Q2 REPORT – SUMMARY

The second quarter (Q2) continued Waterloo EDC’s strong 2021 performance, with eight deals closed, valued at more than $185.3 million, representing 240 new jobs. At the halfway point of 2021, Waterloo EDC has set a new organizational record for value of closed deals – $320 million. Even with the large number of closed deals, our sales pipeline continued to grow – it now includes 97 potential investments worth more than $2.1 billion.

Despite the ongoing challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic, Waterloo EDC has continued to deliver strong results – in the second quarter alone we added 5 potential deals valued at more than $22.5 million to our sales pipeline. If closed, these investments would represent 55 new jobs for Waterloo Region.

Along these lines, our marketing efforts continue to generate strong results, including our best-ever month for blog traffic and new heights in lead generation. We published 24 blog posts and three larger content pieces.

The world continues to grapple with COVID-19, which means investment may fluctuate depending on the ability to contain the virus, but Waterloo EDC’s results this quarter indicate a surge in new investment interest and activity.

8 closed deals

Investment closed deals valued at $185.3 million

Breakdown of deals by sector:
50% advanced manufacturing
37.5% ICT
12.5% business and financial services

Approximately 240 new jobs created

3 foreign direct investments
5 local expansions

97 deals in our pipeline with an estimated value of $2.1 billion at the end of Q2 2021

INVESTMENT BY STAGE

4 opportunities in ‘Forecast’ stage with an estimated value of $18.4 million

Outbound and inbound missions

• 26 investment meetings with international companies
• 18 meetings with local companies/organizations seeking expansion support
• 77 meetings with intermediaries and stakeholders
FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT

Waterloo EDC’s traditional investment attraction activities – inbound and outbound missions – continue to be paused due to COVID-19, though hope is on the horizon that these activities may become possible in late-2021 or early 2022. These restrictions haven’t stopped the organization from landing new investments and building a robust pipeline of qualified opportunities.

The team closed three foreign direct investment deals valued over $50 million. Of these deals, two were in technology and one was in financial/professional services. The two technology investments – MasterClass and EPAM Systems – made headlines in Waterloo and in national publications. Together, they will bring a minimum of 145 new, high quality jobs to the community.

In addition to closing deals, the Waterloo EDC team continued to pursue investment opportunities aggressively through 26 meetings with international companies exploring expansion into Waterloo Region and 77 meetings with investment intermediaries and stakeholders.

The team added five opportunities valued at more than $22.5 million to the sales pipeline. From a closed deals perspective, this makes Q2 2021 one of the most successful quarters in Waterloo EDC’s history. Our pipeline now includes 97 potential investments with an estimated value of $2.1 billion.

LOCAL BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION

During Q2, Waterloo EDC succeeded in landing five new local expansions valued at more than $130 million. Together, these deals are expected to create 95 new jobs in the advanced manufacturing sector.

In addition to helping enable new local expansion investments, the Waterloo EDC team held 18 meetings with local companies exploring expansion opportunities.

We continued to support the local business ecosystem by providing up-to-date information about COVID-19 resources and supports available to Waterloo Region businesses and we have continued to pivot messaging and support as Waterloo Region grappled with a challenging third wave of COVID-19 cases.

With the COVID-19 pandemic ongoing, the Waterloo EDC team continued to play a leadership role in the Business and Economic Support Team of Waterloo Region (BESTWR), which helps local businesses weather the challenges of COVID-19 and advocates on their behalf.
INVESTMENT MARKETING AND AWARENESS

The Waterloo EDC Marketing team increased its focus on driving new lead generation through inbound strategies, with the goal of moving a larger proportion of overall lead generation in-house.

Throughout Q2, the team launched new lead generation campaigns targeting some of the world’s biggest brands, land-hungry manufacturers and more. As of June 30, we have more than tripled our 2021 projections for new contacts from core markets, while continuing to increase quality metrics.

Waterloo EDC published 24 blog posts in Q2, resulting in more than 23,000 pageviews and continued to maintain high organic session metrics. We launched a new series called “Understand the Risk,” which provides comparative data related to risk across a number of categories, and published new pieces about investments from EPAM Systems and MasterClass, new funding rounds from Faire and ApplyBoard, as well as newly available industrial land.

Our overall web traffic and organic traffic continued to be strong despite a shift away from paid traffic. Likewise, our LinkedIn metrics continued their strong growth despite our increased focus on lead generation rather than follower and impression growth, while Twitter metrics remained flat due to a continued decrease in paid promotion.

Note: Social follower growth in Q2 reflected Waterloo EDC’s changing priorities. Twitter growth was slightly negative while LinkedIn growth was substantial. Blog session growth continued to surpass goals while web sessions also showed strong growth.

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