

## **An Economic Engine...At the Heart of the Community**

*Sophie Roux, Vice-President Public Affairs, Montreal Port Authority*

The Montreal Port Authority (MPA) is an autonomous federal agency with a mission clearly geared towards freight transport and economic development. The Port of Montreal, which it administers, is a resolutely urban port located right in the core of the City of Montreal. Beyond its role of economic engine, the Port of Montreal firmly believes that its involvement in the community, in the spirit of a healthy port-city relationship, is a vital component of a sustainable economy. It is mission-critical to know how to reconcile and fill these complementary roles (economic and social), given that the MPA sees its neighbouring communities as stakeholders in its operations on the same par as its business partners.

A graduate in political science from McGill and holder of an MBA from Royal Roads University, **Sophie Roux** has extensive experience in communications and public affairs.

Sophie worked in the National Capital Region for several years in such diverse circles as NPOs, on the political front and for organizations in the public and private sectors. Her areas of expertise include the design and rollout of communication campaigns, reputation and issues management as well as the management of advertising, awareness and media campaigns on a national scale. She also has a strong background in government relations.

Sophie Roux joined the Montreal Port Authority as Director of Communications in July 2013. Since March 2015, she has served as Vice-President, Public Affairs.

### **Theme Description**

As a port authority, the MPA believes that it is worthwhile and feasible to align its mission of economic development and operational efficiency with its equally fundamental mission of involvement in the community that is home to its operations. Since its activities take place on close to 26 km along the shoreline of the Island of Montreal, the Port of Montreal is at the heart of both the city and a large community that it cares about and in which it invests daily. In its community relations strategy, the MPA must reconcile varied interests and needs from its local stakeholders. In turn, it must manage to engage them in discussions of port activities (e.g., through a Good Neighbourhood Committee) and take into account comments from the community and organizations when developing its projects, thereby turning their feedback into added value.

### **Learning Objective**

The MPA has to contend with two complementary roles: economic engine and responsible corporate citizen. It must find solutions that can align economic development and operational efficiency with solid community involvement. In doing so, the MPA must work together with stakeholders whose interests and needs vary widely, owing to the extent of its territory and its activities. It must be able to integrate communities and stakeholders into its project development while regularly providing information and holding discussions on its operations. It must also get actively involved in its surrounding community (open houses, community investments, presence in the field, etc.). Therefore the presentation aims to show how an enterprise whose vocation is economic and industrial, seemingly at odds with community relations, can genuinely integrate into its business processes its vision of rapprochement among stakeholders and involvement in its neighbouring community.