

RAINFOREST ALBERTA



**CALGARY SUMMIT**

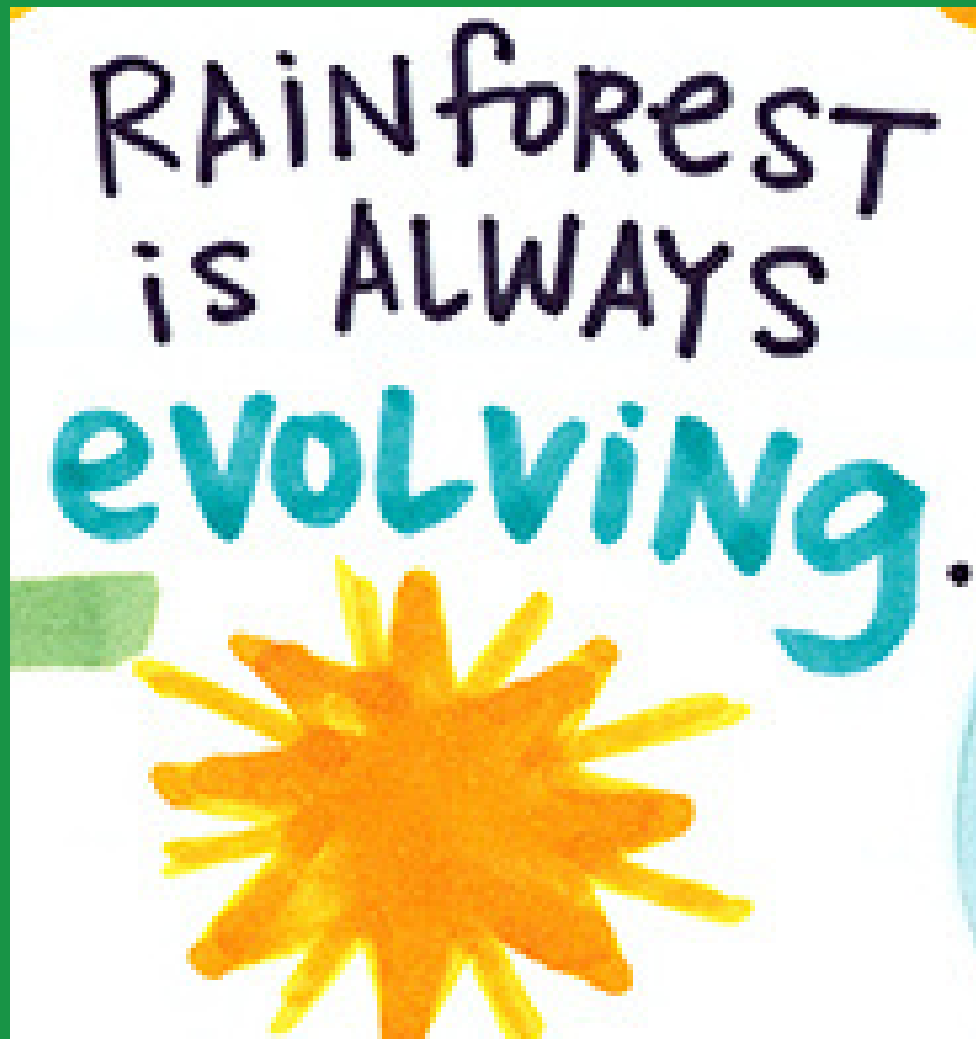
**2021**

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# Executive Summary

Rainforest Alberta is based on the premise that the nature of complex innovation ecosystems are comparable to biological systems. Nutrients to grow such an ecosystem include talent, ideas, and capital. According to the Rainforest analogy, these nutrients are only maximized by people. Human behaviour is what allows these nutrients to move wild and freely, like in Rainforests. Optimizing social behaviours involves fostering diversity, promoting collaboration and requires significant trust across social barriers.



As of 2021, Calgary's ecosystem - our Rainforest - is growing rampantly. Inspired by this growth and a fireside chat with Rainforest co-author Greg Horowitz, earlier in the year, the summit focused on rerooting the community in the social contract.

The summit was hosted with support from partners in a virtual conference setting. A graphic recorder documented the event to create an artifact which will serve as a reminder of our commitment to living by the social contract.

The 142 participants at the summit explored the long-term vision for our burgeoning ecosystem. They were inspired by guest host Breanne Everett and co-founder of the Rainforest, Brad Zumwalt. Conversations were then hosted by community facilitators in breakout rooms and then participants joined a networking session where connections were made to foster this vision.

After the event, participants were asked to continue taking small steps to build on connections that embody the social contract.

**142**  
**Participants**

# Who attended the 2021 YYC Summit?

2021 marked the first virtual Rainforest Alberta Summit. The Summit wasn't bound by space so everyone was welcome!

**25%**



**Were new to the Rainforest this year**

**14%**



**Had never been to a Rainforest event**

**44%**



**Were Ecosystem Builders**

**27%**



**Were Entrepreneurs**

**19%**



**Were Startup Team Members**



IT ALL STARTS  
WITH THESE  
**SMALL**  
INTERACTIONS

"Rainforest movements are never about one thing. It's about lots of small things that over time begin converging. Just as you're beginning to see all these little efforts that may look different, but somehow begin aligning to the same intention. [This] is why the alignment of intention - the social contract - is far more important than the alignment of agreement, which is the congruence of opinion. And that's why you start with that."

**GREG HOROWITT**

# THE SOCIAL CONTRACT

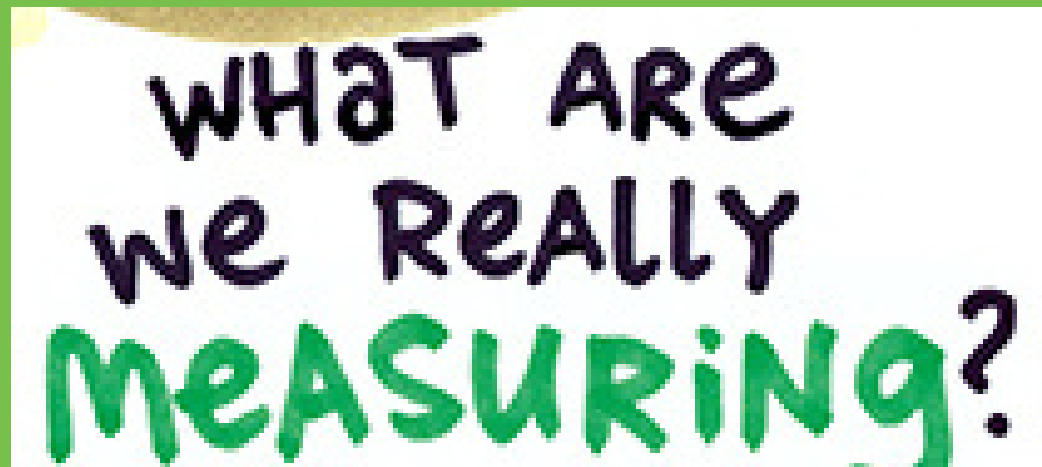
2021 marks five years  
since the social contract  
was written by the  
Rainforest Alberta  
Community



1. **DIVERSITY** - I embrace diversity, strive to create equal opportunity for every person and I am open to meeting anyone in this community. 
2. **FREE HELP** - I understand that I will receive valuable help from others for free.
3. **TRUST** - I will give trust to others before expecting to receive trust in return. 
4. **PAY IT FORWARD** - I agree to "pay forward" whatever positive benefits I receive.
  - For every introduction I get, I will provide an introduction to another person.
  - For every hour of advice I receive, I will give an hour of advice to someone else.
  - For every risk someone takes with me, I will take a risk with a different person.
5. **FAIRNESS** - I will be nice and treat everyone fairly. I will take advantage of no one.
6. **LISTENING** - I will bring people together and listen, as none of us is as smart as all of us. I believe in the big tent. I believe we gain strength through diversity.
7. **HONESTY** - I will be truthful and frank. I will break rules and call out elephants in the room. 
8. **TEAM SPORT** - I will create teams to play, dream, experiment, iterate, and persist. I understand mistakes happen. Failing quickly and cheaply are acceptable ways of testing new ideas.
9. **SHARING** - I will open myself to learning from others. I am eager to act to learn. I will share my knowledge in the spirit of the Creative Commons to help nurture learning in others.
10. **ROLE MODEL** - I will lead at times and follow at other times. Each person acts as a role model for everyone else. I will live these ideals and enforce them as a member of the Rainforest community. 

RAINFOREST ALBERTA 

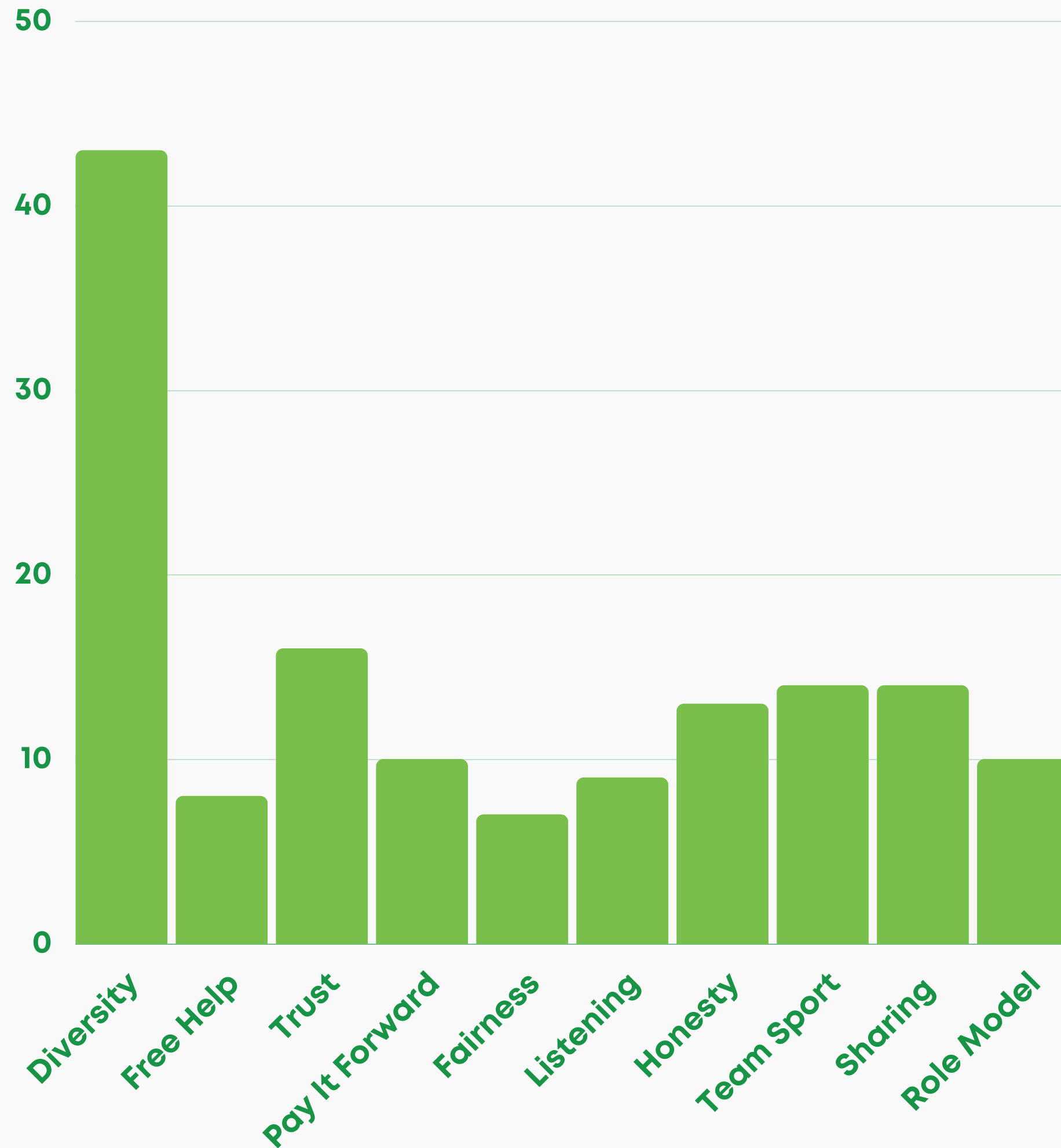
## ENTER THE SUMMIT



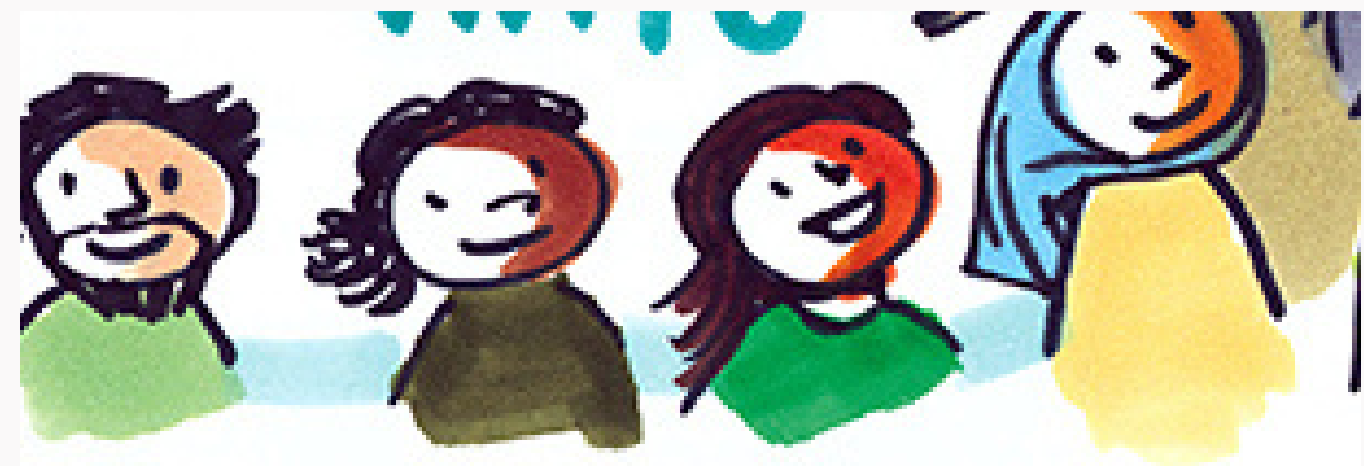
WHAT ARE  
WE REALLY  
MEASURING?

**Participants were asked to reflect on the social contract values from both an individual and community perspective.**

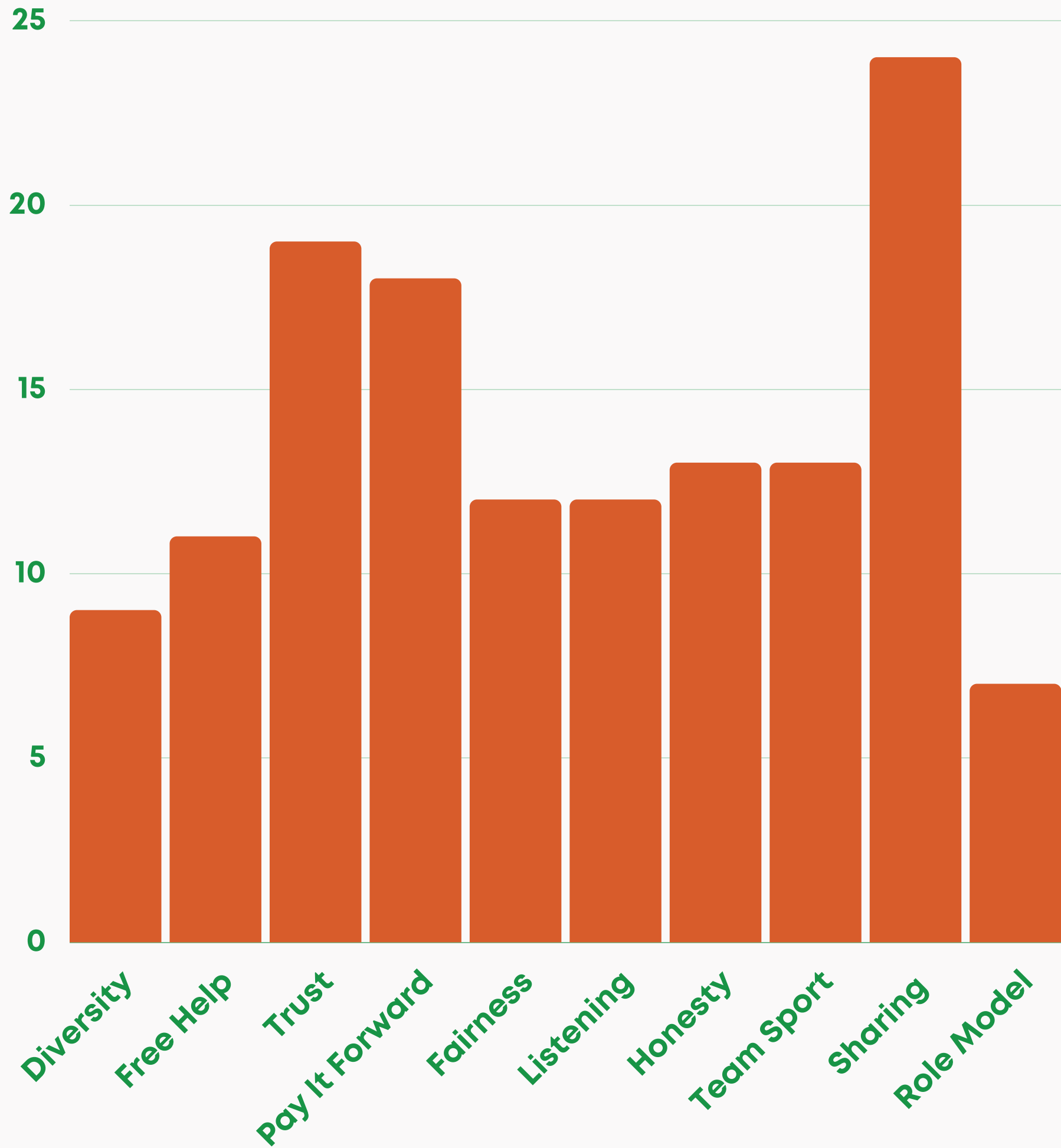




**DIVERSITY**  
represents the  
biggest area for  
growth for the  
YYC community







**SHARING**  
 represents the most prevalent social contract value within the YYC community





Dr. Breanne Everett is the CEO, President and Co-Founder of Orpyx® Medical Technologies Inc. and Kinetix™ Sciences Inc. She is also a medical doctor and resident in plastic and reconstructive surgery at the University of Calgary.

**"Social contracts are very important in building company teams; how we treat each other, our colleagues, and how we build our teams."**

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**BREANNE EVERETT**

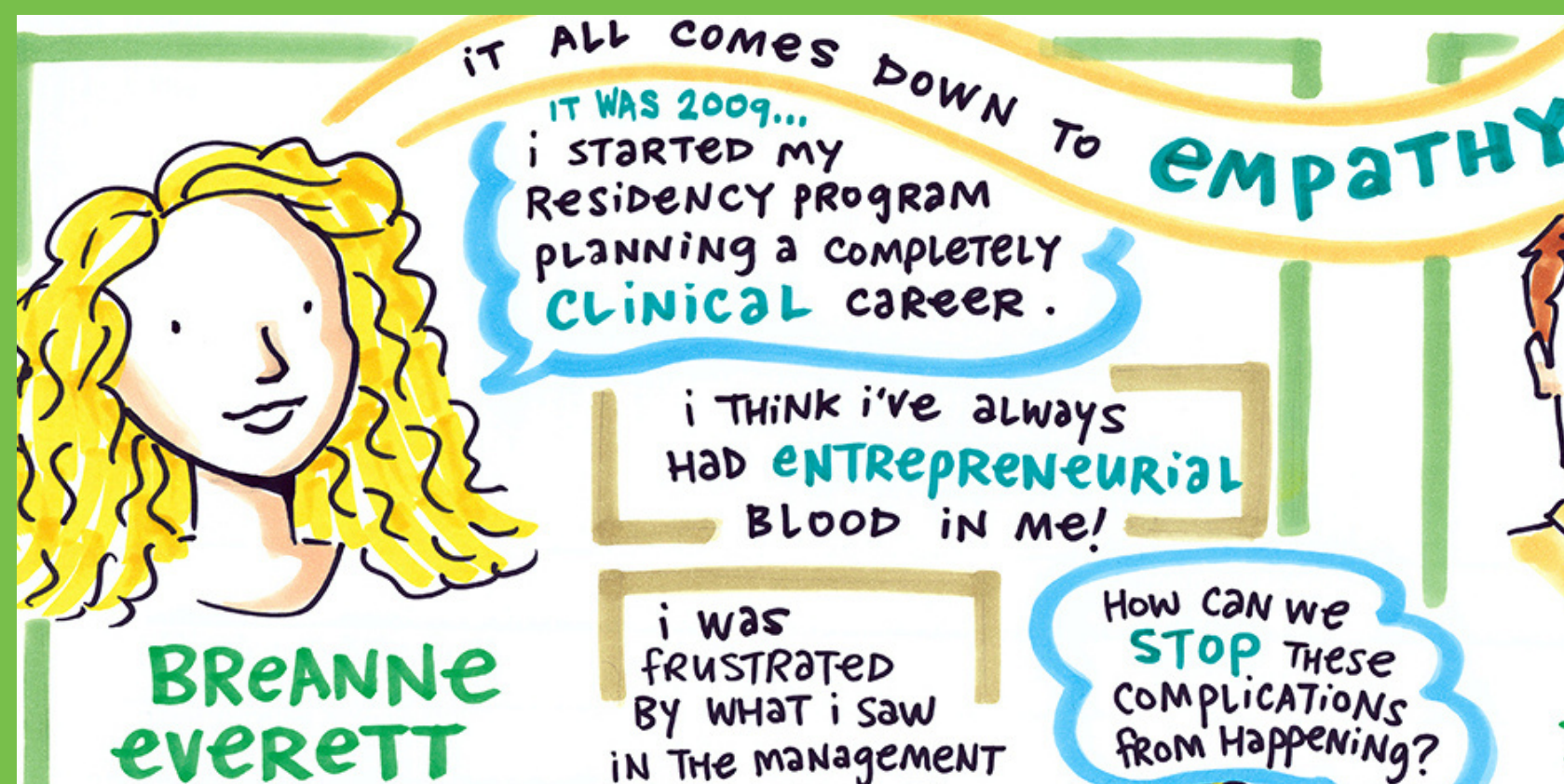
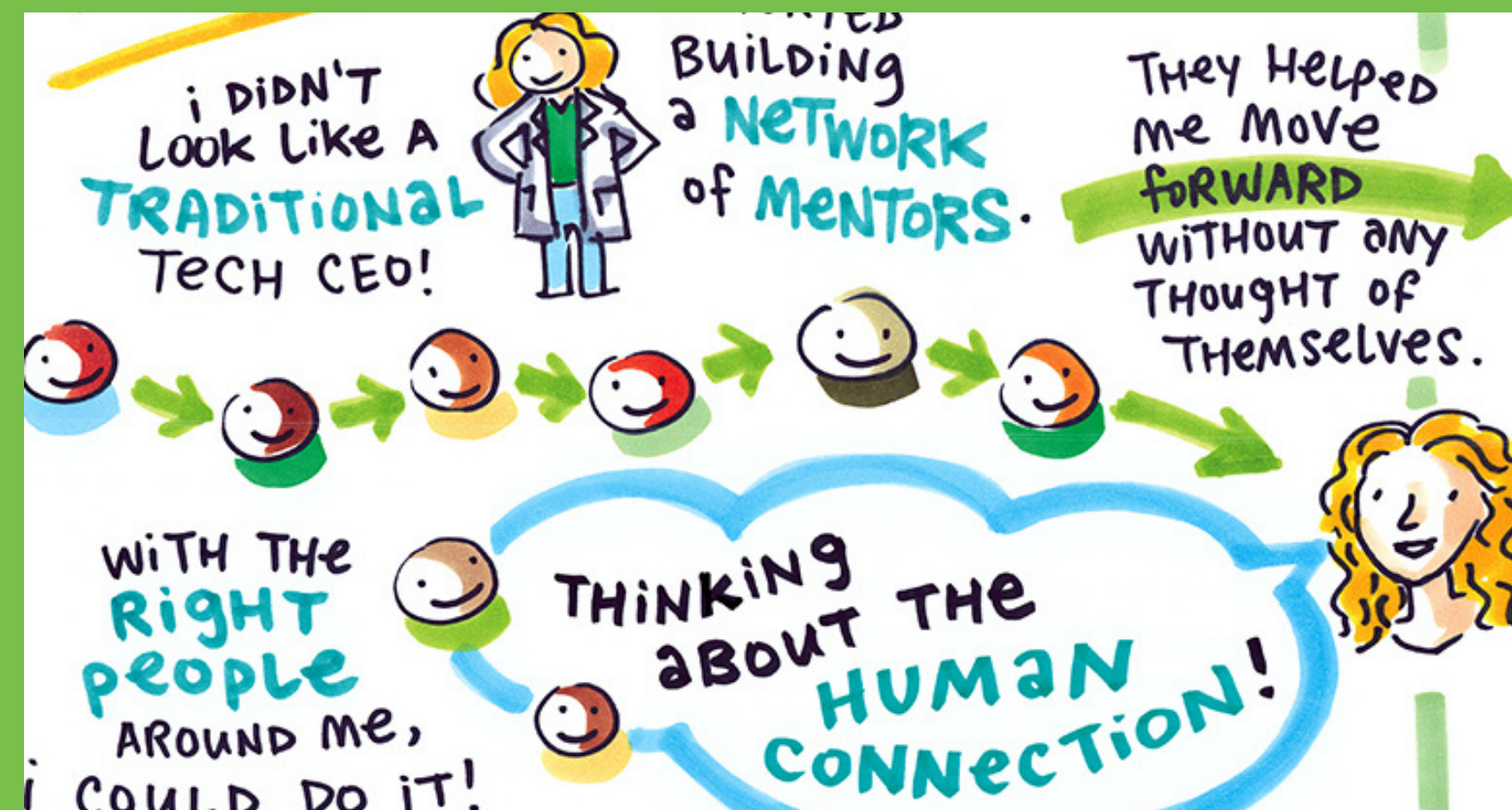
Guest Host



Breanne shared how the social contract values played into her entrepreneurial journey.

She discussed how human connections and linkages were foundational to what became Orpyx® Medical Technologies Inc.

Breanne also discussed how the embodiment of diversity, trust, and the give-back mentality of ecosystem leaders helped build her network, attain investment, and grow her companies.



To Breanne, elements of the social contract all come down to empathy.

Check out Breanne's entire presentation [here](#).





Brad Zumwalt is a co-founder of Rainforest Alberta. He has been growing technology companies for over 30 years and leads initiatives to support other entrepreneurs and innovators across Alberta.

**"The social contract describes what it means to innovate together, to define what we allow and pursue versus what we resist and avoid "**

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**BRAD ZUMWALT**  
Guest Speaker



Brad opened his presentation by giving credit to the key people that started the Rainforest Alberta movement and emphasized that, as a movement, we should always be looking forward and remain entrepreneur-focused.

He shared how the social contract feeds into Calgary's 10-year goal of reaching 1,000 core tech companies by 2031.

Brad spoke about purpose. In the Rainforest, the purpose is to host a community of people sharing a common faith in continuously growing the culture of innovation and entrepreneurship.

Brad shared the butterfly project as a means to measure the current number of tech companies and as a visual representation of the work left to do.



Next, Brad spoke about living by the social contract as our method for reaching the goal of growing 1,000 core-tech companies in YYC.

Brad emphasized that what really matters within the concept of a Rainforest community is that we nurture connectedness.

Check out Brad's entire presentation [here](#).





# SUMMIT BREAK OUT SESSIONS

All participants were engaged to reflect on the measures and methods to reach the ideal state of a thriving global innovation community in Calgary.

Through connections and commitments built at the summit, all participants are part of creating a culture that will propel Calgary's tech sector to a strong and resilient future.



"99% of what makes innovation happen  
is completely invisible."

**GREG HOROWITT**





# BREAKOUT ROOM FACILIATATORS



**Jonathan  
Perkins**



**Sarah  
Topps**



**Margo  
Purcell**



**Craig  
Elias**



**Christine  
Ward**



**Brigitte  
Legault**



**Kourtney  
Branagan**



**Brent  
Zuber**



**Brett  
Colvin**



**Zac  
Novak**



**Brenda  
Beckedorf**



**David  
Chavez**



# Before Getting Started



Participants were asked to channel their inner community superheroes by coming up with their own innovative superhero name. This was intended to break the ice and get creative juices flowing for the ensuing conversations.





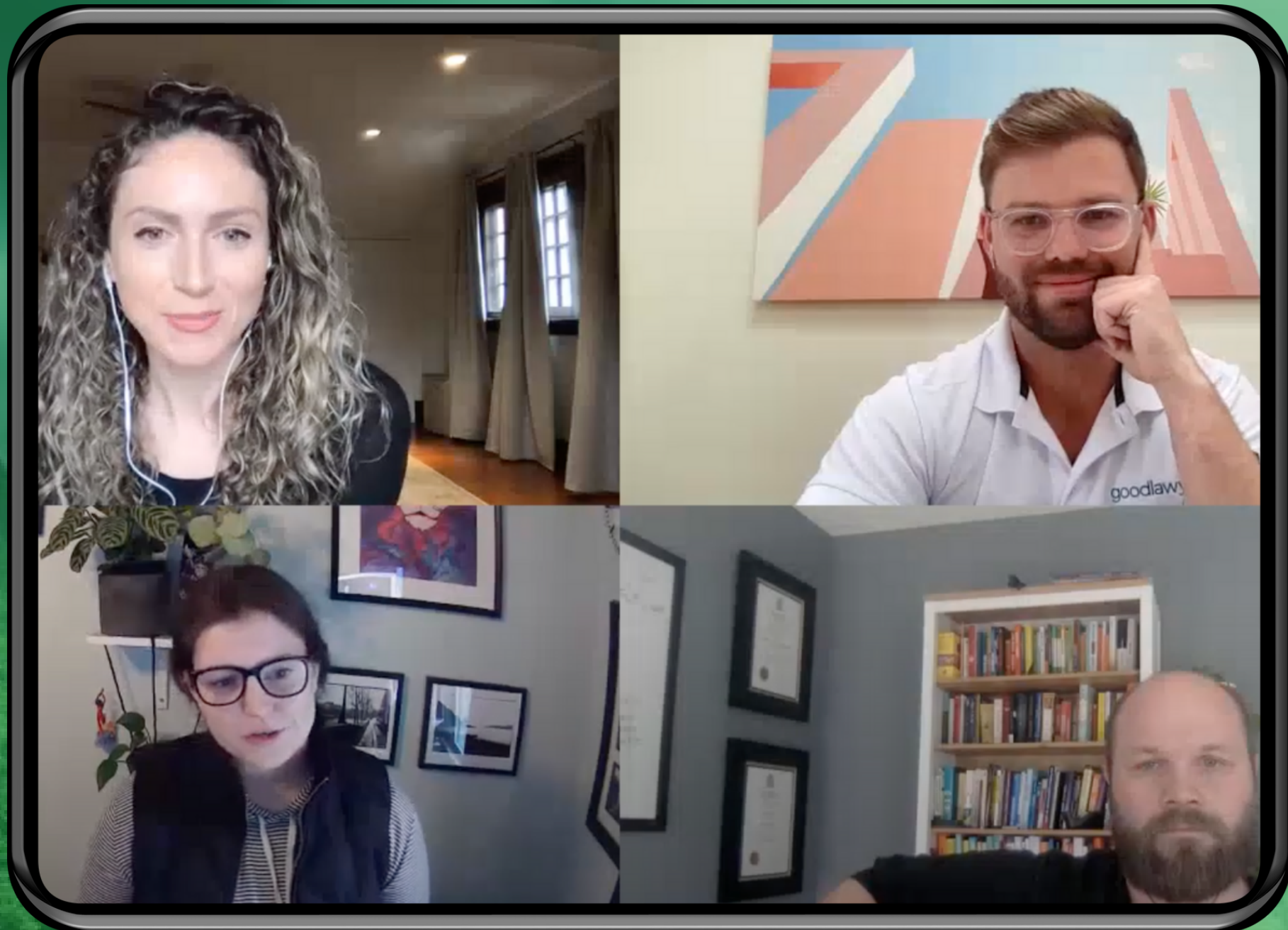
# What We Asked and How We Asked It

Within eleven breakout sessions, participants were asked to visualize and discuss an ideal innovation community in Calgary.

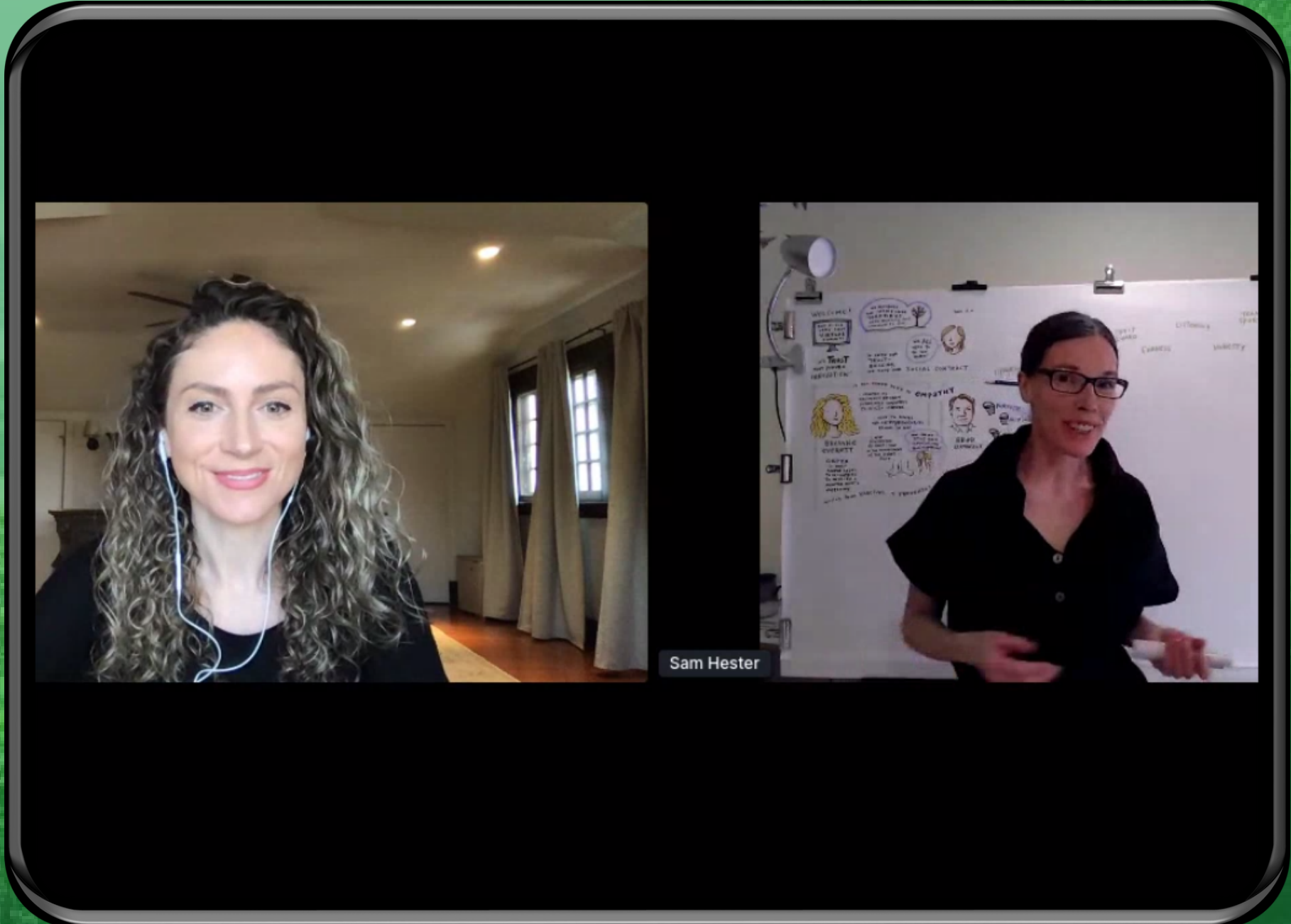
WHAT WOULD CALGARY'S ECOSYSTEM LOOK LIKE IF EVERY INTERACTION & IDEA STEMMED FROM A PLACE OF TRUST, COLLABORATION & DIVERSE THINKING?



From this question, participants discussed their vision and aspirations for an innovation ecosystem that values trust, collaboration, and diversity.



it's **TRUST**  
THAT POWERS  
**INNOVATION!**





# What We Heard

Within the breakout sessions, there arose four themes describing the ideal community.

Community is an important and recurring word because it describes the interconnected whole that participants aspire to create together.

Participants imagine a healthy and successful community in the following ways.





# A Growing Community



Participants aspire to create a community where economic growth is an outcome and measure rather than the only driving force behind the ecosystem.

In such a community, there is a constant and reiterative growth of ideas, perspective, knowledge, and wisdom. This community is not defined by its individuals and organizations but by the ever-increasing number of connections between them. There is an understanding that, through collaboration and connection, the actions of individuals will always result in a stronger ecosystem. As Greg Horowitz says: “it’s about lots of small things.”

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A growing community must have a core energy that fuels, inspires, and attracts people and ideas. This core is fed by success and storytelling that continually revitalizes the community and moves it onward. Such storytelling includes sharing and celebrating milestones of all parts of the ecosystem no matter where individuals or organizations are along their business cycle.

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There is an appreciation that a healthy community grows by appreciating those who came before and learning from their successes and failures. The metaphor of a relay race is an apt description of a community that seeks to learn from its parts to progress the whole rather than individualistically compete for dominance.

# An Inclusive Community



In an inclusive community, the innovation ecosystem has a thirst for a diversity of perspectives, experiences, and backgrounds. It is a welcoming community that is a first choice for people around the world--a global magnet for talent and ideas.

This is a community that prioritizes collaboration over competition with individuals and organizations actively seeking ways to connect, partner, and share. As new members enter the community, they do so with an intent to bring value that they may share, rather than with an intent to simply receive benefits by their membership.

Such a community “replicate[s] privilege for the underrepresented” as a way to actively engage traditionally excluded populations. There is an innate sense of equity within the community that is supported by policy and action. Such a community of innovators perfectly reflects the broader population around it so that all people may see themselves as innovators and participants in this community.

This ideal community is well-integrated with education institutions and welcomes youth voices and perspectives; it understands that innovation can be driven by new generations that have an eye to the future. Of course, an inclusive community has a clear point of entry--a metaphorical (or literal) front door that is well-known to all. This is a place or organization where people with good ideas may go to get all the support and resources they need to grow a business and find success. The Platform Innovation Centre can be that first point of entry for this community.



# A Sustainable Value-Based Community



Since participants are committed to the Rainforest Alberta Social Contract, it is not surprising that they consider the future of Calgary's innovation ecosystem to be progressive and value-based. In addition to the 10 values and principles of the social contract, participants believe that an ideal innovation community will also place great value on environmental sustainability and positive social impact. This is a resilient community.

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Participants also identify a high quality of life in Calgary being an outcome of a well-connected community that values the overall resilience and prosperity of the population. In this community, there is a high sense of belonging from its members. Those within the ideal innovation ecosystem also have a meaningful work/life balance that many believe does not exist in Calgary's traditional corporate culture. Such a balance and quality of life will also ensure Calgary is a magnet for global talent, investment, and business.

# An Entrepreneurial Community



Participants believe that an ideal innovation ecosystem retains the entrepreneurial spirit that is an important part of the Calgary business identity. This is a community where good ideas, no matter how new or disruptive, can receive support and are celebrated.

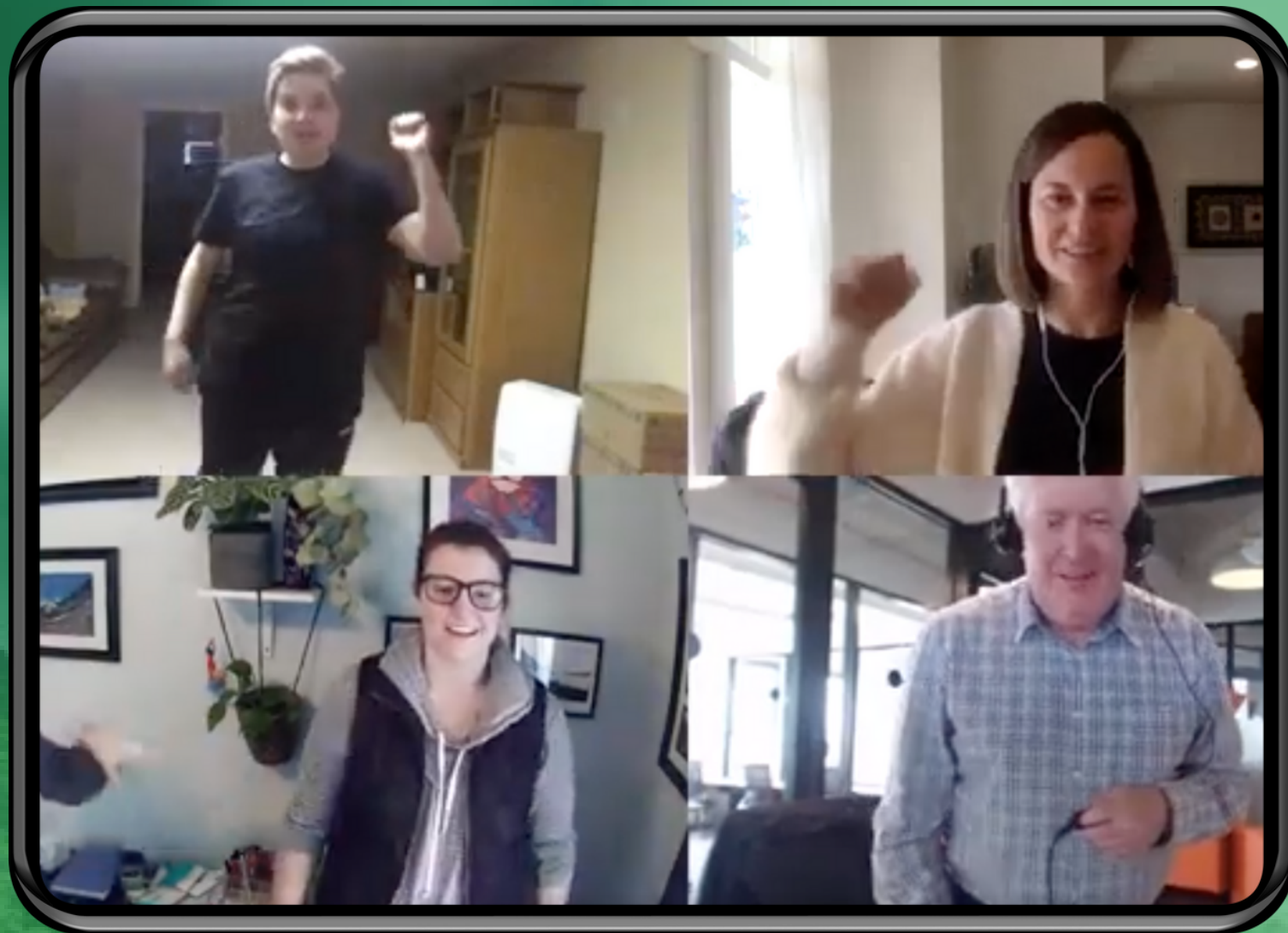
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An entrepreneurial community values and rewards risk-taking. It fosters a low fear approach to innovation based on the strength of trust within the community and the unfailing support of the network of innovators. These are founders and organizations that put more effort into embracing opportunity than avoiding threats.

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This ideal community still appreciates that it is an economic entity. It values success and growth while also seeing the success of founders as something that can be shared with the greater community to beget even more success and prosperity for all.

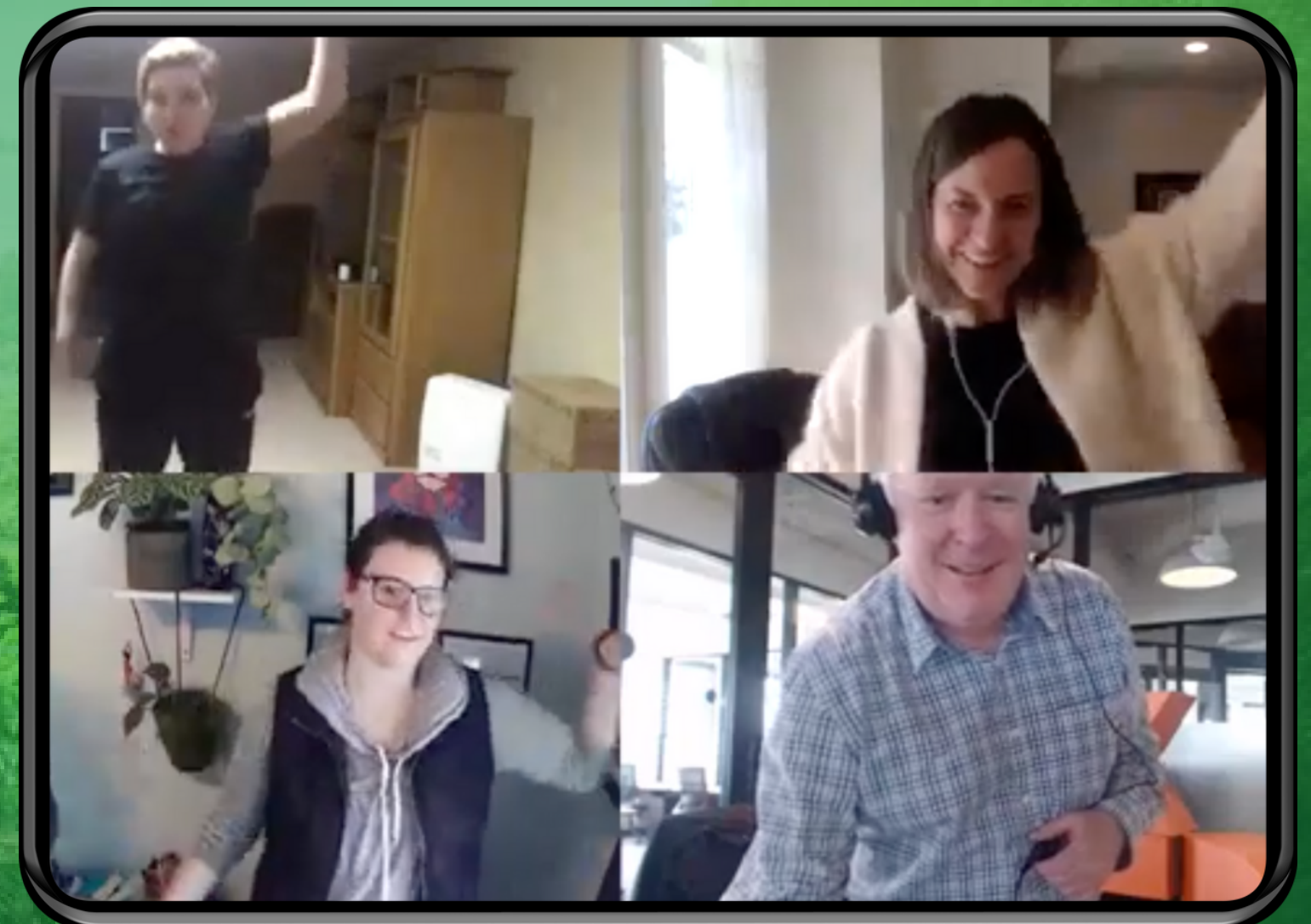




After facilitators shared their insights with the main group, participants were asked to join in an interactive break and work their trust muscles.

This meant being vulnerable, trusting everyone to take part, to have fun, and to shake it out.

Join us for a stretch [here](#)(28:36).





IT ALL STARTS  
WITH THESE  
**SMALL**  
INTERACTIONS

WHAT  
COULD I  
GAIN FROM  
THIS  
PERSON?



WHAT  
COULD I  
DO FOR  
THIS  
PERSON?

**NETWORKING**

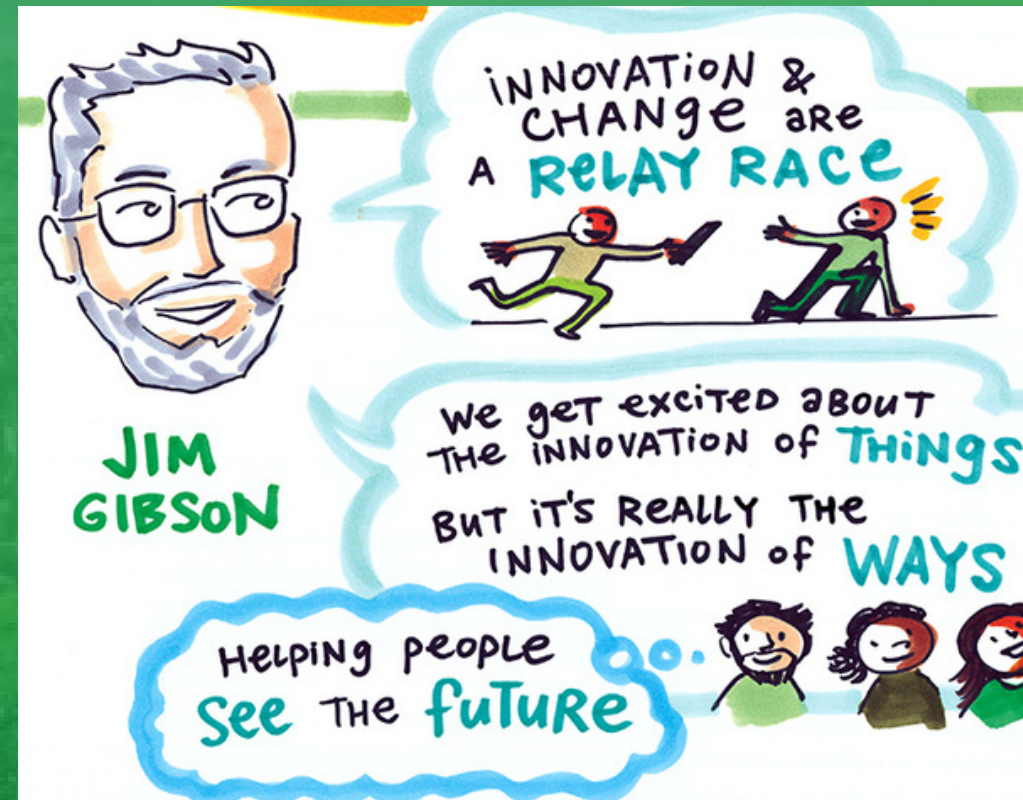




"Innovation of ways" means helping people see the future as inclusive, diverse, and solving problems. The future won't happen by adding more things, but new ways of thinking. "

## JIM GIBSON

After building connections through virtual networking co-founder of Rainforest Alberta, Jim Gibson, shared parting wisdom on how the Social Contract contributes to the "innovation of ways".





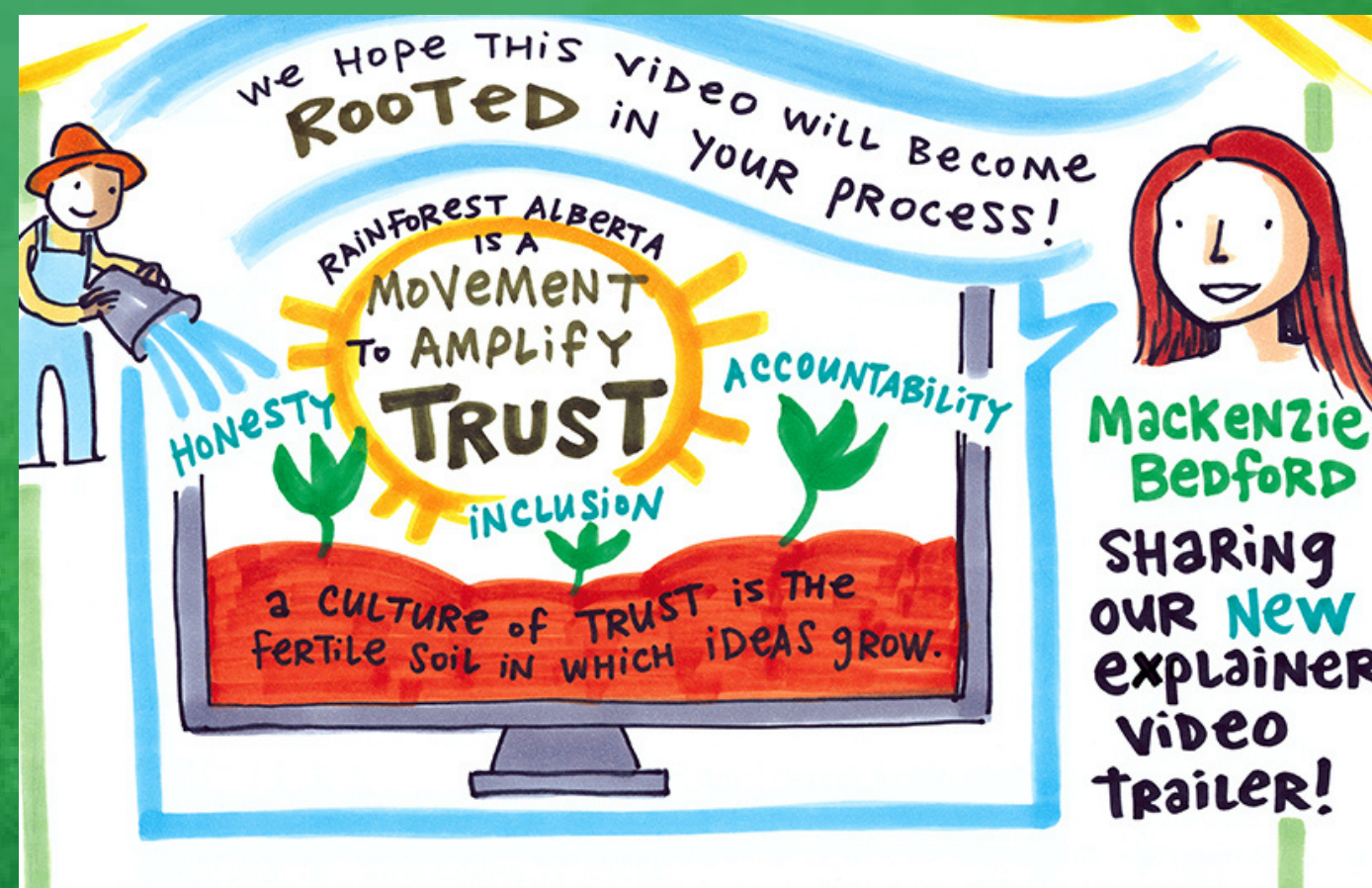


We closed the 2021 YYC Rainforest summit with an inspiring [video teaser](#) (14:05).

Mackenzie Bedford has been working with the Rainforest team to create a fun, simple, and lasting way to share the Rainforest analogy and social contract with newcomers to the Rainforest.

The full version of this project will be released to the community soon. Stay tuned!

**Mackenzie Bedford**  
**Artist**  
**Previous Community Manager**





RAINFOREST ALBERTA 

## **AFTER THE SUMMIT**

**WHAT ARE  
WE REALLY  
MEASURING?**

**Participants were asked to  
continue nurturing the  
connections made at the Summit.**



**6 out of 10**

People who took our measurement survey made 1-3 new connections as a result of attending the summit

50%

of survey respondents renewed 1-3 connections with people they hadn't seen for awhile

"The concept of community is connectedness, but it's embedded in the culture, which again goes to that concept of the social contract, the values and intentions or our aligned intentions into a set of outcomes"

GREG HOROWITT



# PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCES



**Rafael  
Hernandez  
Alarcon**

"It was a very fulfilling experience to be part of the summit and to bear witness to so many people coming together to forge a better tomorrow. Small and big, on professional stature, united in a very cohesive and harmonic effort to bring better opportunities, technological advances, and a brighter future to the region. It was somewhat overwhelming to see the number of people participating, but there was no red tape, rookies and veterans exchanging experiences, networking, and bringing their best practices to enrich the collective synergy. The conducting thread felt in all and each activity. The organization seemingly flawless, very dynamic; speaker after speaker keeping the quality bar high. Then, went into breakout rooms to get to know some of the participants at a closer, personal level. I have connected with almost all of them on LinkedIn, besides the bond forged that day. I enjoyed the summit in its entirety, but my favourite part was the speed dating networking. Hesitant and self-conscious of the "underwhelming" resume, having just started my second pivot career into technology, I got into the session thinking of how little I offer compared with CEOs, CTOs, and all the chief positions, but each one of us has our own path, transferrable skills, network, and it felt like I brought enough to the table, after all. Conversations went very natural, finding common ground, exchanging perspectives, and visions. I had six lightning #networking sessions; I had connected with each one of them!!"

"Attending the Rainforest Summit left me feeling energized and full of new contacts and resources. What resonated the most was the quote from Greg Horowitz reminding us that innovation is based on "lots of small things that over time begin converging". The little things add up to make big changes. The Rainforest movement is that spark, making big things happen through this community of like-minded people that I am excited to be a part of."

**Erin Moffatt**





"The Rainforest Summit is the best of what the Rainforest community has to offer: not only does the event encourage attendees to reflect on the social contract that binds us together, but it provides attendees with the opportunity to act on that reflection and be the type of members who will drive innovation across Alberta. By renewing the foundation that bolsters this community and encouraging collisions between community members, the Summit also reorients and invigorates efforts to stay the course towards achieving a flexible and fertile ecosystem."

**Helette Conradie**

"The summit was a powerful atmosphere of a dedicated community driven by a (non-enforceable, I might add) social contract. The energy in the virtual room was one of belonging, support and enablement. I found Dr. Everett's startup story particularly inspiring. If she could accomplish so much then with so much less community resource and support than we have now, then Calgary is primed for unprecedented innovative feats with the increasing amount of activity in the tech space. I left the summit more energized than ever before, and freshly committed to the awareness creation, capacity building and storytelling efforts geared at strengthening our innovation ecosystem."

**Wunmi Adekanmbi**



"Felt very inclusive even in a digital setting and the event was facilitated with positivity to continue cultivating Alberta's tech ecosystem - it was great!"

**Stephanie Horner**



**WELCOME!**  
THIS IS OUR VERY FIRST VIRTUAL SUMMIT!  
IT'S **TRUST** THAT POWERS INNOVATION!

WE RECOGNIZE THE TRADITIONAL TERRITORIES WE'RE BUILDING THIS COMMUNITY ON!

THIS IS A SAFE SPACE FOR CONVERSATIONS!

WE ALL HAVE TO DO THE WORK!  
TO GUIDE OUR TRUST-BUILDING, WE HAVE OUR **SOCIAL CONTRACT.**

**BREANNE EVERETT**  
IT ALL COMES DOWN TO **EMPATHY.**  
IT WAS 2009... I STARTED MY RESIDENCY PROGRAM PLANNING A COMPLETELY CLINICAL CAREER.  
I THINK I'VE ALWAYS HAD **ENTREPRENEURIAL BLOOD** IN ME!  
I WAS FRUSTRATED BY WHAT I SAW IN THE MANAGEMENT OF THE DIABETIC FOOT.  
HOW CAN WE STOP THESE COMPLICATIONS FROM HAPPENING?  
**ORPYX** IS ABOUT SENSOR-BASED TECHNOLOGIES TO MEASURE + MONITOR WHAT'S HAPPENING!  
MOVING FROM **REACTIVE** TO **PREVENTATIVE**  
I DIDN'T LOOK LIKE A TRADITIONAL TECH CEO!  
I STARTED BUILDING A NETWORK OF MENTORS.  
THEY HELPED ME MOVE FORWARD WITHOUT ANY THOUGHT OF THEMSELVES.  
WITH THE RIGHT PEOPLE AROUND ME, I COULD DO IT!  
THINKING ABOUT THE HUMAN CONNECTION!

**BRAD ZUMWALT**  
PURPOSE: INCLUSIVE, SILO-BUSTING, SECTOR-AGNOSTIC, SOCIAL-BARRIER-SMASHING, ETC. ETC. ETC!  
MEASURES  
METHODS  
WHAT IT MEANS TO INNOVATE TOGETHER...  
WE HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO GROW THE TECH SECTOR FOR GOOD OR EVIL.  
WE'RE BUILDING AN ALBERTA COMMUNITY.  
WE PROCEED WITH **TRUST.**

WHAT WOULD CALGARY'S ECOSYSTEM LOOK LIKE IF EVERY INTERACTION & IDEA STEMMED FROM A PLACE OF **TRUST, COLLABORATION & DIVERSE THINKING?**  
RAINFOREST IS ALWAYS EVOLVING.  
GIVE + TAKE  
THERE USED TO BE MORE OF AN ATMOSPHERE OF TRUST & COLLABORATION.  
THAT'S GONE DOWN DURING THE PAST COUPLE OF YEARS.  
IT BECAME A PLACE TO GET JOBS.  
WE WANT A REGENERATIVE ECOSYSTEM.  
WE NEED TO BUILD IT UP AGAIN!  
WE NEED MENTORS TO REFLECT THE MENTEE'S WE WANT.

ACCESS TO UPSCALING + KNOWLEDGE  
THE FRONT DOOR  
GOING FROM NETWORKING TO COMMUNITY  
FEELING THAT THERE'S A PLACE FOR YOU!  
CREATING MORE DIVERSITY  
IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT AGE YOU ARE OR WHAT DEGREE YOU HAVE.  
DIVERSITY FUELS CREATIVITY!

GOING BACK TO THAT ENERGY WE USED TO FEEL!  
WHAT'S THAT FLAME THAT CAN DRAW PEOPLE IN?  
TECH IS FOUNDATIONAL EVERYWHERE  
THE COOLEST JOB YOU'VE NEVER HEARD OF.  
TECH UPSCALING  
CREATING A NEW WORK/LIFE BALANCE  
CHOOSING A CAREER  
AN OPPORTUNITY FOR UNIVERSITIES  
TECH UPSCALING  
KNOWLEDGE SPILLOVER

HELPING PEOPLE SEE THEMSELVES IN TECH!  
TELLING THE STORIES  
ADOPTING STUDENTS SO WE'LL TAKE THEIR IDEAS INTO ACCOUNT EARLIER.  
TRUST = THE ABSENCE OF FEAR.  
NEW THINGS ARE NOT THREATS, BUT OPPORTUNITIES!

QUALITY OF LIFE  
TRUST = THE ABSENCE OF FEAR.  
NEW THINGS ARE NOT THREATS, BUT OPPORTUNITIES!

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LISTENING  
TEAM SPORT  
SHARING  
ROLE MODEL

FAIRNESS  
HONESTY

WORKING THOSE TRUST MUSCLES  
THESE DAYS, PEOPLE ARE COMING WITH NEEDS.  
I'M ON THE RECEIVING END OF THINGS. IN THE IDEAL SITUATION, I'D BE GIVING BACK.  
EMPOWERING PEOPLE TO GIVE HELP!  
MORE EMPLOYEE!  
CELEBRATING SMALLER STORIES  
SHARING MILESTONES  
WE NEED MENTORS TO REFLECT THE MENTEE'S WE WANT.

OUR SUPERHERO WORD CLOUD  
IT NEEDS TO BE CONSTANTLY REFILLED

INNOVATION & CHANGE ARE A RELAY RACE  
WE GET EXCITED ABOUT THE INNOVATION OF THINGS... BUT IT'S REALLY THE INNOVATION OF WAYS  
HELPING PEOPLE SEE THE FUTURE

CULTURE IS LIKE A BUCKET WITH HOLES IN IT.

IT NEEDS TO BE CONSTANTLY REFILLED

IT NEEDS TO BE CONSTANTLY REFILLED

IT NEEDS TO BE CONSTANTLY REFILLED

IT NEEDS TO BE CONSTANTLY REFILLED

1000 CORE TECH COMPANIES BY 2031

WHAT COULD I GAIN FROM THIS PERSON?  
WHAT COULD I DO FOR THIS PERSON?  
IT ALL STARTS WITH THESE SMALL INTERACTIONS

NETWORKING  
COLLABORATION, STRATEGY, FUNDRAISING, ARCHANGEL, GENERALIST, FANTASTIC, COOL, WOMEN, POLITELY, KNOWLEDGE, ENTHUSIASM, WEATHER, COMRADE, EMPowerMENT, BRIDGE, NETWORKING, COMMUNITY, CONNECTOR, STORYTELLER, ENTREPRENEUR, CAPTAIN, POSITIONING, PRODUCT, RADIO, KNIFE, CLEARER, GOODLAWYER

OUR SUPERHERO WORD CLOUD  
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RAINFOREST ALBERTA

2021 CALGARY SUMMIT

PLATFORM calgary

startup calgary  
be part of the energy.

(zinc)

ask Betty  
SHE GETS SHIT DONE

ALBERTA INNOVATES

S&M HESTER - THE23RDSTORY.COM



# THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS

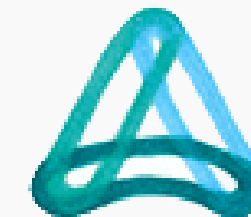
**PLATFORM**  
calgary

**startup**  
**calgary**  
be part of the energy.

(zinc)



ask Betty  
SHE GETS SH\*T DONE



ALBERTA INNOVATES





# THANK YOU

If you would like more information about the 2021 YYC summit or a printable version of the graphic recording, please contact [info@rainforestab.ca](mailto:info@rainforestab.ca)