

TDS pays it forward for COVID recovery

published 06/30/2020

For immediate release: Winnipeg, June 30, 2020 – A Winnipeg law firm’s commitment to downtown development and state-of-the-art technology has paid off, so TDS is paying it forward with \$40,000 of complimentary legal services to help several struggling Manitoba small businesses recover from the pandemic.

Less than two years ago Thompson Dorfman Sweatman (TDS) Law became the first tenant to move into True North Square and invested in technology for all of its lawyers and staff that made it easier for collaboration. When COVID-19 hit, its team continued to work at full speed even when they had to abandon their new offices to work at home in March.

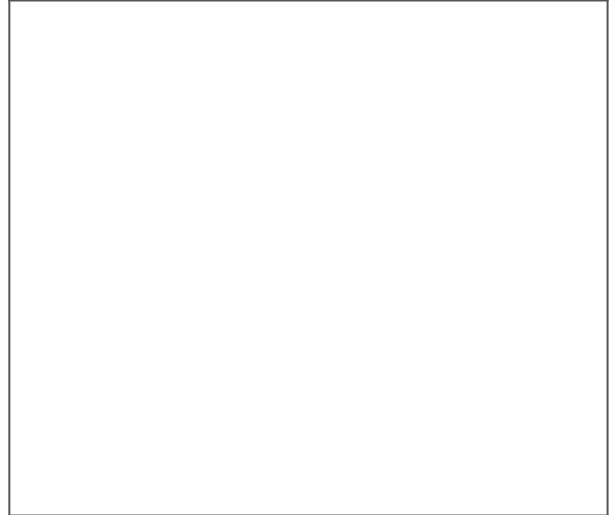
“While the move to working remotely during COVID-19 was relatively easy for us, we appreciate it wasn’t that smooth for so many Manitoba companies,” says **Keith LaBossiere**, TDS’s CEO and Managing Partner. “So today we’re launching COMPASS, an invitation for small businesses who have been significantly impacted by the pandemic to tell us what they’ve been through and how we can help them.”

TDS is inviting any Manitoba business with less than 50 employees and less than \$5 million in annual sales to apply to be one of four organizations to benefit from the program. TDS will then select four Manitoba businesses (two existing clients and two non-clients) to each receive \$10,000 in complimentary legal services from TDS lawyers.

“Not everyone appreciates that small businesses need legal help every year for things as simple as filing their annual corporate returns to negotiating contracts with staff or their unions. And we know that during COVID-19 those demands still need to be met,” LaBossiere said.

“Diversity is one of TDS’ Core Values, so we will be making a special effort to reach out to diverse businesses and encourage applications from businesses that are 50 percent or more owned by BIPOC and LBGT2QIA+ entrepreneurs.”

TDS launched its fund to give back just as its regular 200+ lawyers and staff and 24 new lawyers are slowly starting to move back into True North Square. Of the 24 new lawyers to join TDS, 15 were from other large Canadian and Manitoba law firms who actively sought out



TDS, as well as former TDS lawyers who returned to the firm. Nine of the new lawyers are recent graduates.

“To see so many lawyers want to join us is one of the extra bonuses of investing in the community that we hadn’t anticipated,” LaBossiere said.

Veteran lawyer **Richard Yaffe**, who worked in another Winnipeg law firm for almost 40 years, said he made the move to TDS because TDS’ priorities matched his own. He was impressed with the focus on excellence and people, and he could see that TDS’ values for serving the community aligned with his.

“My work in the community is extremely important to me. I told them that at this stage in my life it would be a huge benefit to me if my volunteer work was seen as an asset to TDS rather than a detriment. And when Keith told me how TDS is investing in the community and supports its lawyers giving back to the community, I thought TDS was going to be a perfect fit for me,” said Yaffe, who has a long history volunteering in leadership roles for many organizations including the Winnipeg Art Gallery and the new Inuit Art Centre.

LaBossiere adds, “It’s unusual in Manitoba for such a large number of lawyers – like Richard – to leave their existing firms and move to another firm. Typically lawyers start and end their careers in one firm. When we ask them ‘Why TDS?’ most of them say they were impressed by the investment we were making in collaborative technology and being a key player in the success of True North Square. They recognized it was all part of our commitment to local development, local clients, and the local community. If we had to distill it down to one word, it would be culture”.

“So our early investments have drawn attention and allowed us to give back even more to the community with the launch of a program to provide some complimentary legal services as we move into COVID-19 recovery,” LaBossiere adds.

DISCLAIMER: *This article is presented for informational purposes only. The content does not constitute legal advice or solicitation and does not create a solicitor client relationship. The views expressed are solely the authors’ and should not be attributed to any other party, including Thompson Dorfman Sweatman LLP (TDS), its affiliate companies or its clients. The authors make no guarantees regarding the accuracy or adequacy of the information contained herein or linked to via this article. The authors are not able to provide free legal advice. If you are seeking advice on*

specific matters, please contact Keith LaBossiere, CEO & Managing Partner at kdl@tdslaw.com, or 204.934.2587. Please be aware that any unsolicited information sent to the author(s) cannot be considered to be solicitor-client privileged.

While care is taken to ensure the accuracy for the purposes stated, before relying upon these articles, you should seek and be guided by legal advice based on your specific circumstances. We would be pleased to provide you with our assistance on any of the issues raised in these articles.