



As of May 26, 2014

Interactive Niagara Media Cluster
o/a INNOVATE NIAGARA

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**INNOVATE
NIAGARA**

HELPING ENTREPRENEURS WITH LEADING-EDGE IDEAS TO START, GROW AND SUCCEED

Founded on the principle of "innovation through collaboration", Innovate Niagara provides a single access point to match clients with services to suit their needs through a suite of in-house programs, resource partners and network of incubation facilities.

Innovate Niagara provides access to the following services:

- entrepreneurial training courses,
- business advisory services, tools and resources,
- business and industry networking events,
- business-academic collaboration opportunities, and
- residency within industry-specific incubation facilities

Since 2011, Innovate Niagara has:

- Provided over 2,500 consulting hours to over 250 clients
- Delivered \$1.6M worth of market intelligence
- Organized 50 networking and training sessions with over 2,100 participants
- Helped clients get \$3.4M in funding
- Incubated 17 profitable companies
- Facilitated the creation of over 145 new jobs

Innovate Niagara is a member of



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INCUBATION FACILITIES

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Brock University

BioLinc connects scientific discovery with business opportunity. BioLinc helps transform today's leading-edge research opportunities into tomorrow's robust business opportunities by providing students, researchers and private sector companies with a forum to connect, collaborate and commercialize concepts.



the Generator at one is a full-service interactive media production facility that houses world-class technology, talent, and experience. *the Generator at one* is a utopia for digital media providing tenancy, support and access to technology to start-ups, helping them grow and become profitable.



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INNOVATE NIAGARA HELPS ENTREPRENEURS WITH LEADING-EDGE IDEAS TO START, GROW AND SUCCEED

About Innovate Niagara

Innovate Niagara helps entrepreneurs with leading-edge ideas to start, grow and succeed. Innovate Niagara is a Regional Innovation Centre (RIC) through the Ontario Network of Entrepreneurs (ONE).

Founded on the principle of “innovation through collaboration,” Innovate Niagara provides a single access point to match clients with services to suit their needs through a suite of in-house programs, resource partners and network of incubation facilities including *the Generator at one* and the Goodman School of Business *BioLinc* facility.

Following in the footsteps of a mentor organization from Waterloo, Innovate Niagara has leveraged the success of the **Accelerator Program (AP)** and partnered to implement this globally renowned framework of support. The AP offers coaching and mentoring, experienced staff, proven methodologies, education and training programs, connections to capital, established partnerships, R&D support and outreach, and commercialization expertise.

Supporting Emerging Sectors

As a RIC, Innovate Niagara supports emerging sectors and high-growth industries by connecting innovators to the people and programs required to bring their innovations to the market. Innovate Niagara is geared to assist companies within innovative business clusters such as:

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Agriculture
- Bio Manufacturing
- Clean Tech
- Digital Media and Information Technologies
- Green Energy
- Life Sciences, Health and Wellness

Product and Services

Innovate Niagara is unique in that it fosters synergies between students, private companies as well as educational programs, research and development expertise, and infrastructure at Brock University and Niagara College. It facilitates networking, collaboration, prototyping, production and business development. Innovate Niagara's main activities revolve around:

- entrepreneurial training courses,
- business advisory services, tools and resources
- business and industry networking events,
- business-academic collaboration opportunities, and
- residency within industry-specific incubation facilities

Network of Incubation Facilities

Innovate Niagara is building a network of incubators including *the Generator at one* and Goodman School of Business *BioLinc* facility. These business incubators provide programs and supports to nurture the successful development of start-up companies through an array of business resources and support services. The benefit to being a sector-specific incubator is the synergies that happen between companies –often offering complimentary services that allow for them to partner on projects and grow exponentially.

the Generator at one

In 2010 based on the collective successes of stakeholders, Innovate Niagara (then known as nGen) was able to launch the state-of-the-art technology facility *the Generator at one*. In addition to adding a \$3 million full-service interactive media production facility, the space included a business incubator containing some of the brightest minds in the sector.



the Generator at one is currently running at capacity and has had graduating tenants move into offices of their own. Those companies now employ over 70 people.

the Generator at one is branded as a 'utopia' for interactive digital media and is a full-service, interactive digital media facility that houses world-class technology, talent and expertise. *the Generator at one* offers the most robust, cost-effective and convenient interactive digital media solution to customers in Canada, the US and as far away as China. Any or all aspects of an interactive digital media project, from pre- to post-production can be completed at *the Generator at one*.

BioLinc

In 2012, Brock University announced the establishment of BioLinc, an incubator that would be part of the Innovate Niagara family. BioLinc started accepting clients for tenancy in the summer of 2013.

The Goodman School of Business BioLinc is part of Innovate Niagara's network of incubators. BioLinc is a bioscience, biotechnology and biomanufacturing facility housed within the \$114.1 million Cairns Family Health and Bioscience Complex at Brock University. BioLinc helps transform today's leading-edge research opportunities into tomorrow's robust business opportunities by providing students, researchers and private sector companies with a forum to connect, collaborate and commercialize concepts. As such, BioLinc's slogan is: "connecting scientific discovery with business opportunity."

Brock's BioLinc incubator supports bioscience companies and researchers by providing:

- office and lab space
- flexible lease arrangements
- shared use of office and lab equipment
- business counselling and training
- professional networking opportunities



Brock University



THE EVOLUTION OF INNOVATE NIAGARA



2008 | nGen

nGen was established as a partnership between multiple levels of government and local industry in June 2008 to provide networking and educational opportunities for interactive digital media businesses in Niagara – such as 3D animations, game development, and web development. Some of nGen's first projects included:

- Niagara 1812 heritage tour and game for iPhone
- Noise in Niagara app, portal and web magazine
- Ontario Augmented Reality Network
- ODIME - Ontario Digital Interactive Media Engine



2010 | The Generator at one

The Generator at one opened in June 2010, adding a \$3 million state-of-the-art, full-service interactive media production facility to nGen as well as tenancy to qualified new interactive digital media companies. Housing world-class technology and talent, the suite of services are available for rent to tenants and the public:

- Motion-Capture Studio
- Visual FX Suite
- Audio Suite
- Presentation Theatre
- Datacentre
- R&D Lab including 3D Printer & 3D Scanner



2010 | Regional Innovation Centre

In October 2010, nGen expanded from tenancy and support targeted specifically at interactive digital media companies becoming Niagara's Regional Innovation Centre (RIC), part of a network of business support services through the Ontario Network of Entrepreneurs (ONE).

With the addition of the RIC, nGen expanded its mandate to provide advisory services to emerging industries such as:

- advanced manufacturing
- clean technology
- biosciences



2012 | Brock BioLink Incubator

The Goodman School of Business BioLink is part of Innovate Niagara's network of incubators. BioLink is a bioscience, biotechnology and biomaterials facility housed within the \$114.1 million Cairns Family Health and Bioscience Complex at Brock University. BioLink helps transform today's leading-edge research opportunities into tomorrow's robust business opportunities by providing students, researchers and private sector companies with a forum to connect, collaborate and commercialize concepts.

BioLink occupies approximately 5,000 square feet in the Cairns Complex and has the capacity to nurture multiple companies, projects and researchers at one time. BioLink accepted its first start-up companies and entrepreneurs in the health and bioscience sectors in the fall of 2013.

INNOVATE NIAGARA

Innovate Niagara is a Regional Innovation Centre (RIC) that helps entrepreneurs in high-growth industries to start, grow and succeed. We are also building a network of incubators including the Generator at one and Goodman School of Business BioLink facility.

Innovate Niagara provides access to the following key services at little or no cost:

- entrepreneurial training courses,
- business advisory services,
- business and industry networking events,
- business-academic collaboration opportunities, and
- additional business tools and resources.

Another of the core offerings of Innovate Niagara is its web portal:

www.innovateniagara.com

Innovate Niagara's web portal is designed to streamline an entrepreneur's path from concept to prototype to profitable business – all in one place – helping drive the growth of innovative clusters in the Niagara Region.

History

In April 2008, nGen - Niagara Interactive Media Generator was formed with several government, educational and private sector partners, and a vision. That vision was to build a hub of support for digital media companies to start and grow through networking, educational opportunities and several key projects.

nGen opened its doors to the community in June of 2008 and began putting to work its founding principles in order to grow the interactive digital media cluster in Niagara. nGen helped foster a number of start-up companies in the industry and completed a number of successful interactive media projects. Strategic co-location with the St Catharines Enterprise Centre, a resource centre for entrepreneurs jointly funded by the Ministry of Economic Development, Trade & Employment (MEDTE) and City of St Catharines, created mutual benefit through camaraderie, information sharing and the development of joint projects. This relationship has been widely viewed as a model for co-operation in Ontario Network of Entrepreneurs (ONE).

Leveraging its success to date, nGen expanded its facility in June 2010 through the use of a \$3 million grant from the FedDev Ontario Community Adjustment Fund. The expanded facility, branded *the Generator at one*, is a state-of-the-art production facility equipped with leading edge digital interactive media technology. The grant enabled nGen to increase tenancy capacity along with expanding its access to technology with the purpose of making nGen a self-sustaining organization in the future.

In October 2010, nGen was designated a Regional Innovation Centre (RIC) by the Ministry of Research and Innovation and joined the Ontario Network of Entrepreneurs (ONE – then known as Ontario Network of Excellence), a collaborative network of organizations across Ontario, designed to help innovative people commercialize their ideas in high-growth industries. ONE connects technology-based businesses, entrepreneurs, and researchers with services and programs to help innovate and gain a competitive advantage.

nGen's founding partners in 2008 were (in alphabetical order):

- Brock University
- City of St. Catharines
- Interactive Ontario (IO)
- Niagara College
- Niagara Enterprise Agency (NEA)
- Niagara Economic Development Corporation (NEDC)
- Ontario Media Development Corporation (OMDC)
- Silicon Knights Inc® (SK)

After running RIC and Business Acceleration Program (BAP) activities for 6 months, nGen's Board of Directors completed a Strategic Planning process where it determined that the RIC was vital for the Niagara Region and the mandate of nGen was expanded to assist entrepreneurs and SMEs in all emerging industry sectors. The mandate that was passed by the board in December 2011 was:

"nGen - Niagara Interactive Media Generator will transition the organization to become the overarching Regional Innovation Centre (RIC) and will expand its mandate to support growth in emerging sectors working as the regional organization in Niagara."

In 2012, it was announced that another facility would become part of nGen's network of incubators. BioLinc is part of Brock University's Goodman School of Business, and is targeted at start-up companies in the health and bioscience sectors. Housed at Brock University's new \$111.4 million Cairns Family Health and Bioscience Research Complex, BioLinc started accepting applications for tenancy in the summer of 2013.

In January 2013, the nGen board voted unanimously to further transition the organization and requested to adopt the *Innovate Niagara* brand. The Innovate Niagara Advisory Committee unanimously approved the request.

In April 2013, the nGen brand was retired and Innovate Niagara formally launched to acknowledge and embrace the expanded mandate to serve sectors beyond just the interactive digital media sector that the name "nGen" had

become tied to. This did not affect the legal business name of the organization – “Interactive Niagara Media Cluster.”

Following in the footsteps of Communitech, a mentor organization from Waterloo, Innovate Niagara has leveraged the success of the Accelerator Program (AP) and partnered with them to implement their globally renowned framework of support. The announcement was made in February 2013 that Innovate Niagara would be delivering AP.

In April 2013, the administration office relocated from the first floor to the office space adjacent to *the Generator at one* on the third floor of One St Paul Street. The office layout and arrangements with the building owner enables Innovate Niagara to expand and continue to add additional service providers to the space. As such the following service providers have offices within the Innovate Niagara space:

- St. Catharines Enterprise Centre
- Niagara Angel Network
- Natacor Inc. (owned by one of Innovate Niagara’s Executives-in-Residence)

The goal is to add other providers such as Industrial Research Assistance Program (IRAP), Ontario Centres of Excellence (OCE), and others, with the option of full-time or part-time shared office space.

Web Portal

One of the core offerings of Innovate Niagara is its web portal: www.innovateniagara.com. A web “portal” is a website that brings information together from a variety of sources in a simple and uniform way.

Recognizing that navigating through the regulations and requirements can be one of the biggest challenges for new entrepreneurs, another key benefit of the www.innovateniagara.com web portal is the client-centric design, with all aspects of navigation and workflow targeted at finding efficiencies for the entrepreneur.

By centralizing client information and incorporating tools that allow for easy information sharing between resource partners, the potential for duplication between organizations is drastically reduced and will help drive the growth of innovative clusters in the Niagara Region.

Utilizing the resources of a wide range of business support partners, including government organizations, local and regional economic development organizations, funders and service providers, www.innovateniagara.com has over 120 tools to propel the entrepreneur – at all stages of maturity - to new heights.

The web portal features the ability to create a personalized “Roadmap” that tracks the entrepreneur’s progress on their journey of launching an idea into the marketplace. By following the Roadmap, students, entrepreneurs and businesses can access resources that are appropriate for each phase of their venture. As opposed to being overwhelmed with general internet searches, users of the portal are guided through what the Innovate Niagara team have found to be the most credible resources for each business phase.

By registering on the site, the user’s progress through the Roadmap is tracked so the user can checkmark each completed resource and it will be saved for subsequent visits to the site.

The portal has been viewed by the Ontario Network of Entrepreneurs (ONE) as a best practice model for other regions (and the ONE network itself) to work towards.

