

**PRESS RELEASE**

**TOP 5 FINALISTS ANNOUNCED FOR 15<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL SMALL BUSINESS BC AWARDS**

**January 19, 2017 – Vancouver:** The finalists of the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Small Business BC Awards have been officially announced. Out of the nearly 600 small businesses from across B.C. who were nominated for the awards, there are now only five businesses in each award category moving forward in the judging process, and one step closer to being named a top B.C. small business.

Small Business BC, in partnership with Canada Post, is proud to host the Small Business BC Awards, the largest small business awards competition in British Columbia.

“We are thrilled with the engagement that B.C.’s small business community has had with this year’s awards and we extend our heartfelt congratulations to all,” said Small Business BC CEO George Hunter. “We are very much looking forward to celebrating the outstanding achievements of local entrepreneurs at the Small Business BC Awards Gala.”

“We are very proud of all the nominees and would like to sincerely congratulate the Top 5 Finalists,” said Canada Post’s General Manager of Consumer and Small Business Marketing Lise Cote. “Canada Post is honoured to be a part of the Small Business BC Awards, recognizing and celebrating all the hard work and accomplishments made by these businesses.”

For the last step in the Awards’ judging process, the finalists will pitch their business, and its success, to a panel of business experts. The winners will be announced at the Small Business BC Awards Gala and will receive the Premier’s Prize in the amount of \$1,500 cash, a one-year All-Access Pass to Small Business BC education and experts, and the honour of being named one of B.C.’s top businesses.

“British Columbia has a vibrant small business community and the Small Business BC Awards are testament to the entrepreneurship happening throughout the province,” said Bruce Ralston, Minister of Jobs, Trade and Technology. “We are proud to support creative leadership in the small business sector and this year’s nominees demonstrate that B.C. continues to be a place of remarkable innovation, where people benefit from good jobs and a strong, sustainable economy.”

This year’s Small Business BC Awards Gala will be held in conjunction with the [Open for Business Awards](#), which not only celebrate B.C.’s local small businesses, but also the communities that they reside in.

The Gala is promising to be the business networking event of the year and will take place at the Vancouver Convention Centre on the evening of February 23, 2018. For more information and ticket sales, visit <https://sbbcawards.ca/buy-tickets/>.

The 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Small Business BC Awards finalists for all ten categories are as follows, in alphabetical order.

<p><b>PREMIER’S PEOPLE’S CHOICE</b> <i>Presented by the Province of British Columbia</i></p> <p>Duffy Baker Construction Corp, Penticton Okanagan Rawsome Natural Foods Inc., Grindrod Rising Knead Bakery, Whistler The Gibsons Butcher, Gibsons ULAT Dryer Balls, Parksville</p>	<p><b>BEST APPRENTICE TRAINING</b> <i>Presented by ITA</i></p> <p>Capilano Builders, North Vancouver Mountain Pacific Mechanical, Chilliwack Northern Legendary Construction Ltd., Fort St. John Shoemith Construction, Fernie Technicon Industries, Terrace</p>
<p><b>BEST COMMUNITY IMPACT</b> <i>Presented by Vancity</i></p> <p>Debra Lynn Creations, Surrey Hot Mama Health &amp; Fitness Franchising Ltd., Victoria Keela, Vancouver Recycling Alternative, Vancouver Zero Ceiling Society of Canada, Whistler</p>	<p><b>BEST COMPANY</b> <i>Presented by Sage</i></p> <p>BikeHike Adventures, Vancouver Csek Creative, Kelowna eVision Media, Abbotsford Innergy Corporate Yoga, Chilliwack Wicks Electric Inc., Vancouver</p>

<p><b>BEST CONCEPT</b> <i>Presented by Rogers</i></p> <p>Barnacle Systems, Victoria Coast Protein, Vancouver Sea to Sky Removal, Squamish Studiostone Creative, Vancouver Tubify, Vancouver</p>	<p><b>BEST EMPLOYER</b> <i>Presented by TruShield Insurance</i></p> <p>Aequilibrium, Vancouver Imperial Custom Wood Finishing Ltd., Abbotsford Island Lake Lodge, Fernie Pathfinder Endeavours Ltd., Prince George The Directorship, Vancouver</p>
<p><b>BEST IMMIGRANT ENTREPRENEUR</b> <i>Presented by Small Business BC</i></p> <p>Envisioning Labs, Vancouver FreshWorks Studio, Victoria Little Hut Curry, Powell River Miku Vancouver, Vancouver Ophthalmight Digital Solutions, Vancouver</p>	<p><b>BEST INNOVATION</b> <i>Presented by Western Economic Diversification Canada</i></p> <p>Algabloom International Ltd., Richmond AVA Technologies Inc., Vancouver Certn, Victoria Nada, Vancouver Winecrush, Penticton</p>
<p><b>BEST INTERNATIONAL TRADE</b> <i>Presented by UPS Canada</i></p> <p>Domestic Objects, Vancouver Furever Clean Dog Wash, Victoria Ironside Design Manufacturing, Chilliwack Search &amp; Rescue Denim, Vancouver Vitalis Extraction Technology Inc., Kelowna</p>	<p><b>BEST MARKETER</b> <i>Presented by KPU</i></p> <p>Domestic Objects, Vancouver Island Lake Lodge, Fernie Nettle's Tale Swimwear, Vancouver Twirling Umbrellas, Kelowna Two Wheel Gear, Vancouver</p>

More details about the Small Business BC Awards can be found at <http://sbbcawards.ca/>.

#### Quotes

“Congratulations to all of the hardworking entrepreneurs and small business owners who have been nominated for the Small Business BC Awards. These awards are a fantastic way to honour entrepreneurs from across British Columbia who have invested so much time and energy into building their businesses and to driving innovation across the province. Small businesses are the backbone of our economy. They are defining parts of our communities, large and small, from coast to coast to coast. And through their work to create new ideas and technologies for the market, these nominees reflect British Columbia’s strong spirit of innovation and collaboration. Their hard work and dedication will be so important to driving growth, and to creating the good, middle class jobs of tomorrow.” – **The Honourable Bardish Chagger, Minister of Small Business and Tourism and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons**

“We’d like to thank everyone for nominating their local top employer for the Best Apprentice Training award and extend well-deserved congratulations to the Top 5 nominees. Model employers, such as our nominees, are passing down their knowledge to their apprentices, empowering them to continue to strengthen the trades in our province. We’re excited to meet all the champion employers on February 23rd and hope their successes with apprentice training inspire others to do the same.” – **Gary Herman, CEO of Industry Training Authority (ITA)**

“Once again, Vancity is very pleased to sponsor the community impact award category. We are excited by the caliber and diversity of the top nominees!” – **Catherine Ludgate, Manager of Community Investment at Vancity**

“We are incredibly excited to see the caliber of small businesses that have made the Top 5 Finalist list for all Small Business BC award categories this year. On behalf of Sage, I’d like to offer my most heartfelt congratulations to these businesses for their fantastic accomplishments in the community, and for earning their rightful place amongst other exemplary SBBC award finalists. As a long-time advocate for business builders in the region, Sage is thrilled for this opportunity to celebrate the important contributions small businesses make to the local economy. We look forward to meeting everyone at the upcoming SBBC awards ceremony and learning more about their inspirational business journeys.” – **Paul Struthers, Executive Vice President and Managing Director at Sage Canada**

“Small businesses have the business ideas, unique products and services and determination to grow beyond our borders. UPS Canada is proud to be a part of the 15th Annual Small Business BC Awards and continue our support for Canadian small business growth in international markets. Congratulations to Top 5 Finalists in the Best International Trade category.” – **Paul Gaspar, Director of Small Business at UPS Canada**

“TruShield Insurance knows that providing a supportive, productive workplace is key to the success of any small business. We are proud to work with Small Business BC and participate in the awards which celebrate BC’s brilliant entrepreneurs. We congratulate all of the nominees!” – **Mike Gaba, Manager of Business Development in Western Canada at TruShield Insurance**

“The finalists in this year’s Small Business BC Awards exemplify the key to getting results. They demonstrate that effective marketing is a conversation that leads to a mutually beneficial relationship. Each one has found uniquely

creative ways to engage their customers. Congratulations to all.” – **Wayne Tebb, Dean of KPU School of Business**

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**About Small Business BC**

[Small Business BC](#) provides entrepreneurs with the information and guidance necessary to build a solid foundation for their business. Through a wide range of products, services, education and resources there's a piece that fits with every business. No matter what stage or what skill level, when an entrepreneur finds themselves asking "How do I...?" Small Business BC is the one to call.

**About Canada Post**

[Canada Post](#) is Canada's primary postal operator, providing service to more than 16 million addresses and delivering nearly 8.4 billion items in 2016. They are committed to providing innovative physical and electronic delivery solutions that create value for customers, small business and Canadians.

**About the Province of British Columbia**

[The B.C. government](#) recognizes that small businesses are the heart and soul of our communities, and the backbone of our economy. Small business plays a vital role in developing both the economic and social fabric of our province. The Small Business Branch, through the Ministry of Jobs, Trade and Technology, is committed to supporting and developing small businesses throughout the province in every stage of the business lifecycle. It's part of our goal to make B.C. the most small-business friendly jurisdiction in Canada.

**About the Small Business Roundtable**

The permanent [Small Business Roundtable](#) was established in 2005 to engage in a dialogue with small business owners to identify the key issues and opportunities facing small businesses in British Columbia, and to develop recommendations for small business and government on strategies to enhance small business growth and success.