



Q & A with Patrick Parent, Moosehead Breweries

What does innovation mean to you?

To me, innovation is about looking at an opportunity or a problem through a different lens and using a creative process to generate additional value.

How does your organization approach innovation?

As a 150-year-old company, our approach has been evolving over time based on market realities. Most recently we have begun experimenting with co-creation as a new way to deliver incremental value. While this process is in its very early stage, we certainly see opportunities brought forth by collaborating with external innovators.

Why do you think innovation is important for Saint John and the province?

This is a topic that I am very passionate about. I think we all understand the economic pressures on our province and city and it is evident to many people I encounter that one of the key pillars of growth has to come from entrepreneurial ventures. To enable a sustainable ecosystem, there must be further partnerships between established enterprises and new ones. I firmly believe that there is a win-win solution where larger businesses can create additional value for their customers by leveraging the knowledge of innovators and in return these innovators can create exportable products by validating their concepts. Of course, there are complexities to take into consideration but with shrinking demographics and continued pressures on the resource sector we must be proactive in identifying new ways to create development.

What are some simple things people can do to drive change?

Get involved in the discussion and create awareness. Change Management is largely about communication and education. For the business community, it's about taking a leadership role in the solution, perhaps by doing small co-creation pilots or simply by promoting collaboration amongst industries to unlock intellectual capital.

How is technology changing your business model?

As a Canadian manufacturer, we are faced with the same productivity challenges facing many North American companies. Technology improvements are imperative for us to remain cost-competitive. As a smaller brewery, we must be very nimble and react quickly to shifting market needs. In order to accommodate those needs we need to continuously look at technological advances.

Where would you direct people if they wanted to learn more about innovation?

I have encountered many resources throughout our great province. In our particular case, Enterprise Saint John has played a critical partnership role in putting us on the path we are on now. We have also collaborated with NBIF, CCNB, ONB and many others. A good place to start and get connected to the broader network would be your local economic development agency.