

2025

Post Summit Highlights



Prairie
Business
SUMMIT

Executive Summary

On behalf of the Edwards School of Business (Edwards) and the BRIDGE Knowledge Centre (BRIDGE), thank you for being part of the inaugural Prairie Business Summit! It was a pleasure to welcome innovative minds and changemakers for two inspiring days of learning, collaboration, and connection.

This year's Summit brought together professionals from across industries, all with a shared commitment to exploring the future of business innovation. The event also celebrated and strengthened the vital connection between the Edwards School of Business and Saskatchewan's business community—serving as a catalyst for new partnerships, collaborative research, and opportunities that bridge academic insight with real-world impact.

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

360 Total Attendees

360 ATTENDEES

221 FROM SASKATOON

127 FROM SASKATCHEWAN

12 FROM OUT OF PROVINCE

Location of Speakers

CANADA

Saskatchewan
British Columbia
Alberta
Quebec
Ontario

INTERNATIONAL

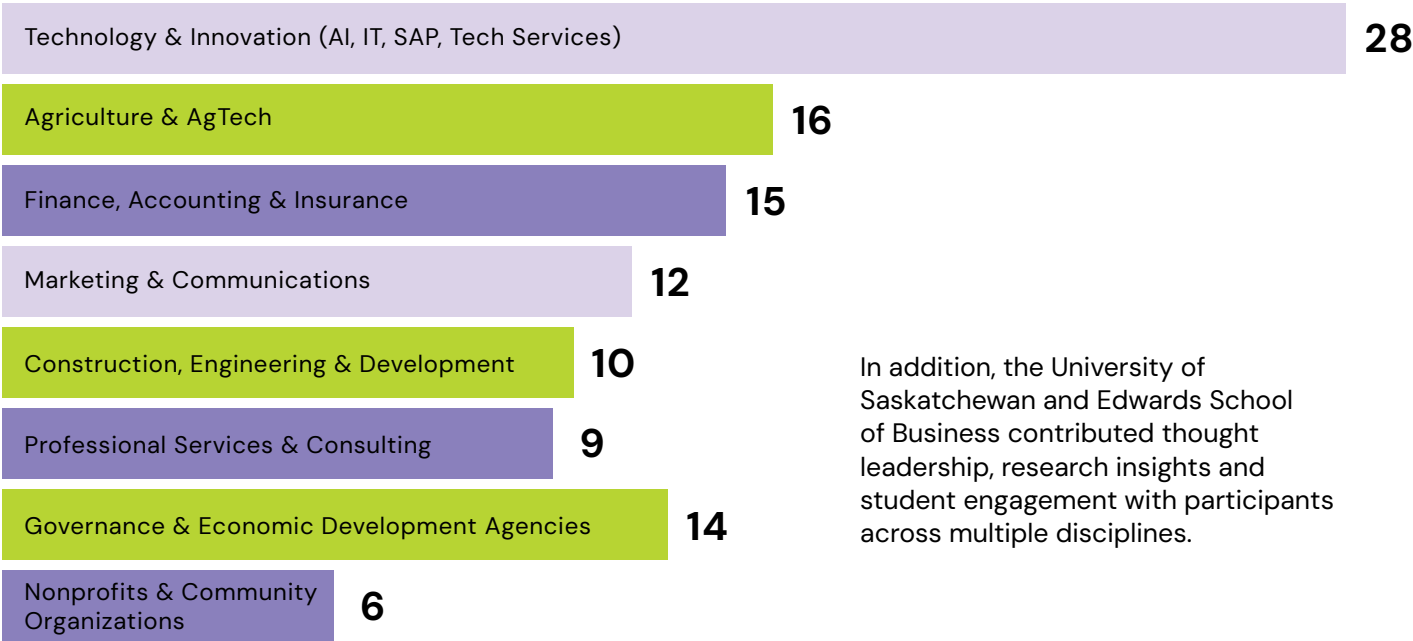
San Francisco, California (Silicon Valley)
London, England
Mumbai, India
Fargo, North Dakota



Top Sectors Represented

SECTOR REPRESENTATION AT THE PRAIRIE BUSINESS SUMMIT

The Prairie Business Summit drew broad participation from across the business, nonprofit, government, and education sectors. The largest representation came from private sector organizations, with particularly strong attendance from the following industries:



Average number of connections made: **30**



Participant Takeaways and Reflections from the Summit

AI IS A TOOL FOR EMPOWERMENT, NOT REPLACEMENT

A recurring theme was the importance of human leadership in AI integration. AI is a tool to enhance—not replace—people and processes. Many participants acknowledged the fear surrounding AI but found reassurance in the Summit's focus on ethics, training, and thoughtful deployment.

- “AI won’t transform your business—your people will.” – Dustin Cometa
- “AI is not to replace you, it’s to enhance you.” – Tim Hammon
- “AI is here to make/create more jobs, not take them away.” – Salam Makaby

SASKATCHEWAN’S AI ECOSYSTEM IS GROWING

The two days demonstrated that local companies and institutions are already using AI in real-world applications—leaving many left inspired to connect and collaborate more deeply across sectors.

- “Great insight into the AI maturity of industry here in Saskatchewan.” – Mohan Khilariwal
- “Many companies are early in their AI journey and build momentum slowly—one step at a time.”
– Scott Moelle
- “So many SK companies are using AI to improve productivity—and it’s resulting in more jobs, not less!”
– Donnalyn Thortinson

STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION AND PROMPTING FRAMEWORKS ARE ESSENTIAL

It is critical for businesses looking to apply AI meaningfully. The RIPE framework and similar tools provide structure, especially for SMEs.

- “RIPE framework for effective prompts.” – Sharon Thomsen
- “We must use AI not for what we think it knows, but for its communication. We need to be the knowledge.”
– Matthew Buglass
- “Chipp AI’s examples of how to structure prompts were great!” – Chelsea Platzke



Introduction

The Prairie Business Summit is Saskatchewan's premier biennial event that connects global business insights with the local business community. Powered by the Edwards School of Business and the BRIDGE Knowledge Centre, the inaugural Prairie Business Summit took place at Prairieland Park on May 5–6, 2025. This post-summit report highlights the key themes, takeaways, and connections that emerged during the two-day gathering, which brought together over 360 participants from Saskatchewan's business and innovation ecosystem.

Aiming to showcase the transformative power of artificial intelligence, the Summit featured expert-led panels, hands-on workshops, and real-world use cases that illustrated how AI is reshaping various aspects of business, from operations and supply chains to workforce development and customer engagement. With contributions from local business leaders, global AI specialists, researchers, and policymakers, the Summit offered a comprehensive view of the opportunities and responsibilities associated with emerging technologies.

This report summarizes the ideas that sparked dialogue, the insights that emerged across industries, and the recommendations that can guide Saskatchewan businesses in the future. Whether you attended in person or are discovering these highlights for the first time, we invite you to explore how collaboration with the BRIDGE Knowledge Centre, powered by the Edwards School of Business, can support your next steps in your roadmap to innovation.

Event Highlights

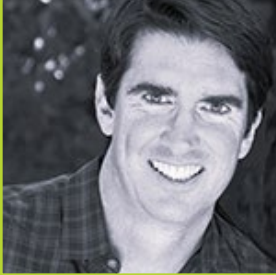
This kickoff event marked a transformative milestone in Saskatchewan's innovation journey by bringing world-class AI expertise directly to the province. By tapping into the insights of global leaders at the forefront of artificial intelligence, Saskatchewan is better equipped to tackle its most pressing business strategy challenges. The knowledge shared at the summit offers tangible, actionable solutions to real-world problems faced across the province's diverse business landscape.

Keynote Speakers



KATIE KING, Author and AI strategist

Katie King's keynote presentation, "Your Scorecard for Success," discussed how artificial intelligence can empower individuals and organizations when approached with the right mindset and strategy. She emphasized that AI should empower rather than replace workers, urging attendees to "make time for AI—it will save you time" by allowing people to focus on meaningful and strategic work. King noted that while attitudes toward AI are becoming more positive, there is still an adoption gap, as many organizations remain slow to implement practical AI solutions. She stressed that effective leadership and continuous learning are essential for bridging this gap and called for champions within organizations who can support experimentation, transparency, and responsible innovation.



ADAM CHEYER, VP, AI Experience Airbnb and Co-Founder of Siri Inc.

Adam Cheyer's keynote presentation examined the transformative potential of artificial intelligence, positioning generative AI as foundational, much like the internet was in its early days. Drawing on his experience as a co-founder of Siri, Cheyer emphasized that while AI is evolving rapidly, current systems lack integration, which creates a persistent gap between reasoning ("knowing") and execution ("doing"), limiting their utility. He pointed out that user experience (UX) is a significant bottleneck, arguing that for AI to achieve widespread adoption, we need more intuitive interfaces and a centralized, seamless AI ecosystem. Throughout his talk, Cheyer stressed the importance of designing AI technologies that enhance human potential, prioritize ethical use, and align with real-world needs.



ROSS PAMBRUN, CEO, The Memphis Group (A.I. for Environment)
& Métis Business Leader

Ross Pambrun's keynote presentation highlighted the transformative power of Indigenous data sovereignty and the significance of Indigenous-led innovation in shaping economic and community development. He emphasized that "your data has value," reminding the audience that when we use products for free, we often become the product. This raises critical questions about consent, privacy, and sovereignty. Pambrun encouraged a shift from transactional approaches to relationship-based partnerships, particularly when working with Indigenous communities. He stressed that meaningful, long-term collaboration must precede rapid technology adoption.

Through his work with Miyo Pimatisiwin Developments, he underscored the importance of protecting what matters by understanding what data is being collected, where it goes, and how it is used. Ultimately, he advocated for data governance models that reflect Indigenous autonomy, values, and self-determination.

[Listen to Ross on CBC Radio:](#)



DAVID CHALK, Business and AI Expert

David Chalk's talk examined the changing role of artificial intelligence in business. He highlighted that large language models (LLMs) excel in understanding language and semantics but do not inherently possess knowledge of the world. Chalk argued that, in practical enterprise settings, AI should not depend on generalized public models like ChatGPT. Instead, it should be securely connected to a company's private data to minimize misinformation and enhance relevance.

He explained that AI agents serve as task-specific tools, allowing interaction with external data and systems. Chalk boldly predicted that traditional software applications would be obsolete within the next 2 to 5 years, as AI becomes the primary interface for interacting with digitized data. This shift would eliminate the need for tools like Excel, enabling direct, conversational access through typing or voice commands.

Agenda Highlights

Day 1

WORKSHOP: NAVIGATING THE AI ADOPTION JOURNEY (WBM TECHNOLOGIES)

WBM Technologies guided participants through the complex process of adopting AI within organizations, emphasizing a strategic and step-by-step approach. The workshop covered key stages, including identifying use cases, managing change, and effectively scaling AI solutions. Attendees learned about common pitfalls, the importance of leadership buy-in, and how to develop internal capabilities to ensure successful AI integration. Practical advice was provided on balancing innovation with risk management and measuring the impact of AI on business outcomes.

WORKSHOP: AI IN SUPPLY CHAIN OPTIMIZATION (SAP AI)

The SAP AI workshop highlighted the transformative impact of artificial intelligence on supply chain management by enhancing forecasting accuracy, inventory management, and logistics planning. The presenters used real-world examples to demonstrate how AI-driven analytics can lower costs and improve responsiveness to market changes. Participants had the opportunity to explore tools for automating routine tasks and optimizing complex supply networks, gaining valuable insights into how to build more resilient and adaptive supply chains powered by AI.

WORKSHOP: LEVERAGING AI FOR CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT (CHIPP AI)

Chipp AI's workshop focused on transforming customer interactions through AI-powered personalization and automation. Attendees explored how AI technologies, such as chatbots, sentiment analysis, and predictive analytics, can enhance the customer experience, boost satisfaction, and increase loyalty. The session highlighted strategies for integrating AI into marketing and support channels, such as the RIPE Framework, while ensuring data privacy and maintaining a human touch. Practical tips for measuring the success of AI-driven engagement were also shared.

PANEL: AI IN BUSINESS STRATEGIES (KEYNOTE DAVID CHALK, CHIPP AI, BETTERCART ANALYTICS, SASKTEL, SAP AI)

This dynamic panel, featuring keynote speaker David Chalk and representatives from Chipp AI, BetterCart Analytics, SaskTel, and SAP AI, explored how AI is transforming business strategies across various industries by lowering entry barriers, accelerating workflows, and enabling rapid growth when applied with purpose. The panelists emphasized that successful AI implementation begins with clarity—organizations must identify specific problems before adopting AI to avoid inefficiencies and internal resistance. Equally important is fostering a supportive culture through open discussions about job displacement, ethics, and the evolving role of humans in AI systems to build trust and ease transitions. A standout insight encouraged companies to “learn with AI, don’t work with AI,” reframing AI as a collaborative learning partner rather than a replacement, which ultimately fuels innovation and long-term resilience.

Day 2

WORKSHOP: AI FOR MANUFACTURING EFFICIENCY (CHIPP AI)

This workshop, led by Chipp AI, focused on leveraging artificial intelligence to enhance efficiency and productivity in the manufacturing sector. Participants explored real-world use cases where AI-driven tools have optimized operations, reduced downtime, and improved predictive maintenance. The session highlighted practical strategies for adopting AI in existing manufacturing environments and underscored the importance of aligning AI implementation with operational goals. The presenters also discussed data readiness, integration challenges, and how AI can lead to more agile and cost-effective production processes.

WORKSHOP:

OWNING & PROTECTING YOUR DIGITAL ASSETS (OPEN PATH PARTNERS)

Open Path Partners conducted an engaging workshop on the importance of protecting digital assets in today's data-driven world. Attendees gained valuable insights into the legal, technical, and strategic methods for owning, controlling, and safeguarding intellectual property, proprietary data, and AI-generated content. The session highlighted that, as organizations produce increasingly valuable digital content and datasets, it is crucial to be proactive in defending these assets against misuse, theft, or unauthorized access. Participants left with actionable steps for securing their data and navigating the legal complexities surrounding digital ownership.

WORKSHOP:

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN AI DEPLOYMENT (ETHICAL DIGITAL – KATRINA GERMAN)

Katrina German from Ethical Digital led a thoughtful workshop on the ethical challenges and responsibilities associated with deploying artificial intelligence. Through case studies and discussions, participants explored topics such as bias in algorithms, responsible data use, transparency, and the social implications of AI systems. The session encouraged attendees to critically consider the long-term impact of AI on individuals and communities while providing a framework for incorporating ethical principles into the development and governance of AI tools. The workshop emphasized that ethical AI is not merely a compliance issue, but a fundamental aspect of trust and innovation.

PANEL:

AI IN SASKATCHEWAN BASED INDUSTRIES (VENDASTA, NUTRIEN, SAP AI, SASKTEL, SGI & AISK)

This engaging panel highlighted how organizations across sectors – including tech (Vendasta), industry (Nutrien) and municipal government (City of Saskatoon) – are using AI to address practical, real-world challenges. The panelists emphasized that data privacy is a top priority, especially when implementing customer-facing technologies like chatbots, which underscores the necessity for strong security measures. A central theme of the discussion was the proposal to establish an AI hub in Saskatchewan—a dedicated space for knowledge sharing and collaboration that could foster responsible AI innovation across the province, helping both businesses and communities thrive in the rapidly evolving digital landscape.

EDWARDS FACULTY ON THE FUTURE OF WORK SERIES

What does AI mean for how we lead, work, and grow? In this special series, six faculty members from the Edwards School of Business shared timely insights on how AI is reshaping the workplace—from accounting and marketing to leadership and team dynamics. Topics included managing AI adoption and organizational change, the impact of AI on hiring and operations, how AI-generated content influences trust, and what motivates people in an AI-enabled workplace.

A big thank you to **Devan Mescall, Cheryl Loadman, Joseph Schmidt, Keith Willoughby, Shan Wang, and Trevor Maber** for their thoughtful contributions to this series. If you're interested in continuing the conversation, collaborating on a project, or bringing these insights into your organization, reach out to the **BRIDGE Knowledge Centre** at BRIDGE@edwards.usask.ca. We'd be happy to help make those connections.



Attendance Overview

The Prairie Business Summit attracted a diverse cross-section of Saskatchewan's business ecosystem—reflecting one of the Summit's core goals from the outset. Rather than focusing on a single sector, the event was intentionally designed to bring together leaders from across industries, highlighting the province's broad economic strengths and fostering collaboration between sectors. This inclusive approach ensured that discussions were both wide-reaching and deeply rooted in the unique opportunities that Saskatchewan offers.

Insights and Outcomes

The Prairie Business Summit provided a valuable platform for sharing insights while honoring the experiences of attendees. By capturing discussions through session monitors, notetakers, and recordings, we identified key themes and takeaways relevant to the broader business and academic communities. The insights presented here reflect a collective voice from SMEs, researchers, students, industry leaders, and policymakers, and aim to guide future initiatives in prairie innovation and collaboration. On the next page are six key insights into how AI is transforming business, data sovereignty, work, user experience, ethics, and cross-sector collaboration.



AI in Business Scaling

AI Successful AI adoption starts with strategic alignment, focusing on small but impactful use cases such as internal administrative tasks, forecasting, and customer service. Demonstrating clear return on investment (ROI) through pilot projects builds internal confidence and encourages broader organizational support. Leadership sponsorship and a culture of experimentation are crucial for effectively scaling AI, as emphasized in the AI in Business Strategies panel, the AI in Supply Chain Optimization workshop, and other sessions.

AI as a Force Multiplier with Data Sovereignty

AI empowers businesses to automate routine tasks, improve decision-making, and accelerate innovation, enabling teams to accomplish more with less effort. However, as Ross Pambrun highlighted, data privacy, consent, and sovereignty are essential—especially when free tools rely on user data. Organizations that integrate general AI capabilities with proprietary and securely managed data can achieve a competitive advantage. This concept was emphasized in sessions focused on customer engagement and supply chain management.

Human-AI Collaboration and the Future of Work

The summit emphasized the importance of seeing AI as a partner rather than a replacement. While AI is proficient at handling routine tasks, humans excel in areas such as creativity, ethics, and strategic thinking. This partnership between humans and AI necessitates workforce upskilling and encourages open discussions about the ethical implications and job transitions involved. These points were highlighted in Katie King's keynote speech and the panel discussion on Harnessing AI for Entrepreneurship.

User Experience and the AI Interface Revolution

For AI to gain widespread adoption, it is essential to create an intuitive and seamless user experience. Adam Cheyer's keynote emphasized that many current AI systems lack proper integration, which makes user experience the main obstacle to progress. David Chalk's prediction that traditional software will be replaced by AI-driven conversational interfaces within the next 2 to 5 years highlights the urgent need for businesses to prepare for this new digital interaction paradigm.

Ethical AI and Building Trust Through Transparency

Incorporating ethics, transparency, and governance into AI deployments is crucial for establishing trust with customers and stakeholders. Engaging in open discussions about risks, biases, and the responsible use of AI promotes inclusive innovation. This was a key focus in the workshop on Ethical Considerations in AI Deployment and the Boardroom Governance of AI panel.

Community Building and Cross-Sector Collaboration

One of the central themes of the summit was the need to build a collaborative ecosystem that bridges the business, academic, government, and technology sectors. A key takeaway was the proposal for an AI hub in Saskatchewan, which aims to centralize knowledge sharing, promote responsible innovation, and enhance the region's competitive standing. This idea was supported by various panels and workshops throughout the event.

Recommendations and Next Steps

The Prairie Business Summit emphasized the transformative potential of AI across various industries and stressed the importance of strategic integration, ethical governance, and collaboration. To fully benefit from AI, businesses should adopt it thoughtfully—starting on a small scale, prioritizing data integrity, and building strong partnerships, especially with academic experts like those at the Edwards School of Business. Below are clear recommendations and next steps to help industries move forward with confidence and collaboration.

STEP 1: DEFINE CLEAR, STRATEGIC USE CASES

Identify specific business challenges where AI can provide measurable value:

1. Manufacturing & Supply Chain: Focus on predictive maintenance, inventory forecasting, and process automation.
2. Entrepreneurship & Startups: Automate routine tasks and implement AI-driven customer engagement tools.
3. Technology & Data Services: Develop integrated AI ecosystems that offer intuitive user experiences.
4. Government & Public Sector: Enhance administrative efficiency and engage communities in discussions about AI ethics.
5. Education & Workforce Development: Integrate AI literacy and ethics into curriculum and training programs.

Starting with targeted, high-impact pilot projects helps to build momentum and internal confidence while minimizing risk.

STEP 2: PRIORITIZE DATA GOVERNANCE AND ETHICAL AI

Ensure data privacy, security, and transparency by understanding the data being collected, how it is used, and where it is stored. Engage in open discussions about the ethical deployment of AI, considering workforce implications and respecting Indigenous data sovereignty. This step is essential across all sectors, especially in customer-facing applications where public trust is crucial.

STEP 3: FOSTER COLLABORATIVE ECOSYSTEMS AND LEADERSHIP

To drive meaningful integration of AI, it is essential to develop partnerships across various sectors, including industry leaders, government, and academic institutions. Collaborating with the BRIDGE Knowledge Centre and the Edwards School of Business provides a valuable opportunity for expert guidance, research partnerships, and workforce development initiatives. By leveraging the expertise of Edwards faculty in AI strategy, ethical governance, and the future of work, organizations can lead with confidence.

Promoting leadership support and fostering a culture of experimentation and continuous learning are crucial for the responsible and scalable adoption of AI. These cross-sector relationships not only accelerate innovation but also facilitate the sharing of best practices throughout Saskatchewan and beyond.

BRIDGE Exchange: Turning Summit Insights into Action

Following the Prairie Business Summit, **the BRIDGE Exchange Series** will provide attendees with the next steps to transform big ideas into actionable collaborations. Unlike the Summit, which gathered a broad audience to explore key business questions in Saskatchewan, the BRIDGE Exchange offers sector-focused sessions that connect industry leaders, researchers, and students for targeted discussions, collaboration, and innovation.

The first event, focusing on AgTech, is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, October 29, 2025. Participants will have opportunities to engage in panels, collaboration hubs, and networking sessions designed to explore applied projects and partnership opportunities across the Edwards School of Business, AgBio, SENS, Engineering, and other colleges. Pre-register here: <https://www.surveymonkey.ca/r/BRIDGEExchange>

2027 Summit

Building on this year's success, the goal for the 2027 Prairie Business Summit is to guide the roadmap to innovation by leveraging global expertise that Saskatchewan has yet to fully access. To ensure the summit aligns with the needs of the business community, we invite you to share your input by completing a brief survey on potential topics. Your feedback is key to shaping a summit that drives meaningful impact and supports your roadmap to innovation.

Help Shape the Future of Prairie Innovation – and Win Free Entry to PBS 2027!

Fill out our **quick survey** and tell us what you'd like to see in the next Summit or AI-focused event. Your feedback will directly influence our planning—and as a thank you, you'll be entered for a chance to win free entry to PBS 2027!





TESTIMONIALS

“

Day 1 of the conference offered a comprehensive exploration of how to use AI in business strategies and especially the ethical part of it.

“

Absolutely gorgeous and well executed! I'm proud to be an alumni, all the more! Thank you!

“

Validated so many things I'm learning as I start my AI consultant business. Data is key. Jump in but start small and keep going. Best event I've ever been to!

“

We must use AI, not for what we think it knows, but for its communication. We need to be the knowledge.

“

AI is not stand-alone; it needs to be an integral part of business, top to bottom. It's real.

“

Great opportunity to get insight into the AI maturity of industry here in the Saskatchewan province. Looking forward to contributing to the AI journey of the province.



“

This was a
WORLD CLASS
event... high
caliber speakers
and amazing
support from
volunteers.

Acknowledgements

The Prairie Business Summit was made possible by the collective effort, generosity, and vision of many individuals and organizations dedicated to the future of Saskatchewan.

DONORS

We would like to extend our deepest gratitude to Wayne Brownlee and the Brownlee Foundation for their generous support. PBS was created to spark stronger partnerships and forward-thinking dialogue, the Brownlee Family Foundation has created a more connected, collaborative future for our province.

PARTNERS

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our remarkable partners for your investment, insights, and collaboration during the planning and execution of the Summit:



Your leadership and support were instrumental in shaping a Summit that connected industries, sparked new conversations, and outlined a bold path forward for Saskatchewan's economy. Thank you!

ORGANIZING TEAM

A heartfelt thank you to the Edwards School of Business and the BRIDGE Knowledge Centre for leading the organization and hosting of the inaugural Summit.

We also extend our gratitude to the faculty, staff, volunteers, and industry collaborators whose energy, creativity, and dedication brought every detail to life. Your collective efforts created a space where global ideas converged with Prairie ambition.

Finally, to our speakers, workshop facilitators, and engaged attendees—thank you for making this Summit an inspiring and actionable gathering. We look forward to building on this movement with you.

Conclusion

The 2025 Prairie Business Summit was more than a conference—it was a launchpad for innovation, dialogue, and long-term partnerships. We are excited to continue working with our partners and community to shape a sustainable, inclusive, and AI-powered future for Saskatchewan.





BRIDGE

Knowledge Centre

Thanks to the incredible momentum generated by the Prairie Business Summit, we are committed to continuing our efforts. The BRIDGE Knowledge Centre is excited to announce a series of focused, high-impact events scheduled for 2025 and 2026. These events are designed to help you build on the insights we gain together. Sign up here to become a part of the BRIDGE community.

Email: bridge@edwards.usask.ca
Website: www.edwards.usask.ca/bridge/

