2026 EDITION

The Communications Modernization Index

Where does your organization really sit, and *what is it costing you?*

How Canadian organizations are measuring up, and the roadmap for closing the gap.

FOUR ARCHETYPES · WHICH ONE ARE YOU?

The Patchwork | **The Consolidator** | **The Governed** | **The Modern**

Five dimensions. Four levels. Section 4 tells you which one you are.

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SECTION 01

The state of communications in Canadian organizations

The Transition Underway

Customer communications management is changing category. What was a back-office production function, statements out the door, notices in the mail, is now a front-line customer experience discipline. Aspire CCS calls 2026 the industry's "metamorphosis year": the shift from document-centric operations to dialogue-driven engagement is no longer a forecast. It is the market.

For Canadian organizations, that shift arrives with a complication. The communications infrastructure most institutions run today was assembled one vendor at a time: one for print, one for digital delivery, one for archiving, another for accessibility remediation. Each solved a problem when it was added. Together, they created a new one.

The scale of the problem

The numbers describe an industry that knows it has outgrown its infrastructure

83%
of Canadian credit unions plan to increase technology spend in 2026

49%
cite legacy systems as a top technology concern, up 10 points year over year

58%
cite lack of system integration as their number one technology challenge

1 in 5
credit union members log into a mobile app daily, more than total branch traffic

78%
of Canadian consumers prefer digital banking channels

Read those together and the picture is clear. Members have moved to digital. Budgets are moving to technology. And the systems in the middle, the ones that carry every statement, notice, and disclosure, are the ones executives trust least.

The Regulatory Pressure

Accessible Canada Act

Requires accessible, PDF/UA-compliant document delivery from regulated institutions.

FINTRAC obligations

Require traceable, auditable communications records.

Canada Post economics

Rate increases keep compressing the economics of legacy print production.

None of these pressures is on the horizon. All of them are already here. And each one gets harder to answer when communications run across four or five disconnected vendors, because every audit, every accessibility request, and every rate change has to be reconciled across all of them.

The Competitive Pressure

Megabanks and digital-native fintechs are setting the bar for communications quality. Younger account holders expect the same clarity, speed, and channel flexibility from their credit union or regional bank that they get from their digital-first financial apps.

THE BOTTOM LINE

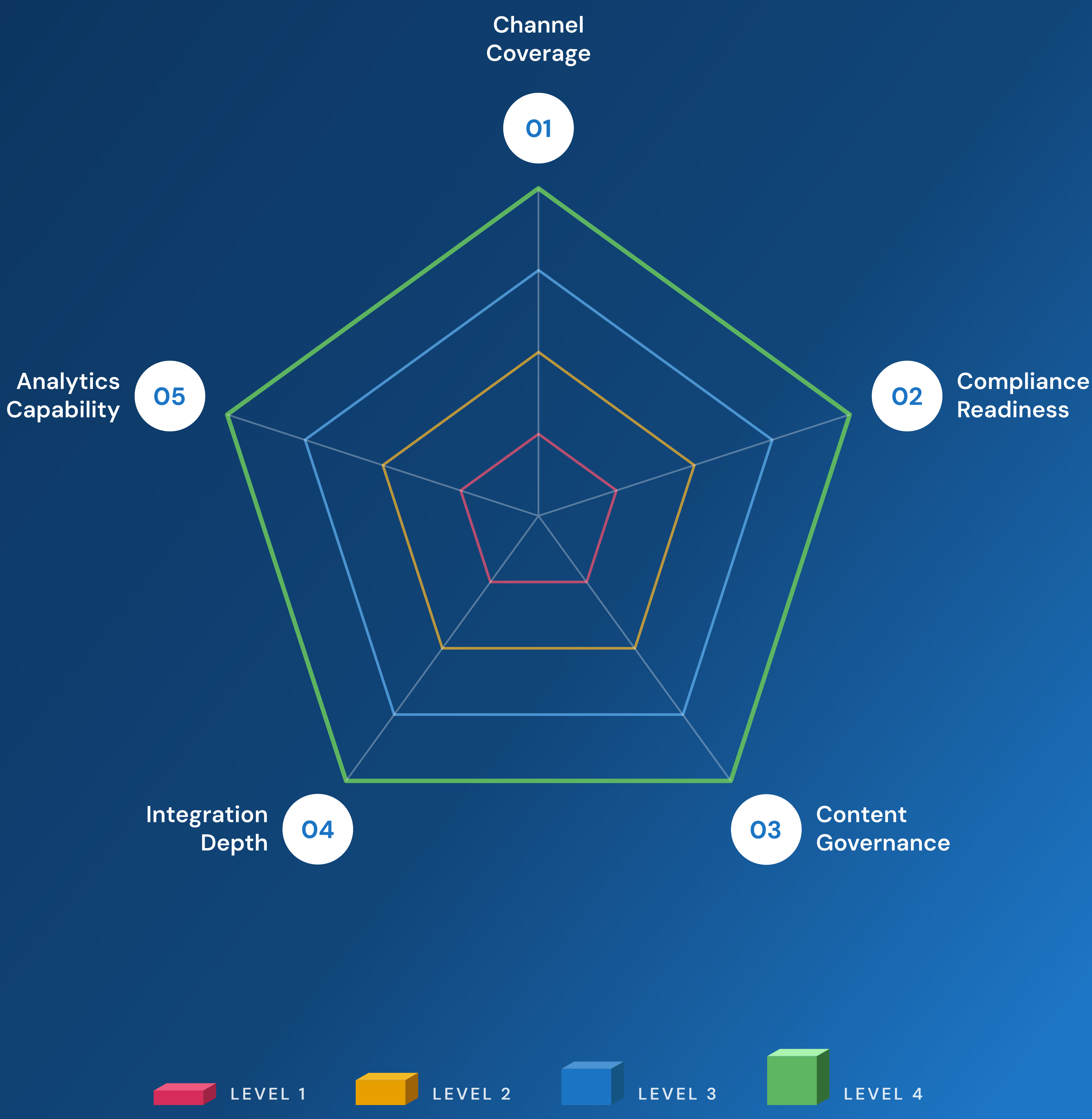
The organizations that fall short are not losing customers to a competitor's brand. They are losing them to a better statement.

> **"Every mid-market institution sits somewhere on the modernization curve. The Index exists to tell you where, and what it takes to move."**

Sources cited in this section: Aspire CCS Annual Market Report 2026; Cornerstone Advisors, "What's Going On In Banking" 2026; Ipsos Consumer Banking Preference Survey.

SECTION 02

The five dimensions of communications maturity



SECTION 02

The five dimensions of communications maturity

Communications maturity is not defined by a single platorm or capability. The Index measures five dimensions that together reveal how effectively your institution delivers, governs, integrates, tracks, and manages customer communications. See where you're strong, where gaps remain, and what needs to improve next.

DIMENSION 1

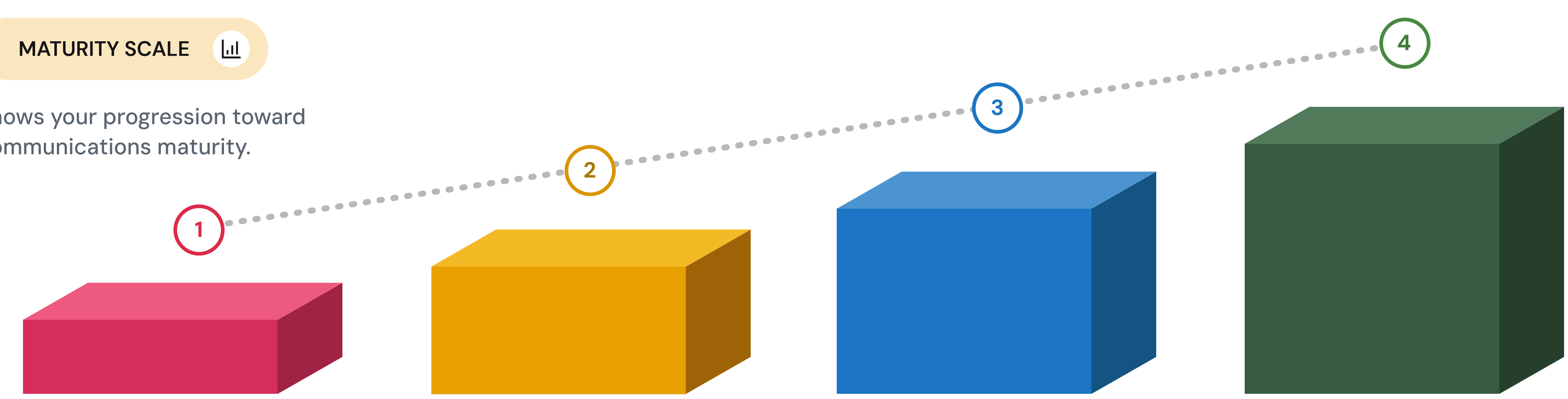
Channel Coverage

01

The range of communication channels your institution delivers across, and how consistently governed your content is across those channels.

MATURITY SCALE

Shows your progression toward communications maturity.



LEVEL 1

Fragmented

Print and email run separately. SMS, portal, and push sit on different platforms.

LEVEL 2

Partial

Two or three channels share templates. Others stay siloed, with no unified routing.

LEVEL 3

Integrated

All primary channels draw from one governed source. The platform decides routing.

LEVEL 4

Optimized

Preference-driven routing measured across every channel. Customers choose how they hear from you.

MOVING FORWARD

Focus on consistency before adding channels. Bringing print, email, SMS and digital delivery under shared governance creates a stronger foundation than simply expanding channel choice. The goal is one connected customer experience, regardless of how a communication is delivered.

DIMENSION 2

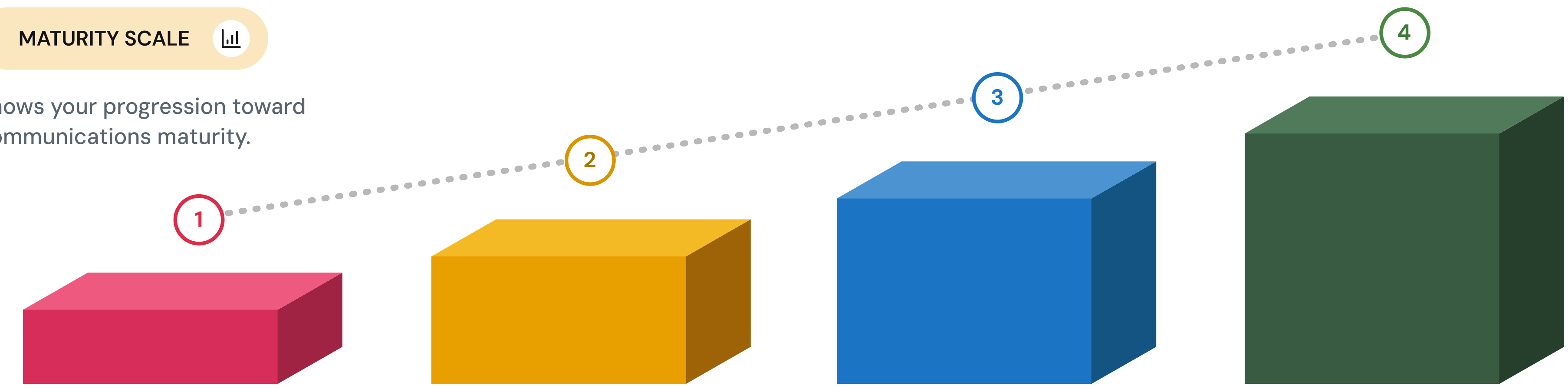
Compliance Readiness

02

Your institution's ability to produce regulatory documentation, meet accessibility requirements, and demonstrate audit-ready compliance for every communication sent.

MATURITY SCALE

Shows your progression toward communications maturity.



LEVEL 1

Reactive

Compliance review happens after content is created, often delaying delivery by weeks. No automated accessibility checking. Audit trail requires manual reconstruction.

LEVEL 2

Documented

Compliance workflow is documented and followed for most communication types. Accessibility is checked for some documents. Audit trail exists but is not easily searchable.

LEVEL 3

Systematic

Compliance workflow is automated for all primary communication types. PDF/UA compliance is verified on all regulated documents before delivery. Full audit trail is searchable and exportable.

LEVEL 4

Proactive

Compliance is built into the content authoring layer. Accessibility validation is automatic. The institution answers any regulatory inquiry about any communication within hours, not days.

MOVING FORWARD

Move compliance upstream. The more accessibility, approvals and audit requirements are built directly into communications workflows, the less your institution needs to rely on manual reviews and remediation. Mature organizations make compliance part of production—not a checkpoint at the end.

DIMENSION 3

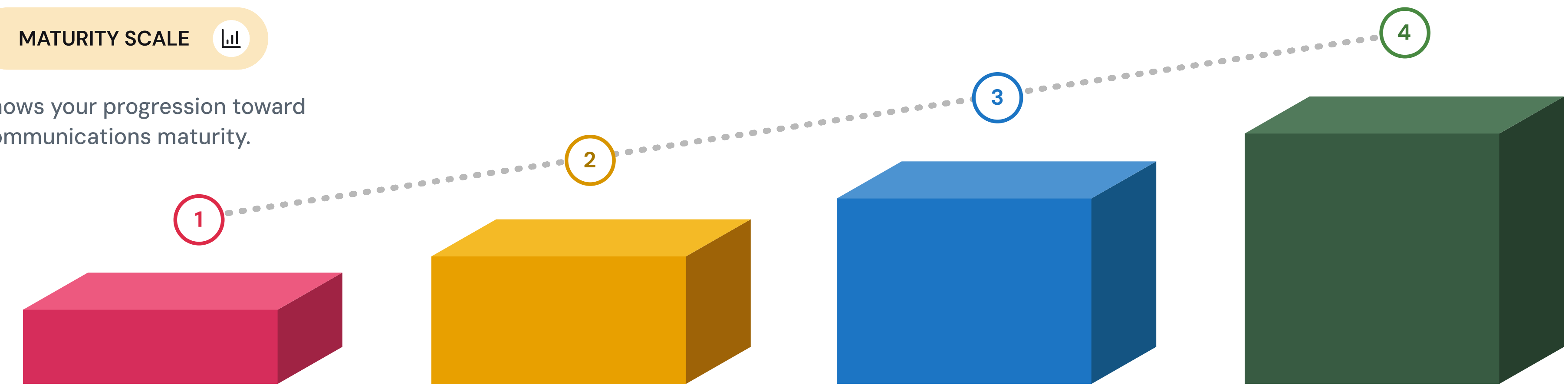
Content Governance

03

The degree to which your institution controls its communications templates, manages version history, and maintains a single source of truth for all customer-facing content.

MATURITY SCALE

Shows your progression toward communications maturity.



LEVEL 1

Ad Hoc

Templates stored in multiple systems, maintained by multiple teams. No version control. Changes made locally and inconsistently.

LEVEL 2

Centralized

Primary templates stored in a central system. Version history tracked for most communications. Change management process exists but is not always followed.

LEVEL 3

Governed

All templates in a single, version-controlled source. Change management is documented and enforced. Approval workflows are automated.

LEVEL 4

Self-Serve

Governance is built into the authoring layer. Business teams make routine template changes directly through a governed portal, with version control, approvals, and compliance validation enforced automatically. No IT queue.

MOVING FORWARD

Make one source of truth the goal. Centralizing templates is a start; true maturity comes when version control, approvals and routine changes happen within the same governed environment. This reduces dependency on IT while giving business teams greater speed without sacrificing control.

DIMENSION 4

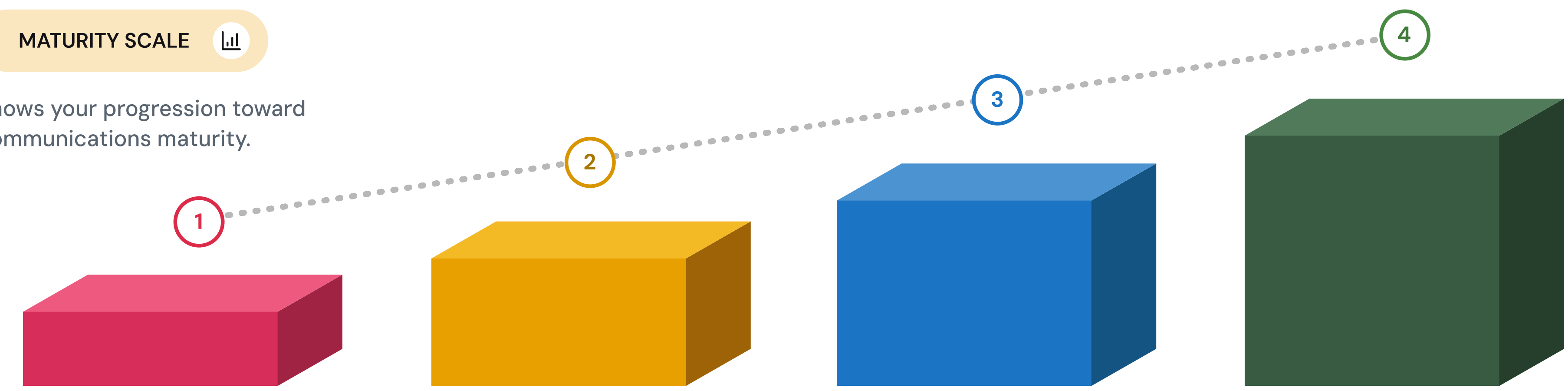
Integration Depth

04

How deeply your communications platform integrates with core banking, CRM, and other key data sources, and how reliably those integrations deliver complete, accurate data to every communication.

MATURITY SCALE

Shows your progression toward communications maturity.



LEVEL 1

Manual

Data for communications pulled manually from source systems. No automated data feeds. High error rate.

LEVEL 2

Partial

Core banking integration for primary account data. CRM integration limited or absent. Data feeds for some communication types but not all.

LEVEL 3

Connected

Core banking, CRM, and primary data sources feeding the communications platform automatically. Single source of truth for customer data across all communication types.

LEVEL 4

Consolidated

One integration layer replaces every point-to-point vendor connection. Real-time data feeds, no manual handling, and every channel drawing from the same complete customer record.

MOVING FORWARD

Reduce connections, not just manual work. Point-to-point integrations can automate processes while still leaving institutions with a complex ecosystem to maintain. Moving toward a consolidated integration layer creates a more reliable flow of customer data across every communication and channel.

DIMENSION 5

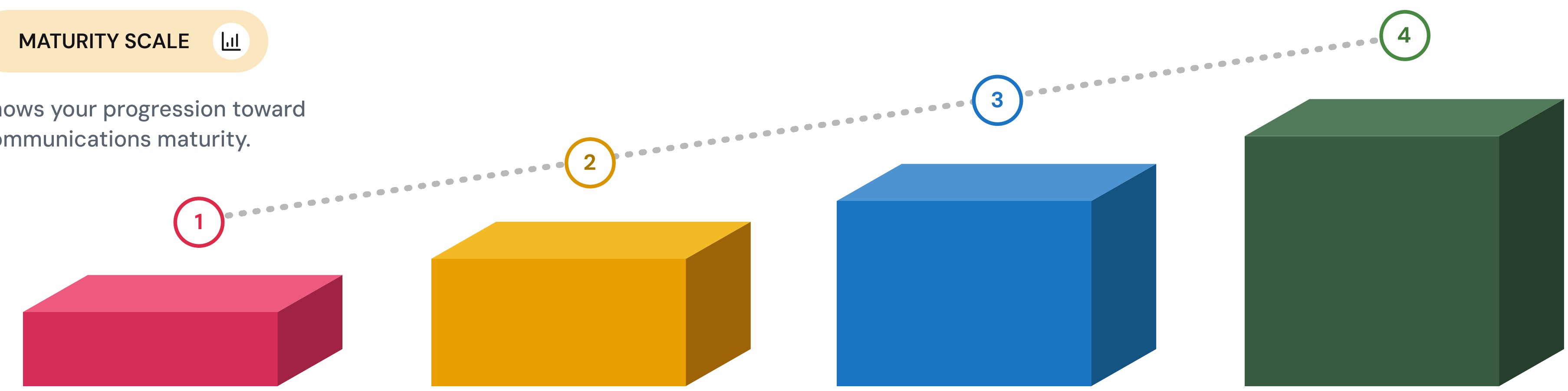
Analytics Capability

05

Your institution's ability to measure communications performance, connect delivery data to customer outcomes, and use those insights to improve future communications.

MATURITY SCALE

Shows your progression toward communications maturity.



LEVEL 1

None

No visibility into communications performance beyond delivery confirmation. No connection between communications and customer behaviour data.

LEVEL 2

Basic

Open rates and delivery rates available for digital channels. Print delivery tracked by volume, not outcome. No cross-channel view.

LEVEL 3

Actionable

Cross-channel performance dashboard. Delivery data connects to downstream customer actions (app login, call volume, transaction). Insights inform template and channel decisions.

LEVEL 4

Closed-Loop

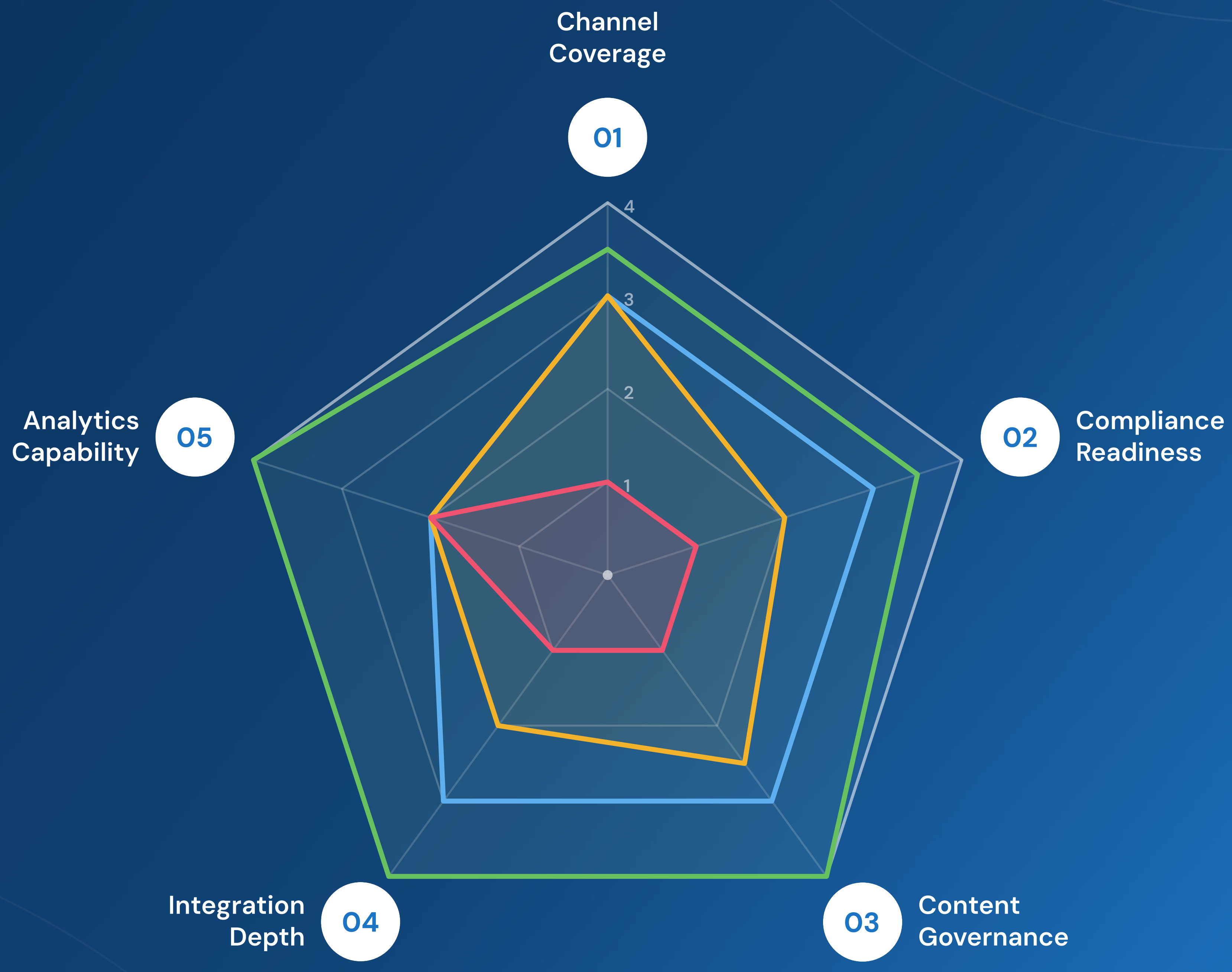
Real-time production status and timestamped delivery tracking across every channel, connected directly to business outcomes. Channel, timing, and content decisions are made on evidence, not intuition.

MOVING FORWARD

Move from delivery metrics to business outcomes. Knowing that a communication was sent is operational reporting; knowing what happened next is actionable insight. Connect delivery data to customer behaviour so channel, timing and content decisions can increasingly be based on evidence.

The Index at a glance

All four modernization archetypes from Section 3, plotted against the five dimensions of communications maturity.



The Patchwork
Level 1 or 2 across most dimensions

The Consolidator
Level 2 to 3, with gaps in compliance and analytics

The Governed
Level 3 across most dimensions

The Modern
Level 3 or 4 across all dimensions

SECTION 03

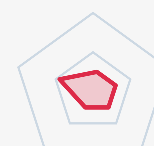
The four modernization archetypes

Most organizations recognize themselves faster in a profile than in a score. The four archetypes below describe where Canadian organizations actually sit on the modernization curve. Find yours, then use the self-assessment in Section 4 to confirm it.

- The Patchwork
- The Consolidator
- The Governed
- The Modern

ARCHETYPE 1

The Patchwork



TYPICAL PROFILE

Credit union or regional bank with $500M to $3B in assets. Five or more communications point solutions, no shared template governance, compliance managed manually, and no meaningful integration between communications platforms and core banking or CRM. Maturity scores at Level 1 or 2 across most dimensions.

PRIMARY PAIN

Every communication change requires coordination between multiple vendors and internal teams. Compliance review is the long pole in every tent. The institution knows it needs to modernize but has no clear picture of where to start.

THE HONEST VIEW

Adding another point solution to this architecture does not reduce the fragmentation. It compounds it. The Patchwork's path forward starts with consolidation and governance, not new tools.

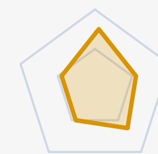
THE PATH FORWARD

Begin with a communications audit that maps every active platform, template library, and data source. Consolidate the highest-volume communication types onto a single governed platform first. Integration with core banking follows. Build from the foundation up.

> VOICE OF THE ORGANIZATION
>
> *“We have been meaning to deal with this for three years. Every quarter something more urgent comes up. And then we get a regulatory inquiry and we spend two weeks manually reconstructing the audit trail.”*

ARCHETYPE 2

The Consolidator



TYPICAL PROFILE

Regional bank or mid-sized credit union with $1B to $5B in assets. One or two primary platforms handling most communication volume, partial integration with core banking, template governance that works for high-volume communications but breaks down for exception cases. Compliance workflow exists but is not fully automated. Maturity scores at Level 2 to 3 with notable gaps in compliance and analytics.

PRIMARY PAIN

The main platform works reasonably well. The exceptions, regulated correspondence, accessibility compliance, cross-channel consistency for lower-volume communications, are still managed manually and still create risk.

THE HONEST VIEW

The Consolidator is closer than they think. The foundation is partially built. The remaining gaps are specific and addressable without a full platform replacement.

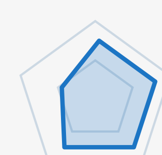
THE PATH FORWARD

Target the compliance and analytics gaps directly. Automated accessibility validation and a reliable audit trail are the highest-priority near-term outcomes. Cross-channel integration follows.

> **VOICE OF THE ORGANIZATION**
>
> *"Our main statement and email production is fine. It is the edge cases, the regulated notices, the accessibility requirements, the one-off correspondence, where we are still doing things manually. And those are exactly the things that get us into trouble."*

ARCHETYPE 3

The Governed



TYPICAL PROFILE

Larger credit union or Schedule B/D bank with $3B to $10B in assets. Single primary communications platform, documented template governance, reliable core banking and CRM integration, and a delivery platform that produces a credible audit trail. Maturity scores at Level 3 across most dimensions. Analytics capability is the most common remaining gap.

PRIMARY PAIN

The infrastructure is solid. The institution is not getting full value from it, because the analytics layer is underdeveloped and the team has no clear picture of which communications are performing and which are not.

THE GOVERNED · CONTINUED

THE HONEST VIEW

The Governed institution has done the hard part. What remains is turning reliable delivery into measurable outcomes, and that is a visibility problem, not a rebuild.

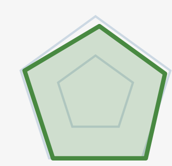
THE PATH FORWARD

Invest in cross-channel analytics. Connect delivery data to customer behaviour data. Use the resulting evidence to drive channel, timing, and content decisions, starting with the highest-volume communication types.

> **VOICE OF THE ORGANIZATION**
>
> *"We have good infrastructure. We just do not have great visibility into how our communications are actually performing. We are making content and channel decisions based on intuition, not data."*

ARCHETYPE 4

The Modern



TYPICAL PROFILE

A growing segment of Canadian financial institutions that have completed communications consolidation and now run every channel through a single governed platform with a single point of accountability. Maturity scores at Level 3 or 4 across all dimensions. Business teams make routine changes without IT involvement, compliance updates are absorbed by the platform, and delivery data connects directly to customer outcomes.

PRIMARY PAIN

Staying ahead of the curve as the rest of the market catches up, and continuing to earn the operating advantage their consolidation created.

THE HONEST VIEW

The Modern organization is ahead of the market but not immune to drift. Institutions arriving at Level 3 and 4 over the next 24 months will arrive on newer tooling. Sustained advantage comes from the same discipline that built it: measure, benchmark, improve.

SECTION 04

The Maturity Self-Assessment

Ten questions. Four answers each. Score yourself honestly; the value of the Index depends on it.

Mark an X in the circle beside your answer, or colour it in. Each answer carries the point value shown beside it; add up all ten at the end of the next page.

1 How many separate platforms does your institution currently use for customer communications (email, print, SMS, document portal, regulated correspondence)?

6+ platforms	1
4 or 5	2
2 or 3	3
1 platform	4

2 Does your institution have a single, version-controlled template library that all communications are produced from?

No	1
For some communication types	2
For most	3
Yes, for all	4

3 When a template change is required, how long does it typically take from approval to production?

6+ weeks	1
3 to 6 weeks	2
1 to 3 weeks	3
Less than 1 week	4

4 **Can your organization produce a full delivery audit trail (what was sent, to whom, when, in what format) for a communication sent 18 months ago?**

◯ No	1	◯ With significant manual effort	2
◯ With some manual effort	3	◯ Immediately on request	4

5 **Are your regulated documents currently PDF/UA compliant as required by the Accessible Canada Act?**

◯ No	1	◯ We are working on it	2
◯ Most are	3	◯ Yes, all are, validated	4

6 **How does customer data flow from your core banking system into your communications platform?**

◯ Manually	1	◯ Partially automated with manual exception handling	2
◯ Largely automated with some exceptions	3	◯ Fully automated with a single source of truth	4

7 **Does your communications platform integrate with your CRM?**

◯ No	1	◯ Partially	2
◯ Yes for most use cases	3	◯ Full bidirectional integration	4

8 Can you measure communications performance across all channels (email, print, SMS, portal) in a single dashboard?

- ○ No — 1
- ○ For digital channels only — 2
- ○ Across most channels — 3
- ○ Yes, all channels with downstream outcome tracking — 4

9 Do your customers receive consistent communications regardless of which channel they use?

- ○ No, significant inconsistency — 1
- ○ Mostly consistent with known exceptions — 2
- ○ Yes, with minor variations — 3
- ○ Yes, fully consistent and preference-driven — 4

10 How many vendors and internal teams have to coordinate when a regulated communication changes?

- ○ Four or more — 1
- ○ Two or three — 2
- ○ One vendor plus internal review — 3
- ○ One accountable partner, changes made through a governed portal — 4

/ 40

Your total

Add up all ten answers and find your tier below. Scoring: 10 to 19 Patchwork, 20 to 29 Consolidator, 30 to 35 Governed, 36 to 40 Modern.

10 to 19	20 to 29	30 to 35	36 to 40
Patchwork	Consolidator	Governed	Modern

SECTION 05

The modernization roadmap

Four stages, in order. No stage skips the one before it. Each milestone below is operational and specific: something your organization finishes, not something it aspires to.

STAGE 1

Patchwork to Consolidator

- [ ] Map all active communications platforms, vendors, and template libraries
- [ ] Identify the top 10 highest-volume communication types and consolidate them onto a single governed platform
- [ ] Establish core banking integration for primary account data
- [ ] Implement a documented template change workflow
- [ ] Build basic delivery audit trail capability

STAGE 2

Consolidator to Governed

- [ ] Complete cross-channel template consolidation
- [ ] Implement automated accessibility validation (PDF/UA)
- [ ] Connect CRM to the communications platform
- [ ] Build a searchable, exportable audit trail
- [ ] Automate the compliance workflow for all regulated communication types

STAGE 3

Governed to Modern

- [ ] Implement a cross-channel analytics dashboard
- [ ] Connect delivery data to customer behaviour data
- [ ] Move routine template and content changes to business teams through a governed self-serve portal
- [ ] Launch preference-driven channel routing so customers hear from you the way they choose
- [ ] Establish an ongoing analytics review cycle

STAGE 4

Modern, Sustained

- [ ] Expand personalization and channel optimization based on Stage 3 performance data
- [ ] Establish a regular communications audit practice
- [ ] Benchmark annually against the Communications Modernization Index
- [ ] Contribute to Symcor's mid-market financial institution research community

> A note on staffing: none of these stages requires building a communications technology team. Every stage has been completed, repeatedly, by organizations working with a managed partner who brings the platform and the people. That is the difference between a roadmap and a backlog.

SECTION 06

Where Symcor fits

If the roadmap above describes work your organization needs done, the practical question is who does it. The answer for a growing number of Canadian organizations is a partner, not a platform purchase.

COR.CCX is Symcor's fully managed customer communications service: composition, print, digital delivery, accessible output, secure archiving, and regulated templates, run end to end by Symcor. There is no software for your IT team to operate and no platform for your team to staff. Business users make routine changes through a governed portal, and Symcor runs everything behind it.

Each dimension of the index maps to a capability the service already delivers

1	**Channel coverage**	Print, digital portal, email, and SMS through a single integration, with the move from print to digital handled by the same partner on the same contract.
2	**Compliance readiness**	PDF/UA-compliant output as standard, with alternate formats built into production, and Symcor absorbing regulatory updates because it is held to the same standards as Canada's largest banks.
3	**Content governance**	Version-controlled, regulated templates with automated approvals.
4	**Integration depth**	One integration layer replacing every point-to-point vendor connection.
5	**Analytics**	Real-time production status and timestamped delivery tracking across every workflow.

The scale is the proof

2.1 Billion	#1	30 Years
customer communications distributed annually	one of Canada Post's largest partners	trusted by Canada's leading financial institutions

When TD Insurance modernized its regulated communications on the platform, it eliminated 220,000 documents and 460,000 printed pages while cutting costs by 50% or more. Migrations from proven regulated templates complete in as little as 3 months, against the 12 to 18 months a typical enterprise implementation takes.

Symcor was founded by TD, RBC, and BMO in 1996 to run exactly this kind of infrastructure. Thirty years later, the institutions that modernize fastest are the ones that decide to stop managing five vendors and start working with one.

SYMCOR

Find out where *your* organization stands.

Talk to a COR.CCX specialist about where your organization sits and what the path forward looks like.

Contact Us →

TRUST INDICATORS

- 2.1 billion communications processed annually
- Founded by TD, RBC, and BMO in 1996
- 30 years trusted by Canada's leading financial institutions
- Accessible Canada Act compliant