

CENTRE FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION

SUPPORTING INNOVATION BY PROVIDING SHARED WORKSPACE



The Centre co-locates a diverse set of organizations and individuals who work for social innovation. Founded in 2004, the Centre provides physical desk space, virtual resources, and social opportunities to nurture collaboration, community, and innovation. Shared services include:

- Office space
- Meeting rooms
- Internet and phone services
- Reception services
- Cross organizational marketing and electronic newsletter
- Office equipment
- Optional health and dental insurance
- Collaborative programs
- Shared bicycles

Four different types of workspaces address participants' different needs. Private offices and private desks support those seeking longer-term, and full-time, rental arrangements. Hot Desks offer limited access to workspace at lower commercial rental rates. Visitors are also offered temporary workspace, billed by the day or by the week.

All who locate at the Centre sign rental agreements to pay a base rent for desk or office space plus a basic amenities fee. The amenities fee, though separated out from rent, is not optional. Additional fees are charged for particular services based on usage. For example, fees for copier use vary by the number of copies made. This billing system is equitable in that all organizations pay basic fees for shared office space and equipment to support the community, while those who use more services pay for them.

The Centre sets pricing for shared spaces and services to cover the operating expenses. This matches the Centre's mission to be financially self-sustaining.

Members of the Centre also sign a Cooperation Policy, pledging to actively support the community and maintain a culture of collaboration. This commitment is evidenced by numerous inter-organizational programs and a highly diverse calendar of public events that take place at the Centre each month.

Key Lesson Learned

- Create multiple shared spaces offerings to suit participants' needs.
- Create cost structures that are equitable and also strengthen the community of participating organizations.
- Encourage a general commitment of participating organizations, beyond a rental agreement, that supports the mission of the shared service and its community.

Mission: To catalyze social innovation in our home base of Toronto and around the globe. We believe that society is facing unprecedented economic, environmental, social, and cultural challenges. We also believe that new innovations are the key to turning these challenges into opportunities to improve our communities and our planet.

Participants 180 organizations and projects

Annual Budget \$1 Million

Structure Independent nonprofit organization

Founded 2004

Website www.socialinnovation.ca

Location Toronto, Canada

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