



TOLOGY 101

Taylor

AS STARTLING AS THIS MAY SEEM, GLEN CLARK AND HIS GANG AREN'T responsible for all the world's woes. The vast majority, but not all.

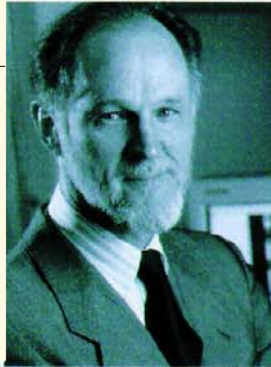
It is in this bipartisan spirit that we went to some of the province's corporate leaders for comments on the B.C. Business Summit, taking place Nov. 8 and 9 at the Vancouver Trade & Convention Centre. After all, the gathering of 1,000-odd private sector leaders aims not only to pick on bad government policy (for instance, um, the highest marginal tax rates in North America), but also to "identify approaches business can take to boost the provincial economy."

We at *BCBusiness* applaud the fact that the summitteers aren't out just to play the blame game, as tempting as that may be. And so here, courtesy of a few of the province's company presidents and CEOs, are some proactive ideas about what business can do to improve B.C.'s sickly economy.

terrance owen

"Business should reduce its dependence on government handouts. Don't go to the government for handouts; let the markets decide if your company is going to live or die . . . It's unfortunate that the business sector keeps coming back to the government for these bailouts, and it's unfortunate that the government acquiesces, because it puts other businesses at a competitive disadvantage."

Terrance Owen, President, Helix Biotech



wendy mcdonald

"We're going to have to tighten up like we did in the early '80s. We're just lucky to have our U.S. company producing; we have 14 branches down there, and they're doing very nicely, thank you very much. Especially with the U.S. dollar being so strong, it's nice to have that coming in."

Wendy McDonald, CEO, BC Bearing Group



tony hepburn

"If we're going to attract investment to this province, we have to have positive labor and management conditions. Dialogue is important, ensuring that everybody does understand that we are in difficult times, and that the world has changed . . . It's a question of understanding, and there has to be understanding on all sides."

Tony Hepburn, President, Odium Brown



jane milner



"Obviously the resource-based economy is in a lot of trouble, struggling on all fronts. So we can be looking as a business community for other sectors to nourish, whether it's high tech or tourism . . . If you're talking about encouraging entrepreneurs, there's all kinds of stuff we can do, from mentoring programs to sharing facilities. Sort of taking the Junior Achievement concept into adult business start ups."

Jane Milner, President, North Shore Credit Union

rob bakshi

"Business in B.C. should move more to the technology side and be able to produce top-notch entrepreneurs and attract the best talent from all over the world. We have the potential to become like Silicon Valley in California or the technology sector in Ottawa . . . If I was in the resource sector and dependent heavily on exports to the Far East, I would try to change my product or services to meet the needs of countries where there's less turmoil and more growth – whether it's domestic, in the U.S. or in Europe."

Rob Bakshi, President, Silent Witness Enterprises



jim mcintosh

"Hiring local talent or recruiting talent into the province would help the economy. And think about exporting your product if you're not already doing it – particularly to the U.S. as a starting point. You'll be billing in U.S. dollars and getting the advantage of the exchange rate."

Jim McIntosh, President, Infowave Wireless Messaging



thomas fung

"The costs of production are high in B.C., even though we have all this raw material, much more than most countries in the world. We need to find a way to cut down costs, and labor is one of the costs . . . While taxes are high, at least they are costs you can predict. Labor issues are relatively unpredictable."

Thomas Fung, CEO, Fairchild Holdings