

7 New Brunswickers Who Get It Done

Nov 23, 2016 by [Huddle Staff](#)



There's nonstop chatter in New Brunswick about how to transform the province and make it a more prosperous and progressive place. The conversation has been going on for, oh, about a century or so.

While lots of people talk, few take action. That's been the problem.

That's why we love people who get it done. People who create real opportunities in New Brunswick and beyond. People who are making a difference.

Here are seven of our favourites.



Image: submitted

Venky Kulkarni – Innovator

As senior vice-president of business transformation, technology and digital Innovation for [Medavie Blue Cross](#), Kulkarni knows the importance of innovation and technology in transforming traditional sectors. Earlier this year, he [helped lead a trip](#) to Waterloo, Ont. for a group of New Brunswick business people to learn about corporate innovation and how it could boost business here at home. When he's not guiding one of Canada's biggest healthcare solutions providers, Kulkarni is nurturing early-stage startup companies in the healthcare/insurtech and fintech sectors. His most recent involvement is with a new New Brunswick fintech startup called [Quber](#).



Image: submitted

Erin Schryer – Literacy Champion

It's almost 2017. Pretty much every job is in some way a knowledge job. That leaves people with poor literacy skills on the outside looking in at prosperity. New Brunswick has a horrifically bad literacy record. Statistics Canada found that more than half of New Brunswickers between 15 and 65 don't have the literacy levels needed for today's economy. And it doesn't seem to be improving. Last year over 1300 students from the Anglophone school system failed the grade two literacy assessments. As executive director of [Elementary Literacy](#), Erin Schryer is trying to change the course by bringing volunteers into schools to work one-on-one with young New Brunswickers to improve

their reading skills. She's a strong advocate for improved literacy, calling out New Brunswick's remarkable complacency in the face of a literacy crisis that has profound economic and social consequences.



Image: Picaroons, submitted

Sean Dunbar – Brewer

Picaroons has made a name for itself as New Brunswick's largest craft brewery and [Sean Dunbar](#) is the man behind it all. He believes in making the province better one beer at a time. Dunbar believes that businesses can play a role in community building, whether it's by teaming up with local companies like [Real Food Connections](#) or helping [revive an entire town](#). Dunbar is also keen on supporting others in the industry and does so by carrying a selection from other local breweries at Picaroons. The company's distribution is now moving beer for six other craft brewers. Picaroons now has retail locations in both Fredericton and Saint John. And with the new Fredericton [Roundhouse opening soon](#), and a

St. Stephen location in the works, we're sure there are many great things (and beers) to come.



Image: submitted

Laura Araneda – Leader

Laura Araneda is one kickass leader. Besides moving Penobsquis-based [VIC Progressive Diamond Drilling](#) leaps and bounds ahead in her role as CEO by expanding the company's specialization, Araneda is on the board of directors for the Atlantic Institute of Market Studies and the NB & PEI division of Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters. A champion for female leaders, Araneda is a charter member of the Atlantic Canada Chapter of Women's President Organization. Profit magazine has named her one of the [Top 100 Female Entrepreneurs](#) for the past five years. She's currently working with UNB's campaign cabinet to raise \$110 million for the It Begins Here campaign, \$50 million of which will go to scholarships for students.



Image: submitted

Bill McGrath – Design Guru

Bill McGrath is a leader at Fredericton-based [OrangeSprocket](#), a creative technology company focused on creating effective and memorable user experience, web sites and branding.

OrgangeSprocket has added some of the top companies in the world to its client roster, like Google, YouTube, Salesforce.com, VW, Disney, Toyota and Evernote, as well as local caffeine heroes Java Moose Coffee. With its market focus on Toronto, Vancouver, San Francisco and Mountain View, OrangeSprocket is a great example of a New Brunswick company competing globally.



Image: Kelly Lawson

Monica Adair – Architect

Monica Adair and her Saint John and New York-based firm [Acre Architects](#) have already earned a global reputation in the architectural community. But she's just getting started. Adair received the [RAIC Young Architect Award](#), a national award recognizing design excellence and leadership. The trendy [Wallpaper*](#) magazine called Acre a breakthrough firm. In New Brunswick, they've designed the new [Picaroons Roundhouse](#) in Fredericton and recently completed residential projects in St. Andrews and Rothesay. They also broke ground on a new project in Austin, Texas, on The Cedars Ranch, a modern wedding venue on 20 acres of forested oak and cedar. Monica has helped bring a renewed appreciation of design to Saint John with the creation of

the “Petanque Park” installation as part of the [Third Shift](#) event earlier this year, and the firm also released a provocative design for the McClary building on 222 Water Street to prompt community conversation about the property.



Image: submitted

Paul Gunn – Finance Pro

After a 20 year career as a financial executive and involvement with the funding phase of Sackville, NB-based [Soricimed's](#) startup, Paul Gunn made the big switch to biotech to become Soricimed's CFO in 2007. As its current president and CEO, Gunn is no stranger to leading companies through growth and adjustment and has done just that for Soricimed. Following a devastating fire in its lab earlier this year, Gunn led Soricimed to the U.S. [FDA orphan drug designation](#) of its peptide SOR-C13 for the treatment of ovarian and pancreatic cancer.