

# Influencing an environment where business in Atlantic Canada succeeds

2018-2020 Strategic Plan



Atlantic Chamber  
of Commerce  
Representing business since 1896

Chambre de commerce  
de l'Atlantique  
Représentant les affaires depuis 1896

December 2017

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## Contributing to a strong, vibrant, and growing Atlantic Canada

### Message from the CEO and Chair

Over the last three years, the Atlantic Chamber of Commerce has worked closely with local chamber members and corporate partners to build a strong voice for business in Atlantic Canada and to advocate on their behalf with Federal and Provincial governments.

We have been focused on building capacity internally and throughout the region, working with our partners to establish a stronger presence and to strengthen the sustainability of our chamber network for members.

Atlantic Canada is full of remarkable and untapped potential and we certainly have good reason to be proud and optimistic. As we head toward 2020, ACC will focus on new opportunities to propel growth in our region, as well as further enhancing our member and corporate partner experience and engagement as we build upon our strong foundation and partner to influence an environment where business in Atlantic Canada succeeds.

The ACC 2018-2020 Strategic Plan outlines our priorities and strategies to help us deliver upon this important mandate, as we collectively work towards making a positive impact on a strong, vibrant and growing Atlantic Canada. We have a lot of work to do, but by leveraging our collective strengths, remaining committed to our goals, and continuously striving to achieve Chamber standards of excellence, we can ensure a solid contribution to our success over the longer term.

Thank you in advance for your continued commitment, support and partnership in advancing these important priorities for Atlantic Canada!



**Sheri Somerville**

**CEO**



**Richie Mann**

**Chair, Board of Directors, 2017-2018**



## VISION

ACC actively partners to positively impact:

**A strong, vibrant, and growing Atlantic Canada**

## MISSION

**Partnering with members to influence an environment  
where business in Atlantic Canada succeeds**

## CORE VALUES

**MEMBER-FOCUSED    COLLABORATIVE    INCLUSIVE  
CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT    PRINCIPLED & ACCOUNTABLE**

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

#1.  
**IMPACTFUL  
POLICY DEVELOPMENT  
AND ADVOCACY**

#2.  
**ENGAGED  
MEMBERS  
AND PARTNERS**

#3.  
**STRONG,  
SUSTAINABLE  
ORGANIZATION**



## Introduction

Atlantic Chamber of Commerce (ACC) has been championing the cause of business in Atlantic Canada since 1896, and continues to promote and support business and economic development within the region.

ACC is a not-for-profit, membership-based organization made up of local chambers and corporate partners. **Today ACC represents more than 16,000 businesses through its 93-member Chambers of Commerce in Atlantic Canada.**

The last three years have been a period of building the foundation for the Atlantic Chamber through new branding, re-engagement of local chambers throughout the region, and renewed leadership to influence policy-related issues.

Building on these and other successes, the time was right to develop a new three-year strategic plan. This plan was developed based on the insights of the ACC Board of Directors and staff, on behalf of the membership. Member input received through a recent survey as well as ongoing discussions have been instrumental in identifying priorities.

As a starting point, the ACC has significantly increased its involvement in policy consultations and issues that directly impact the prosperity of Atlantic businesses.

The 2018-2020 Strategic Plan provides a clear roadmap for the next three years. This roadmap identifies clear priorities and strategies to support ACC's mission and efforts, working towards a shared vision for Atlantic Canada.

ACC's mission is to partner with members to influence an environment where business in Atlantic Canada succeeds. By partnering with our local chamber and corporate members, we envision a future where Atlantic Canada is strong, vibrant and growing.

Dedicated to the growth and prosperity of our members and business in Atlantic Canada, **ACC is committed to impactful policy development and advocacy, engaged members and partners, and a strong, sustainable organization.**

By focusing on these three priorities, ACC will deliver value to members and support a strong, vibrant and growing Atlantic Canada.



## Vision and Strategic Priorities

### Vision

Atlantic Chamber of Commerce contributes to the vision of:

# A strong, vibrant, and growing Atlantic Canada

### Core Values

Our everyday activities are guided by the following values:

#### Member-Focused

*Our members are our priority. We strive to bring the greatest value to our members and business in Atlantic Canada by targeting our efforts and aligning our resources.*

#### Collaborative

*We proactively address business-related issues and opportunities through a collective voice based on consultation, the sharing of information, and collaboration with our members of all sizes, like-minded organizations, and the business community.*

#### Inclusive

*We promote and support business interests in Atlantic Canada, and recognize the diversity of our members and the region. Our advocacy focuses on regional and province-specific issues. Services are designed to maximize the benefit to all members.*

#### Continuous Improvement

*We strive to be innovative, to lead by example and to share with, learn from, and support our members through standards of excellence in all areas of the chamber business.*

#### Principled and Accountable

*We make decisions based on evidence and always with the benefit to the regional business community in mind. We are accountable to our members and communicate our actions and outcomes.*



## Mission and Core Values

### Mission

Atlantic Chamber of Commerce exists to:

**Partner with members to influence an environment where business in Atlantic Canada succeeds**

To carry out our mission, ACC:

1. Educates, influences, collaborates, and advocates on policy-related issues to support business in Atlantic Canada
2. Supports local chamber members in building capacity and delivering benefits to their members
3. Promotes regional economic growth in Atlantic Canada

### Strategic Priorities

ACC identified the following priorities:

1. Impactful policy development and advocacy
2. Engaged members and partners
3. Strong, sustainable organization

### Measures of Success

Success will be measured based on the following:

- Recognition of ACC by government, media, and other stakeholders (e.g., media exposure, discussions held, requests for opinions, public statements)
- Level of satisfaction by local chamber members and corporate partners
- Strong corporate partner network
- Advancement of top priorities for business in the region
- Strong Provincial Advisory Committees in each province
- Research and monitoring capacity building in collaboration with local members and corporate partners throughout the region
- Effective, timely policy development, impact assessment, and reporting processes
- Membership and revenue growth



## Strategic Priority #1: Impactful Policy Development and Advocacy

### Rationale

Atlantic Chamber of Commerce partners with members to influence business-related issues with the intent of supporting an environment where business in Atlantic Canada succeeds. Positively influencing policy development and advocating on behalf of the needs of business is ACC's priority.

We are developing and growing our strengths in this area. Within the last three years, we have:

- Increased number of our members (of all sizes) approaching ACC about business issues
- Provided a unified voice on behalf of the region to influence policy at the national level
- A growing number of requests by federal and provincial governments to speak on behalf of business
- Strengthened our expertise and capacity in policy development, research, and strategic communications
- Demonstrated support for the diverse needs of our region including on provincial-specific issues
- Brought together and helped to mobilize local chambers and chamber policy staff throughout the region to focus on provincial and regional business issues
- Increased Board participation, commitment and responsiveness, positively influencing policy development and advocating for business needs

- Worked closely with other like-minded organizations to share information and collaborate on important issues

There is more to be done, and together we will build on these efforts. Among these opportunities are the following:

- Continue to enhance strategic and effective policy development and advocacy efforts
- Provide more timely response to business issues
- Increase engagement at the provincial level through collective efforts and leadership by members including by repurposing our Provincial Advisory Committees and mobilizing and supporting local chambers to focus more on business issues at the regional and provincial levels
- Engage passionate and knowledgeable people to actively participate in Provincial Advisory Committees
- Continue to build our capacity and strategic communications



## Strategic Priority #1: Impactful Policy Development and Advocacy

### Goals

- Positively impact the Atlantic Canadian business environment through policy development and advocacy on regional and province-specific issues
- Continue building credibility of the Chamber network in Atlantic Canada

### Anticipated Outcomes

- Impact of policy development and advocacy efforts
- Timely responses to Atlantic Canada business issues
- Number of requests by members, government, media and other stakeholders for ACC to speak on behalf of business
- Increasing member involvement in policy development
- Percentage response rate to issues that support ACC's mission
- Communication of policy priorities, positions and advocacy efforts

### Strategies

- 1.1 Stay on top of business issues and provide timely leadership to advocate for and advance business policies
- 1.2 Advance top priorities for Atlantic businesses
- 1.3 Establish and communicate Atlantic Business Priorities in partnership with members and in support of a strong, vibrant and growing business environment
- 1.4 Educate members of policy issues to better inform and engage local chambers, their membership, and corporate partners
- 1.5 Bring provincial advocacy issues to the forefront through effective and efficient Provincial Advisory Committees (PACs) in each Atlantic province and with ACC leadership
- 1.6 Proactively educate federal and provincial governments and economic development leaders of business issues and advocacy priorities
- 1.7 Communicate advocacy efforts and impacts to diverse stakeholders
- 1.8 Develop and grow relationships with key stakeholders to support advocacy
- 1.9 Build capacity by leveraging research and monitoring capabilities of members and other regional and provincial stakeholders with similar interests



## Strategic Priority #2: Engaged Members and Partners

### Rationale

Atlantic Chamber of Commerce partners with members to help support a strong network of chambers and business throughout Atlantic Canada. Delivering value to local chamber members and corporate partners through building connections, capacity and partnerships to support a strong business community throughout the region is ACC's priority.

Over the last three years, we have been working hard to engage our members and provide value:

- Building the network of local chambers throughout Atlantic Canada
- Facilitating information sharing and networking among local chambers
- Supporting local chamber members in governance and policy development, and education to their members
- Delivering benefits through Chambers of Commerce Group Insurance Plan and other benefits which, in turn, supports local chambers in providing value to their members

We are encouraged by the positive feedback received from our members on ACC services and programs. We recognize though, there is more to be done. Among the opportunities ahead are:

- Continue to build value for local chambers through information sharing, networking, capacity building, and benefits
- More actively engage with local chamber staff and volunteers
- Clearly define the ACC value proposition for corporate partners
- Continue to build the credibility of the Chamber network in Atlantic Canada



## Strategic Priority #2: Engaged Members and Partners

### Goal

- Deliver value to local chamber members and corporate partners through networking, support, benefits, and recognition

### Anticipated Outcomes

- Level of participation by members at ACC led and co-hosted events and activities (in-person and virtually)
- Increased level of participation
- Level of satisfaction by members
- Local chamber member retention
- Corporate partner membership growth and retention

### Strategies

- 2.1 Define and communicate the ACC value proposition for chamber members and corporate partners
- 2.2 Grow and promote a robust suite of services to best meet member needs
- 2.3 Make connections at the local level through local chamber member and corporate partner outreach
- 2.4 Encourage local chambers to include ACC updates at regular board meetings
- 2.5 Build and support connections with and between local chamber members and corporate partners
- 2.6 Recognize member successes and best practices
- 2.7 Support local chambers with professional development in areas such as media relations, board training, orientation and governance
- 2.8 Develop and promote a capacity building toolbox to support local chamber members (e.g., tools, templates and resources)
- 2.9 Promote, grow, and diversify affinity programs that provide value to members, building on the success of the Chambers of Commerce Group Insurance Plan



## Strategic Priority #3: Strong, Sustainable Organization

### Rationale

Working with staff, the Board of Directors are stewards tasked with ensuring a long future ahead for the Atlantic Chamber of Commerce. Together with partners, ACC's purpose is to influence an environment where business in Atlantic Canada succeeds. This means being relevant to members and the regional business community, gaining influence on a national level. This is only possible through the hard work, dedication, and strong working relationships with local chamber members, corporate partners, and our many volunteers and staff.

Over the last three years, we have been working hard to engage our members and provide value. We have:

- Established membership with 93 local chambers
- Working partnerships with corporations
- Been building capacity as an organization in terms of leadership, policy development and communications
- Active and engaged board representatives across the region
- Stronger recognition and brand awareness of Atlantic Chamber of Commerce throughout the region

There is more to be done, and together we will build on these efforts. Among these opportunities are the following:

- Building stronger advisory committees within each Atlantic province through engagement of local chamber staff, volunteers and corporate partners
- Engaging more local chamber staff, executive, and volunteers throughout the regional network
- Better defining the value proposition of corporate membership and working more closely with corporations that benefit from ACC's activities
- Building greater awareness of ACC throughout the region and nationally
- Aligning existing and new resources to support ACC priorities that help to better meet the needs of our members and business in the region
- Leading by example through strong governance, leadership, and engagement



## Strategic Priority #3: Strong, Sustainable Organization

### Goal

- Strengthen the organization in terms of membership, capacity, financial resources, and credibility

### Anticipated Outcomes

- New corporate memberships
- Provincial Advisory Committees and committees of the Board with active and engaged members
- Increased ACC brand exposure
- Increasing millennial and next generation engagement at the local level
- Revenue growth and financial sustainability
- Canadian Chamber of Commerce national accreditation

### Strategies

- 3.1 Grow corporate membership through newly defined membership categories and benefits based on the ACC value proposition and retention strategies
- 3.2 Strengthen the Provincial Advisory Committee model
- 3.3 Effectively align internal resources and renewed board committees to support the priorities identified within this plan
- 3.4 Build ACC's brand within the region, within the local chamber network, and nationally
- 3.5 Further explore and mobilize initiatives in partnership with members to engage millennials and the next generation of business and chamber members
- 3.6 Grow revenues
- 3.7 Continue to implement national accreditation standards of excellence for operating through the Canadian Chamber of Commerce (e.g., operational efficiencies, governance best practices, accreditation standards, strategic planning process and review, policy review and development, succession planning)
- 3.8 Recognize the Chamber network in Atlantic Canada



## Appendix I: ACC Board and Staff

### Board of Directors

#### CHAIR

Richie Mann, Vice President, Marketing and Government Relations, Melford International Terminal & Atlantic Gateway

#### FIRST VICE CHAIR

Andy Lodge, Lawyer, BLR Law

#### SECOND VICE CHAIR

Jean-Marc Picard, Executive Director, Atlantic Provinces Trucking Association

#### SECRETARY-TREASURER

Stephen Lund, Business Advisor, Deloitte

#### PAST CHAIR

Terry Malley, President and CEO, Malley Industries Inc.

#### DIRECTORS

Christopher Googoo, General Manager, Ulnooweg Development Group Inc.

Don Hay, Owner, Haydon Restaurants Limited

Nathan Locke, Founder, President and Chief Executive Officer, DairyLife Inc.

Paul Lypaczewski, General Partner, Island Capital Partners

Margo Soucy, Acting Executive Director, CBDC Cabot

Chad Peters, Vice President Public Affairs, m5 Public Affairs

Pam Williams, Partner, Cox & Palmer

Leigh Winchester, Regional Vice President, Nova Scotia South & Financial Planning Atlantic Provinces Division, BMO Bank of Montreal

### Staff

Sheri Somerville, Chief Executive Officer

Glenn Davis, Vice President, Policy

Patricia Colson, Coordinator, Communications & Public Relations

Tracy Beaver (Dauphinee), Manager, Administrative Services

