

THE QUARTERMARK

Q4 2025 Quarterly Brief | Copyright 2025 Healy Consulting & Advisory

10 Things I Learned in 2025

1

Canadians are tougher than we give ourselves credit for

When pressure shows up - tariffs, geopolitics, supply shocks - Canadian firms don't fold. They adapt quietly, pragmatically, and with less drama than most.

2

Tariffs don't kill companies. Confusion does

The real damage isn't the tariff itself; it's slow decision-making, fuzzy ownership, and leaders hoping it'll "blow over."

3

Visibility isn't vanity, it's protection

If people don't understand what you do, they won't defend you, fund you, or back you. This applies equally to public institutions and private companies.

4

Narrative alignment is a force multiplier

When boards, executives, and teams share the same story, execution speeds up dramatically. When they don't, everything stalls.

5

Good leadership is mostly about making things simpler

The best executives I worked with this year weren't the smartest in the room (maybe they were, actually), they were the clearest.

6

Canada is re-industrializing, whether we say it out loud or not

We're selling to ourselves again: steel, power, infrastructure, advanced manufacturing. It's nation-building, just without the speeches.

7

Energy is now everyone's problem

Energy isn't a line item anymore, it's the foundation of productivity, resilience, and competitiveness across every industrial sector.

8

AI is less magic and more plumbing than people think

The winners aren't chasing shiny tools; they're focused embedding AI, robustly, in core systems, in a way that won't break under pressure.

9

Strategy has become operational again

This year, strategy stopped being slides and became decisions about pricing, sourcing, capex, talent, and sequencing, fast.

10

Most organizations don't need reinvention, they need help

Clean up first. Grow up second. Only then, scale up. Trying to skip steps creates fragile growth and heroic burnout.

A Few Words on Tariffs

Not rushing into a (bad?) deal looks smart on Canada's/ Carney's part now. It's all about CUSMA 2.0, and everyone knows it.

The very, very latest, which broke this morning, is the US is "targeting dairy, Online Streaming Act in USMCA negotiations". (per the Globe and Mail) That is a lot better than walking away/ tearing it up/ threatening A, B and C.

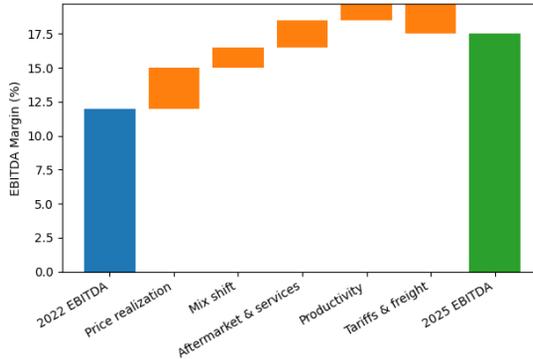
This is now a horseshoe between Canadian patience and unpopularity/ negative economic indicators south of the border. July 1 seems a long way off. That might, in fact, be enough time for Canada to be dealt a few more face cards.



Source: Gov't of Canada

Chart of the Quarter

How Canadian Mid-Market Industrials Defended and Expanded Margins (2022-2025, Illustrative)



Margins Didn't Improve by Accident

Across Canadian mid-market industrials (a basket I pulled), EBITDA resilience came from pricing discipline, mix improvement, aftermarket growth, and hard productivity work, not from a friendly macro environment. Tariffs and freight were real headwinds, but they were managed, not fatal. The performance gap this cycle has been driven by execution speed and clarity, not by scale.

This is the beating heart of the Canadian economy 🍁.