

# Our future will be shaped by how we adapt to change

**BY SUZANNE DE JONG, AACI, P.APP**  
 President, Appraisal Institute of Canada

It is often said that the only constant in life is change. While this expression is well known to all, I would point out that not all change is created equal. Regardless of its nature, speed, or magnitude, change is ALWAYS accompanied by opportunity. Even rapid and profound change that creates a crisis presents opportunity.

While we all know that we should embrace change and find the opportunities that lie within it, it is human nature to not only resist change, but also to prefer that the change be initiated and driven 'by us' rather than 'forced upon us.' We can plan for anticipated change, but sudden and unexpected change forces us into a purely reactionary posture – and a much less comfortable position.

From an AIC Member's perspective, it is critical to note that sometimes we have very little control over many of the changes we encounter – we can control only our response to them. Throughout the ongoing COVID pandemic (now 2.5 years as I write this), AIC Members have proven that they are very adept at responding and adapting to this type of externally driven change. Collectively as individual Members and as an organization, we rapidly developed and implemented new

ways of doing our work. We all found ways to adapt, and even thrive, during the pandemic. Adaptability, resilience, and flexibility in the face of change are largely a function of mindset and perspective.

This brings us to another type of change; that which can be anticipated. Beginning in 2020, AIC undertook an exercise to identify the trends and forces affecting its Members and the organization and worked to identify the opportunities that those forces will present. And most importantly, upon its conclusion in June of 2022, the *Shaping our Future* project yielded a comprehensive series of recommendations aimed at ensuring the continued success and effectiveness of AIC Members and the organization that serves them. Those 22 recommendations are grouped into three areas: 1) the profession, 2) Membership, and 3) the organization. I strongly encourage you to read the full set of recommendations and all the supporting documentation at [shapingourfuture.ca](http://shapingourfuture.ca).

As AIC develops its new Strategic Plan over the coming months, we will be setting clear objectives and metrics that address not only the Task Force recommendations, but also the ongoing work of the organization.



**Succession**

2021 age demographics in Canada indicate that almost 40% of our population is over the age of 50, while those aged 25-34 represent 36% of the population. AIC estimates that its Members in the cohort of 50 years and over is even larger than this – perhaps approaching 60%. This means that we may be facing an exodus of Members, experience, and knowledge over the coming decade or so.

To mitigate the effects of this ‘demographic bubble,’ AIC must continue to enhance its focus not only on recruitment, but also on the engagement and input of Candidates and newly-designated Members. This will be accomplished in two ways: 1) through increased recruiting initiatives, including advertising and promotion, outreach and partnership with post-secondary institutions, strengthening the Candidate development process, etc., and 2) by increasing the involvement, engagement and input of both Candidates and newly-designated Members.

These individuals quite literally are the future. We need their active participation at all levels of the organization, from committee work to governance, to ensure that our profession and organization continue to meet the needs of an evolving marketplace, and ensure that our organization remains relevant and responsive. Diversity of perspectives and diversity in service offerings is key to our collective success. Equally important is diversity in race, national or ethnic origin, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, disability, etc. See more on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion below.

**Technology**

Technology is routinely referred to as being disruptive. Disruption implies discomfort, and while new technology may well cause us discomfort, that same technology, be it artificial intelligence (AI), AVMs, Block Chain, or others, presents huge opportunities for everyone, including valuation professionals and the Institute.

Up until now, a great deal of your time and effort in providing opinions of value has consisted of the collection and analysis of data. The true value proposition of the appraiser lies in the ability to apply judgement to that data to determine its validity and relevance.

The opportunity becomes clear: appraisers can leverage AI and other technologies to complete some of the more routine aspects of their work so they can focus on applying their specialized expertise and judgement. The disruption of technology in valuation provides us with an opportunity to do more of what we specialize in and less of what almost anyone can do, thereby increasing our value proposition, efficiency, and output.

**Organizational efficiency**

In an organizational context, however, efficiency and effectiveness are hard to define. The effectiveness of an organization depends on its mission and goals, internal efficiency, strategic positioning, and many more factors.

In the case of AIC, we have an extremely complex organizational and governance structure that includes: a national body, provincial affiliates (both with their own governance, committees, and dues structures), and chapters. Furthermore, some key responsibilities and tasks are

divided among those organizations (i.e., Candidate registration at the provincial level, and all remaining Candidate interactions at the national level).

While AIC is responsible for public protection in its role as the regulator of our profession, AIC is also a Membership organization. Our Members pay substantial annual dues at multiple levels (national, provincial, chapter) and should expect maximum value for their money. Maximizing Membership benefit return for their dues requires that not only each one of these organizations function effectively on an individual basis, but also, and perhaps most importantly, that all those organizations work together as efficiently and effectively as possible.

One of the Board’s top priorities in the coming year will be to conduct an in-depth assessment of all components of the entire organization’s efficiency, effectiveness, and division of responsibilities, and implement any changes required for improvement and optimization.

**Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)**

The organization is at a pivotal moment in its EDI journey. We now have a wealth of research and framing around EDI issues within the Institute, thanks in large part to our President’s Council on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and the work it has undertaken over this past year. While we are embarking on writing a new Strategic Plan to guide us over the coming years, who we want to be and the future we want to live in will, in large part, be defined by this document. It goes without saying that EDI needs to be at the forefront of this conversation.



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*We, both as an organization, and as individual Members, have the flexibility, creativity, and resiliency to respond to rapid and unanticipated change.*

While we know our Membership is increasingly diverse, we know that this diversity is not always fully reflected within our committees, Board and other decision-making bodies. This is a disadvantage for any organization as it can keep some of the 'best and brightest' from fully engaging in the work. Very few people would argue with the common sense and human decency aspects of the foregoing. Paying attention to and actively working to achieve EDI is 'the right thing to do' for countless reasons, including many business case components to working towards EDI.

Valuation professionals should also consider the fact that they serve an increasingly diverse client base. Client perception of a service provider is greatly increased if that client can recognize some of their own values and attributes in the provider. We need to mirror the makeup of the population we serve.

It is not only the right thing to do, but it also makes sound business sense.

**Diversification of service offerings**

Public perception and awareness of AIC member services are still largely limited to point-in-time appraisal, and while this will constitute a substantial of our work for the foreseeable future, the use of technology in our point-in-time practices will also free up time and create opportunities for Members to undertake other types of work. From consulting, to Reserve Fund Studies, machinery and equipment, and the multitude of other types of work that your body of knowledge and *Canadian Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice (CUSPAP)* allow you to do, the question is not "should I take on other types of work?" but rather "which other types of work will I take on?"

For many years now, AIC has worked to promote our Members' full suite

of offerings through marketing and advertising activities and the delivery of CPD courses and webinars that help Members undertake non-traditional assignments. The new Strategic Plan will build upon those efforts so that Members can increase diversification in their work.

Our collective response and adaptation to the COVID pandemic have proven that we, both as an organization, and as individual Members, have the flexibility, creativity, and resiliency to respond to rapid and unanticipated change. The new Strategic Plan will provide the organization with a roadmap that will take us all to a

point where we are even better prepared to respond to, and even anticipate, changes and ensure that we maintain the world-class reputation of our profession and organization as we continue to deliver the high level of performance that our clients and all stakeholders have come to expect. Now that we are equipped with extensive input from the Membership and other research from the Shaping our Future Task Force, I look forward to working with the Board and staff to develop our new Strategic Plan. Stay tuned for updates as our work on that front progresses throughout the fall and into the new year. 🚩