



2025

Impact Report



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Executive Summary

2025 was a year of disruption and transition. Affordability pressures intensified, digital adoption remained uneven across regions, and advances in artificial intelligence began reshaping how Canadians work, learn, and plan for the future. These conditions exposed widening gaps in productivity, talent alignment, and organizational readiness, and made clear the importance of the systems that connect people to opportunity.

Magnet's work in 2025 focused on strengthening those systems.

Through national programs, regional partnerships, data-driven tools, and technology-enabled pathways, Magnet helped employers, learners, workers, and community organizations navigate a rapidly shifting environment. Students moved into meaningful employment, workers accessed training tied to real demand, and partners collaborated more deeply to respond to economic and technological pressures.

Across Canada, Magnet anchored conversations about digital transformation and AI readiness, offering evidence, tools, and practical guidance to organizations adapting to change. Regional engagements sharpened understandings of local workforce realities, while national and global thought leadership helped bring Canadian insights into international dialogue.

Guided by the Empowering 2027 strategy, Magnet's work across its four pillars (Economic Productivity, Regional Value, Preferred Partner, and Technology Leadership), reinforced a shared purpose: strengthening the systems that support an inclusive, resilient, and future-ready economy. This meant aligning data and programs, elevating regional insight, advancing responsible technology adoption, and deepening collaboration across post-secondary institutions, employers, sector councils, workforce organizations, and policy partners.

Above all, 2025 was a year defined by connection and capability, strengthening the relationships, infrastructure, and shared understanding needed for a more adaptive and productive economy. The work done this year lays the foundation for the next phase of Magnet's transformation arc and the continued advancement of Empowering 2027.



Mark Patterson
Executive Director, Magnet



2025 at a Glance



February
EcoImpact 2025
(Calgary)



June
Ireland Propero
Study Tour (Dublin)



March
AI-Cademy: Canada
Summit for Post-Secondary
Education (Calgary)



July
NCDA AI Virtual Summit



January
ISED Skills Directorate
staff Retreat (Ottawa)



- May**
- AI & Small business OECD
 - NL Futures Labour Market Coordination Roundtable, Community Futures National Conference (Government of NFLD)
 - AI Remote Work & Productivity (Memorial University)
 - Innovative Indigenous Career & Futures Skills Symposium (ISET) (Vancouver)
 - Web Summit (Vancouver)



Mark Patterson – Speaker & Contributor

September



September



October



November



September

- AI & Small Business Entrepreneurs (Memorial University)
- AI Reshaping the World
- (Expertise Hub Cooperative
- Building One Canada with the Honourable Evan Soloman



November

- Future Talent Forum: NYU



November

- Ontario Economic Summit (Toronto)
- Canadian Science Policy Conference (Ottawa)

December

Sustainable Finance
World Forum





"The MAGNET Wage Subsidy Program has been instrumental in helping us grow by allowing us to bring in fresh talent and expand our services."

— Danijela Babunski Drouin, Owner/CEO, Autism Mobile Inc.

Economic Productivity

In 2025, rising costs, uneven digital adoption, and widening gaps between regional labour needs and available skills placed new pressures on Canada’s productivity. **Magnet exists to help strengthen economic performance by supporting the organizations, partners, and systems that connect learning and work.** Through renewed national programs, technology-enabled pathways, and cross-sector collaboration, Magnet contributed to a more coordinated and adaptive workforce environment during a challenging year.

This work was anchored by two major renewal wins that shape Canada’s applied workforce development system:

Learn + Work

Supporting students to move from learning into meaningful employment

- Student Work Placement Program
- Outcome Campus Connect

Work + Learn

Supporting workers to upskill or transition through employer-aligned training

- Future Skills Centre partnerships
- Sector-based pilots

These initiatives are funded by the **Government of Canada through Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC)**, whose investment enables national delivery, shared infrastructure, and coordinated pathways across partners.

“We have been very, very fortunate to have received funding from Magnet over the past few years...Invaluable not only for the mentorship opportunity, but by the learning achieved by our students as well as helping them decide on their future educational goals and career path.”

— Marina Tuthill, Partner, City View Chiropractic Inc



Learn+Work

Strengthening Employment Pathways for Students

Learn + Work programs help students transition from education into meaningful employment, a central element of Canada's long-term productivity and innovation capacity. Magnet delivers these pathways through a technology-first infrastructure that reduces friction for employers, empowers delivery partners, and expands access for learners across regions.

2025 Highlights

- Renewal of **SWPP**, sustaining wage supports that helped employers continue hiring students during a year of affordability pressures.
- Expansion of **Outcome Campus Connect**, connecting **5700 students** to work-integrated learning and applied employment opportunities.
- Support for over **2900 employers**, many of them SMEs, adopting student talent to accelerate modernization, digital projects, and innovation work.
- Streamlined matching, approvals, and reporting across Magnet's national platform.

Why This Matters

Students gain applied experience aligned with emerging labour market needs. Employers advance modernization and digitization work that would otherwise be delayed. Regions strengthen early-career attachment and youth retention.

"This work opportunity has provided me with plenty of career relevant skills and experience. This involves skills relevant to deal structure, financial underwriting, critical thinking and strategy, Excel in the context of high finance, communications, client relations, and many more."

— Kyle Dewall, University of Guelph



Work+Learn

Strengthening Training Pathways for Workers

Work + Learn initiatives support workers seeking advancement, upskilling, or transitioning into roles shaped by technological and economic change. Through renewed partnership with the **Future Skills Centre (FSC)**, Magnet helped national partners scale employer-aligned training models, strengthen sector innovation, and improve pathways for workers navigating economic transition.

2025 Highlights

- Renewal of FSC-supported work, sustaining collaboration with post-secondary institutions, sector councils, and training organizations across Canada.
- Tools and supports that helped partners deliver **industry-aligned, job-ready learning** rooted in real employer demand.
- Growth of models informed by **MagnetAI, Skills Bridge, and PathPilot** supporting digital and AI adoption in training.
- Evidence and insights that helped partners identify promising practices and guide future program design.

Why This Matters

- Workers gain practical skills that match real labour market needs.
- Employers access talent ready for roles shaped by digital and AI-enabled transformation.
- Sectors and regions strengthen their ability to adapt during economic change.

Magnet's System-Level Advantage

Magnet is the only organization in Canada that delivers both Learn + Work and Work + Learn pathways at national scale and connects them through a shared digital backbone. This system-level integration reduces friction for employers, expands access for learners and workers, and strengthens collaboration across organizations supporting talent, training, and workforce development.

As a **technology-first platform, national convener, ecosystem steward, and insight generator**, Magnet helps partners navigate technological and labour market change — including the rapid adoption of AI and digital tools — while validating approaches that work in practice.

Why This Matters for Canada's Economic Future

Magnet's contribution to economic productivity in 2025 helped strengthen Canada's workforce system by:

- Improving early-career attachment and reducing hiring friction
- Enabling SMEs to modernize and innovate through emerging talent
- Strengthening upskilling and transition pathways for workers
- Aligning learning and training supply with employer needs
- Advancing digital and AI-enabled tools across the ecosystem
- Informing national policy and program decisions with real-world evidence

Magnet's impact in 2025 was not simply program delivery. It reflected the role of a **technology-enabled, partnership-driven, evidence-informed system** designed to help Canadians adapt, employers innovate, and communities thrive during a period of economic uncertainty.





"The event was very curated to create opportunities for collaboration and discussion on key issues impacting Atlantic Canada."
— Mohamed Bagha (Managing Director, Saint John Newcomers Centre)

Regional Value

In 2025, Magnet advanced its regional mandate through the **Magnet Network Live (MNL) Spotlight Series**, delivered intentionally in Atlantic Canada, Manitoba, and Alberta. These regions were selected based on partnerships built in 2024, geographic diversity, and alignment with Magnet’s 2025 implementation plan. This work supported the Empowering 2027 strategy by strengthening local ecosystems and building a connected, evidence-informed national workforce system.

Although the Spotlight Series followed a consistent national engagement model, each event was **co-designed with local partners** to reflect unique workforce realities, sector priorities, and regional opportunities. This blend of coherence and local adaptation produced nuanced and actionable insights.

“Thank you for creating such a thoughtful and engaging event. I would welcome continued opportunities to stay involved and to play a more active role in future Magnet initiatives in Manitoba. The conversations that began here have real potential to shape meaningful partnerships, and I’d be glad to help carry that momentum forward.”

— Cora Dupuis (Co-operative Education Coordinator, Brandon University)

Policy-Level Participation

Each region benefited from the involvement of senior provincial leaders who grounded discussions in current policy and economic priorities:



Atlantic Canada (NL):

Former Cabinet Minister Andrew Parsons, most recently Minister of Industry, Energy and Technology & Attorney General



Manitoba:

Jamie Moses, Minister of Business, Mining, Trade & Job Creation



Alberta:

Shannon Marchand, Deputy Minister of Advanced Education

Their presence added important context and strengthened the relevance of the insights captured.



National Delegation + Local Ecosystems

To bring national coherence to each region, Magnet travelled with a curated delegation that included the CEO of Palette Skills and the CEOs and Presidents of national sector councils representing biosciences, manufacturing, HR, the green economy, and entrepreneurship. This delegation provided sector intelligence and a future-focused perspective that enriched local dialogue and enabled cross-regional comparison.

Each Spotlight engagement convened the full local ecosystem: employers and SMEs, post-secondary institutions, sector councils, chambers and economic development organizations, technology and innovation partners, newcomer supports, community organizations, workforce intermediaries, and Indigenous and rural partners. This comprehensive design created a 360-degree understanding of regional workforce dynamics, from youth retention to digital and AI adoption readiness.

Regional Insight Briefs

Each engagement produced a **Regional Insight Brief** capturing:

- Workforce and demographic trends
- Sector-specific talent needs
- Technology and AI adoption capacity
- Partnership opportunities
- Recommended actions for regional and national partners

Together, these briefs form a multi-region evidence base informing Magnet's 2026 pilots, national policy briefs, and the next phase of the Empowering 2027 strategy.

Why This Matters

The Spotlight Series strengthened both regional and national capacity by:

- Generating place-based intelligence essential for national planning
- Elevating regional insights into provincial and federal discussions
- Deepening cross-sector relationships and alignment
- Revealing structural patterns affecting productivity and talent mobility
- Informing programming related to digital transformation and AI readiness

Just as importantly, these engagements **fostered new, meaningful connections within each ecosystem**, expanding Canada's collective ability to collaborate, innovate, and adopt new tools. This collaborative strength — rooted in bringing diverse organizations together to solve shared challenges — is a defining feature of Canada's workforce system and a key driver of productivity and resilience.

Magnet's regional work connected community needs with national priorities, strengthened ecosystem collaboration, and advanced the country's capacity to act together with purpose.

Preferred Partner — Building Trust, Connection, and Shared Capacity

In 2025, Magnet deepened its role as a **trusted national and international partner**, helping organizations navigate workforce challenges by building relationships, convening diverse voices, and strengthening the connective tissue of Canada's learn-and-work ecosystem. Partners rely on Magnet not only for technology and insights, but for the credibility, neutrality, and collaborative spirit that underpin successful cross-sector work.

Maple & Gold: Celebrating Collaboration and Strengthening Trust

Maple & Gold, held in Toronto's Distillery District, became a signature gathering for Canada's workforce ecosystem. Through the **MAPLE Awards**, Magnet recognized organizations and leaders who model collaboration, innovation, and inclusive workforce impact.

These awards matter because they:

- Elevate partners whose work strengthens Canada's productivity and talent development
- Celebrate cross-sector collaboration as a Canadian advantage
- Build visibility and trust among organizations that rarely share the same stage
- Reinforce Magnet's role as a neutral connector who amplifies the ecosystem and not just ourselves

For many partners, Maple & Gold is where relationships form, collaborations begin, and national conversations take shape.

"CDM was delighted to be included in such a special event full of thought leaders and impact players in workforce innovation. It was a honour to be recognized and to participate and our org made some great connections. Thank you so much for all that you do to help Canada meet the workforce needs of the day."

— Centre for Digital Media (CDM)

*"...if Magnet runs its programs even half as well as this event,
its funders and partners are being very well served, indeed."*

— Maple & Gold anonymous survey





Convening Beyond Canada: Trusted on the Global Stage

Magnet's partnerships extended internationally in 2025, reflecting growing trust in its ability to interpret global workforce trends and connect them meaningfully to Canadian realities.

Magnet collaborated with international partners to convene delegations, share expertise, and position Canadian insights within global conversations on skills, technology, and the future of work.

- **Dublin, Ireland:** Collaboration with Propero Learning Systems and SkillNet Ireland to explore emerging models of skills innovation and workforce transformation, supported by a Canadian delegation.
- **Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates:** Participation in the Future Talent Council's global forum, where Magnet brought Canadian partners to speak, contribute expertise, and strengthen international relationships around AI, skills, and productivity.

These engagements demonstrated that global partners see Magnet as a credible and thoughtful contributor to international dialogue, and as a bridge connecting Canadian innovation to global best practices.

National Partnerships: How Magnet Adds Value

Throughout 2025, Magnet's role as a preferred partner came to life through dozens of collaborations across Canada. Magnet was invited to:

- Speak at partner events and summits
- Provide thought leadership on AI, productivity, and talent development
- Offer in-kind support, analysis, and strategic advice
- Help organizations shape proposals, grants, and pilot projects
- Introduce partners to one another — sparking collaborations, research, and new initiatives
- Serve as a trusted connector linking chambers, PSEs, sector councils, SMEs, and policy leaders

This partnership work is often quiet, relational, and behind-the-scenes, but remains central to how the learn-and-work ecosystem advances.

Why This Matters

- Magnet's value as a preferred partner is rooted in trust. Partners turn to Magnet because:
- Magnet convenes without agenda, creating space for honest, forward-looking dialogue
- Magnet bridges sectors that rarely work together
- Magnet amplifies others' work rather than positioning itself at the centre
- Magnet introduces ideas and organizations that unlock new projects, funding, and innovation
- Magnet brings Canadian expertise into global conversations, while bringing international insight back to Canadian partners

In a year of uncertainty and technological change, these trusted relationships helped strengthen Canada's workforce ecosystem and prepare partners for what lies ahead.



Preferred Partner: The Outcome

In 2025, being a preferred partner meant more than attending events or delivering programs. It meant:

- Celebrating the best of Canada's ecosystem
- Opening doors nationally and internationally
- Helping partners connect, learn, and collaborate
- Building alignment across diverse sectors
- Grounding conversations in evidence and technological insight
- Supporting organizations as they navigate the shift to an AI-enabled economy

Magnet's role as a preferred partner reflects a simple idea: Canada's workforce challenges cannot be solved by any one organization. They require trust, collaboration, and shared purpose — and Magnet helps make that possible.

Technology Leadership

In 2025, technology adoption, especially Artificial Intelligence (AI), became a defining force shaping productivity, competitiveness, and workforce resilience. For partners across Canada, the challenge was not only understanding these shifts but knowing how to act on them. Magnet strengthened national capacity by advancing research, delivering practical tools, and convening leaders to navigate technological change with clarity, evidence, and confidence.

Magnet's work in 2025 focused on three interconnected areas: **research, ecosystem capability-building, and global thought leadership**. Together, these efforts positioned Magnet as a trusted guide for organizations adapting to rapid technological transformation.

[LinkedIn Article:](#)

A behind-the-scenes look at the AI workshop that had local entrepreneurs both excited and slightly terrified...



"Mark Patterson, an AI expert who travels the country like a technological Paul Revere...Patterson didn't sugarcoat the challenges...The participants weren't just learning about opportunity they were also learning about survival... Patterson's core message wasn't really about technology—it was about community and intentionality. The businesses that will thrive aren't necessarily the ones with the most advanced AI setups. They are the ones that integrate tools while keeping their human advantages: local knowledge, relationships, creative problem-solving, and adaptability.

– Kevin Drake, Virtual & Blended Learning Strategist





Research Leadership: Understanding AI's Impact on Work

To deepen national insight into how AI is reshaping skills, jobs, and learning, Magnet brought on a full-time PhD researcher under the academic guidance of Toronto Metropolitan University's Vice-President, Research & Innovation. This role advances a structured research agenda examining:

- How AI is redefining tasks, occupations, and productivity
- Emerging skill demands and implications for training systems
- The evidence gaps affecting policy and program design
- Opportunities for Canadian organizations to adapt and remain competitive

The research strengthens Canada's capacity to plan for technological change and ensures Magnet's tools, programs, and policy advice remain anchored in academic rigor.

Ecosystem Capability Building: Practical Tools for Real-World Adoption

Technology leadership is not about forecasting the future — it is about equipping partners to navigate it. In 2025, Magnet expanded national capability through:



MagnetAI Sessions

Interactive learning and advisory sessions delivered to post-secondary leaders, chambers, SMEs, and workforce organizations. These sessions focused on practical, applied use cases rather than hype, helping partners understand:

- Where AI adds value
- What adoption barriers exist
- How to build early capability
- How to introduce tools responsibly



AI-Enabled Tools

MagnetAI, Skills Bridge, and PathPilot continued to evolve, supporting:

- Employer decision-making
- Skills identification
- Training navigation
- Digital adoption readiness

These tools help reduce friction in hiring, training, and workforce planning, strengthening national productivity.



Cohorted Networks

Magnet convened and supported cohorts across chambers of commerce, sector councils, and post-secondary partners, creating shared learning environments where organizations could advance technology integration collectively.

This work reflects Magnet's role as a technology-first network builder that supports partners as they adapt, modernize, and plan for the future.



Global Thought Leadership: Canada's Voice in the Future of Work

In 2025, Magnet's leadership in the intersection of technology, productivity, and workforce development was recognized internationally. Magnet provided insights at key global and national forums, helping position Canada within international conversations on AI adoption and skills transformation.

2025 Thought Leadership Engagements Included:

- **ISED Skills Directorate Staff Retreat**
Innovation, Science and Economic Development
Canada — Ottawa, ON
- **Cannexus25**
CERIC — Ottawa, ON
- **Metropolis Canada Conference**
Metropolis — Toronto, ON
- **NL Futures Labour Market Coordination Roundtable**
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
— St. John's, NL
- **AI & Small Business OECD Workshop**
OECD & Government of Newfoundland and
Labrador — St. John's, NL
- **NCDA AI Virtual Summit**
National Career Development Association
— International
- **G7 Employment Working Group:
AI in the Labour Market**
ESDC — Ottawa, ON
- **Future Talent Forum**
Future Talent Council — Abu Dhabi, UAE
- **Ontario Economic Summit**
Ontario Chamber of Commerce — Toronto, ON
- **Canadian Science Policy Conference**
Canadian Science Policy Centre — Ottawa, ON

Representing Canada at these events helped amplify national insights and strengthened global partnerships that benefit Canadian organizations, workers, and policy leaders.

Why This Matters

Technology leadership is essential to advancing Canada's productivity and competitiveness.

Magnet's 2025 work strengthened the national ecosystem by:

- Improving organizational readiness for AI and digital tools
- Supporting partners with evidence, research, and practical pathways
- Aligning workforce development with technological reality
- Reducing adoption barriers for SMEs and community organizations
- Building national confidence through thought leadership
- Connecting Canadian insights to global learning
- Equipping workers, employers, and educators to adapt responsibly

Magnet's approach reflects a core belief: **The future of work is not predetermined — it is shaped by the readiness, capability, and confidence of the ecosystem.**

Looking Ahead to 2026

2026 represents the next stage of Magnet's transformation arc — moving from insight and systems analysis into activation and capability-building. Everything we learned in 2025, from regional engagements to AI readiness work to national program delivery, now sets the foundation for a year focused on strengthening the leadership, tools, and coherence Canada needs as technological change accelerates.

A central expression of this trajectory is **Adaptive Leaders 2026**. Building on Magnet's work across Empowering 2027, this national initiative will support leaders across PSEs, sector councils, chambers, community organizations, employers, and government with navigating technological transition with clarity and confidence. Through its Master Series, provincial policy roundtables, strategic digital transformation projects, and national thought-leadership strand, Adaptive Leaders will help shape a shared vocabulary and practical toolkit for institutions adapting to AI and emerging technologies. It continues Magnet's commitment to strengthening Canada's adaptive human potential.

This emphasis on capability building reinforces Magnet's work across all four pillars of Empowering 2027. National programs will continue to modernize the Learn + Work and Work + Learn architecture; AI-enabled tools will scale to partners who need them most; and the regional intelligence gathered in 2025 will inform pilots, partnership models, and policy direction for 2026.

Maple & Gold, the MNL Show, and the Spotlight Series will continue to serve as national platforms that bring the ecosystem together and help convert insight into collective action.

In 2026, Magnet's work will continue to advance a more connected, capable, and confident national workforce system while remaining rooted in the priorities established in Empowering 2027.



