

Capital Strong: The Mid Market and Canada's Economic Transformation

2026 is Canada's moment, and that makes it the middle market's moment too.

At ACG Toronto Capital Connection 2026, we're exploring the forces shaping investment, growth, and dealmaking: from private equity trends, infrastructure investment opportunities and AI to cross-border transactions, food and beverage innovation plus Canada's burgeoning defence sector.

ACG Toronto connects private equity professionals, investment bankers, lenders, corporate development leaders, lawyers, accountants, advisors, and business owners through a powerful community dedicated to middle-market growth. Members access exclusive experiences, industry intelligence, meaningful networking, and a global network of growth professionals. Please learn more at www.ACG.org/Toronto.

Conference Co-Chairs & Committee

Karen Fisman - Managing Director - PricewaterhouseCoopers
Joseph Lo - Partner - Sagard Private Equity

Ali Akbar - Ironbridge Equity Partners
Evan Bennitt - CIBC Commercial Banking
Steve Blazevic - Raymond James
Jake Bullen - Cassels Brock & Blackwell
Tori Buffery - Neuberger
Giancarlo Di Zazzo - BMO Sponsor Finance
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Michael Rudanycz - SLC Management | Sun Life Assurance Company of Canada
Vipul Soni - Alvarez and Marsal
Jonathan Stone - Guardian Smart Infrastructure Management

DealSource North

DealSource North is Canada's #1 program for mid-market dealmakers featuring pre-scheduled meetings to discuss investment opportunities to enable stronger deal flow for Canadian, USA and global organizations.

Exclusively tailored for Investment Banks and M&A Advisory firms, DealSource North creates the opportunity to host pre-scheduled meetings with Private Equity Firms, Capital Providers, Corporate Development and Family Office firms.

DealSource North Co-Chairs & Committee

Nicole Li - Principal, Alphi Capital
Eric Sunbulian, CPA, CA - Director, MNP

Riley Anderson - Ironbridge Equity Partners
Gregory Lynch - CPS Capital
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Kristian Rochon - Regimen Equity Partners
Jordyn Snyder - Roynat Capital
Jonathan Valeriati - Novacap
Mary Williams - MNP Corporate Finance
Christine Yam - PwC, BC

Conference Agenda: November 10, 2026

Welcome Remarks – Main Stage (On Ground Floor)
8:40 – 9:00

Land Acknowledgement:
Cathy Logue, Managing Director, Global Practice Leader, Stanton Chase – ACG Toronto & ACG Global Board Member

Speakers:
Tim Bishop, Chief Executive Officer – ACG Toronto
Evan Bennitt, SVP, Corporate Finance, CIBC Commercial Banking – ACG Toronto Board Chair
Karen Fisman, Managing Director, PricewaterhouseCoopers – ACG Toronto Conference Co-Chair
Joseph Lo, Partner, Sagard Private Equity – ACG Toronto Conference Co-Chair

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Opening Keynote – Main Stage (On Ground Floor)
9:00 – 9:40

Geopolitical, Economic, and Global Business Trends

ACG Toronto is pleased to announce Canada's Ambassador to the United States, Mark D. Wiseman, as the Keynote speaker for ACG Capital Connection 2026.

Ambassador Wiseman will share timely insights on the geopolitical, economic, and global business trends that are influencing investment decisions, capital markets, and strategic growth initiatives.

His unique perspective on international affairs and business will provide valuable context for executives and investors navigating an increasingly complex global environment.

Moderator: Bruce Chapple, Managing Partner and CEO – McMillan

Speaker: Mark D. Wiseman, Canada's Ambassador to the United States

Keynote Session 1 – Main Stage (On Ground Floor)
9:45 – 10:20

Trends in Private Equity Deal Making: Canada vs. U.S. Perspectives on Investing, Financing and Exits

Private equity investors continue to navigate an environment characterized by elevated uncertainty, abundant capital, evolving financing markets, and slower exit activity. This panel brings together leading private equity professionals to discuss how firms are sourcing opportunities, underwriting risk, creating value and generating liquidity in a market where quality assets remain scarce.

Panelists will provide perspectives on Canada versus U.S. deal activity, the impact of tariffs and geopolitical uncertainty, competition between banks and private credit providers, the increasing role of AI in diligence and portfolio company value creation, and how sponsors are approaching exits, continuation vehicles and liquidity solutions. Attendees will gain practical insights into where private equity firms are investing, what they are avoiding, and how successful investors are positioning themselves for the next phase of the market cycle.

Introduction: BMO Financial Group

Moderator: Giancarlo Di Zazzo – Head, BMO Sponsor Finance and Capital Partners, BMO Financial Group

Speakers:
Mackenzie Regent – Co-Founder and Partner, Kalos Transaction Advisory
Jamie Cartwright – Partner, Novacap Private Equity
Eugene Polevoy – Founder & Managing Partner, Blue C Capital
Paul Lipson – Co-Founder, Fort Point Capital

Networking Break & Tradeshow: 10:25 – 10:55

Breakout session 1A – Room 201BC (Please Proceed to Second Floor)
11:00 – 11:40

What is Infrastructure Now and What Will it Become? Ports to Private Marinas. Hospitals to Holiday Clubs. Transmission Lines to Compute Power.

Is sector classification the defining test? Is the investee company providing an essential economic/ social function? Does the manager have the expertise to underwrite, operate, and create value over the long term?

Moderator: Troy MacDonald, Partner Advisory Service - Doane Grant Thornton

Speakers:
Brett Stevenson – Managing Partner & Founder, BTG Capital
Michael Ciaramella – Director, Longbow Capital
Mistine Lauzon – Senior Special Advisor to the Honourable Tim Hodgson, Minister of Energy and Natural Resources Canada

Breakout session 1B – Room 202AB (Please Proceed to Second Floor)
11:00 – 11:40

Smaller Plates, Bigger Bets: The Impact of GLP-1s and Where Capital Wins in a Reshaped Food & Beverage Market

GLP-1 medications are already beginning to reshape how consumers think about appetite, health, portions, convenience, indulgence and value. This session will use GLP-1 adoption as the timely entry point for a broader discussion on the food and beverage market: where demand may shift, which categories may be pressured or advantaged, and how investors and operators are underwriting consumer businesses in a changing environment.

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Panelists will discuss observed changes across snacks, alcohol, confectionery, restaurants, better-for-you and functional products, consumer staples and grocery, while also addressing inflation, private label, margin protection, value creation and exit appetite in the F&B sector.

Moderator: Oliver Connolly, Partner – PwC Corporate Finance

Speakers:
Julie Drapeau, Senior Vice President, Innovation - Purity Life
Anne Lee, Senior Vice President – Swander Pace Capital
Jenny Thompson, Vice President - Ipsos

Networking Lunch & Tradeshow: 11:45 – 12:45

Keynote Session 2 – Main Stage (On Ground Floor)
12:50– 1:35

Focus on Resiliency: Strengthening Canada's Defence Capabilities

The discussion will begin with a high-level overview of the current state of the defence sector in Canada, with a particular focus on Canada's defence capabilities. Enhancing industrial resiliency and building a robust domestic defence ecosystem for the future.

Introduction: Jake Bullen, Partner – Cassels Brock & Blackwell LLP

Moderator: The Honourable Marco Mendicino, Senior Counsel and Strategic Advisor - Cassels Brock & Blackwell LLP

Speakers:
Lucas Crumpton, CEO - Crumpton Global
Dasha Cohen, Executive Director - The Alliance of Canadian Defence Companies (ACDC)
Sabrina Fiorellino, CEO - Fero International Inc.
Jeffrey McCain, Partner - JSM Capital Corporation

Breakout Session 2A – Room 201BC (Please Proceed to Second Floor)
1:40 – 2:20

AI: From Hype to EBITDA

Artificial intelligence is rapidly reshaping how organizations source opportunities, evaluate investments, and execute transactions. Join leaders from private equity, investment banking, and technology as they discuss real-world AI applications, lessons learned from implementation, and the balance between human judgment and machine intelligence.

Attendees will gain practical insights into where AI is delivering measurable value today, how firms are building competitive advantage, and what the future of AI-enabled dealmaking may look like.

Moderator: Thomas Dallaire, Partner - PwC

Speakers:
Moritz Christ, Managing Director – Spearhead
Philip Borge, CEO & Co-Founder – Crunched
Parinaz Sobhani, Head of AI - Sagard

Breakout Session 2B – Room 202AB (Please Proceed to Second Floor)
1:40 – 2:20

Cross Border Trade & Deal Making

Moderator: Neil Kravitz, Managing Partner – Elect - Fasken

Speakers:
Ed Mills, Director – Raymond James
Dave Saunders, Principal -– Beringer
Natalya Rybenchuk, Principal, Private Equity – CPPIB

Networking Break & Tradeshow: 2:25 – 2:50

Breakout Session 3A – Room 201BC (Please Proceed to Second Floor)
2:55 – 3:35

DPI is the New IRR: How Firms are Finding Liquidity in a Stalled Exit Market

Traditional M&A and IPO exits remain constrained, and distributions-to-NAV have stayed below 15% for four straight years — levels last seen in the GFC. LPs have responded: DPI now ranks as the second most important metric in allocation decisions after IRR.

In turn, GPs and LPs are taking matters into their own hands rather than waiting for markets to reopen. This panel will focus on various tools available to the market and explore how firms are utilizing these tools to drive liquidity in their portfolios.

Moderator: Alex Smyth, Partner, National Leader Private Equity - MNP

Speakers:
Maurissa Bell, Investor & Strategic Advisor - Private & Capital Markets
Katie Fasken, Founder & Managing Partner - August Advisors
Xiru Yang, Principal, Head of Capital Formation - Neuberger Capital Solutions
Zach Levitt, Managing Director – Onex Partners

Breakout Session 3B – Room 202AB (Please Proceed to Second Floor)
2:55 – 3:35

The Value Creation Playbook: Investor, Advisor & CEO Perspectives

What separates companies that achieve exceptional outcomes from those that simply perform well? Join leaders from private equity, M&A advisory and the CEO community for a candid discussion on the levers that drive enterprise value, the common missteps that limit it, and the strategies that position businesses for a successful exit.

Moderator: Jonathan Zepp, Managing Partner – Robbins Appleby

Speakers:
Megan Roach, CEO – Roots
Ali Akbar, Partner – Ironbridge Equity Partners
Matti Keskikyla, Managing Director – Alvarez & Marsal

Closing Keynote - Main Stage (On Ground Floor)
3:40 – 4:15

Investible Defence - Opportunities for the Mid-Market

Investable Defence will explore whether Canada's commitment to the Defence sector will produce enduring, financeable businesses that generate appropriate risk-adjusted returns for investors.

Topics to be discussed include which parts of the supply chain (and business models) are more/less attractive, how to assess Defence upside/procurement risk, what could go wrong and key diligence questions, value creation and the exit environment. Attendees should have a better understanding of where to invest, key diligence items, financing growth, the exit environment and what risks to consider.

Introduction: Gerard McInnis, Senior Partner, Transaction Advisory – Kalos

Moderator: Andrew Hockin, Senior Director – CIBC Leveraged Finance

Speakers:
Doug Horn, Managing Director – Clairvest
David Armstrong, Senior Partner – Novacap
James Yurichuk, CEO & Founder - Wuxly
Matthew Lombardi, Director, ONE9

Closing Reception: 4:15 – 6:30

Open to all DealSource North and Capital Connection delegates.

Please join us to celebrate turning insights into action, introductions into opportunities and relationships into results!

Thank you for joining ACG Toronto Capital Connection 2026 and we'll see you in 2027 for a refreshed set of experiences. Please learn more at www.ACG.org/Toronto.
