

## Views from the top

**Charles Brindamour**, Chief Executive Officer of Intact Financial Corporation and **William (Bill) Young**, Chair, Intact Financial Corporation Board of Directors reflect on our purpose to help people when they need it most and to build communities that are resilient for the future.



**Charles Brindamour**  
Chief Executive Officer



**William (Bill) Young**  
Chair, Intact Financial Corporation Board of Directors

### What role should business play in addressing societal issues?

**CHARLES:** There are deep trends shaping society. We must take a whole-of-society approach to tackle issues like climate change, poverty and inequality. Business has a responsibility to show leadership. Leadership for me in that context is to make sure your organization is centred on helping and winning. That intersection is very big in my view. That's why we've centred our game plan on building resilient communities.

### And can you explain what building resilient communities means to you?

**CHARLES:** When society is going through its toughest times, that's when our people really step up. So building resilient communities for us is about using that spirit and our strengths to help communities where we operate.

And it's centred on two big ideas.

First is climate. Climate change is the defining trend of the next century. We want to put our know-how, expertise, and resources to work to help communities be ready to face the impacts of climate change.

Second, building resilient communities for us is also about creating economic opportunities. We want to help people to have a fair shot at finding opportunities to develop themselves and their families in the communities in which we operate.

### Talking about businesses' contribution to society, in times of economic volatility would it be tempting for Intact to pull back on its commitments to building resilient communities?

**BILL:** Our contribution to society is non-negotiable. Helping is why we exist as an organization. And our focus on building resilient communities is more critical than ever. There's value in really understanding what the challenges people, and our customers, are facing on a day-to-day basis. We are navigating an era of tough times. When your purpose explicitly states that you're there to build resiliency—we have an imperative to step up.

### Do you believe that Intact's focus on helping society, on building resilient communities, is one of the reasons Intact is outperforming?

**BILL:** If we're helping people, that means we're understanding them, which correlates to providing services that are well suited to their needs, driven by a workforce that is talented, diverse and inclusive. It's a recipe for success.

We've been able to prove to ourselves and our customers over the years that being focused on helping society also enables us to provide the best service—and that enables us to win in the marketplace.

**CHARLES:** Totally agree Bill. If you're focused on issues that create the conditions for communities to thrive, then your business is more sustainable. And you create growth opportunities in the process. Helping is not just about purpose—it's also about strategy. With a clear purpose and strategy, it shapes the investments you make, your behaviours and priorities. This is our outperformance formula.

### How do we manage the balance between thinking long term and reflecting on the big trends while remaining agile enough to manage the crises our customers face on a day-to-day basis?

**CHARLES:** Our first priority is to remain laser focused on getting our customers back on track. If that's not working, we can't invest for the mid and long term. Then it's about transforming our organization to stay relevant as society evolves. We anticipate future trends as a part of our strategy process and use our strengths to turn them into growth opportunities.

### How does the Board challenge Management to be accountable for maintaining this balance between the customer expectation today and the mid to long term needs of society?

**BILL:** The Board agrees we can't short-change our social impact and ESG commitments. They're fundamental. But looking after our customers today is also key. So our governance structure enables a dual track—where the management team has the freedom and obligation to be focused on the customer experience, while also progressing on key commitments to society.



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A good example is our response to the pandemic. Our customers stopped driving their cars, they were financially challenged. Intact stepped up with financial relief for customers and millions in aid for our communities. We didn't compromise helping society at the expense of customers. This is what happens when the company enters challenging times from a position of strength.

**How is Intact tackling the global challenge of climate change?**

**CHARLES:** We have been focused on helping our customers adapt to a changing climate for over a decade. Now, we are building on our work in adaptation towards the transition to net zero. And we have five priorities to get us there:

We are moving the whole enterprise towards net zero by 2050 and we will cut greenhouse gas emissions in half from our corporate operations by 2030.

We have to acknowledge that this transition will be difficult. We account for this by doubling down on adaptation, to help society prepare for the consequences of climate change.

We have strong relationships with our customers, many who are determining their own response to climate change. We will use our core strengths in data and risk selection to help them get there.

Of course, we have to put our products to work. Helping companies transition and support new energy sources, new technologies, and accelerate the transition towards net zero is a key element.

And the last point is that for this transition to be successful it must be an all-hands-on-deck approach. We need to collaborate, to bring what we know to the table with governments and the communities where we operate.

**How does the Board help Intact prepare for long-term risks and opportunities presented by uncertain issues like climate change?**

**BILL:** The Board is proud of Intact's leadership on climate change adaptation. As climate change manifests itself into increasing instances of extreme weather, we've stepped up to help. Our efforts have built incredible momentum in Canada, which we're now globalizing.

The Board approved Intact's climate strategy, which has both a long-term view to 2050 across our whole value chain, while maintaining a focus on nearer term emissions reductions in our corporate operations.

The Board is engaged with Management on net zero pathways, including in our underwriting, investment and management activities. And we know we have the required skills and experience in the organization to achieve those goals.

**And what are the other dimensions that make these issues for the boardroom?**

**BILL:** We address ESG issues in a practical way. Climate change is a clear and present threat we face as a society. We're close to that in the way that we are helping our customers manage it. So climate is an example of where we're tackling issues that we're interested in and where we have the credibility to address them in a meaningful way.

Stakeholder interest in our ESG performance is high. Over the past year, I've met with at least 10 of our principal shareholders and about half of our discussions are focused on Intact's position on ESG topics, including climate change and DEI. It's useful for us to hear from shareholders on what their expectations are to inform our thinking, as the world is moving quickly on these issues and society's expectations of the business response to ESG is evolving rapidly.

**Building resilient communities means that everybody has a fair chance at winning. One way Intact creates those opportunities is by having our employees and our leaders to be representative of the communities we serve. Why is that important to you?**

**CHARLES:** It would be a big mistake to not seek to represent the communities in which we operate.

If you think about performance, about our ability to make good decisions, then diversity for us is really about strength. It's at the heart of the definition of our Value of respect. As a result, this idea of representing the communities in which we operate is fundamental to really improve the quality of the decisions that we're making.

And finally, this goes straight to our ability to be a best employer. People need to recognize themselves in the organization. People need to know they can speak up and they can contribute to why we exist.

**What is the Board's perspective of the role of DEI in the governance and performance of the organization?**

**BILL:** Being a diverse organization, and having a culture where everyone can recognize themselves, enables us to tap into the largest pool of skills and capabilities. It's good business, but it's also mapped directly to the core values we hold as an organization.

I would say for the Board, we were an early adopter of measures of gender diversity—signing the Catalyst Accord in 2012—and we've far exceeded our early commitment of a minimum of 30% women on the Board. We are close to 50% and we're focusing now on a longer-term trajectory to be more diverse in dimensions beyond gender.

That's critical, because one of the Board's principal roles, is to be an effective sounding board to management on strategy. The best way we can do that is by ensuring Board members have different backgrounds, histories and ways of thinking about big issues.

**Finally, what's different about the Social Impact Report this year and why is that important?**

**CHARLES:** The report shows that we are focused more than ever on demonstrating performance against our strategy to both help and win.

Our people, our customers and our communities are facing difficult headwinds, particularly on the economy and in relation to the impacts of climate change. But at Intact we are optimistic. We must show that the combination of business leadership, collaboration, and decisions rooted in values and a sense of purpose are foundational to our competitive advantage and how we will help build resilient communities.



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