

Finding Community in Corporations and Countries

By Elliot Hellowell-Phillips

*“Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is a progress. Working together is success.”
– Henry Ford*

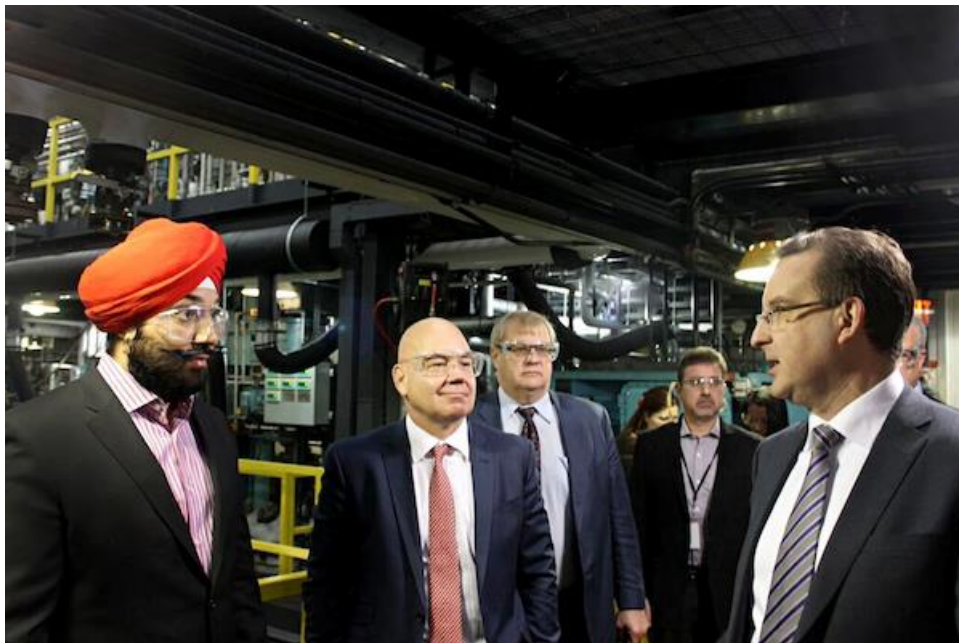
Throughout my work experience trip to Toronto, Ottawa, and San Francisco, I strove to compare and contrast each city’s sense of community, their focus on science and innovation, and their cultural identity. During my two weeks in Canada and the United States, I learned about the multitude of roles within a science and technology company while immersing myself in each country’s distinctive customs. Globalization has led to increased global cooperation in the 21st century and through this work experience I gained an understanding of North American society and its similarities and differences to England. By analyzing notable places that I visited on my work experience, it is evident that each culture prioritizes different ideals in their communities and each has a distinct approach to science and innovation.

Xerox Research Centre of Canada

My trip started with working at the Xerox Research Centre of Canada (XRCC). Established in 1974, XRCC is Canada’s leading materials research centre and strives to create real-world solutions to business and consumer problems. In the summer of 2015 the National Research Council of Canada (NRC) agreed to collaborate with Xerox to build the Advanced Materials Manufacturing Centre to accelerate Canada’s growth as an innovation hub. This project demonstrates Xerox’s focus on Canadian innovation and the support of the Canadian government. During my time at Xerox I was able to work with several roles within the centre, including manufacturing, finance, legal, centre leadership, and engineering. This experience in a diverse range of areas enabled me learn about the importance of community leadership and shared goals, which creates a sense of community and allows for more productive and motivated work. Xerox’s common goal of leading and inspiring Canadian innovation is shared throughout

the centre and witnessing the community's passion for science and innovative ideas was inspiring.

A form of technology that I found particularly fascinating at Xerox was their use of the 3D printer. At Xerox they are using 3D printer technology to create advanced, customizable materials that are stronger than those created in normal production mechanisms. Their use of this technology demonstrates Canada and Xerox's focus at being "early adopters" of new technologies and shows that innovation is prioritized in Canada. Canada's focus on new innovation and modern technology contrasts with England's frequent focus on tradition. Cambridge, in particular, emphasises the importance of maintaining traditional roots and places a large emphasis on liberal arts at education institutions. Whereas England's identity has been formed over thousands of years of tradition and history, Canada is a relatively new country that is gradually defining itself as a leader in global innovation and research.



Vice President of XRCC and Centre Director, Dr. Paul Smith (Right) pictured with Canada's Minister of Innovation, Science, Technology, and Economic Development, Navdeep Bains (Left), and President and CEO of Xerox Canada, Al Varney (Centre), in the XRCC Pilot Plant.

Silicon Valley, California:



The Google Campus and a Picture of Myself with the Android Mascot

Located in the San Francisco Bay Area, Silicon Valley is the global centre for technology and innovation and accounts for one-third of all venture capital investment in the United States. As an innovation hub, Silicon Valley has attracted global technology superpowers, such as Apple, Google, and Samsung, and continues to lead the world in technological innovation. During my visit to San Francisco and Silicon Valley, I was amazed by their adoption and integration of new technologies, including driverless cars. At the Apple and Google Campuses driverless cars are an integrated part of the community and this seamless integration contrasts with the traditional environments of England and Cambridge.

Instead of being viewed solely as employees of a corporation, Apple and Google cast their employees as “dreamers.” As “dreamers,” their daily responsibility is to put their dreams into practice and use the financial and technological resources that are available to make their dreams a reality. Within their campuses, Google and Apple are cities within a city. This is most apparent at Google where the company feels like a family and the campus feels like a university.

At Google, “Googlers” have made the campus part of their identity and feel a sense of belonging. Instead of a workplace, Google is a home where dreaming is encouraged and innovation is always prioritized. These experiences are incredibly unique compared to XRCC and Cambridge. Although Google could be viewed as a larger adaptation of Henry Morris’s village colleges, pairing life with work instead of life with education, their sense of community is unrivaled in any global corporation. In Silicon Valley, their culture has become inherently woven with innovation and it plays a large role in defining the identities of the diverse Google and Apple families.

Ottawa, Canada:

Ottawa is the capital city of Canada and is the home of the Canadian government. As a result, Ottawa has come to embody the values that are enshrined in Canadian culture. The foremost value of Canadian culture is diversity and protecting multiculturalism has been a consistent goal of the Canadian government since its creation. When you arrive in Ottawa, you instantly feel welcomed and are greeted by a population made up of a multitude of ethnicities and cultural backgrounds. Canada’s multicultural mosaic contrasts with the current global trend of isolation and xenophobia and the Canadian government continues to emphasise that communities are strongest when their members are the most different and diverse.

Canada’s focus on diversity is apparent in the Library of Parliament within the centre block of the Canadian Parliament. This building houses books from a wide range of age groups and ethnicities, including everything from children’s books to the latest Margaret Atwood. I also had the opportunity to visit the Canadian Mint, which also demonstrates Canada’s global identity and diversity. At the Mint only 40% of the currency made is Canadian, displaying the global makeup of Canada’s population and their commitment to foreign states. Canada’s global role is

increasingly defined as a proponent of cooperation and it does not feel that it needs to be a global hegemon, such as the US. Canada's humanist goals and focus on multiculturalism are truly embodied in Ottawa's institutions and community and demonstrate clear differences to England and the US. In England the US, historic landmarks, such as Cambridge University of the Golden Gate Bridge, often overshadow the cultural communities within. However, in Ottawa and Toronto the landmarks, such as the CN Tower and Parliament, are often diminished compared to the cultural communities. The social communities of Little Italy, Little Poland, and China Town are integral to Canadian city life and demonstrate that Canadian community is less defined by history and architecture and instead is most effectively captured by people and cross-cultural cooperation.



Canadian Parliament in Ottawa

As I reflect on my work experience trip, I am amazed by the differences between North American and European cultures. Although I had the ability to learn professional skills and develop my understanding of science and technology, I was also able to gain a deeper understanding of cross-cultural differences. The US, Canada, and England are all leaders in the international system, but all have immense internal differences. As the world becomes increasingly connected, it is important to understand these differences and work with them to build a more harmonious and cooperative global community.



My Mother and I After Landing At Heathrow Airport

I would like to thank the Henry Morris Memorial Trust for making this opportunity possible and look forward to continuing expanding my interest for science and technology in Cambridge.