**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**Friday, Sept. 13, 2024**

**Chamber helping small and medium-sized manufacturers**

CAMBRIDGE, Ont. – The Cambridge Chamber of Commerce has launched a new program to empower and elevate the capabilities of local small and medium-sized manufacturers.

Created in partnership with Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada (TMMC), the [Manufacturing SkillUp for SMEs](https://www.cambridgechamber.com/Events.htm#id=2651&cid=232&wid=1101&type=Cal) program is a six-part learning opportunity led by a team of industry experts that focuses on a variety of topics to help small and medium-sized manufacturers succeed.

Topics include AI integration, supply chain dynamics, improving customer service, finding ways to bridge cultures in the workplace, precision advancement and developing a Kaizen strategy.

Cambridge Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Greg Durocher said the launch of the program comes at the right moment as Canada’s productivity continues to lag. A recent Statistics Canada report indicates that productivity at Canadian businesses fell by 0.2 per cent during the second quarter of 2024, with 11 of the 16 main industries recording declines.

“We thought it would be a good idea for us to develop a program for small and medium-sized manufacturers and advanced manufacturing firms so they are able to learn leading edge technologies and leading-edge performances that can make them a better and stronger player in the international market,” said Durocher, adding the program is open to all small and medium-sized manufacturers in Waterloo Region, not just Cambridge Chamber members.

According to the Region of Waterloo, manufacturing is the largest industry in the Kitchener-Cambridge-Waterloo Census Metropolitan Area, with more than 49,300 people working in the sector. The region is considered the fourth largest manufacturing centre in Canada due to the fact it employs more than 17.5% of residents.

The first **Manufacturing SkillUp for SMEs** session will focus on creating a Kaizen strategy, considered by many in business as the “building block” of all lean production methods. It will be held in October at the TMMC facility on Fountain Street North and includes a Toyota Plant Tour. The remaining five sessions run once a month into March of 2025.

To learn more, visit [www.cambridgechamber.com](http://www.cambridgechamber.com)

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## ***The Cambridge Chamber of Commerce is committed to the enhancement of economic prosperity and the quality of life in Cambridge. A non-partisan organization funded solely by memberships, the Chamber works hard to address concerns of business, provide access to information resources and represent members at the municipal, provincial and federal levels of government. With more than 1,800 member firms, the Chamber's strength is clearly in its hardworking volunteers and committees addressing issues affecting local business and providing practical solutions.***