A Snapshot of Young Entrepreneurship in Canada

If the idea of a young entrepreneur conjures up a university student launching his or her startup from a dorm room, think again. Canadians in that cohort are focused on coursework and managing high student debt loads. That helps explain why youth entrepreneurship in Canada has held relatively steady for three decades, even as some business conditions (low interest rates, the rise of the intangibles economy) would appear to make starting a business easier than ever.

Canada’s young entrepreneurs are...

A small cohort

1.7% of all entrepreneurs are under 30

$2.6 billion In 2016-2017, 497,000 students acquired $2.6 billion in loans

Despite debt accumulation, young entrepreneurs are still more likely to have post-secondary education than the average Canadian.

Credit hungry

40% of entrepreneurs under 30 say obtaining financing was an obstacle to business growth.

80% relied on gifts/donations, meaning access to family resources could help.

Which industries are young entrepreneurs working in? Here are the top 3 sectors:

- Construction: 16.2%
- Professional, scientific, and technical services: 15.7%
- Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting: 10.5%

Not diverse

Of the SMEs owned/managed by someone under 30...

55% are fully owned by men
15% are fully owned by women
14% are fully owned by a visible minority

7.7% the number of young entrepreneurs who abandoned their business in 2016

Budget 2019 allocated $38 million over 5 years to Futurpreneur, which supports young entrepreneurs

Data savvy

33% of young entrepreneurs used data analytics in 2017, compared with 18% of those in the 50-64 age group.

28% of young entrepreneurs used cloud computing in 2017.

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