templates, would allow these models to influence both regional and national strategies.

Taken together, these insights point to a broader truth: Atlantic Canada demonstrates readiness for integrated workforce solutions through its long tradition of collaboration and collective innovation, but policy often lags behind the region’s collaborative behaviour. The challenge is not capability. It is alignment. Policy now needs to match the region’s ambition, recognize that Atlantic Canada is already acting like a workforce system, and create the conditions that allow this system to operate with clarity, speed, and shared purpose.

What Atlantic Canada Teaches Us About System Design

Atlantic Canada offers an early picture of what future workforce systems will require: agility, interdependence, cultural grounding, and a deeply collaborative practice that treats coordination as a core capability, not an afterthought. The region's scale makes gaps in design visible almost immediately. It also makes strengths such as trust, adaptability, community connection, more powerful. When partners across NL, NS, NB, and PEI spoke about their work, they were describing more than isolated programs. They were describing how a system behaves when it is forced to be both resourceful and interdependent.

- **The first lesson is that collaboration is system architecture.** NLWIC, CNA, Keyin College, Holland College, and multiple employer groups spoke about collaboration as a default setting, not an initiative. The transcripts show this plainly: partners did not describe “projects”; they described relationships, shared purpose, and the practical need to move quickly across institutional boundaries. This way of working reduces friction in ways policy and program design rarely achieve. It is a model of coordination that national systems can learn from. Collaboration must be designed in from the beginning rather than layered on later.
- **The second lesson is that workforce development cannot be separated from community life.** Newcomer-serving organizations shared examples of candidates who secured work quickly yet struggled with housing, transportation, and school access, gaps that ultimately determined whether they stayed. Youth mobility in NS and NB, and the uneven population distribution in NL, show that belonging, connection, and cultural identity shape workforce behaviour as much as wages or job availability. Workforce strategy, in this region, is inseparable from community development strategy.
- **The third lesson comes from Indigenous-led innovation.** The Nunacor model illustrates how training, entrepreneurship, business development, and cultural continuity reinforce one another when planned together. Their approach is a demonstration of what integrated planning looks like when designed from community-out rather than program-in. It offers principles that should inform regional and national design: alignment, continuity, long-term vision, and the integration of economic and cultural priorities.
- The fourth lesson is visible in how SMEs adopt technology. The conversations across NL, NS, NB, and PEI revealed that small businesses embrace digital tools when they solve real problems: scheduling, compliance, workflow management, and client communication. This is incremental innovation, but meaningful. It contrasts with national narratives that overemphasize transformation and understate operational realities. Atlantic SMEs are proving that readiness grows when technology is practical, accessible, and directly tied to the workday.
- **The final lesson is that mobility defines workforce behaviour in the region.** Workers cross boundaries. Employers recruit across provinces. Students train in one place and work in another. Seasonal industries rely on movement. Skilled trades travel to fill short-term demand. The system already behaves like a shared labour market even though its policies, data, and credentials do not. Any future system, regional or national, must begin with the acknowledgement that people and skills are moving.

Together, these lessons reveal a region that understands its own operating system. Atlantic Canada is not only navigating constraints; it is showing how resilience is built through collaboration, community grounding, and system-level thinking that connects economic development, social infrastructure, and cultural identity.

These insights place Atlantic Canada squarely within the national picture Magnet is shaping through the MNLSpotlight series. Across this report and the companion analyses from Manitoba and Alberta, a clear pattern emerges: regions advance fastest when systems reflect lived conditions, when training meets the rhythm of work, and when collaboration operates as core infrastructure. The work ahead is to support the local projects that strengthen participation, improve productivity, and show how efficient labour-market systems unlock economic potential. Atlantic Canada has provided both clarity and momentum. Building on that momentum, Magnet will continue strengthening labour-market systems through partnerships that translate collaboration into lasting economic and social opportunity.

Spotlight: Nunacor — Indigenous-Led Innovation in Action

Nunacor Development Corporation offers one of the clearest demonstrations of how Indigenous-led enterprises are shaping the future of work in Atlantic Canada. As CEO Andy Turnbull explained, Labrador's labour market is defined by both its highly skilled Indigenous workforce and the scale of opportunity emerging across mining, renewable energy, hospitality, and major projects.

Nunacor's approach blends local strength, Indigenous leadership, and global expertise. Their Mamattuk Restaurant illustrates this integration: international chefs work alongside local staff in a setting grounded in Inuit cultural design and locally sourced ingredients. **"Bringing skills and expertise from around the world has been incredibly helpful in growing our businesses and creating top-quality products,"** Andy noted.

Technology is a core part of this model. Nunacor is using AI to streamline hospitality operations, demonstrating how small Indigenous organizations can adopt advanced tools to global standards. This supports efficiency and frees employees for higher-value work.

At the system level, Nunacor's experience shows both momentum and friction. Immigration remains essential for filling roles that cannot be sourced locally, and Andy highlighted the need for more flexible policies. "There's not enough people for the jobs that are available... we have to be open to immigration to fill the need and grow our communities." He also emphasized the importance of a greater appetite for risk among funders and policymakers to support Indigenous-led ventures and new industries.

Nunacor's story is ultimately a blueprint: culturally grounded, future-focused, and built on the belief that Indigenous communities must fully benefit from regional growth. It stands as one of Atlantic Canada's strongest examples of how identity, innovation, and economic opportunity reinforce one another.