

## **Innovation and New Technologies in the Construction Industry – A PANEL DISCUSSION**

This year's Members' Day industry panel focused on the theme of innovation and new technologies and how they are rapidly affecting and changing the construction industry.

Our panel of experts included:

**Bryce Jones** - Construction Manager, Modern Niagara,

**Rick Huijbregts** - Vice-President, Strategy and Innovation, George Brown College (GBC)

**Terry Olynyk** - Director of Business Development, PCL Contractors Canada Inc. (Toronto)

**William R. MacGowan** - Director, Digital Buildings for Cisco's Industry Transformation Division in Canada.

**Mark Casaletto** – President, ConstructConnect Canada

Each of our panelists shared invaluable insights stimulating strategic discussion on how construction companies could potentially harness these new advancements in technology to better run their business.

Huijbregts from GBC pointed out that other industries are quickly changing as a result of developments in innovation and technology, but that the construction industry has moved slowly on this front. Huijbregts quoted Jack Welch saying "if the rate of change on the outside exceeds the rate of change on the inside, then the end is near" – all to point out that technology "outside" our construction industry is moving so rapidly and the new talent required to understand these technologies in our industry is limited. Huijbregts stated that according to Brookfield Institute 42% of Canadian jobs are at a high risk of being impacted by automation within the next 10 years and that many of these jobs are in the construction sector.

MacGowan's comments were focused on the internet of things (IOT) and the opportunity this brings, "there is a massive new revenue stream opportunity that is in the market today and we are looking to partner with companies that want to become smart building integrators or master technology contractors."

Olynyk added "There could be innovation right beside you and you don't even know it so it is important to look around you left and right and understand your people, those who have brilliant ideas and want to facilitate change – you need to actually allow them to do it."

The panel discussion challenged those who attended to think about what their organization might look like in five years and what their vision for the future of their organization is? Prompting the questions of whether or not they felt their company was ready for a world of rapidly growing technology and innovation. Are you ready?