

# Our digital strategy comes home

A strategy for the future







Call for change

# Support affordable housing through digital

**A home offers much more than shelter: It gives people stability and a place in the community. It's a haven for relationships. And it's where memories are stored and created.**

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), Canada's national housing agency, is driven by the principle that homes help people participate more fully in society, from pursuing an education to staying employed.

That principle inspired the organization's ambitious goal: By 2030, everyone in Canada will have a home they can afford and that meets their needs.

How? CMHC stabilizes the housing market in many ways, such as by protecting lenders in case of defaults and ensuring the availability of mortgage funding, through economic downturns and periods of growth. Under Canadian law, all lenders require mortgage loan insurance if a borrower has a down payment of less than 20% of a home's purchase price. As the nation's largest mortgage insurance provider, CMHC plays a key role.

**Learn more from the people that create change for CMHC and those that are impacted. [Change from Every Angle](#)**



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For example, it opens the doors to homeownership for those who are having a hard time saving for a 20% down payment, or who would otherwise not be able to receive a mortgage. Via its main lines of business—mortgage loan insurance, affordable housing, securitization and policy and research—CMHC supports a steady housing supply, serving local governments, lenders and developers.

But its noble goal was in danger of never being reached. Outdated systems and processes prevented CMHC from adapting to the digital age and limited the effectiveness of its employees.

Take CMHC's software applications: The agency had nearly 1,000 of them—one for every two of its 1,900 employees! And many of those were customized and hard to maintain.

Tied down to an aging, insecure infrastructure and lack of integration, employees struggled with siloed information and slow productivity. In fact, the primary job duties of one in six CMHC employees was manipulating and consolidating data sets rather than making business decisions. The agency realized its own home needed a gut renovation.

We knew we were falling behind, but as a government-owned company with a leading market position, we were complacent about modernization. After years of failed attempts to improve our processes and systems in incremental steps, we had arrived at a place of clarity: digitize or surrender.

**EVAN SIDDALL**

Former CEO, CMHC





When tech meets human ingenuity

# A complete technology transformation

**To carry out CMHC's mandate as a unified agency equipped with the right tools, CMHC worked with Accenture to create a new digital strategy and undergo a complete business and technology transformation.**

All those redundant software applications? They were modernized to a new set of technologies that can be more easily updated, built on Microsoft's Azure cloud platform. This reduced the maintenance burden of using outdated technologies and supports better real-time insights on clients and the housing market.

In addition, a new customer relationship management (CRM) platform created a unified, single view of their client. Now, for example, CMHC can be more responsive to a client who is interested in one product but whose needs could be addressed more effectively with another.

To better serve clients, new processes were also put in place to replace manual work for underwriting mortgage insurance and assessing mortgage applications for risk.

One of the new processes distributes funds through an online financial distribution and reconciliation process that speeds up approvals and payments. In addition, CMHC created a housing data exchange, where financial institutions can find analytics and insights on mortgages and securitization to make sound decisions regarding the housing market.





## When tech meets human ingenuity

Technology has not only simplified and transformed CMHC's business processes, it has made its workforce more collaborative and fully mobile, thanks to tools like Office 365 and Teams.

CMHC also deployed strategies for protecting client data with a full range of services, including security and governance oversight and a comprehensive cybersecurity review and assessment.

In addition, a new security portal provides a single view into CMHC's vulnerability logs and security scanning reports. This replaced a labor-intensive, manual process of gathering disparate information about potential threats. Now, the

organization has faster, easier access to security intelligence.

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Now that the team eliminated siloes—including between commercial and non-commercial operations—more employees are able to track and measure overall client relationships. As a result, employees can assess if a client

could be better served by another product or service than the one for which they originally approached CMHC.

And as a result of CMHC's own "Results Only Work Only Environment" (ROWE) policy, in which all meetings are optional, employees have more autonomy and flexibility. More importantly, employees can better serve clients, innovate and be more productive—and happier.



A valuable difference

# Helping people find homes they can afford

**As a result of the partnership with Accenture, CMHC's technology renewal helped support 13 new housing programs—mandated by the Canadian government as part of the country's first-ever National Housing Strategy (NHS)—that will have a far-reaching impact on housing.**

NHS aims to strengthen the middle class, cut chronic homelessness in half and fuel Canada's economy. After CMHC launched its business and technology transformation, the government tasked the agency with implementing the objectives of the \$55 billion 10-year plan, including

constructing 100,000 new affordable housing units and repairing 300,000 affordable housing units.

Now for the first time, CMHC is directly delivering these government funds to clients instead of simply transferring money to provinces and territories to funnel further. Because of the new technologies and digital tools, CMHC employees can fulfill the NHS' goals and find the right solutions for a wider range of clients, including developers and assisted housing partners.

Another program rolled out is the First-Time Homebuyer Incentive for people whose annual combined household income doesn't exceed \$120,000. By offering first-time homebuyers 5% or 10% of the home's purchase price to put toward a down payment, it lowers the purchaser's mortgage carrying costs. Not only does the program make homeownership more affordable, its website and portal provide helpful information.







## A valuable difference

For example, website visitors can use a calculator to assess their eligibility and confirm that they're borrowing no more than four times their income.

Accenture supported the iterative design and program's implementation, created the digital solution that underpins the program and enables reporting directly into CMHC's monthly and annual reports. As a result, CMHC met the government's implementation deadline and was enabled to give the promised funding to Canadians.

In addition, Accenture worked with CMHC to design and launch a series of competitions for Canada's Housing Supply Challenge.

The program will award up to \$300 million in prizes over five years for new solutions for people looking for an affordable place to live.

"We were in a place where we needed to embrace change and truly equip our employees with the right tools and processes to drive innovation and new ways

of working. In order to achieve our 2030 aspiration, we need to think differently and lean-in to a culture of innovation," says President and CEO of CMHC Romy Bowers. "We want to lead the way in the adoption of emerging technologies, such as blockchain and digital ecosystem partnerships, to truly transform the Canadian housing market. Most importantly, our employees are now empowered to guide our continuing transformation to keep pace with leading market practices, enabling CMHC to best support our clients and people living in Canada."

As a result of its technology renewal, CMHC will continue to have the best-in-class security, data, and analytics to generate insight-driven research and services to support an increasing housing supply and a stable housing market.

Today, CMHC's capabilities have brought it closer to reach its 2030 goal. It is poised to help everyone in Canada have a home they can afford—and all of the benefits that come with having a place they call home.

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**ROMY BOWERS**

President and CEO, CMHC