Defining What's Next
Atlantic Credit Unions 2026 Fall Summit

Fall Summit Workbook

October 14-15, 2026

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INTRODUCTION

On behalf of the Atlantic CEO Executive Committee, Atlantic Central, League Savings & Mortgage and League Data, we are pleased to have you join us for our 2026 Fall Summit!

The 2025 Summits focused on sustainability and resilience, while the Spring 2026 Summit explored how collaboration, leadership, and collective action can help credit unions adapt and thrive. Building on those discussions, the Fall 2026 Summit turns to the strategic choices that will shape the future of Atlantic credit unions. Participants will examine how scale, innovation, governance, payments modernization, and purpose can strengthen the competitiveness and long-term sustainability of the system while preserving the distinctive value credit unions bring to members and communities.

Session Outcomes

1. Continue to deepen understanding of the system challenges, opportunities, and the options available to support long-term growth and sustainability among credit unions, system partners and provincial regulators.
2. Facilitate open and honest discussions about the topics presented.
3. Build and strengthen credit union and system collaboration.

Meeting Details

The Summit will be held at the Delta Hotels Halifax Downtown (Directions: 1990 Barrington St., Halifax) in the Baronet Ballroom from October 14-15, 2026. The discussions will be facilitated by Kate Calnan, Vice President Strategy at Thinkwell Research & Strategy.

A Board Chair Workshop is taking place in the Empress Room on the afternoon of October 14. The Chairs' session will be facilitated by Manijeh Colabella, Partner at Watson Board Advisors.

All attendees are invited to a reception in the Bluenose Ballroom on October 14 from 4:30pm – 6:30pm, sponsored by CUMIS – Co-operators. Dinner is at your leisure.

Workbook

The following pages provide background information, discussion questions, and space for notes for each Summit agenda topic. Reviewing the material in advance will help you arrive prepared to contribute your perspectives, questions, and ideas throughout the Summit.

Website

A Summit website has been developed to provide easy access to information such as the workbook, agenda, speaker bios and sponsors. A link to this website will be emailed to all Summit participants.

SUMMIT SERIES WEBINARS

In advance of the October Summit, several pre-summit webinars were offered. All sessions were recorded and are included below.

Webinar: Real-Time Rail

Jul 29 50 MIN	Real-Time Rail Bobbi MacEachern, Director of Payment Services, Atlantic Central

Webinar: CUCC Overview

Aug 6 50 MIN	CUCC Overview for CUs in Atlantic Canada Drew Wilczynski, Executive Director, CUCC

Webinar: League Data Update

Sep 29 80 MIN	League Data Update Chad Griffin, CEO, League Data; Roger Lynch, Head of Technology Operations, League Data; Naimish Kakkad, Head of Technology Innovation, League Data

Webinar: Atlantic Central and League Savings & Mortgage Update

Oct 1 60 MIN	Atlantic Central and League Savings & Mortgage Update Paul Masterson, President & CEO, Atlantic Central & League Savings & Mortgage

Credit Union Chairs Association Summit Event

The Atlantic Canada Credit Union Chairs Association will be hosting a workshop with Manijeh Colabella from Watson Board Advisors. Manijeh will be leading a discussion on what evolving governance demands mean for board leadership.

Chairing for the Future: The Chair's Role in Board Readiness

Wednesday, October 14 – 1:15PM-4:15PM
Empress Room
Delta Hotels Halifax Downtown

SUMMIT AGENDA

Wednesday, October 14

Baronet Ballroom

7:30AM	Breakfast in the Baronet Ballroom	
8:30AM	Welcome Remarks	CEO Exec. Chair
8:35AM	Using Research to Inform Growth	Ipsos + Thinkwell
9:25AM	The Evolving Risk Environment	Panel Discussion
10:15AM	Break	
10:25AM	Scale, Strategy and the Future of Atlantic Credit Unions	Panel Discussion
11:25AM	Strategic Opportunities for Growth for a Credit Union Outside its Provincial Border	Torys
12:30PM	Lunch in the Baronet Ballroom	
1:15PM	AI Strategy and Practical Use Cases	Panel Discussion
2:05PM	Payments Modernization and Real-Time Rail	Panel Discussion
2:55PM	Break	
3:10PM 3:50PM	Credit Union Challenges and Solutions Revenue Growth The Evolving Role of Credit Union Branches	Facilitator
4:15PM	Recap Day 1	Facilitator
4:25PM	CUMIS – Co-operators Sponsor Remarks	Sponsor
4:30PM	Day 1 Ends	

Wednesday, October 14: Board Chairs Workshop

Empress Room

1:15PM	Chairing for the Future: The Chair's Role in Board Readiness	Watson
4:15PM	Return to Baronet Ballroom for Recap Day 1	

Wednesday, October 14: Reception

Bluenose Ballroom

4:30PM- 6:30PM	CUMIS – Co-operators Summit Reception in the Bluenose Ballroom	

Thursday, October 15

Baronet Ballroom

7:30AM	Breakfast in the Baronet Ballroom	
8:30AM	Credit Union Day Greetings	CCUA
8:35AM	ACCEL Emerging Leaders Conference Update	ACCEL
8:40AM	Reflections from Day 1	Facilitator
9:00AM	Surviving the Cage (Match): In Search of Purpose for a Thriving Credit Union System	Canadian Centre for the Study of Co-operatives
10:00AM	Table Discussions	Facilitator
10:15AM	Break	
10:30AM	The Role of Credit Unions in Building Stronger Economies & Communities	Panel Discussion
11:30AM	Table Discussions	Facilitator
12:00PM	Lunch in the Baronet Ballroom	
1:00PM	Where do we go from here?	Facilitator
1:45PM	Wrap-up and Closing Remarks	CEO Exec. Chair
2:00PM	Adjourn	

PRESENTERS

Facilitation

- Kate Calnan, VP Strategy, Thinkwell Research + Strategy

ACCEL

- Claire Lessel, Manager of Human Resources, Atlantic Edge Credit Union

CEO Executive Committee

- Cory Munden CEO Atlantic Edge Credit Union & Chair CEO Executive

CCUA

- Michael Hatch, VP of Government Relations, Policy and Research, CCUA

Chairing for the Future: The Chair's Role in Board Readiness

- Manijeh Colabella, Partner, Watson Board Advisors

CUMIS--Co-operators

- Kirsten Holt, VP, National Partner Success, CUMIS – Co-operators

Strategic Opportunities for Growth for a Credit Union Outside its Provincial Border

- Blair Keefe, Partner, Torys

Surviving the Cage (Match): In Search of Purpose for a Thriving Credit Union System

- Marc-André Pigeon, Director, Canadian Centre for the Study of Co-operatives and Assistant Professor, Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy, University of Saskatchewan

The Evolving Role of Credit Union Branches

- Rick Doucette, CEO, Coastal Financial Credit Union

Panel: AI Strategy and Practical Use Cases

- Anthony McQuaid, AI Product Technologist & Founder, Heliolab
- Michael Flynn, Manager of Finance, Public Service Credit Union
- Rakesh Kochhar, Chief Operating Officer, Sydney Credit Union

Panel: Payments Modernization & Real-Time Rail

- Bobbi MacEachern, Director of Payment Services, Atlantic Central
- Naimish Kakkad, Head of Technology and Innovation, League Data
- Scott Robertson, Product Director, Payment Applications, Central 1
- Sunny Soin, Interim Head of Payments, Central 1

Panel: Scale, Strategy and the Future of Atlantic Credit Unions

- Eric St-Pierre, CEO, UNI Financial Cooperation
- Ken Shea, President & CEO, East Coast Credit Union
- Lisa Colangelo, President & CEO, YNCU
- Oscar Roque, Chief Product & Innovation Officer, Beem Credit Union

Panel: The Evolving Risk Environment

- Corina Farbacher, Chief Governance and Risk Officer, Affinity Credit Union & League Savings and Mortgage Board Chair
- Kathy McReynolds, VP Support Services and Risk, East Coast Credit Union
- Shanti Samaroo, Chief Financial Officer, Atlantic Edge Credit Union

Panel: The Role of Credit Unions in Building Stronger Economies & Communities

- Josh Tavenor, Director, Strategic Policy, Department of Growth, Development and Defence Industries, Government of Nova Scotia
- Margo Butler, Executive Director, John Howard Society of New Brunswick, Fundy Region Inc.
- Steve Dunne, President & Partner, Dunne Group & Dunne Properties

Panel: Using Research to Inform Growth

- David Dudka, Director of Insights and Innovation, Thinkwell Research + Strategy
- Michael Hsu, VP Financial Syndication Team, Ipsos

DAY 1: WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Cory Munden, Chair of the CEO Executive Committee, will open the session by welcoming participants, reviewing session goals and introducing the facilitator.

Session Overview

The 2026 Fall Summit builds on discussions from the 2025 Spring and Fall Summits and the 2026 Spring Summit. It shifts the conversation from understanding the challenges facing Atlantic credit unions to exploring the strategic choices, capabilities and collaborative approaches needed to shape a strong and sustainable future.

The Fall 2026 agenda reflects feedback from credit unions and is designed to move participants from insight to action. The sessions examine the forces shaping the system—including growth, scale, risk, payments modernization, AI, governance, and cooperative purpose—while creating space for open dialogue, new perspectives, and opportunities for collective leadership.

Discussion: Reflecting on the outcomes of previous Summits, what is the most important result you want this Summit to achieve?

USING RESEARCH TO INFORM GROWTH

Michael Hsu (Ipsos) and David Dudka (Thinkwell) will share key insights drawn from their organizations' latest research.

The Ipsos research will highlight national findings on Canadians' and Atlantic Canadians' attitudes, perceptions, and emerging trends related to financial services and broader economic issues.

The Thinkwell research will highlight findings from research conducted with Atlantic Canadians who are not currently credit union members, exploring their financial behaviours, product and service preferences, and perceptions of financial institutions.

Together, these perspectives will provide valuable insight into market opportunities, evolving consumer expectations, and potential pathways for credit union growth.

Discussion: If you were advising credit unions based solely on this research, what three actions would you prioritize to drive growth?

THE EVOLVING RISK ENVIRONMENT

Facilitated by Brenda Roberts-Harmon (Atlantic Central and League Savings and Mortgage), this panel will feature Shanti Samaroo (Atlantic Edge Credit Union), Kathy McReynolds (East Coast Credit Union), and Corina Farbacher (Board Chair, League Savings and Mortgage, and Affinity Credit Union). The discussion will examine the evolving risk landscape facing credit unions and the leadership, governance, and operational capabilities needed to navigate it successfully.

The conversation will explore emerging regulatory and compliance requirements, including AML and FINTRAC expectations, as well as fraud prevention, operational risk management, and other evolving challenges affecting the sector. Drawing on their experiences and perspectives, panelists will share practical insights, lessons learned, and approaches that can help credit unions strengthen risk management, enhance governance practices, and build organizational resilience across the Atlantic system.

Discussion: As the risk environment continues to evolve, what is the one risk or emerging issue that credit union leaders should be paying more attention to?

SCALE, STRATEGY AND THE FUTURE OF ATLANTIC CREDIT UNIONS

This session will bring credit union leaders together to examine the priorities, pressures, and opportunities shaping the sector's future. The discussion will focus on how credit unions can pursue sustainable growth while preserving their cooperative purpose, member focus, and community relevance in an increasingly competitive financial services landscape. Panelists will explore how business models are evolving to support profitability, scale, innovation, and long-term resilience, including whether traditional sources of revenue and growth remain sufficient in today's environment.

The conversation will also consider the broader implications of federal credit unions expanding into provincial markets, whether organically or through merger. Panelists will explore what this could mean for provincially regulated credit unions, competitive dynamics, regulatory alignment, and strategic options across Canada.

The session will generate forward-looking perspectives to inform credit union strategy, governance, and decisions about growth, collaboration, and sector positioning. Lisa Colangelo (YNCU), Eric St-Pierre (UNI Financial Cooperation), Ken Shea (East Coast Credit Union), and Oscar Roque (Beem Credit Union) will share their perspectives on the opportunities, challenges, and choices shaping the next chapter of the credit union movement.

Discussion: Note any questions or comments you have for the panelists.

STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH FOR A CREDIT UNION OUTSIDE ITS PROVINCIAL BORDER

As credit unions consider their long-term growth and sustainability, many are exploring opportunities beyond their current provincial boundaries. These opportunities may include mergers that support future growth, competitiveness, and member value.

In this session, Blair Keefe (Torys) will share his perspective on federal continuance and interprovincial mergers. A leading expert in the financial services industry, Blair has decades of experience advising Canada's leading financial institutions on regulatory matters and industry best practices.

Discussion: What questions do you have about the provincial and federal frameworks that govern credit unions today and how those frameworks may evolve? Which forms of growth, collaboration, or consolidation could create the greatest value for credit unions and their members?

AI STRATEGY AND PRACTICAL USE CASES

AI is creating new opportunities for credit unions to enhance efficiency, improve member experiences, and support decision-making. As organizations explore how best to adopt AI, many are focused on balancing strategic ambition with practical, achievable use cases.

In this session, Rakesh Kochhar (Sydney Credit Union), Anthony McQuaid (Sydney Credit Union/Heliolab), and Michael Flynn (Public Service Credit Union) will share how they are approaching AI strategy and implementation. Panelists will discuss their use cases, governance considerations, lessons learned, and the challenges and opportunities they have encountered along the way. Participants will gain practical insights into how credit unions can move from exploration to action while building organizational confidence and capability in AI.

Discussion: What should credit union leaders be doing today to ensure AI becomes a meaningful business capability?

PAYMENTS MODERNIZATION & REAL-TIME RAIL

Canada's payments landscape is undergoing a significant transformation with the introduction of **Real-Time Rail (RTR)**, a new payments system designed to enable faster, data-rich, and near-instant payment experiences. As implementation progresses across the financial services sector, credit unions must understand what RTR means for their organizations, their members, and their future payments strategies.

In this session, **Bobbi MacEachern** (Atlantic Central), **Sunny Soin** (Central 1), **Scott Robertson** (Central 1), and **Naimish Kakkad** (League Data) will continue the Real-Time Rail conversation from the 2026 Spring Summit. They will provide updates on industry readiness, implementation timelines, national developments, digital banking integration, operational impacts, and what Atlantic credit unions can expect as RTR is rolled out across the system.

Participants will gain practical insights into how credit unions can prepare for implementation, manage risk, and position themselves to take advantage of new capabilities as Canada's payments ecosystem continues to evolve.

Discussion: Note any questions or comments you have on how RTR will affect your credit union. What are you doing to prepare?

CREDIT UNION CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

Revenue Growth

As interest-rate cycles, margin pressures, and increasing operating costs continue to reshape the financial services landscape, many credit unions are exploring how to diversify revenue sources and reduce reliance on traditional lending income.

This interactive facilitated table discussion will provide an opportunity for leaders to discuss practical strategies for growing non-interest income while continuing to deliver member value. The discussion will encourage a shift in thinking from "How do we charge more fees?" to "What services would members willingly pay for because they create meaningful value?" Leaders will share experiences, lessons learned, and ideas for strengthening member relationships, increasing engagement, attracting new members, and creating sustainable sources of revenue growth.

Discussion: What products, services, partnerships, or operational changes have generated meaningful non-interest income at your credit union, and what lessons would you share with others?

The Evolving Role of Credit Union Branches

Across the banking industry, branches are evolving from transaction-focused locations into centres for advice, relationship-building, and growth. For credit unions, this shift must be balanced with maintaining the visible community presence that remains a key source of differentiation. These trends raise several important questions:

- How can credit unions evolve their branch services to place greater emphasis on member advice and value?
- What best practices can help credit unions make their branch more effective and efficient?
- How must employees, members and community be engaged through a change process?
- What will the branch model of the future look like, and what should credit unions do today to prepare for it?

Rick Doucette (Coastal Financial Credit Union) will share insights and lessons from CFCU's recent branch transformation. The discussion will also identify topics for a future Summit series or session, guided by the interests of participating credit unions.

Discussion: If member expectations, technology, and transaction patterns continue to evolve at their current pace, what role should the branch play in your credit union three to five years from now?

BOARD CHAIR SESSION

Chairing for the Future- The Chair's Role in Board Readiness

Continuously evolving regulatory, financial, operational, technological, people, and strategic risks are increasing the demands placed on credit union boards. As the environment becomes more complex, Board Chairs play a critical role in ensuring boards have the capacity, information, relationships, and governance practices required to provide effective oversight and strategic leadership.

In this facilitated discussion, led by Manijeh Colabella (Watson), Board Chairs will explore what these growing expectations mean for their leadership of the board. Participants will share perspectives on board readiness, succession planning, director development, governance effectiveness, strategic oversight, and the Chair's role in fostering productive board dynamics and informed decision-making. The conversation will consider how boards can remain resilient and effective while navigating rapid change.

Discussion: What capability, perspective, or governance practice does your board need to strengthen most to remain effective?

DAY 2: WELCOME AND CREDIT UNION DAY GREETINGS

Michael Hatch (CCUA) will open the day and bring Credit Union Day greetings from CCUA.

ACCEL EMERGING LEADERS CONFERENCE UPDATE

Claire Lessel (ACCEL) will bring forward an update on the inaugural ACCEL Emerging Leaders Conference that was held in Halifax in September.

Discussion: Note any questions you have for ACCEL and their recent conference.

REFLECTIONS FROM DAY 1

As you reflect on the discussions from Day 1, what key themes emerged? What new insights, if any, have influenced your perspective on the future of the credit union system? Considering what Credit Union Day represents and celebrates, how is your perspective on the broader cooperative movement shifting?

As part of this opening conversation, participants will be invited to reflect on a fundamental question:

What would be the impact if credit unions did not exist in Atlantic Canada?

This discussion is intended to encourage deeper thinking about the distinctive role of credit unions, the value they create, and the opportunities and responsibilities that come with remaining relevant in a rapidly changing environment.

Discussion: How would you respond to the question: If credit unions did not exist in your community, what would be the greatest loss to local businesses, community organizations, or residents?

SURVIVING THE CAGE (MATCH): IN SEARCH OF PURPOSE FOR A THRIVING CREDIT UNION SYSTEM

Credit unions confront formidable but familiar challenges: an aging membership, costly digital and payment modernization, deep pocketed and dynamic new competitors, talent acquisition challenges, and no letup in compliance costs. But there are some new twists to these old challenges. Credit unions are said to be engaged in a "cage match" because Canada's newly stagnant population means one entity's gain is another's loss. Moreover, credit unions are said to be "one move away from breaking the whole system" because potential mergers between federal and provincial credit unions could weaken increasingly frayed impulses to cooperation. It is said that the system will not fail, but it may fade away or evolve into something unrecognizable.

Although these challenges can appear daunting, credit unions have opportunities to move forward by questioning prevailing assumptions about mergers, scale, technology, and the future while drawing on the sector's collective experience of cooperation. Marc-André Pigeon (Canadian Centre for the Study of Co-operatives, University of Saskatchewan) will explore how credit unions can reinvigorate and reimagine cooperative purpose and governance while remaining focused on the difference they make through small-business lending, member advocacy, community commitment, and the responsible use of their financial capabilities.

Discussion: If credit unions are to remain relevant and distinctive over the next decade, what aspects of our co-operative purpose must we protect, and what aspects might we be willing to reinvent?

THE ROLE OF CREDIT UNIONS IN BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES AND ECONOMIES

Credit unions have long played an important role in supporting the social and economic well-being of Atlantic Canadian communities. Through local decision-making, community reinvestment, business lending, and partnerships with governments, nonprofits, and community organizations, credit unions contribute to outcomes that extend well beyond financial services.

In recognition of International Credit Union Day, this panel will bring together external partners from the business, nonprofit, and public sectors to share perspectives on the value credit unions bring to the communities they serve. Steve Dunne (The Dunne Group), Margo Butler (John Howard Society, Fundy Region), and Josh Tavenor (Government of Nova Scotia) will discuss why they chose to work with credit unions, how those partnerships have supported their organizations, and where future opportunities for collaboration may exist.

Drawing on experiences in community development, housing, small business growth, government program delivery, and social services, panelists will explore the unique strengths credit unions bring as locally focused financial partners.

Discussion: What is one issue facing Atlantic Canadian communities today where credit unions are uniquely positioned to make a greater impact over the next five years?

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Over the past two days, participants have explored the forces reshaping the credit union system. Throughout these discussions, a common theme has emerged: the future is not something that will happen to credit unions, but something that must be actively shaped by the choices leaders make today.

This facilitated closing discussion will provide participants with an opportunity to reflect on the ideas, opportunities, and challenges raised throughout the Summit and consider what they mean for their organizations and the broader Atlantic credit union system.

Discussion: Based on the ideas and priorities explored during the Summit, what is one action your organization should take next, and what would be required to move it forward?

WRAP-UP AND CLOSING REMARKS

Cory Munden, Chair of the CEO Executive Committee, will close the Summit by summarizing key highlights and outlining next steps.

SUMMIT PARTICIPANTS

NB Credit Unions

Beaubear
Lynn Estey
Tosha Hamilton
Blackville
Jacqueline Jardine
Nancy Curtis
Brunswick
Kurt Peacock
Lisa Loughery
NBTA
Bob Fitzpatrick
Margery Nichol
OMISTA
Linda Schofield
Tammy Christopher

NL Credit Unions

Atlantic Edge
Cory Munden
Dan Sheaves
Community NL
Carl Ferrie
Cathy Hollett
NLCU
Glenn Bolger
Maureen Singleton
Public Service
Ian Barrett
George Smith
Venture
Lee-Ann Rowsell
Robert Hiscock

NS Credit Unions

Acadian
Lynn Deveau
Cp Clare
Renel Doucet
Claude Belleveau
Cape Breton
Shawn Moore
Melvin Bryden
Coastal Financial
Rick Doucette
Raymond Doucette
Dominion
Angela Hickey
Rina Gouthro
East Coast
Ken Shea
Melanie Sampson
Glace Bay Central
Tanya Duffy
Sean MacLellan
iNova
Karla MacKeen
Mitchell Wells
Mosaik
Krystle Clyke
New Waterford
Janet Wilcox
Dave Myers
Princess
John Higgins
Ron O'Handley
St Joseph's
Holly Landry
David George
Sydney
Caleb Gibbons
Mike Mombourquette
Teachers Plus
Dale Roode
Jim MacFarlane
Valley
Andrea Martin
Leigh P Doucette

PEI Credit Unions

Consolidated
Lori Gandy
Sarah Millar
Morell
Sherri Clark
Lisa MacIntyre
Provincial
Alfred Arsenault
Imelda Arsenault
Souris
Brad Coffin
Paul MacNeill

Atlantic System Committees & Partners

Atlantic Central & LSM
Paul Masterson
Brenda Roberts-Harmon
Don Noyes
Paul Paruch
Shane Kerpan
Bobbi MacEachern
Erin McDonah
Jennifer Murray
Brandon Wells

League Data
Alan Brown
Brendon Mercer
Chad Griffin
Corinne Stockford
Linda House
Marsha Roul
Naimish Kakkad

System Partner Board Chairs
Sarah Millar, AC Chair
Corina Farbacher, LSM Chair
George Smith, LD Chair

CEO Executive Committee
Cory Munden, Atlantic Edge CU (NL)
Ian Barrett, Public Service CU (NL)
Alfred Arsenault, Provincial CU (PE)
Sarah Millar, Consolidated CU (PE)
Lisa Loughery, Brunswick CU (NB)
Tammy Christopher, OMISTA CU (NB)
Ken Shea, East Coast CU (NS)
Caleb Gibbons, Sydney CU (NS)
Claire Lessel, ACCEL
Paul Masterson, Atlantic Central & LSM
Paul Paruch, Atlantic Central
Chad Griffin, League Data

ACCEL
Claire Lessel, Atlantic Edge CU
Dan Roberts, East Coast CU
Erika Armstrong, East Coast CU
Emily Ward, OMISTA CU
Laurelle Saccary, Sydney CU

Credit Union Guest
Nigel Wyles, Brunswick CU

Federal CU
UNI Financial Cooperation
David Losier
Eric St-Pierre

CCUA
Jennifer English
Michael Hatch
Charlotte Moase

Central 1
Colin Lewis
Scott Robertson
Sunny Soin

CUMIS | Co-operators
David Power
Greg MacPhee
Kirsten Holt
Zack Fuerstenberg

Government & Regulators
FCNB
Andy Richardson

NL CUDGC
Trevor McCormick
Joan Marie Gatherall

NS CUDIC
Mike Hurley
Darrell Evasuk

PE CUDIC
Rob MacBain

NS Superintendent
Dave McCaron

SPONSORS

On behalf of the CEO Executive Committee, Atlantic Central, League Savings and Mortgage, and League Data, we extend our sincere thanks to our sponsors for their partnership and support.

Please join us in thanking our sponsors for their valued support of the 2026 Atlantic Credit Unions Fall Summit.

Welcome Reception Sponsor

CUMIS co-operators

Lunch Sponsors

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BOARD CHAIR WORKSHOP

Pre-read Material

Welcome!

We look forward to meeting you in person at Atlantic Central's 2026 Fall Summit and facilitating **Chairing for the Future: The Chair's Role in Board Readiness**.

The workshop is designed to allow for candid peer exchange and practical reflection on the Chair's role in ensuring the board remains equipped, informed, and aligned to govern effectively as risk and complexity continue to grow.

Our discussion will be grounded in the realities facing Atlantic credit unions, including increasing regulatory expectations, operational and strategic complexity, leadership and governance capacity, technology, and broader questions about the future of the system. Building from the Summit's morning discussion on risk, we will explore three areas of Chair leadership:

- **Translating risk into effective governance**: helping the board focus on what matters, ask better questions, and use information, committees, agendas, and assurance effectively.
- **Building a board that is ready for the future**: considering board composition, capabilities, behaviours, renewal, succession, and constructive challenge.
- **Strengthening leadership oversight and strategic readiness**: supporting effective CEO oversight and creating space for consequential strategic discussions, including questions of organizational capacity, collaboration, and consolidation.

The workshop will be practical, interactive, and discussion-based. Throughout the session, you will have opportunities to test ideas against your own experience, learn from fellow Chairs, and identify one or two actions that may strengthen your own leadership of the board.

To make the most of our time together, we encourage you to:

- Come ready to participate openly and actively
- Reflect on the Board experiences and discussions that have helped you contribute at your best
- Bring your questions, perspectives, and experiences to the conversation

Included in this welcome package are:

- The workshop agenda.
- Pre-reading materials to help frame our discussion.
- Additional information about your Watson team and Watson.

Sincerely,

Manijeh Colabella
Partner
manijeh@watsoninc.ca

Watson
Board Advisors

Session Agenda

- Opening and orientation
- From risk awareness to effective board oversight
- Building a board ready for what comes next
- The chair, the CEO, and organizational readiness
- Discussion on strategic capacity and the wider system
- Commitments and close

Preparing for the Session

The links below provide a short introduction to a few of the frameworks we will be exploring together. They are intended simply to offer a sneak peek into some of the concepts we will discuss.

- **Watson's Three-Layers Model [Article]**

  https://www.watsoninc.ca/enhancing-board-effectiveness-a-layered-approach-to-governance/

  Three layers make up the world of the Board. It's when all of them are healthy and aligned that you can actively advance your organization's purpose. A Board is most effective when it engages on the right issues at the right level at the right time.

- **Steady Hands, Stormy Seas: How Credit Union Boards Are Governing Through a Generational Turning Point [Article]**

  https://www.watsoninc.ca/road-ahead-for-credit-unions/

  Credit unions are navigating a generational turning point, facing growing pressures from technology, regulation, shifting demographics and increased competition. Drawing on conversations with credit union leaders across Canada, this article explores five governance priorities shaping the sector's future—from re-anchoring purpose and staying relevant to strengthening Board capabilities, renewing cooperation and leading with greater agility through uncertainty.

- **Strengthening the Board-CEO Relationship: Practical Strategies for Success**

  https://www.watsoninc.ca/strengthening-board-ceo-relationship/

  A strong Board–CEO relationship relies on trust, clear expectations, candid communication, and mutual respect. Healthy tension is inevitable, but when managed well it strengthens decision-making, accountability, and organizational performance. A strong Chair–CEO partnership also helps maintain alignment and address issues before they become more difficult.

Meet Your Facilitator

Manijeh Colabella | Partner

Manijeh is a Partner at Watson and helps boards of directors and their committees through governance reviews, board and director evaluations, development of governance structures and frameworks, and facilitating board education and sessions. Manijeh has nearly 30 years of experience in governance and law, working across all sectors including financial institutions, credit unions, pension and benefit plans, not-for-profit corporations, and member-based institutions. Prior to Watson, she served as the Chief Legal Officer and Corporate Secretary of a North American TSX-listed equity capital provider. She is the chair of the ICD's BC Chapter, co-chair of the Governance and Human Resources Committee of the Vancouver Symphony Society and sits on the boards of White Rock Museum & Archives, the VSO School of Music.

Appendix: About Watson

Founded in 2005, Watson is the most experienced board advisory firm in Canada. We do this work because we believe that high-performing, well-governed organizations create a stronger world, with their boards holding a critical and complex leadership role. Over the last 20 years, we have supported more than 600 boards across the full spectrum of sectors, ownership structures, and stages of evolution. Our pledge is to leave you stronger.

We are a Certified Women Owned Enterprise and a fully independent Benefit Company. Each year, we publish our benefit report, available on our website, demonstrating our commitment to operating responsibly with consideration for our interest holder groups.

Watson helps clients establish or improve their approach to governance. In addition to supporting Boards through targeted advisory work and facilitation, Watson helps strengthen governance by:

Building a Strong Board	Director Search | Board Renewal | Board Composition
Finding & Supporting the CEO	Search | Performance | Succession Planning | Leadership & Culture
Evolving Governance	Board Evaluation | Governance Review | Structures & Practices
Achieving Alignment & Engagement	Strategic Facilitation | Board Education

Watson
Board Advisors