

CLIENT STORY: AXIS BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY CENTER



Extraordinary growth in challenging times

In November 2019, AXIS Capital hired its first employee in Halifax. By the end of 2020, despite a pandemic that disrupted life worldwide, its Halifax office grew to 200.

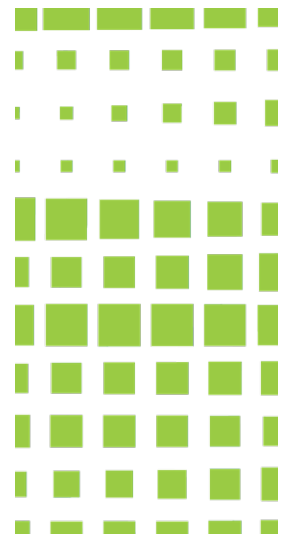
AXIS Capital is a global provider of specialty insurance and reinsurance, with offices around the world. The Halifax office, called the AXIS Business Technology Center, is part of the Business Technology Solutions Group, the company's IT organization. The team in Halifax supports the global operations of a company that also works to foster inclusion, protect the environment, and invest in the community.

What brought them to Nova Scotia?

"We looked at multiple locations in North America," says Brendan Butler, Halifax Site Lead. "All signals pointed toward Halifax – excellent talent, a proven track record for operation centres, and many universities and community college campuses. We felt Halifax was the right size, in the right time zone, for us to scale and grow those in-house technology skills."

"I think the impact of the Halifax office on AXIS generally is going to be massive," says Jay Whiddon, Chief Information Officer – Marketing Technologies & Digital User Experience. "Historically, AXIS has outsourced portions of our foundational and strategic work. With Halifax, we're investing time and effort into our own organization to retain that knowledge and give people a career path."

AXIS had expected to hire approximately 50 people in 2020, their first full year of operation. They opened the new office in the Nova Centre on March 9th with 30 employees but had to close it two days later. "When the pandemic hit, we saw an opportunity to double down and be an employer of choice in Nova Scotia," Butler says. AXIS brought forward a multi-year plan and accelerated hiring opportunities. They developed their relationships, set up a referral program for existing employees, and hosted virtual job fairs.





NSBI has been a valuable partner to help AXIS succeed in Halifax, Butler adds. “They gave us a solid foundation and understanding of Nova Scotia and the talent pool here,” he says. “Secondarily, but importantly, they supported us through the Investment Attraction payroll rebate, which had made it attractive for us to set up and put roots down in Nova Scotia. Since our first hire, NSBI has made themselves available to us whenever we had questions.”

Nova Scotia’s universities have also been strong partners, he says. “We’ve been operating co-op programs since June of 2020, averaging 10 students per semester, and we have gained amazing talent.”

“The people we have in Halifax have a start-up type of energy with their excitement and sense of drive,” Whiddon says, “and we are even seeing this during the time of COVID. To harness this new talent, we make sure they have the nurturing, understanding and mentorship of our industry leaders.”

“We had extraordinary growth in 2020,” Butler says. “We expect to continue hiring through the end of 2021. And we’ll be looking for opportunities where other parts of AXIS Capital may benefit from expansion in Nova Scotia. Right now we’re laser-focused on being a premier employer in Nova Scotia, harnessing what we’ve already built. But we’re just starting. We’re excited about the future in Nova Scotia.”



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BRENDAN BUTLER
AXIS Capital