



2005– 2006

Strategic Plan

Fredericton Chamber of Commerce



November 29, 2004

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I. Managing Change

The Fredericton Chamber of Commerce has achieved significant accomplishments and has undergone substantial internal changes during 2004. The following are a number of the highlights:

- Awarded the 2004 Chamber of The Year from the Atlantic Provinces Chambers of Commerce (APCC)
- Undergone staff reorganization with the end result being an additional staff person to focus on member needs
- An increase in membership during 2004
 - o 2004 year end membership 823 members
 - in 1998 membership was at 550 members
- the Fredericton Chamber is the largest Chamber in New Brunswick...the 2nd largest in Atlantic Canada
- an increase in revenue
 - o see graph figures
 - o in comparison, during the period 1998 to 2003 revenues of the Chamber increased \$198,749 to \$309,204 (a dramatic increase of 56%).
- education activities were restructured
- continued efforts to define Chamber's role in Economic Development

During the upcoming year, there are a number of key initiatives to be undertaken:

- acquiring new office space
- the development of a web based portal
- the establishment of a Federal Government Affairs Committee
- development of long-term business plan
 - o long-term financial strategy to replenish financial reserves
 - While the Fredericton Chamber is financially strong, increased requests to participate in economic development initiatives have diminished the organization's financial reserves.
 - o formalization of long-term marketing strategy
- the national accreditation of Fredericton Chamber
- research the possibility of expanding the Fredericton Chamber boundaries

The operations of the Chamber has grown to include operating 17 internal committees, representatives on 7 additional external committees, and approximately 50-55 events and functions per year on average.

A number of areas of future opportunities were identified:

- ⇒ business people in greater Fredericton are waiting for next 'big thing'
- ⇒ We will be relocating soon. Our new office needs to make a statement. Potential relocation with other group could provide opportunity.
- ⇒ We can work with other organizations, such as smaller chambers.
- ⇒ We are experienced in hosting functions – that ability can be used elsewhere (by other groups).
- ⇒ Can work with chambers of other municipalities – some gains being made on this front.
- ⇒ Steer people from other countries here? Attract immigrants?
- ⇒ We can be the leader of all groups in area – we're the voice of reason.
- ⇒ We have access to senior federal cabinet minister
- ⇒ Federal caucus meeting here in Jan 05
- ⇒ Base Gagetown is a huge potential resource to business community – invite dignitaries and do other things to include.
- ⇒ Keep young people here (including immigrants)
- ⇒ New city council – may be receptive to new ideas.
- ⇒ Highest percentage of entrepreneurs (smaller businesses) in province
- ⇒ High talent base in Fredericton
- ⇒ Can unite business with community (communications) - Communication products, such as newsletter, present new opportunities.

A discussion was held regarding the **“key issues of the Chamber’s future”** during which the following topics brought forward regarding economic development:

- ⇒ Who is the leader in 'seek and find'?
- ⇒ Do we want to (or can we) be a leader or supporter? In what capacities? During discussion it was indicated that the Chamber should operate in a supporting role. Group/organizations with resources dedicated toward economic development should take a lead role (ie. Business NB, Enterprise Fredericton, and Team Fredericton)
- ⇒ Do we understand the Fredericton economy well enough to know how to address growth of it? Do we have enough information about the local economy? Where is it? What is the provincial strategy? Are we part of it? It was indicated that we need to improve our relationship with BNB in order to understand where we fit. It was suggested that research be undertaken into other studies, such as Mulroney's Prosperity Initiative (and many others).
- ⇒ In discussing retention and expansion of businesses, it was asked if the 'seek and find' idea is a good one? Much of the long-term growth in Fredericton has come from businesses that were started here. Is the provincial government doing enough to help existing businesses as it is in trying to attract new business to the area?

The following strategic plan addresses the issues raised above, and identifies activities for the Fredericton Chamber to undertake to fulfill its mandate in the five key areas of benefits, economic development, education, advocacy, and networking. Feedback from a membership survey (November 2004) was taken into consideration during discussions.

Participants of the strategic planning session were as follows:

- Dan Koncz – President
- Don Good – Past President
- Laura O’Blenis – President Elect
- David MacMullin – 2nd Vice Pres.
- Ron Sauntry – Treasurer
- Steve Burns – Executive Member
- Peter Lindfield – Director
- Mitchell Smith – Director
- Terry Avery – Director
- Dan Coleman – Director
- Shawn Quinlan – Director
- Darcy McKillop – Director
- Weldon LeBlanc – General Manager
- Kerry Atkinson – Membership Marketing Director
- Jen Merrill – Member Services Coord
- Brianne Phillips – Event Co-ord.
- Wendy Williams – Admin.Assistant
- Mac Fraser - Facilitator
- John Spurway – Facilitator

II. What our Members Think

An on-line survey was conducted with the Chamber membership during November 2004:

- 262 people participated in the survey (compared to 285 last year)
- 175 surveys completed from start to finish (compared to 156 last year)
- 226 surveys had at least one question answered (compared to 235 last year)
- # of empty surveys – 36 (compared to 48 last year)

When asked to rate the Chamber on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being poor, 5 being excellent) members responded as follows: (responses from the 2003 survey are noted for comparison)

<u>What’s Important to members?</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>
Economic Development	4.3	4.3
Networking	4.2	4.1
Advocacy	4.0	4.1
Education/Training	3.9	3.9
Benefits	3.6	3.8
<u>How Good are we doing?</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>
Economic Development	3.8	3.8
Networking	4.4	4.5
Advocacy	3.8	4.0
Education/Training	3.7	3.9
Benefits	3.8	4.2

In summary, in reviewing the member survey results, the Chamber is meeting or exceeding member’s expectations in all areas except in the area of economic development. As well, improvements in performance over the previous year were noted in all areas except economic development, which remained the same.

Mission Statement

“Taking Care of Business”

1. Promote the aims of our members and to act in their best interest.
2. Provide tangible services for small business.
3. Be the premier business association in Fredericton.
4. Be the voice of an advocate for business.
5. Provide an effective network for Fredericton Business.
6. Provide a synergy vehicle for business.
7. Exceed expectations of members.

2004 Fredericton Chamber of Commerce Membership Survey Results

	<u>What’s Important to members?</u>	<u>How Good are we doing?</u>
1.) Economic Development	<u>4.3</u>	<u>3.8</u>
2.) Networking	<u>4.1</u>	<u>4.5</u>
3.) Advocacy	<u>4.1</u>	<u>4.0</u>
4.) Education/Training	<u>3.9</u>	<u>3.9</u>
5.) Benefits	<u>3.8</u>	<u>4.2</u>

I. Provide leadership in economic development initiatives in greater Fredericton

Strategic Objectives	Action Plan	Completion date	Staff	Committee
1) Enhance the profile of the Chamber in economic development and exceed the expectations of the Chamber membership.	1.) Enhance the Chamber's relationship with Business New Brunswick	Ongoing	W. LeBlanc	Ec Dev TF and PGA
	2.) Work with Team Fredericton to enhance the "Business Ambassador" program	Feb '05		Ec Dev TF
	3.) Explore budgetary and human resource considerations associated with an enhanced role in economic development	Feb '05		Ec. Dev TF
	4.) Identify economic development initiatives in which the Chamber should be involved in a lead role or supporting role	ongoing		
2.) To define our role in economic development in Fredericton	1.) Establish Economic Development Task Force	January '05		Board
	2.) Economic Development Committee to put together a brief on how to support various sectors – understand roles of other players – provide recommendations (include results from BRE survey)	April 30/05		Ec. Dev TF
	3.) Brief to get board approval	May 31/05		Ec. Dev. TF
3.) To develop advocacy on a federal level	1.) Establish a Federal Government Affairs Committee	January '05		Board
	2.) Continue relationship with A. Scott and A. Savoie	On Going		Pres. & GM
4.) To develop regional development with other jurisdictions	1.) Continue discussions to identify and move forward on items of mutual interest	On Going		Pres & GM
5.) To get more revenue from Base Gagetown	1.) Discuss with Andy Scott	Mar 31/05	W. LeBlanc	FGA
	2.) Talk to new General	Mar 31/05		FGA
	3.) Research and understand the structure and protocols of "doing business" at CFB Gagetown	Sep 30/05	Staff	
	4.) Bring in procurement officer to educate members on how to do business with Base	Dec 31/05	B. Phillips	

6.) Attract new business through providing access to funding	1.) Meet with Provincial officials to determine funding available to business and lobby the province to using funds currently at disposal.	Sep 30/05		PGA
	2.) Develop a synopsis of available programs and how to access them.	Sep 30/05		PGA
	3.) Check with Atlantic Provinces Chamber of Commerce to tie into efforts of this organization (ie. less than \$200k has extra 30% tax credit)	Sep 30/05		PGA
	4.) Develop and provide a seminar for Fredericton entrepreneurs educating businesses on how to access funding	May '05		
7.) To develop Atlantica – Atlantic Canada, New England & Quebec	1.) Develop a position and strategy to see if it is a viable strategy – “Highway 95 trade corridor”	June '05		Board
8.) To develop a list of best practices criteria for retention and recruitment	1.) Obtain results of the Business retention and expansion (BRE) survey from Enterprise Fredericton	May '05 or upon completion		Ec. Dev TF
	2.) Develop and provide a seminar that helps small business find/retain immigrant staff in conjunction with Enterprise Fredericton	September '05	B. Phillips	

II. Provide an effective networking system for Chamber members

Strategic Objectives	Action Plan	Completion date	Staff	Committee
1.) Organize and promote a well rounded mix of networking opportunities for Chamber members	1.) Review the revenues and expenses of the Business After Hours program, and explore the possibility of increasing fee charged to host a Business After Hours.	Summer '05	B. Phillips	

III. Be the voice and advocate for business in Fredericton

Strategic Objectives	Action Plan	Completed by	Staff	Committee
1.) Enhance the level of awareness of the Chamber’s advocacy efforts.	1.) Increase communication with members to obtain enhanced feedback on issues	Bi-monthly	W. LeBlanc	
	2.) Initiate regular polls relating to issues and the operations of the Chamber (see also VI.4.2)	Quarterly	J. Merrill	

	3.) Communicate poll results to members of the Chamber and the media	Bi-monthly	W. LeBlanc	
2.) Ensure that the resources of the Chamber are effectively used to the benefit of Chamber members	1.) Continue to focus the resources of the Chamber on macro issues of the business community	Ongoing		Board
	2.) select issues that meet with the mission and vision of the Fredericton Chamber of Commerce	ongoing		Board

IV. Be a relevant educational and informational source for Chamber members

Strategic Objectives	Action Plan	Completion date	Staff	Committee
1.) Present timely information sessions on current “hot issues”.	1.) Massage survey data to more accurately pin point what size business member identifies education as a higher priority	Summer '05	B. Phillips	
	2.) Strategically initiate educational activities to meet the needs of targeted groups	Fall '05	B. Phillips	
	3.) identify issues and speakers of interest to members of the Chamber	Fall '05	B. Phillips	
	4.) Prepare a long-term sustainable education strategy for the Fredericton Chamber of Commerce.		B. Phillips J. Merrill	
2.) Promote educational sessions of importance to business operations of Chamber members	1.) Work cooperatively with economic development partners and educational service providers to deliver educational programming,	On-going	B. Phillips	
	2.) Selectively promote educational activities that are not presented by the Chamber.	On-going	B. Phillips	

V. Provide tangible benefits for Chamber members

Strategic Objectives	Action Plan	Completion date	Staff	Committee
1.) Maintain a relevant assortment of beneficial products and programs for Chamber members.	1.) Obtain feedback from members to determine possible additional benefits	Spring '05	Staff	

	2.) Prioritize additional benefits for members and initiate new benefits where possible	Summer '05	Staff	
	3.) Identify ineffective benefits and make recommendations to the Board for discontinuation	Summer '05	K. Atkinson & J. Merrill	
	4.) Enhance the effectiveness of the Member to Member Advantage Program	January '05	K. Atkinson & J. Merrill	

VI. Provide a strong organizational infrastructure for operations of the Chamber

Strategic Objectives	Action Plan	Completion date	Staff	Committee
1.) Provide clear vision and direction for staff and volunteers of the Chamber	1.) Review the Chamber's vision and mission statement to ensure that it remains relevant to the operations of the Chamber	March '05		Board
	2.) Develop a set of criteria to assist the Board in determining which special projects in which the Chamber should become involved	Spring '05		Board
	3.) Investigate the issues involved in the expanding of the organization's boundaries.	Summer '05	W. Williams	
	4.) Prepare a 3 to 5 year business and marketing plan providing projections for future growth of the Fredericton Chamber of Commerce (ie. membership and revenues)	Spring '05	W. LeBlanc K. Atkinson	Board
	5.) Obtain new office space to facilitate the re-location of the Chamber offices.	Fall '05		Office TF
2.) Ensure that the Chamber continues to be a financially stable organization	1.) Prepare a sustainable long-term plan to rebuild the fiscal surplus to allow the Chamber the opportunity to participate in future initiatives.	Spring '05	W. LeBlanc	Treasurer
	2.) Investigate the possibility of obtaining "charitable foundation" status for Fredericton Chamber of Commerce	Spring '05		Treasurer
	3. Investigate the possibility of implementing a "capital campaign" to raise funds for the new chamber offices	Spring '05		Treasurer

Strategic Objectives	Action Plan	Completion date	Staff	Committee
3.) Actively pursue growth of the membership of the Fredericton Chamber	<p>1.) establish and maintain a database of businesses in the greater Fredericton area to facilitate membership sales efforts.</p> <p>Staff note...a database of this nature would be useful if the Chamber were lacking in “sales leads”; however, this is not the case. The issue at this time is finding the time to follow-up on potential leads. This should be considered as an “action” item when new member growth reaches a plateau.</p>	Summer '06	Staff	
4.) Effectively communicate with Chamber membership to obtain feedback and communicate efforts of the Chamber	<p>1.) Tabulate the results of the 2004 membership survey into report form and make available to assist with decision making on specific areas of interest.</p> <p>2.) Initiate ongoing membership polls to obtain member feedback (<i>see also III.1.2</i>)</p> <p>3.) Initiate a poll to explore methods of improved communications with Chamber membership</p>	<p>March '05</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>April '05</p>	<p>W. Williams</p> <p>J. Merrill</p> <p>J. Merrill</p>	