

# Show, don't tell

How a Nova Scotia film company uses the power of stories to engage the public on resource projects

**O**pening shot: a Halifax coffee shop... the camera zooms in on Journeyman film company as it gets its big break in the natural resources sector.

The backstory: Journeyman's director of client strategy and development, Nic Fieldsend, was meeting with prospective clients from Shell. And Shell needed an aerial shoot to document some of the activity taking place 300 kilometres offshore as it surveyed Nova Scotia's Shelburne Basin—the site of a future exploration well.

The happy ending: Journeyman landed that work and it went well. That led to Shell's East Coast team referring Journeyman to its West Coast colleagues. Thousands of kilometres across the country, Shell needed a video update of a liquefied natural gas development project it was proposing for Kitimat, B.C. That referral also went well, and by the fall of 2013 Shell had contracted Journeyman to provide video and animation to support community engagement—profiling people from the project team and the community and providing education about all aspects of the project, which became known as LNG Canada.

Fast forward to Oct. 2, 2018 and LNG Canada's proponents, which still includes Shell, announced a \$40-billion LNG export terminal would be built. It's the largest private sector investment in Canadian history, and Journeyman has been intimately involved in the project. "When you can work with the largest companies in the world, and deliver quality content that is effective, this experience builds profile and credibility in the industry," says Fieldsend. "It has positioned Journeyman as a capable and knowledgeable company in the natural resources sector."

Traditionally, companies in the business of resource extraction have not turned to film to help them advance their projects. But as communicating with local stakeholders and the general public about these projects—and getting a social licence to proceed with them—become more crucial, industries like mining and oil and gas are starting to use video and film as a communications tool.

Journeyman was formed in 2008 by founder and CEO Mathew Welsh, who wanted to start a company that could help organizations tap the power of telling stories. Fieldsend was the firm's second employee (the company currently employs 16), joining Journeyman in 2010.

Fieldsend says understanding the value of video and storytelling to help move natural resource projects along is "evolving" and that 40 to 50 per cent of Dartmouth-based Journeyman's current work touches the natural resources sector. Its clients include not only Shell, but companies like Razor Energy, Black Rock Tidal, Nova Scotia Power Inc., Hydro One, Genome Atlantic and Ontario's Independent Electricity System Operator.

Video content can help the Shells of the world get the coveted 'social licence' to operate by catching people's attention with engaging visuals and text and encouraging them to learn more about their projects.



Journeyman's founding fathers (left to right) Mathew Welsh, Oren Hercz and Nic Fieldsend. Photo courtesy Journeyman

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Nic Fieldsend, Journeyman's director of client strategy and development

In the case of LNG Canada, Fieldsend said this energy story evolved and storylines built up during the five years Journeyman has been working on it. "It was about building the case," Fieldsend says of the content it developed for LNG Canada. "The challenge was showing people what the long-term benefit story was, and what is the benefit of this project to them."

Fieldsend says Journeyman has been hiring senior talent to beef up its production and marketing and development capacity. It is also looking to have a presence in markets across the country such as Toronto, Calgary and Vancouver to take advantage of the growing appetite for video content on the Internet.

"By 2021, 80 per cent of content online will be video. Companies and organizations need to understand how to navigate through the noise and find ways to connect with their audience. They need to know how and where to reach them and provide authentic and engaging content that will move them to a new point of view," he says. "We have a growing network of proven collaborators across Canada and a diverse portfolio that demonstrate how we can use great content to help clients solve problems." |nrm

#### FEEDBACK

✉ [dcampbell@naturalresourcesmagazine.com](mailto:dcampbell@naturalresourcesmagazine.com)

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