



Aurora Chamber of Commerce

Media Release

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Too Few Entrepreneurs Able to Scale Up Their Business

Aurora Chamber of Commerce Report Identifies Six Barriers to Growth

AURORA, ON, April 21, 2016: Today, the Aurora Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with the Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC), released the report, *Breaking Barriers: Ontario's Scale Up Challenge*, which identifies the major roadblocks preventing Ontario businesses from expanding and presents recommendations to best support business owners in taking their ventures to the next stage of growth. According to the report, based on interviews with nearly two dozen business owners, sector associations, and other organizations, as well as a survey of over 350 Ontario business owners, too few entrepreneurs are continuing to build their business, or “scale up”, in the province.

The report adds to a recent chorus of voices calling for governments, the business community, and other actors to build on the province's entrepreneurial spirit by creating the conditions to enable our most promising firms to scale.

To position Ontario for long-term success, the report proposes recommendations to address six specific barriers preventing businesses from growing, which includes a lack of access to talent with scale up experience, gaps in the right kinds of financing, and lower incentives to growth offered through public programs.

Chief among the Aurora Chamber of Commerce's recommendations are for governments to improve businesses' access to talent in the short-term by creating a scale-up visa to quicken access to essential international managerial talent. According to an OCC survey, 63 percent of businesses that are looking to grow face a talent shortage. The Aurora Chamber of Commerce also encourages governments to gain a better understanding of where current gaps exist in the Canadian financing landscape.

Other recommendations of the report include:

- Realign public programs and incentives to focus supports on high-growth firms

- Encourage greater international trade activity by linking more business support programs to trade
- Improve access to public and private anchor customers by leveraging procurement to strategically invest in growing businesses
- Enable accurate measurement and monitoring of the scale up challenge by ensuring collaboration between Statistics Canada and industry groups to collect and publicize relevant data

The OCC's survey also revealed that the cost of doing business remains a top issue for Ontario employers as 69 percent of business owners looking to grow identified this as a barrier. Through its advocacy efforts on other key policy issues, the Aurora Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with the OCC, continues to highlight the cost of doing business as a major challenge facing Ontario's business community.

Quotes:

- **Javed Khan, Chair of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors:** "We are fortunate to have a vibrant business community and a number of extremely successful enterprises in Aurora. However, there is a tendency for businesses here to stay small, and this is something that needs to be addressed. The long-term economic success of our community depends on the ability of local businesses to transform into larger-scale companies. Both the federal and provincial governments have allocated room in their budgets to support the scaling up initiative in Ontario, and tapping into this potential is crucial for small and medium-sized businesses in Aurora."

- **Allan O'Dette, President & CEO of Ontario Chamber of Commerce:** "The release of *Breaking Barriers* coincides with initiatives currently underway by the governments of Canada and Ontario to help our most promising firms scale up. We have an incredible opportunity to leverage this alignment across government and the business community to tackle this challenge."

Survey conducted online between March 3 and April 11, 2016. N=359.

[Learn more](#) about the Aurora Chamber of Commerce.

[Learn more](#) about the Ontario Chamber of Commerce.

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