#MeToo and the potential pitfalls for women in business

The need to help women entrepreneurs access capital

Time is ticking to legalize cannabis

O CANNABIS
May is a month of hope and optimism. The days are longer, baseball is back, gender-lensed opportunity flows from the federal budget and we begin to see a lot of green. For many in our country that green will mean the budding of a new legalized recreational marijuana industry and for others the righting of the ship for women in business.

While Bill C-45 makes its way through Parliament and women across the country hold out renewed hope to get a fair shake in business, there is certainly a lot of anticipation and cautious optimism about what this will mean for many people.

In this issue of The Review we look at both issues: cannabis and women in business. Before the Bell examined what outstanding issues remain that should be considered before the recreational use of cannabis is legalized. Our Dale Smith recounts the issues in his piece “The Final Countdown.”

Rita Notarandrea, CEO of the Canadian Centre for Substance Use and Addiction, adds a cautionary note about young people on cannabis. As she writes, “it is increasingly important we talk to youth”

Next Michael Bourque, president and CEO of the Canadian Real Estate Association, reminds us to exercise caution around health concerns for growing your own cannabis.

And no discussion on decimalization would be complete without the voice of Canada’s police forces. Maro Harel, president of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police sounds his whistle reminding us there are key jurisdictional details that have yet to be resolved.

The federal budget was a good news budget of sorts for inspiring and growing women entrepreneurs. Dale Smith recaps the Before the Bell show on what those opportunities are in “Pushing Forward for Women in Business.”

Janice McDonald, founder of the Beacon Agency, and Clare Beckton, executive in residence with the Centre for Research and Education on Women in Work, add that there needs to be a broader definition of the term innovation for women entrepreneurs.

Finally, special to the Sixth Estate, Barbara Balfour examines if the #MeToo movement may actually be negatively impacting women in business and the need for continued positive and constructive relationships between men and women at work.

Hope springs eternal. Enjoy!
Cannabis: The final countdown

BY DALE SMITH

With recreational cannabis being a hundred days — more or less — away from being legalized in Canada, Before the Bell checked in with stakeholders about what the outstanding issues are. There was fascinating debate but no consensus as to whether Canada, which will be the first G7 country to legalize, is ready for marijuana to come out of the shadows.

The panel met the morning of a hair-raising day for the Trudeau government as it showed up support for its marijuana legalization bill in the Senate, where the Conservatives had mounted serious opposition the bill. Senators ultimately voted 44 to 29 to pass the bill, which now heads to five different committees for further study.

Hours earlier on Before the Bell, Kelly Coulter, founder of the NORML Women’s Alliance of Canada, expressed no residual doubts about Canada’s readiness. “Canada is not only ready, but Canada has a global obligation,” said the author and commentator. “We have a healthy medical system in place, we’re ready to transition. Other countries are following our lead.”

Coulter noted that one of the most valuable outcomes of legalization will be medical research that has been stymied by illegality. That lack of science, however, is why some believe Canada isn’t ready.

“Frankly, the science isn’t there,” said Chris Smillie, Principal at Tactix government relations. “We haven’t been able to go through a process in Canada where we’ve properly studied the substance and its effects on young people, old people, and people in between, and that’s because it’s been an illegible substance.”

While police may not be ready, a lot of entrepreneurs are, according to Michael Curran of Great River Media, Publisher of the Ottawa Business Journal. Curran noted companies like Canopy Growth in Smiths Falls, Ontario, which converted the former Hershey chocolate factory into a marijuana facility.

“That’s just one example of a company that is looking to hire hundreds of people right now, and it’s going to create a big, big industry,” said Curran, who noted that Canopy is Canada’s biggest licensed marijuana company, with a market capitalization of $6.5 billion. According to Statistics Canada, the current marijuana industry sits at $5.7 billion in Canada before legalization, compared to $22 billion for alcohol.

“Growing marijuana in Canada is now a bigger business than growing tobacco,” said Curran. “This is going to be a big deal, and the bigger opportunity isn’t in this country – it’s on a global basis.”

That said, Smillie noted that our trading partners could put a damper on Canadian companies because the substance is still illegal in their countries. “Canadian companies won’t be able to list on the New York stock exchange if they’re engaged in this activity,” said Smillie. “This is a major damper on potential investors. Canada is a relatively small economy, and a couple of decisions from a couple of our key allies not to deal with us because of this product, and Canada could be in real trouble.”

When it comes to workplace issues, there remains a great deal of confusion because provincial legislation can include broad definitions of what a workplace is, and because the issue of levels of impairment remain unclear without further research. Nevertheless, Coulter notes that impairment is impairment.

“We’ve progressed with alcohol too,” Coulter noted.

That the legislation allows for some home-grow could have consequences for real estate and the rental market, according to Michael Bourque, President & CEO of the Canadian Real Estate Association.

“Because of the amount of humidity in the air, the hazards around re-wiring electrical, and plumbing — you can ruin a house very quickly by growing plants,” said Bourque. “These are not house plants. The humidity from a marijuana plant is equivalent to six other plants.” Bourque says that provinces should have regulations in place before people are allowed to home-grow.

Former Conservative federal public works minister Christian Paradis, now senior vice president of strategic development, security services, with GardaWorld, said that in all of the consultations conducted by the government, nobody asked about securing the value chain.

“There are production facilities where you have to provide security services,” said Paradis. “Then you have to transport cannabis from the production to the storage facility, and you need surveillance at the storage facility. Then you need transportation to the distribution facilities, with access controls.”

The need for accurate information as part of public education is also key consideration, according to Rita Notarandrea, CEO of the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction.

“Ten percent of our population reported past-year use of cannabis,” said Notarandrea. “When we talk about youth, 21 percent. When we talk about 45 to 65, 23 percent. The use is already occurring.”

Notarandrea noted that there remain a lot of misconceptions in the public, especially when it comes to driving, as some people believe that they drive better while high. As well, many parents may not understand how to have necessary discussions with their children because they may not realize their own biases will create an atmosphere of accusation or judgment.

“We have to be cognizant of the fact that youth are using,” says Notarandrea. “Preventing use is part of it, delaying use is the other component of it, and talking about frequency and quantity. We want to ensure that our youth, if they’re going to use, that they use responsibly.”

Senator Larry Smith, Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, said that the Conservatives in the upper chamber were concerned that there hasn’t been enough time to have a proper education program in place before the government legalizes.

“This is an opportunity to get the education issue and the awareness issue done early,” said Smith. “We don’t see that happening. We have a government that’s ahead of itself.” He added that they are looking at issues related to Indigenous communities, particularly in the North and remote communities.

“They don’t have the facilities, they don’t have the technology, and they don’t have the police who are trained properly to deal with this issue,” said Smith. “These people are starting off behind the 8-ball.”
100 days to Cannabis regulation: Are we ready to guide the conversation with young Canadians?

In approximately 100 days, Canada will legalize, regulate and restrict access to non-medical cannabis use. This transformation in our drug policy will require an intense educational campaign to inform Canadians, particularly young people, about the effects of cannabis use.

After alcohol, cannabis is one of the most frequently used substances among Canadian youth, with 20.6 per cent of 15–19-year olds reporting past year use in 2015. Although use among school-aged youth in Canada has declined steadily over the past decade, Canada is one of the highest-ranking countries in the world for cannabis use.

How do we determine the next steps to educate young people about the effects of cannabis use? A good starting point is to better understand the perceptions that youth have around cannabis, their issues and their concerns. For example, what do they believe are the effects associated with the drug? What influences a young person’s decision to use or abstain?

To answer these questions, the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction (CCSA) conducted over twenty focus groups with young people aged 14-19 across Canada. Through this effort, we obtained baseline information about their perceptions on cannabis use and gained feedback on the information needed to effectively guide the conversation.

Our research revealed that young people are confused about the effects of cannabis, especially given all the vast and sometimes conflicting information that is available to them. Further, they are not having open and honest conversations with their families, peers, and trusted adults about cannabis use. They strongly believe that conversations about cannabis should avoid being “preachy” and exaggerated such as “you’ll die if you smoke cannabis.” Young people also reported that they are interested in being involved in peer-to-peer prevention efforts.

By understanding what and how youth think about cannabis use, CCSA was able to identify gaps in current education and awareness efforts and focus on how to have effective conversations about cannabis and inform youth decision-making. We have also been told by stakeholders from across the country — including doctors, nurses, coaches, teachers and many others — that this communication guide is urgently needed to equip them in engaging with young people regarding cannabis in an authentic, safe and judgment-free conversation. With cannabis legalization approaching, it is increasingly important we talk to youth and find out what they need to live healthy and happy lives.

So, what’s the plan? This spring, CCSA will be releasing its Cannabis Communication Guide, which was created for youth and designed by youth. It draws on CCSA’s made-in-Canada research and provides an evidence-informed approach to effectively communicate with younger Canadians about cannabis and cannabis use. Equipping parents, teachers, health professionals, coaches and young people themselves with a guide to have informed, unbiased and non-judgmental conversations is a vital way to prepare for the legalization of cannabis.

Public awareness and education are critical to ensuring that young Canadians are well informed about the effects of cannabis use. We need to keep in mind that this discussion may not be entirely about preventing cannabis use but rather delaying cannabis use in younger Canadians. The Cannabis Communication Guide is just one of the many ways that CCSA generates the evidence for coordinated action on substance use.

Rita Notarandrea, M.H.Sc., C.H.E. is the CEO of the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction.
Go Slow on Home Grow

The government deadline for the legalization of cannabis is fast approaching and some of the potential problems with the legislation are coming into sharper focus. Yet the promotion and protection of the health and safety of homes and families, especially when home cultivation of cannabis is involved, has received little attention in the cannabis legalization debates.

CREA recognizes the overarching objectives of protecting youth and promoting public safety, which has been evident in the dialogue leading up to the legislation and proposed regulatory framework. But the government is ignoring evidence that growing cannabis indoors can be hazardous to your home and health. Before we enact this part of the legislation, regulations should be in place to ensure the health and safety of Canadians.

The legislation currently allows individuals to grow four plants at home. On the surface, this sounds reasonable, even moderate. But it doesn’t limit the number of crops, or the size of each plant. With very little effort (proper irrigation and lighting) one could easily grow large corn stalk size plants and harvest three or four crops a year. The consequences are myriad and significant. Moderate yields could reach over five kilograms a year and at that level of production there is the potential for increased break-ins and thefts. More importantly, it increases the likelihood of cannabis products falling into the hands of children and youth because of easier access.

Both Health Canada and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) place indoor air quality as one of the most important elements to maintaining a healthy home. The risks associated with extreme levels of mold, spores and fungus when growing cannabis indoors, are very well known, yet are not addressed in the proposed legislation or regulations. Individuals living in these conditions are subject to levels of exposure that could cause a myriad of respiratory diseases. Contamination from pesticides and fertilizers can also lead to issues with air quality, and these chemicals can be a risk to the neighbourhood or children that are unaware of its proximity and use.

In addition to health risks, improper installation and the use of grow-op equipment, including high-wattage lights and irrigation tools, pose safety risks. Improper electrical installation and the associated fire hazards become a major issue with indoor grow operations because growing cannabis takes an enormous amount of electricity. These concerns could result in serious damage to housing infrastructure and threaten the safety of neighbourhoods. Many REALTORS® have witnessed firsthand

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Members of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CACP) have been ramping up to be as ready as possible for the looming legalization of marijuana. However, there are a few outstanding issues that are having an impact on police readiness.

Legislation is not yet final

Federal legislation regarding cannabis growth, distribution and impaired driving is quite advanced, but a number of articles are still being discussed. There are still many unknowns with respect to provincial and municipal regulations outlining the rules for points of sale and public consumption. Only when legislation is finalized can the police truly determine the potential impact on resources, tools and/or training.

In anticipation of the new laws, the CACP is pleased to be working with the RCMP, Public Safety Canada and the Canadian Police Knowledge Network to develop an Introduction to Cannabis online training module we hope to start delivering in July of 2018.

Impaired driving: Our number one concern

The good news is that an estimated 3,380 Canadian police officers are already trained to conduct road-side Standardized Field Sobriety Testing (SFST) with an additional 650 officers certified as Drug Recognition Experts (DREs). The bad news is, we expect to have to double these numbers to address the projected increase in impaired driving. The capacity is currently not there to deliver the amount of training required in the short-term. We are working with police colleges and partners to increase our capacity.

With respect to oral fluid drug screening devices, the National Research Council has not yet completed its assessment of potential tools, and standards have yet to be approved by the Attorney General of Canada.

While we applaud the $81 million in federal funding to support police readiness, details regarding how the funding will be
allocated through the provinces and into the hands of municipal police services still remain unclear.

As a result, police services are, for the most part, unable to budget and plan for the purchase of devices, officer training and other costs.

**Licensed distribution network**

The price of legalized cannabis has yet to be set but must be as low or lower than marijuana sold on the “black market” to discourage price undercutting and illicit sales. There must also be stricter security clearance requirements to safeguard against criminal organizations becoming licensed growers and distributors.

There are many myths and misconceptions to be dispelled. This is why the CACP stresses the need for clear packaging and labeling, combined with strong and sustained education campaigns to increase awareness about the dangers and/or penalties of consumption, trafficking and impaired driving.

While police agencies may not be 100 per cent ready on day one; we will maximize our resources, adopt a phased approach and keep assessing our progress. We are confident in our ability to keep Canadian communities and roads safe.

Mario Harel, O.O.M. is Chief of Police for the city of Gatineau and President of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police.
Pushing forward for women in business

BY DALE SMITH

Given the focus on women’s rights over the past year across multiple socioeconomic spheres from sexual harassment to pay equity to political engagement, it was no surprise the Before the Bell event marking International Women’s Day on March 8 was sold out. The panel, comprised of respected Canadian policy, political and business voices, discussed with moderators Catherine Clark and Susan Delacourt what it will take to realize Canada’s full economic potential with greater participation of women in industry. According to the 2016 Canadian Board Diversity Council Annual Report Card, women still hold only 21.6 percent of FP500 organization board seats, and while women-owned enterprises are growing, there are still barriers to success.

The conversation came a week after the release of the federal budget, which, for the first time, filtered program spending through a gender-based-analysis-plus framework. Highlights include money for a new centre for statistics focused on gender, money for groups that advocate for women, and changes to parental leave — but no new money for childcare.

For Ruth Vachon, president and CEO of Réseau des femmes d’affaires du Québec (Québec Business Women’s Network), what impressed her was the commitment to boost the share of women-led small and medium-sized businesses from 10 to 15 percent.

“We were expecting the Québec government would take the lead but it’s not the case,” said Vachon. “The federal government took the lead, and we were glad of that.”

Greg MacEachern, senior vice president of government relations, Proof Strategies, offered a reminder that budgets are also communications exercises.

“They communicated what impact on the economy women can have, do have, or will have,” said MacEachern.

As for whether governments need to get women onto corporate boards, Vassy Kapelos, the new host of CBC’s Power & Politics, noted that there is an overlap between rules and cultural change.

“In Iceland, they have legislation that covers the public sector, and still very few CEOs are women, and there are very few women on boards in private companies,” said Kapelos, noting that change has been happening in Hollywood because the wage gap between male and female actors has been made public.

Vachon noted that while Crown corporations in Québec were legislated toward gender parity on their boards, the private sector has not budged, meaning that regulation could become necessary. Vachon also said that large corporations need to influence the market, which is why they need to engage on appointing more women directors.

When it comes to barriers women entrepreneurs face, Stephanie Karlovits, founder and CEO of EPIC Fitness + Lifestyle, said that it breaks down to three things.

“Funding has been a big one; support and protection, and growth,” said Karlovits, noting that her student debt was an obstacle to getting financing, and that she feels that she has more protection as a residential tenant than she does as a CEO when it comes to commercial disputes. She also laments the lack of support available for when she wants to take time off to have a family.

“It can’t just be a meritocracy and a fight to the death — we need to be supported,” said Karlovits.

Lesley Lawrence, senior vice president for Ontario of the Business Development Bank of Canada, noted that the budget set aside $1.4 billion for the BDC to finance women entrepreneurs. This builds on an initiative launched in 2015 to increase lending to majority-women owned businesses.

“This is obviously an aggressive target, but we can do it,” said Lawrence. “We have to work with partners like other financial institutions.”

Currently only 16 percent of businesses are women-owned, and in order to help reach more women, BDC plans to run a series of boot camps to help women entrepreneurs with financial literacy and skills. Lawrence said that she is also working with the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters’ committee on women in manufacturing.

“We’re really trying to move the needle on
young women coming into manufacturing and skilled trades,” said Lawrence, noting that women make up less than 10 percent of the sector in Canada.

Catherine Decarie, senior vice president of corporate affairs and secretary of Export Development Canada, said that when it comes to women-led businesses in the export market, the statistical database lists only 1000 companies.

“Exporting companies are more profitable, they’re more resilient, they’re more sustainable longer-term to economic shock, and they’re more innovative,” said Decarie, which is why EDC hopes to help more women-led businesses into the export market, particularly by helping them to de-risk their first steps.

Decarie noted that one of the biggest challenges that EDC faces is that not enough women-owned export businesses know that they exist and can help. This is why the Crown corporation plans to focus on its web presence and boost its outreach in order to better target its training toward real-world challenges.

Both Decarie and Lawrence note that diverse companies that have more women in leadership roles, are more innovative and more profitable.

“Women are very focused on relationships, and we see that with the women entrepreneurs we deal with,” Lawrence said, adding that women in business value trust and loyalty and what it brings.

Lawrence also noted that women in mentoring positions help other women to engage, while Karlovits said that women in leadership positions encourage other employees to see themselves in the organization.
Women entrepreneurs contribute billions of dollars to the Canadian economy and to the communities in which they live. Our recently released national study, Everywhere, Everyday Innovating – Women Entrepreneurs and Innovation examined how and where women entrepreneurs are innovating in Canada. Riding in planes, trains and automobiles, we crossed the country to interview 146 entrepreneurs in all sectors and regions ranging from startups to high growth companies. We took in the beauty of the country’s regional differences while hearing the accounts of risk-takers who forgo pensions and security to chase their entrepreneurial goals.

The stories we heard were powerful. Themes emerged. The constants were resilience, passion and ingenuity as well as frustration. Financial institutions, incubators and accelerators and closed business networks were typical sources of frustration. We heard that sexism is alive and well in many business encounters. As one entrepreneur said about sexism, “Get used to it. It doesn’t make it ok, but you need to get used to it.” Racism for Indigenous women entrepreneurs is an everyday experience. Despite these and other challenges, women entrepreneurs and Indigenous women entrepreneurs are innovating throughout their businesses. As one entrepreneur told us, “If you don’t innovate, you die.” Another said, “Innovation is the implementation of an idea, not just coming up with it.” Unfortunately, their innovation often goes unrecognized.

We tend to equate innovation only with technology. The OECD and Canada 2020 definition of innovation is broad and yet, because innovation is perceived as technological, women entrepreneurs’ significant contribution to Canada’s innovation is unrecognized. This means they are often ineligible for grants and other opportunities offered to technology-focused companies. This is a mistake.

Budget 2018, with its focus on equality and growth, was the first complete gender budget in Canada. It included a strategy for women.

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entrepreneurs. This is good news indeed. We welcome the 1.4 billion given to BDC for loans to women entrepreneurs. With access to capital an ongoing challenge, this money is an important step in the right direction. Funding was also increased for regional development agencies to continue to build and strengthen regional opportunities for women in recognition of the regional differences that do exist. This is helpful as well.

Overall, we’re encouraged that many of our recommendations helped to shape the women entrepreneurs’ strategy in the budget. Women entrepreneurs were heard and their needs addressed. Now, there is a clear pathway laid out in the budget for advancing women entrepreneurs. The next step is crucial; implementation. For it to be successful, government cannot do it alone. It needs partners who are committed to ensuring a better way forward for women entrepreneurs. Key stakeholders in the entrepreneurial ecosystem need to work together. This includes financial institutions. They play a critical role in changing their approaches to better reflect the needs of women entrepreneurs. Women’s business networks and the women themselves all have a role to play. With all partners in the ecosystem working together, there is a greater likelihood of success. The time to make this happen is now.

Janice McDonald is the Founder The Beacon Agency and Clare Beckton is Executive in Residence with Centre for Research and Education on Women and Work.

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SECURING THE CANNABIS VALUE CHAIN

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Security throughout the cannabis value chain:
How #MeToo Chill Could Backfire on Women

BY BARBARA BALFOUR
Special to The Sixth Estate

As the #MeToo movement has gained momentum around the world, one of its unintended consequences is the alienation of male mentors, resulting in a major step backwards for women.

Recent studies by women’s empowerment non-profit LeanIn.Org reveal male managers are three times as likely to say they are uncomfortable mentoring women, twice as uncomfortable working alone with a woman, and 3.5 times more likely to hesitate to have a work dinner with a junior female colleague rather than a male one.

“These study findings support what I’ve been hearing anecdotally, in both my conversations with senior male business leaders at Edelman and externally,” says Lisa Kimmel, president and CEO of Edelman Canada. “Based on the environment, the trial-by-Twitter accusations and the careers getting destroyed by those accusations before getting to due process — they said they would start retreating, and avoid being one-on-one alone with female subordinates.”

“At first, I had an allergic reaction to hearing this — this kind of reasoning assumes all women are out to get these men. But then I took a step back. The majority of leadership roles are filled by male decision makers, and if men aren’t prepared to provide mentorship and sponsorship to junior women, they won’t get ahead.”

“My hope in bringing this issue to the surface is to engage both male and female leaders to have conversations that define the new ‘normal’ in the workplace. These conversations need to bring women and men together — it shouldn’t be women having these conversations all by themselves.

“If we don’t bring the two genders together, it will result in further polarization in the workplace.”

Kimmel was recently named the chair of Edelman’s Global Women’s Executive Network, which champions programs and policies to help Edelman reach its global target of a fifty-fifty split in male/female leadership by 2020. On March 8, the group announced their partnership with TenThousandCoffees, a digital platform that facilitates mentoring and networking opportunities among professionals within the organization.

“Our goal is to help men and women build connections with each other — that’s the critical ingredient for mentorship, promotions, high-performing teams, innovation and creativity within a company,” says TenThousandCoffees co-founder Dave Wilkin.

Each employee in the organization will be given introductions to new colleagues who can help them grow in their career path, thanks to an intelligent matching algorithm.

“Everyone is provided with clear, explicit objectives on how to have a career-related conversation that is endorsed by leaders. They’re given tips and icebreakers to continue building those relationships,” says Wilkin.

“People are not sure how to do this on their own. And if organizations thought diversity inclusion was a challenge last year, it’s even more challenging this year,” says Vicki Saunders, CEO of SheEO, a fund that supports female entrepreneurs. “Companies need to find ways for men and women to build diverse relationships, because when diverse people do come together, we see tremendous outcomes.”

That diversity is also lacking in the world of entrepreneurship, particularly with regards to financial support. In addition to being chronically downplayed and diminished, women-owned businesses are often overlooked by mostly-male venture capitalists and receive less than four cent of venture capital.

“Those numbers haven’t changed in 20 years,” says Saunders, a serial entrepreneur. “People have to pay attention to their unconscious cultural biases towards women in leadership. Shift your lens on how you view the world; notice when guys go out for drinks after work and are doing deals together, that the women aren’t invited.”

By 2026, Saunders aims to create a billion-dollar perpetual fund that will actively invest in 10,000 female entrepreneurs every year with zero-interest loans.

At the end of the day, battling sexism in any setting requires leaders with the courage to have conversations about whether a problem really does exist within the organization, says Kimmel, who facilitated those discussions at town hall meetings at Edelman’s Canadian offices.

“These discussions have been incredibly productive in shedding light from the men on the issues they are grappling with. Men may not know how to conduct themselves in the workplace anymore, whether they can compliment a woman on her dress or if it’s ok to go out for drinks with a female colleague after work,” she says.

“For women to feel absolutely comfortable, we must foster a culture that allows them to be honest about how they feel and where there are no ramifications for doing so. The #MeToo movement is not just our moment but also our huge opportunity as women to propel ourselves forward. The time is now to be advocating for ourselves and one another.

“There’s never been so much receptivity among male leaders. When there’s an open position, they will now look through the lens of diversity and gender, whereas they may not have been as likely to do so in the past.”