



**Metropolitan Halifax Chamber of Commerce
Strong Business. Strong Community. Since 1750.**

Multi Year Strategic Plan

Vision:

The voice of business - helping to build a stronger dynamic economy and contributing to a self-reliant community.

Mission:

To support the growth of business in HRM by providing a voice for business, providing services to businesses which help them to grow and prosper and helping businesses to contribute to a self-reliant community.

Values:

Quality & Customer Service - the Chamber provides excellent service to its members and achieves a standard of quality in all its activities.

Leadership - the Chamber must be forward-thinking, with a clear vision of the future, and be proactive in communicating this vision to key stakeholders, decision makers and the community;

Open and Inclusive - the Chamber must exhibit these values to all members, regardless of company size; including an emphasis on participation;

Non-partisan - the Chamber cannot be seen as a political organization that favours any specific political party;

Community Focus - through participation in the larger community and establishing a sense of caring and responsibility, we can have a better community through the efforts of the Chamber;

Timely and Relevant - the policy work that the Chamber undertakes must be both relevant and timely to members, applied with a consistent philosophy;

Continuous Improvement and Learning - the Chamber must be an organization that embodies improvement and learning and reflects this to its members; and must be viewed as an organization that changes with the times - innovative, modern, dynamic; continuously stimulating change.

The Environment:

The Chamber's work must take into account the following realities and changes in our community:

1. **Need a Positive Community Self Image** - there is a history of negativity in our region inconsistent with our growth, prosperity and success. The community needs to focus more on its success and talents. We need a shared vision and strategy of growth and prosperity.
2. **Shift in demographics** - another perception in the community is that people need to leave the region in search of jobs in other locations. In fact, there are signs of a shortage of workers in a number of industries within Metro. We must address this perception and continue to entice people to stay here, find ways to attract people back to the region and, increase immigration. Other demographic challenges include the aging population, a declining birth rate and declining immigration.
3. **Weak government infrastructure** - while government is a large entity within HRM, there is a need for a strong public service that understands the needs of the business community. Business needs to address its perception of government employees and balance this with the need to work with government towards common goals.
4. **Continued withdrawal of government** - government has less and less money to spread around and fewer hand-outs to give. This has a direct effect on the business community - a new philosophy of relying less on government and doing more for yourself.
5. **Geographic location** - Our geographic location remains a key competitive advantage for this region, particularly in the transportation industry. At the same time, the new, global, information age and the more and more sophisticated technologies associated with it has eliminated many of the old negatives associated with our location and made us even more competitive, especially for those involved in the knowledge-based industries.

6. **Economic opportunities** - there has been a dramatic shift in our economy to new economic areas/industries in which significant growth and development are taking place - oil and gas, information technology, bio-science technology and film production are examples. These industries are helping to create a renewed confidence in our business community. With the growth of these industries it will be important how the Chamber interacts with them - for example what does the Chamber have to offer oil and gas, IT or film companies? To attract certain industries, the Chamber may need to tailor its benefits to make itself attractive to these sectors.

Chamber Goals and Actions:

Goal: **Improve national image, particularly in Ottawa, of Halifax as a growing, thriving business community and as a great place to do business**

VP Responsible: *Senior Vice President*

Actions:

- Become more involved in Canadian Chamber.
- Work with Partners such as Greater Halifax Partnership, CFB Halifax, ACOA, Province, and others to improve relationships in Ottawa, Toronto, Montreal, and St. John's.

Goal: **Take a Regional or Provincial view on issues**

VP Responsible: *VP Government Affairs*

Actions:

- Identify when we should take a provincial or regional position, as we did at the Sable Offshore Energy Project Hearings.
- Emphasize and build on our position as an economic engine for this region.
- Realize the benefits to Metro from growth in the rest of NS.
- Continue to work with other Chambers in the province and region.

Goal: **Support effective and efficient Government**

VP Responsible: *VP Government Affairs*

Actions: - Continue work of HRM task force.

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- Support public service at all levels including pay scales and professional development programs. Competitive salaries and benefits are needed to attract, develop and keep high quality people.
- Support partnerships between the public and private sectors.

Goal: **Encourage development of a strategy for managing future growth of HRM**

VP Responsible: *VP Government Affairs*

Actions: - Organize a symposium on future of Halifax as part of an overall strategy to develop a shared, action oriented Halifax 2020 Vision where the community and the key community stakeholders identify not only where we want to be but how we are going to get there.

Goal: **Branding**

VP Responsible: *VP Marketing & Communications*

Actions: - to broaden our brand awareness in the community to reflect our history and our interest in community service.

Goal: **Celebrate our Success**

VP Responsible: *VP Marketing & Communications*

Actions: - Use Chamber events to encourage local success stories
- Dinner event to thank people working on airport and port.
- Award of merit/outstanding service.
- Chamber's 250th birthday celebration.

Goal: **Voice of Business**

VP Responsible: *VP Policy*

Actions: - Continue the policy work of the Chamber through our volunteers and the existing committee structure.
- Continue to ensure that policy issues are relevant to members through research and responsiveness to member's concerns.

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- Focus policy work on oil and gas, HRM, economic development, transportation, information and bio-science technologies. Recognizing that economic development and realizing the maximum benefit from new or expanding industries will be absolutely critical over the next few years.

Goal: **Deliver quality events that meet the needs of our diverse membership**

VP Responsible: *VP Marketing & Communications*

- Actions:**
- Review pricing and sponsorship opportunities for events
 - Create a more integrated approach to the community for event sponsorship
 - Continue to develop the Business to Business Expo.
 - Deliver profitable events that support Chamber objectives.
 - Ensure successful Spring and Fall Dinners.
 - Continue to ensure that events reach out to the community and provide appropriate opportunities for networking and personal development.

Goal: **To be a Model Chamber**

VP Responsible: *VP Membership Services & VP Finance & Administration*

- Actions:**
- Maintain ISO 9000 certification
 - Continue to be responsive to member concerns and need for services.
 - Maintain financial strength

Goal: **2000 in 2000**

VP Responsible: *VP Membership Services*

- Actions:**
- Continue to expand our membership to reach 2000 corporate members by year 2000.
 - Ensure representation of new industries in membership such as film, high tech, oil and gas, information and bio-science technology.
 - Build broader demographic representation by serving needs of women and minorities in business.
 - Improve member service
 - Increase volunteer participation on committees to 368 members by the year 2000. A 50% increase from our baseline of 245 members as of May 31, 1997.

Goal: **Helping business contribute to a more self sufficient community through partnerships.**

VP Responsible: *Senior VP*

Actions: Explore Partnerships with:

- Metro United Way
- Canadian Youth Business Foundation
- Junior Achievement
- Black Business Initiative
- Greater Halifax Partnership
- Aboriginal Organizations
- Metropolitan Halifax Immigrant Settlement Association