

BC Chamber Executives Society

Strategic Plan 2010-2015

Introduction

The BC Chamber Executive Society (BCCE) was formed to offer education, resources, and support to Chamber of Commerce and Board of Trade Management. Membership includes Chamber of Commerce Executive Directors, Managers, CEOs, Managing Directors, Assistant Managers and staff members. BCCE provides a network in which to share resources, information and support towards the effective and efficient management of the countless aspects of Chambers and Boards of Trade throughout British Columbia.

Vision

Our vision is:

“Advancing leadership, excellence and innovation in Chamber management”

Mission

To further our vision over the next 5 years, we will focus on the following Key Strategic Issues:

- **Organization** – take steps to ensure that we are organized in a manner that is effective and efficient
- **Membership Communication** – improve the consistency, regularity and effectiveness of our communication
- **Membership Retention & Growth** – significantly increase the overall membership engagement of BC Chambers and Boards of Trade through the provision of membership value
- **BC Chamber Relationship** – ensure that the relationship with the BC Chamber is strong and mutually beneficial
- **Professional Development** – improve the professional development support for members

Key Strategic Issues

Key Strategic Issues have been identified through looking at our vision, internal strengths and weaknesses and external opportunities and challenges. This section shows what goals we must accomplish over the next five years to realize our mission in that time frame. Each Key Strategic Issue is introduced through a brief description of the issue followed by goals to be accomplished during the lifetime of this plan – some will be targeted for sooner than the end of the plan. These goals form the base from which our annual business plan will be developed and will also be subject to an annual review (see “*Strategic Management System*” at the end of the plan).

Organization

BCCE’s organization, like many societies, has evolved over the years and structure (i.e. how we are organized to make decisions and take action), policies and procedures have been developed to respond to a variety of needs. We have a Managers’ Manual which is intended to provide support for all members but this is out-of-date, not user-friendly and is not delivered in a prompt way to new managers; a new one has been developed but is not finished.

As we move ahead on our strategic priorities, particularly providing value to members and attracting new members, it is important that we ensure our organization is appropriately configured. This will require a review of the terms of reference for all parts of the organization and a consideration of how we currently handle our administrative tasks. We also need to have a policy and procedures manual that provides a consistent and agreed upon guide to how we function as a society.

2015 Goals

The key metric for our success will be:

- BCCE will model successful organizations with regards to processes and structures.

To achieve this result, we will:

1. Review the organization (Board, Committees, Task Groups and society administration) and make adjustments as needed to our current structure to increase our effectiveness and efficiency.
2. Develop a policy and procedure manual that is current and effective.

Membership Communication

One of the primary reasons BCCE exists is to provide a connection between management and staff of Chambers and Boards of Trade throughout the province who otherwise could feel isolated. Communication is a key element in this for networking ideas that member organizations have implemented or are thinking of as well as to be able to discuss issues we have in common and potential solutions.

At this time, we have several communication channels and they are functioning at various levels of effectiveness. Our Website is a central element as a repository of information – this has improved but has areas that need more improvement (e.g. member directory needs to be kept more current). We have established a newsletter although members have indicated a need for this to be issued more frequently. BC Chamber's Chamberlink is effective for networking and collaboration of shared documents.¹ Our annual Conference is one of our primary opportunities to have face-to-face contact but could be more effective in facilitating ongoing networking to improve the interconnectivity that we all desire. Since communication and support for each other is a primary reason for BCCE's existence, it is critical that we pay attention to and continue to strive to make improvements in these functions and become a learning organization to drive networking and improved communication for all our members.

2015 Goals

The key metrics for our success will be:

- Constant, consistent contact through newsletter communication that arrives in a dependable manner, once a month and a minimum of two conference mailings per year.
- Managers' manual will be a strong learning tool that is easy to use
- Our website will be a strong tool for communications, resources and networking.
- There will be regular and active collaboration and networking within districts (events, issues/advocacy).

To achieve these results, we will:

1. Develop and utilize a strategic communication plan to support the strategic plan.
2. Revise our managers' manual to ensure it is relevant, up-to-date and useful.
3. Enhance our website and ensure it remains current.
4. Establish regular quarterly regional/district meetings to enhance a strong sense of collaborative efforts.
5. Develop chat/email program for members.

Membership Retention & Growth

BCCE is an organization of Chamber professionals whose membership is voluntary – there is no requirement for any eligible member to join. Out of 130 Chambers in BC, 70 are full members and we also have 6 associate members which leaves room for growth. While many Chambers and Boards of Trade have been long time members, we have also lost members mainly due to a perceived lack of value of membership. Some membership

¹ Chamberlink is a BC Chamber initiative and cannot be used for BCCE business.

loss is also due to turnover in management and staff in Chambers and Boards of Trade – some of which is due to a normal career/job transition and some is likely the result of difficulties with the relationship with some Boards of Directors.

Since the functions of our society depend on the participation of members, a robust and involved membership provides more people to support BCCE activities which members value (e.g. professional development, communication, networking, mentoring, etc.). An active society also is much more likely to retain and attract new members. Finally, the higher percentage of Chambers and Boards of Trade that we represent, the more significant voice we have as a society speaking for Chamber and Board of Trade professionals. It is critical for us to ensure that we actively seek new members while at the same time ensure that we are delivering value to our current members.

2015 Goals

The key metrics for our success will be:

- Our membership will be comprised of a significant proportion (85%) of all Chambers and Boards of Trade with managers.
- Membership retention rates will significantly improve (> 3%)
- Members will report a high satisfaction with the level of engagement

To achieve these results, we will:

1. Establish the values that members want from BCCE and take steps to ensure our programs and activities (annual conference and all others) are aligned to directly reflect those areas which members value and which we can deliver or facilitate.
2. Develop and utilize marketing that communicates the value of membership to current and potential members.
3. Develop a dues structure that is acceptable to all members and which optimizes member value (i.e. what we can deliver/facilitate).

BC Chamber Relationship

BCCE's main partner is the BC Chamber that represents Chambers and Boards of Trade throughout the province. BC Chamber supports BCCE but does not have a distinct role and BCCE is represented on the BC Chamber board in a non-voting capacity. The CEO of the BC Chamber, is part of the BCCE as a peer to all Chamber managers and there is a BC Chamber staff member that has responsibility to provide a linkage for areas of mutual concern. BC Chamber staff also attend the BCCE conference. In addition, the BC Chamber provides resources such as Chamberlink. Maintaining a strong and healthy relationship between our two organizations is of vital importance as our jobs and hence BCCE would not exist without Chambers and Boards of Trade and they could not function effectively without high functioning professional management.

2015 Goals

The key metrics for our success will be:

- An active, dynamic link to the BC Chamber's strategies
- Networking and communications to support this link (BC Chamber AGM in May; BCCE in September); similar link to Canadian Chamber and Canadian Chamber Executives
- Very strong and mutually supportive relationship with the BC Chamber

To achieve these results, we will:

1. Clearly define the roles of BC Chamber and BCCE and explore ways to mutually enhance each organization.
2. Develop a joint welcome package from BC Chamber and BCCE for new managers.
3. Work with the BC Chamber to develop joint manager/board training at the BC Chamber AGM.

Professional Development

A principle component of our vision is excellence in Chamber and Board of Trade management. In the past, BCCE has provided professional development opportunities for members primarily at the annual conference; the website could be used to augment this effort but this capacity has not been utilized. Efforts have been made to develop an institutionally based accredited certification for Chamber management but this process is on hold. In addition, our own internal BCCE certification hasn't been utilized in 7 years. A Training Task Force conducted a needs analysis but results have not been implemented. Professional development also needs to include support which is a critical element for both new managers and staff as they are introduced to the Chamber / Board of Trade milieu as well as those with more experience.

If we are to continue to become more valuable to members and attractive to non-members, we must ensure that our training efforts are more organized and supportive of excellence in Chamber and Board of Trade management. This includes a focus on Chamber accreditation (which is essentially a "best practices" approach), Chamber management accreditation for managers and a more formalized mentoring program to provide needed support.

2015 Goals

The key metrics for our success will be:

- There will be an accredited certification program in Chamber management from a post secondary institution (for example: CSAE, TRU)
- Members will have a strong sense of being supported by BCCE

- 70% of BCCE member Chambers are accredited

To achieve these results, we will:

1. Work in partnership with CCEC to ensure Chamber management accreditation is standardized nationally
2. Ensure our annual conference maximizes the professional development opportunities for members.
3. Develop our own internal training program to augment what is available institutionally.
4. Develop and communicate and/or provide training regarding strategies which optimize the management of Chambers.
5. Establish a formalized mentoring program.

Strategic Plan Management

A NOTE ON HOW WE WILL SUCCEED IN THE STRATEGIC PLAN

To effectively use and manage the strategic plan, our planning calendar is synchronized with the budget cycle. Our first step is to do an initial review of the goals and determine what the specific outcomes of each should likely be for the coming year. All financial and labour considerations are identified. This becomes a prime input to the business planning and budget process – as with all business planning and budgeting, this is usually an iterative process to ensure that the highest priority items are sufficiently resourced and some “like to do” items inevitably cannot be resourced for the current year. Once this process is formally approved through our agreed upon organizational process, the business plan is then broken into the financial year quarters (i.e. Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4) and responsibilities assigned. The quarters are calendarized (i.e. a specific start and stop date noted). Sufficiently prior to the end of each quarter, a quarterly review of our business plan progress is made (and communicated to the appropriate bodies in the organization - generally a Board meeting with the agenda built around the quarterly progress and issues) and a look forward at what our business plan had projected for the following quarter. This may result in the need to make minor (sometimes major) adjustments as required. At the end of the year, considering the progress that has been made and reported, an annual review of the strategic plan goals is done to ensure they are still relevant (with the possibility of altering, adding or deleting goals).

The Board is committed to rigorously following this process and we believe that this will ensure that the strategic plan is adhered to and progress is made. The strategic plan is thus both a living document, adjusting to changing circumstances, while remaining locked onto the most important strategic targets.