

Voice of Business

STRATEGIC PLAN

2021-
2023

A large, white, stylized quotation mark is positioned on the left side of the page. The background is a solid orange color with a faint, dark silhouette of a city skyline, including a prominent building with a pointed roof, visible in the distance. The overall aesthetic is modern and professional.

“We intend to hone our focus on the most impactful opportunities for economic growth and we invite every Ottawa business to add their voice and shape their future.”

Sueling Ching

President & CEO Ottawa Board of Trade



THE FUTURE IS HERE

A strong voice of business can drive community prosperity, economic growth and leverage leading edge opportunities.

In 2018 the Chambers of Commerce in Ottawa consolidated to strengthen the voice for business in the Nation's Capital and contribute to the economic growth agenda in the face of unprecedented change in pace and scope due to globalization and technology. The organizations were successfully transitioned by 2019 and led by a provisional board of directors, made up of members of the three previous boards. In late 2019, the organization went through a change in leadership at the CEO level. The board began planning for a new CEO, the first elected board of directors of the new organization and a strategic plan that would realize the vision of becoming a best in class business advocate.

In March 2020, the Board announced a new CEO on the same day as the WHO declared a global pandemic. The balance of 2020 was spent focused on constant and complex advocacy work at every level of government to ensure businesses have the policies and programs they need to mitigate the counter measures of COVID-19. The staff team immediately began working remotely and all events and meetings became virtual. A new board was elected in the fall of 2020 and they began work on our first strategic plan in December of that year.

Today, in the fall of 2021, we continue to support our businesses with access to information, inspiration and influence while planning for a strong recovery and rebound. This strategic plan represents the true role of a board of trade as an advocate and economic partner focused on the current needs and future opportunities in our community. We can't wait to get started!



A MESSAGE FROM OUR LEADERS

It is an honour to serve our businesses and our community through the work of the Ottawa Board of Trade. It has been especially exciting since the consolidation as we **reimagine the future of Ottawa and the opportunity of our private sector to drive growth**. The unexpected and unprecedented challenge of the last year has further amplified the need for a strong voice for business. In many ways it has accelerated our plan as we had to quickly pivot our focus to constant high level advocacy work to ensure policies and programs met the changing needs of businesses during the pandemic. The level of collaboration at every level of government and among economic partners we are experiencing provides a solid foundation for moving forward together.

This strategic plan was designed to follow through on our intention when we consolidated the Chambers - to elevate the influence of the business community with decision makers, create a competitive business climate and have business success drive economic growth. We release this plan in the COVID-19 end game and just in time to impact our recovery.

We hope every Ottawa business will see themselves in this plan and decide to join us so that we may directly support them and drive results more quickly. As an independent, non partisan, member driven organization representing the interests of all businesses, we are uniquely positioned to advocate at every level of government. Our affiliation with the Ontario and Canadian Chambers of Commerce as well as the Canadian Global Cities Coalition allows us to leverage expertise, influence and research from across the country.

We intend to hone our focus on the most impactful opportunities for economic growth and we invite every Ottawa business to add their voice and shape their future.

Sincerely,

Ian Sherman, Chair, Board of Directors

Sueling Ching, President & CEO Ottawa Board of Trade

“The last year has further amplified the need for a strong voice for business.”



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Our volunteer board of directors is passionate about our business community. When asked, "What excites you the most about our OBOT plan?", the answer was clear: the opportunity to focus in and make an impact.

Ian Sherman - Chair

Partner, EY

Priya Bahloo

Senior Vice President, TAG HR

Wayne French

Director, Waste Management

Mischa Kaplan - Vice

Director, Ottawa Tourism

Craig Bater

Counsel, Augustine Bater
Binks LLP

Brendan McGuinty

Strategies 360 Inc.

Joelle Hall - Vice

Director, Richardson Wealth

Erin Benjamin

President & CEO, Canadian Live
Music Association

Mark Nisbett

VP Sales & Marketing, Brookstreet
Hotel & The Marshes Golf Club

Robert Rhéaume - Treasurer

Partner, BDO

Karla Briones

Founder, Karla Briones
Consulting

Andrew Scott

Multiple Store Operator, Pita Pit

Ruby Williams - Corp Sec

Partner, Deloitte.

David Coletto

Founder, Abacus Data

Greg Skotnicki

Director, Manderley Turf
Products Inc.

Andrew Arnott

Managing Director, Corporate
Client Group, RBC Royal Bank

Erin Crowe

CFO, Martello Technologies

Shelley True

Founder, TRUEdotDESIGN

James Baker

Founder, Keynote Group

Sally Douglas

Co-Founder, GSD & Co

Megan Wallace

Partner, Perley Robertson Hill &
MacDougall

FRAMEWORK

Partnership is Key

The Ottawa Board of Trade engaged the Stratford Group to lead the new strategic plan based on their reputation.

The Stratford Group proposed a research and engagement process to ensure that key areas of the plan were addressed and would positively influence the long-term success and sustainability of the organization. The process included one-on-one and small group interviews with 64 individuals, including members, non-members, volunteers and stakeholders. The purpose of the interviews was to gather confidential feedback and insights about OBOT as it is now, and to discuss possible future directions for OBOT.

The key components of the process:

01

Confidential one-to-one and small group interviews

02

Board and member surveys

03

Review of all pertinent background materials

04

Competitive analysis

05

Facilitated strategic planning board session

06

Planning meetings with the Board Chair, Strategic Plan Lead, President & CEO

07

Feedback meetings with the executive committee

08

Board and staff input and edits to the draft strategic plan Board approval of the final OBOT Strategic Plan

The final results of the process include a better understanding of our members and a clear path for moving forward.

Special thanks to our Stratford team; Colleen Kelley, Rissella Weiss and Jim Roche, for your dedication to “getting it right”!

VISION. MISSION. VALUES.

The time is now for Ottawa's business community to rise up for the future of our city, to drive growth, and ensure we step fully into our role as the Capital of Canada.

Vision


Be the voice of business and key advocate for economic growth in our Nation's Capital.

Mission

Cultivate a thriving world class business community in Ottawa by influencing economic development through leadership and partnerships.

Values

- Collaboration
- Future Thinking
- Passion
- Determination
- Integrity



"The secret of change is to focus all of your energy not on fighting the old, but on building the new."

SOCRATES



OUR BELIEFS

Collaboration.

We play to our strengths and partner with others to ensure our community optimizes our collective resources and opportunities.

Determination.

We embrace new ideas and will course correct to achieve results and create the best version of our city.

Future Thinking.

We explore and adopt new ideas, emerging technologies and trends with the intention to leverage leading edge opportunities.

Integrity.

We are independent and non partisan. We do what is right for the business community and are transparent about priority setting.

Passion.

We engage and encourage business and community leaders who demonstrate an authentic ability and desire to make a difference for our region.



THE STRATEGY

Unite

Clarify, enhance and communicate the OBOT identity and brand.

01

Influence

Advocate key priorities for the Ottawa business community at three levels of government.

02

Grow

Expand and diversify the OBOT Membership and elevate overall engagement.

03



01 UNITE

Clarify, enhance and communicate the OBOT identity and brand.

We Will:

- ☐ Clearly articulate the value proposition of OBOT.
- ☐ Create an effective governance and committee structure to drive corporate strategy and implement priorities.
- ☐ Define the ideal member, how they are represented in the community and membership to ensure diversity and inclusion.
- ☐ Clarify collaboration and differentiation areas with other economic development organizations; formalize partnership opportunities and memorandums of understanding.
- ☐ Develop a marketing, communications and media relations strategy to effectively promote OBOT's identity, value and brand.

02

INFLUENCE

Advocate key priorities for the Ottawa business community at three levels of government.

We Will:

- ☐ Create an advocacy committee to select and drive broad key priorities. Leverage membership to collect business interests, influence decision making and inform policy positions.
- ☐ Develop research capability to inform advocacy initiatives.
- ☐ Identify all activities we will stop doing not directly tied to advocacy areas.
- ☐ Design thought leadership activities through the lens of key advocacy areas.
- ☐ Communicate advocacy priorities, successes and outcomes to membership and media.



03

GROW

Expand and diversify the OBOT Membership and elevate overall engagement.

We Will:

- ☐ Enhance the membership experience.
- ☐ Communicate the membership value and benefits: raise advocacy awareness to current members.
- ☐ Create campaigns to drive membership among target membership groups with low participation.
- ☐ Identify alternate funding streams to support key priorities.
- ☐ Complete and implement a membership model review process.

APPRECIATION

This is the first strategic plan of the newly formed Ottawa Board of Trade, a consolidation of its former organizations dating back over 160 years ago. It comes at a time of tremendous change, challenge and opportunity in our global community. It provides an impetus for the for the Ottawa business community to forge its own future in a new world.

Thank you to the business and community leaders who made it happen:

- The Board of Directors of the Ottawa Board of Trade
- The Executive led by Chair, Ian Sherman and Strategic Plan Lead, Brendan McGuinty
- The members, volunteers and community partners who shared their insights
- The staff team who supported the process and development of the findings
- The strategic consultants at Stratford Group; Colleen Kelley, Rissella Weiss and Jim Roche. We are grateful for your partnership.

We thank you for your continued engagement in our vision to grow Ottawa businesses and thereby the economy of the Nation's Capital.

Contact

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