With the launch of the Smart City Sandbox, the firm will gain access to even more talent and innovation and be able to support the quick route to market of some exciting new urban technologies.

Scott Stewart  CEO
EXTENDED EXECUTIVE BIOGRAPHY

As the CEO of IBI Group and member of the Board of Directors, Scott Stewart is responsible for providing executive leadership to the company with a particular focus on the operational management and execution, including implementing the firm’s new Strategic Plan.

EARLY CAREER

With a degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Waterloo, Scott became interested in transportation during a co-op placement at the City of Toronto’s traffic control centre. He was inspired by the prolific architect, systems theorist and futurist, Buckminster Fuller, who believed that a major future challenge would be the movement of goods and people, making transportation the issue of the 21st century. This, coupled with the experience gained from access to one of the most advanced traffic control systems in the world (at the time), drew Scott’s interest to the far-reaching considerations of transportation, establishing the direction of his career.

Scott worked in the public sector for the next several years following university, first for the regional government in Sudbury, (his hometown) where he gained experience in quantitative analytics. During his tenure here, he was asked by Laurentian University to teach a course in physical dynamics at the young age of 24. Over the next several years, he pursued government roles in both Halifax and Montreal, with a focus on the transportation sector, which ultimately led to his employment with IBI Group in 1980.

During the early ’80s, the firm employed less than 30 people. Scott was attracted to the culture, having worked with IBI in his public sector career, feeling that it engaged bright, young, creative people who challenged the norms and didn’t take no for an answer.

GROWING THE TECHNOLOGY PRACTICE

Championing the technology practice for the firm, there were many ‘firsts’ that Scott was instrumental in. In 1981, he learned about an opportunity to bid on a traffic management system for North America’s busiest highway, the Ontario 401. A first-of-its-kind technology, this would have been a stretch for any company at the time. Though the firm did not ultimately win this contract, it was awarded another contract for the Burlington Skyway, also in Ontario. Similar to the 401 project, it was a bridge with a new technology called traffic management, which later became known as intelligent transportation systems or ITS, defining the relationship between technology and transportation. Under Scott’s leadership, IBI
successfully developed and implemented this innovative solution well ahead of the 401 project, making it the first Canadian ITS project and one of the first worldwide.

In five short months following the success of the Burlington Skyway project, the IBI team won projects in Toronto, Boston, Glasgow and a major project in California, accelerating the firm’s growth and doubling its head count in under one year. In 2000, because of his growing reputation, Scott was invited by the U.S. Federal Government to serve as a member of a technical advisory committee on the future of ITS.

Soon after, IBI won the Confederation Bridge contract in PEI, which was a combination of traffic management and tolling. The firm had not yet worked on the development of a toll system but Scott knew this would be a growing, revenue-generating solution for public sector clients going forward and worked hard to successfully implement the project. Next came a toll system for the bridge connecting Paradise Island with Nassau in the Bahamas and then a large-scale project in Greece, giving rise to IBI Group’s recognized, international toll practice which remains a significant contribution to the business to this day.

Closing two acquisitions on the day the firm went public in 2004, IBI Group had 800 staff with operations across Canada, the U.S. and UK. The Intelligence sector accounted for 25 per cent of total revenue, built entirely through organic growth.

**BECOMING CEO**

When Scott took over as CEO in 2013, the firm was in financial difficulty, having acquired a number of under-performing firms in a tumultuous market. There was a huge amount of work to do, organizationally, operationally, and in terms of communicating to stakeholders, including banks, shareholders, and staff. With the help of CFO Stephen Taylor, who joined the firm in 2014, the focus was on paying down debt, getting the company back into good standing with the banks, and establishing operational order with a more fulsome corporate structure. In 2015, IBI Group was named International Turnaround of the Year by the Turnaround Management Association.

Having weathered the storm, Scott knew the firm’s traditional fee-for-services business model needed to evolve in a rapidly changing marketplace. The rise of the ‘smart’ city presented many exciting possibilities for the firm, especially given IBI’s history developing intelligent systems. But it also presented challenges, giving rise to an influx of new competitors, including technology firms and non-traditional market players.

In May, 2018, Scott announced a new strategic direction for the firm, focused on infusing technology throughout all of its core services. With the launch of the Smart City Sandbox accelerator, in partnership with EllisDon, The Weather Network, Ontario Power Generation, Ontario Centres of Excellence, Slate Asset Management, and technology provider Microsoft, the firm will gain access to even more talent and innovation and be able to support the quick route to market for exciting new urban technologies.

With a rich background of technology innovations within the firm, Scott’s underpinning passion is to “set something up that has a life that carries on.” What was and he hopes still is so compelling is that “you’re allowed this freedom within business norms to do what you feel will be of value to the firm, to society. A freedom that was given to me and others in the early years of the firm that I would like to carry forward.”

**PREFERRED INTERVIEW TOPICS**

- SMART CITIES
- EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES AND CITIES
- BIG DATA AND DATA PRIVACY CHALLENGES
- GOVERNMENT CHALLENGES OF P3s
- INFRASTRUCTURE SPENDING IN CANADA AND THE U.S.