

SPROUT



STUDENTS PLANTING SEEDS OF TOMORROW.

INFORMATION DROP #2



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What is Info Drop #2?

Info Drop #2 contains information regarding this year's competition partner and topics relating to the Case Question. These topics are a curated list of a few areas to consider when creating your solutions. This is not an exhaustive list. They act as a starting point for your research to help give you some ideas to explore when engaging in the competition. More importantly, within this Info Drop is the competition case question that you and your team must solve.

We advise that you read over the case question and begin to consider different ways to approach the problem and how you may be able to solve it. Leave room for your ideas to grow and change, however, as you will continue to get more information that will help to inform your solution. You will also want to consult with your team members to see what ideas they have!

Tips for Info Drop #2?

The topics listed in this Info Drop have been selected because they pertain to the expertise of the various experts joining us during the competition but also to the case competition question at hand. So, feel free to use these topics as you deem fit.

- Do research! It is important to read the small descriptions given but much more in depth research into the topics is required to better understand how they may directly and indirectly relate to your proposed solution.
- Think outside the box! Although we have given you a list of topics, you are not limited to, nor are you required to use them. Use as much or as little as needed to aid in your research and overall creation of your solution.
- These topics merely act as the starting point for further research. Don't confine yourself to the topics in this Info Drop, but do take this as a guide for setting out the general scope and direction of the competition.
- Leave room to grow. You shouldn't decide on your case solution after reading Info Drop #2. You still have workshops and experts to talk to that will give you more insight into the question posed to you. Getting stuck on one idea can limit you, so instead, let this be a tool to open your mind to different areas of interest and possibility.
- Identify key words and write them down or highlight them. This can help you as you do more research or navigate your way through the competition.

About the Ontario Science Centre

The Ontario Science Centre is a space where visitors of all ages can learn through play and discover ways to think like a scientist every day. As a gift to the people of Ontario to mark Canada's Centennial, the provincial government commissioned architect Raymond Moriyama in 1964 to design the Ontario Science Centre—one of the first interactive science museums in the world. The Ontario Science Centre has since welcomed more than 54 million visitors. It is one of Ontario's most significant cultural attractions.. Guided by the belief that science, technology and innovation can help us shape a better future, The Ontario Science Centre continues to lead the way internationally with their incredible team of scientists, educators and exhibition creators who conceive, develop, design and build world-class exhibitions, award-winning educational programs and innovative science learning experiences.

Quick Facts:

- Officially opened in 1969
- Visitors to date: 54 million, with an estimated annual visitors of around one million
- The OMNIMAX Theatre seats 324 people and is Ontario's only IMAX Dome screen
- Approximately 20% of their visitors come from outside Ontario—13% are from outside Canada
- More than 165,000 Ontario school students visit each year
- More than 77,000 people visit annually through community access programs
- Nearly 41,000 people joined their special 50th Birthday Community Weekend in 2019

Unique Experiences:

The Ontario Science Centre's mission is to inspire passion for the human adventure of discovery. Here is a short overview of some unique programs and experiences they offer:

- Our Hosts—Their white-coated Hosts can be found anywhere there are visitors around the Centre, ready to unveil thought-provoking demonstrations and make your trip memorable.
- Science School—The Science School invites students to gain Grade 12 science credits during an enriched semester inside the Ontario Science Centre.
- Trips—A one-of-a-kind destination for school trips. A wide range of programming is available to open the minds of young students.
- Community Access—For members of our community who may not have the opportunity to experience the Ontario Science Centre, they have created Community Access Programs.
- Research Live!—Their visitors can choose to take part in actual scientific research! Real science doesn't just happen in the lab—you can contribute to scientific progress during your visit.
- Day Camps—4 to 14-year-olds can discover and explore scientific concepts through themed hands-on science activities.
- As a not-for-profit agency of the Government of Ontario, the Ontario Science Centre relies on provincial support as well as generous individuals, corporations and foundations that share a commitment to science and education for additional operating support.



Ontario Science Centre CORPORATE OVERVIEW

Our vision, mission, purpose and mandate drive everything from our daily decisions and interactions with customers to the strategic aims of our initiatives and partnerships.

Vision

A more curious, creative, and resilient world.

Mission

To inspire passion for the human adventure of discovery.

Purpose

We believe science, technology and innovation will help us shape a better future for society and our planet. We provide opportunities to explore, learn and collaborate. We make a positive and enduring impact on the lives of individuals and communities.

Mandate

The Centennial Centre of Science and Technology Act states the following objectives for the Science Centre:

- (a) to depict to the public and to conduct a program of education in the origins, development and progress of science and technology, and their relationship to society;
- (b) to depict the role of Ontario in the furtherance of science and technology;
- (c) to stimulate the interest of the public in matters depicted by the Science Centre;
- (d) to collect, manufacture, market, exhibit and sell objects and displays; and
- (e) to maintain and operate a science centre and related facilities for the furtherance of the objects set out in clauses (a) to (d) and to provide consulting services in relation to all the matters set out in this section.

Ontario Science Centre Strategic Priorities

Be a vibrant hub for science: We will serve as a hub of innovative partnerships focused on science education and engagement—inspiring and engaging teachers and students with learner-centered approaches, and directly and measurably contributing to Ontario’s STEM and innovation pipeline.

Help build science capital: We will drive awareness, engagement and participation in science and innovation in everyone we serve—helping to build science capital in our society and supporting strong citizenship.

Broaden our reach: We will broaden our reach as a loved and trusted source of family-focused fun and interactive in-person and virtual science experiences—serving as a premier destination in the province’s tourism landscape and contributing to a strong Ontario economy.

Foster organizational resilience: We will foster a strong organization culture that invest in, develops and supports our team. We will also identify and acquire the talent, skills and resources required to achieve our priorities and optimize our financial sustainability.

1 Science capital is a recently established concept that can help us to understand why some people see science as “for me” and others do not. Research shows that building science capital will have a positive effect on people’s lives—including encouraging people to study and pursue science-related subjects and careers, building tools for social justice, and helping to improve people’s lives and life chances.

Ontario Science Centre Frameworks

Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism

Our goal at the Science Centre has always been to create a space—physical and psychological—that is welcoming to our visitors, staff and partners.

We continue to examine and address systemic bias within our organization, taking concrete actions to create positive and sustainable change for our entire community, both inside and outside of the Science Centre. We know there is much work to be done. We will continue to play a role in our community to raise awareness, to fight racism and work to bring about real social change.

Indigenous Ways of Knowing

The Science Centre is committed to learning from and with Indigenous communities and knowledge keepers in our city, across our province, and within the scientific community at large to inform, shape, and make relevant connections with our visitors and the land.

We acknowledge our work must involve decolonizing processes and spaces such as traditional exhibition methods, meeting spaces, and ways of teaching and learning about science. We will do this work in collaboration with and learning from Indigenous knowledge keepers.

Accessibility

The Science Centre is committed to being an inclusive, accessible and engaging organization. As an agency of the Government of Ontario, we're dedicated to the principles of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA): dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity and the development of multi-year accessibility plans to help make Ontario accessible by 2025.

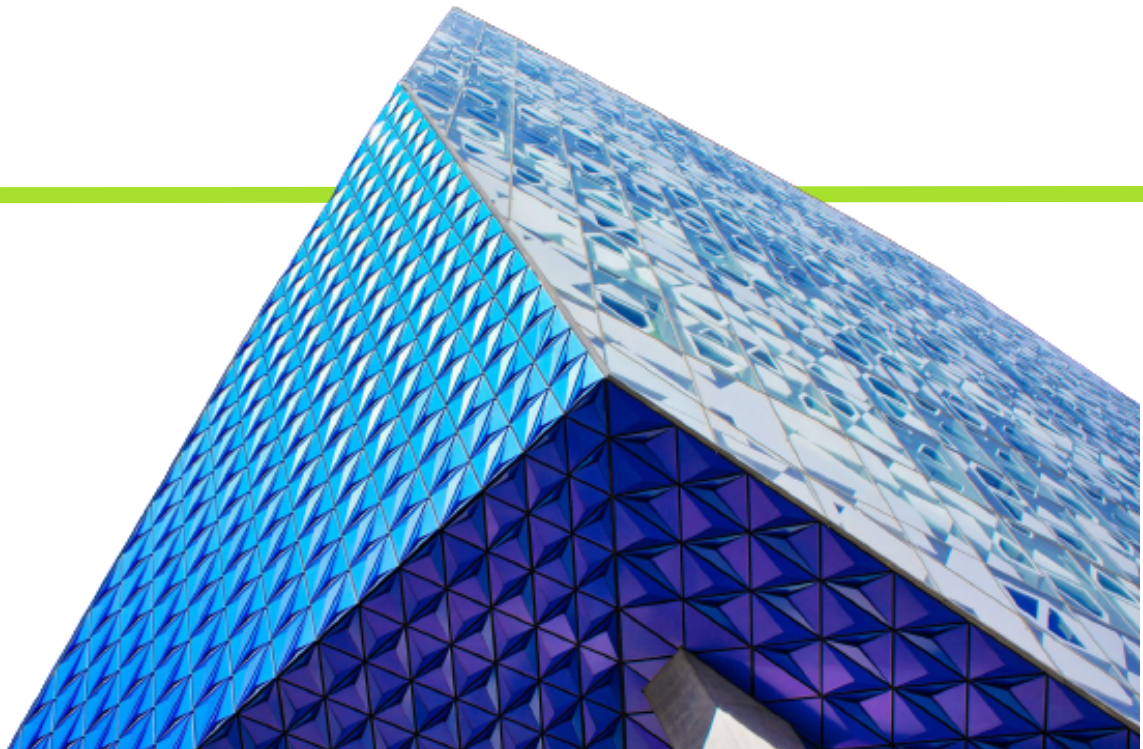
Commitment to the Environment

The Science Centre values the environment. We believe in the wise use and conservation of natural resources. As an agency of the Government of Ontario, we support the Province's initiatives to conserve energy and water and wisely use air and land resources to benefit the environment, the health of our community and the health of our economy for present and future generations.

Case Competition Question

How can we create meaningful physical and digital opportunities to generate revenue and engagement that are aligned with our organizational mission and elevate the experience of the Ontario Science Centre? Ideal solutions would consider the following:

- a. Being a hub of innovative partnerships focused on science education and engagement,
- b. Building science capital,
- c. Broadening the reach of the Ontario Science Centre,
- d. Increasing organizational resiliency
- e. Barriers that might impact your solution (such as socioeconomic, financial, accessibility, systemic exclusion, and other possible access barriers).



Topic Area #1 - Physical and Digital Space

Physical Space

In a technical sense, physical space is the space in which all three-dimensional and material objects exist. This includes people as we work, live, and play within the physical space. Specific to the physical space is the ability to engage with all five of our senses; touch, smell, taste, sight, and sound. These innate senses aid in our survival, help us process and understand our environment, and keep us connected to the world around us.

Activities such as walking in the park, taking the TTC to work or school, going to restaurants, live concerts, sports events, art galleries and museums all exist within the physical space. Think about what those experiences look like, feel like, smell like, taste like, sound like. The physical space is where we live, yet with the emergence of COVID-19, we have seen some of these spaces slowly move into the digital space or bridge the threshold between physical and digital space and experience.

Now more than ever we recognize the importance of taking a step back from the digital world and living in the present. Removing oneself from technology has numerous benefits including alleviation of stress and anxiety, boosting our immune system function, and eliminating fatigue ([Business Insider](#)). However, with the ever increasing pull towards the digital world, our connection to the physical world is at risk.

Consider this:

- What are some consequences of neglecting physical space and living entirely within a digital space?
- What are the similarities and differences of activities that exist within both the physical and digital worlds? From your experience, which do you prefer and why?
- How do interactions within physical spaces foster relationships and connections?

Digital Space

Digital space is a broad term used to describe what is being displayed on devices such as laptops, smartphones, and tablets and the communities being built within the platforms they have access to. With the constant elevation and progression of technology, digital spaces eliminate the need for physical interaction and provide an easy way to connect with society from the comfort of our own homes.

Especially with the emergence of COVID-19, there has been an approximate 75% increase in Canadians ages 15 years and older engaging in different internet-related activities ([Statistics Canada](#), 2021). Now, digital spaces are being used more frequently, dominating in spaces that used to primarily be physical. For example, classrooms, offices, and seminars are being held within the digital realm. The face-to-face conversations that we have become so accustomed to have been limited due to the pandemic.

Thus, interactions with our colleagues are increasingly being transitioned online via social media and video conferencing applications such as Zoom or Skype. In addition, mundane tasks such as buying groceries are now being done more frequently online ([Statistics Canada](#), 2021) with the help of services such as Amazon, Instacart, and through the grocery store websites themselves.

Consider this:

- What are the limitations of using digital space? How about the benefits?
- Think about your experiences in digital spaces, what improvements can be made?
- With the sudden increase of digital space usage, what does this mean for physical spaces?

Access to Technology

Technological advances continue to grow to meet the demands of modern consumerism. However, the newest advances in technology are often expensive and therefore inaccessible to the general public. In Canada, a digital divide exists between the citizens of different provinces and territories, with the perception that Northern communities are struggling with increased costs of high speed internet. In the Northwest Territories, 80 GB internet packages at 5 Mbps speed cost \$29 more than faster plans with more data in Southern provinces and territories ([Canada's Public Policy Forum](#), 2019). This creates a disconnect between North and South, providing the South with more advantageous access to technology due to reduced costs.

However, technology poverty is an issue that impacts those of lower socio-economic status all over Canada and as a result also affects marginalized communities most likely to be stuck in a systemic cycle of poverty. As technological advances become accessible to the public, those who are working class or below the poverty line find themselves lagging behind those who can easily afford to upgrade their existing technology. Being further behind in advances, new speeds, and new innovations leads to experiencing inequalities in access to education in the virtual era, lifestyle gaps, and feelings of isolation. In Canada, 59% of low income households have internet access which, when contrasted with 98% of households with the highest incomes ([Technologyhelps.org](#)), reveals the wealth disparity in technological access. When bridging access gaps, reducing costs is the most impactful answer that professionals are currently addressing.

Consider this:

- In an increasingly digital world, how can we use technology to work around existing access gaps and ensure equitable user experiences?
- How will demand for increasingly new technological advances impact our experiences in the physical world?
- Is reducing costs the only efficient way to ensure increased access to technology? How can impacted industries that want to increase technology use amongst their target demographic do so in a manner that is accessible?

Barriers to Experience

To be accessible, means ensuring equal access to resources in all spaces for every individual. Accessibility also requires individuals to work together to find solutions and to create inclusive and accessible educational and digital spaces ([Access TMU](#)). There are many obstacles and barriers individuals encounter, especially in regards to gaining experience.

One of the most common barriers is being from a lower socioeconomic status and experiencing financial hardship. As of 2021, approximately eight percent of all Canadians and ten percent of Torontonians are living in poverty ([Canadian Census, 2022](#)). All these may seem like a small percentage of the population, it is important to remember that one does not need to be living in poverty to be struggling financially, especially with the increasing costs of living within Canada.

Another common barrier is discrimination. Canada, in itself, is very multicultural, filled with people from all different backgrounds. Based on the [Ontario 2021 Census of Population](#), almost five million people within Ontario alone are visible minorities, the numbers do increase when looking at Canada as a whole. However, many of these groups are heavily discriminated against. For example, within a five year period, four in ten Black people and one-third of Indigenous people surveyed had faced some sort of discrimination on the basis of their race and/or skin colour ([Statistics Canada](#))

People living with disabilities are another segment of society that often face barriers to experience. Within Canada, over six million people are living with some type of disability ([Easter Seals](#)). This includes anyone living with disabilities that are physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory. Those living with disabilities often struggle to have their needs met and accounted for within institutions such as educational institutions and the workplace. For example, within the workforce, only seventy-five percent of employees with disabilities who indicated needing only one accommodation had their needs met; for those who indicated they would need three or more, only thirty six percent of employees had their needs met ([Easter Seals](#)).

What socio-economic inequities, discrimination and inaccessibility share in common is that they all can cause significant barriers to life. This includes access to education, employment, housing, and leisure activities. Without having their needs met, it becomes difficult for individuals to participate within society and therefore hinder their social inclusion and potential for upward mobility.

Consider this:

- How do these common barriers translate into digital spaces?
- How can we ensure that both the physical and digital experience is able to be accessed by everyone?
- Review the [Access Toronto Metropolitan University Website](#) and consider how the resources on that page might help you in answering the case question or presenting your solution.

Topic Area #2 - Building Outreach and Revenue

Innovative Partnerships

An innovation partner/innovative partnerships can be defined as: “a platform, organization, individual, or location in which several companies or creators work toward mutual interests to uncover new approaches to solving existing market problems” ([Mass Challenge, 2022](#)). Rather than just borrowing services/exchanging services from one another, companies/organizations ensure that they collaborate in a manner that benefits both parties. Using the resources available to all involved parties (specific skills, tools, technology, market access and research), these innovative partners move towards the accomplishment of their shared goals and live into their shared values.

What are some Innovative Partnerships?

- Start-up, Corporate, Government, etc.
- Open Innovation (Crowdsourcing): inviting all experts to contribute ideas towards a goal by offering an incentive
- Consultancies: invites consultants to provide expertise for a small fee service
- Universities: providing information from skilled academics

Why use Innovative Partnerships ([Harvard Business Organization, 2022](#))?

- Offset costs
- Add more expertise to existing knowledge pool
- Accelerates innovation
- Commercialization of existing timelines

Ensuring that innovative partnerships foster the well-being of each company not only in the present, but throughout their long-term relationship is key. This can be done by ensuring that the consumers interests are taken into account throughout the process. Facilitating a meaningful and beneficial partnership is crucial to understanding the inner workings of society by allowing for a re-invention to take part. As seen with the pandemic, it is impossible for innovation to exist without the collaboration of multiple different entities ([Entrepreneur, 2023](#)). The world is constantly changing and to keep this momentum of continuous innovation, it is important to encourage strategic innovative partnerships by encouraging them to be active at the forefront of innovation ([Entrepreneur, 2023](#)).

Consider this:

- What are some important factors to consider when attempting to create meaningful and mutually beneficial partnerships?
- What are some of the existing innovative partnerships that the Ontario Science Centre has? What do they have in common?
- Based on the knowledge you have gained from your own individual programs, what are some services that different professionals within your industry could offer the Ontario Science Centre to help foster an innovative partnership?

What is Science Capital?

Science Capital is based around theories of social capital. Essentially the more knowledge one has around a given topic, the more inclined they are to believe it. As opposed to entirely changing the ways in which things are being taught, science capital values makes slight adjustments to the existing approaches (Steam Learning, 2019). Therefore, this allows for a better understanding and further engagement within science education.

The Eight Dimensions of Science Capital (The Science Museum Group, 2016):

- Science Literacy: the knowledge and understanding of how science works, paired with the ability to use and apply science in one's daily life
- Science Related Attitudes, Values, and Dispositions: understanding the value and importance of science in everyday life
- Knowledge About The Transferability of Science: awareness of where and how science related skills are important for one's job
- Consumption of Science Related Media: the exposure of science through unstructured methods
- Participation in out-of-school Learning Activities: taking part in informal activities outside of school (eg: experiments)
- Family Science, Skills, Knowledge and Qualifications: families and community science-related skills, interests and jobs
- Knowing People in Science Related Jobs: recognizing science skills are being used in everyday activities in a meaningful way by people you know
- Talking to Others about Science in Everyday Life: talking about science amongst family, friends, and community members

The main implementation goal of Science Capital is to encourage young individuals to talk about science more – many individuals do not see Science as a valuable resource in day-to-day life, but this encouragement would allow for the shaping of young minds in a beneficial manner.

Consider this:

- One of the Eight Dimensions of Science Capital is focused on the transferability of knowledge. What are some ways that knowledge can be transferred? Think about the ways you have gained knowledge within everyday life.
- What are some ways you use science in your daily life? Has it made understanding and embracing knowledge regarding science easier or more difficult?
- Consider who may be less likely to have access to knowledge about science and possible solutions to help educate them further.
- 2 minute video introduction to Science Capital here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A0t7ObwPD6Y&t=3s>

Organizational Resiliency

Organizational resiliency lies within the internal workings of an organization and the level of resilience has immense impacts on the external workings of a company.

Organizational resiliency is defined as the “ability of an organization to anticipate, prepare for, respond and adapt to incremental change and sudden disruption in order to survive and prosper”. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of organizational resilience in a company's ability to handle crises and pivot approach. A company's organizational resilience is vital as it allows them to adapt to changes, provide security throughout such changes and expand as a result of changes ([The importance of organizational resilience](#)). Furthermore, the impact of strong organizational resilience can be felt in four main areas: company finances, customer experience, company brand/reputation and company operations. The COVID-19 pandemic is a key example of how companies should not just work to be resilient in facing global pandemics, but all risks ([The resilient organization](#)).

Companies who took swift action during the pandemic to support their employees and customers not only found an increase in company stock but also customer loyalty. With proven satisfaction among employees and customers, acquiring more customers wasn't hard to do, and companies were able to make it through the pandemic because of their organizational resilience ([The resilient organization](#)). Before the pandemic, only 24% of executives felt ready to deal with crises or disruption, as such, it is clear that many organizations lack a readiness to handle disruptions.

How can a company increase its' organizational resilience? There are five key traits that a company should focus on to build their resilience: preparedness, adaptability, collaboration, trust, and responsibility ([5 Traits of Resilient Organizations](#)).

Consider this:

- In an increasingly crisis ridden world, how can an organization increase resilience so as to avoid disruptions that might affect its revenue and engagement?
- Think about the impacts organizational resilience has on various aspects of an organization. How can you use strong organizational resiliency to increase the various streams of revenue? What about the different streams of engagement for customers?
- Compare organizational resilience in the physical space vs the digital space. What does strong organizational resilience look like in both realms?

Marketing and Media

As the world continues to shift more and more to digital mediums and forms of media, it is vital that organizations adapt to these new mediums to increase engagement and marketing. Social media engagement with businesses is incredibly strong, and only continues to grow. Hence, companies must be able to use social media and other forms of media to increase engagement, for increased engagement leads to increased revenue. In fact, a study conducted by Forbes found that over 78% of individuals in the study stated that a company's social media posts influence their financial decisions regarding the company. With over 93% of users expecting companies to have some sort of social media presence, it is vital that companies adapt to this new medium, as it is the one individuals turn to more and more each day ([Social Media Today](#)).

Social media is a particularly low cost and effective marketing tool. Various social media sites like Instragram, Twitter, Facebook and more act as great mediums for companies to pull people in. Giving individuals something interesting to view on social media will lead them to visit a company's site and learn even more ([Social Media Campaigns Can Improve Engagement](#)). That said, other forms of media such as the news or print media remain important mediums of engagement and profit driving as well.

But how can a company use various forms of media to market their company and as a result increase engagement and revenue? There are a few key things each company should keep in mind when attempting to use media to market their business.

- Increase Brand Awareness: a company must ensure it has an online presence, for it keeps existing customers interested, and lets prospective customers know about you and how to find you
- Create engaging content: it's important to tailor media content to customers interests and experiences, try to compel individuals to engage with your products/services
- Use media to advertise: though creating content and having a presence is important, without advertising your products/services, most people will fail to take note and engage or spend
- Be social!: interacting with customers via media is important as it creates authenticity. It is particularly helpful to respond to questions or concerns with the media you produce.

Consider this:

- As consumers of marketing media, what has made you consider purchasing an item? What would make you interested?
- What are some advantages and disadvantages of solely using social media and digital spaces to increase consumer engagement? Similarly, what are some advantages and disadvantages of solely using other more physical forms of media?
- As different people are interested in different content, as mentioned above, it is important for companies to consider who their target audience is when using media to market their business. However, are there any common interests that different audiences share?

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