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SOUNDING BOARD

THE OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE VANCOUVER BOARD OF TRADE AND ITS MEMBERS

“Without sufficient trade-enabling industrial land to meet growing demand, we risk hitting an economic brick wall.” Port Metro Vancouver CEO Robin Silvester, pg. 3 JANUARY 2016 • VOLUME 56 • NUMBER 1

THIS ISSUE

Marriott International's top exec at VBOT • 2

New study finds looming industrial land shortage • 3

Natural gas key to B.C.'s green economic future • 4

Director Spotlight: Jan Grude • 5

Photo highlights • 6



Young professionals chart Board of Trade's future • 7

Becoming conscious about unconscious bias • 8

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Taking the next step in our evolution

Board of Trade prepares to embrace regional role in 2016

BY TIM MANNING

The year 2016 will be one for the history books.

After nearly 130 years of service to the regional business community, our board of directors has unanimously voted to recommend to our Members that they vote to rename our organization the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade.

In changing our name, the board believes we will better reflect our regional advocacy efforts and the 5,000 Members that we represent – nearly 50 per cent of whom make their living or own businesses that operate outside the City of Vancouver.

The reality is, our organization has been focused on issues that are region-wide for more than a century, because we understand that regional vision, leadership, and collaboration is critical to the success of not just our local economy, but the B.C. and Cana-

dian economies as well.

We have a long, rich, and demonstrated history of working in Greater Vancouver's best interests. For example, did you know the Vancouver Board of Trade was instrumental in establishing the business school at the University of British Columbia in 1926? Did you know we called on the federal government to create a local airport authority to run YVR in 1987? Did you know that we lobbied for faster border crossings to the U.S. in 1990, leading to the creation of NEXUS? Or that we helped lead the campaign to save the Canada Line after it was originally voted down by the region's mayors in 2004?

In more recent years, our advocacy efforts have also focused on regional issues, from our very public role in the 2015 transit and transportation plebiscite, to our work around Metro Vancouver's proposed Bylaw 280 and regional waste management, our longstanding calls for a mobile business licence program across Greater Vancouver, and our advocacy at all levels of government to invest in roads, bridges, and Pacific Gateway trade infrastruc-



Tim Manning, 2015-16 Chair, The Vancouver Board of Trade

Launched this past summer, we specifically designed the new model to encourage our existing Members – and any new Members – to join their municipal chamber of commerce. In fact, we actually provide a substantial credit towards their Membership if they also join their local chamber.

Another way we will illustrate our support for our colleagues in municipal chambers and their members is to investigate how we might extend our four unique Signature Programs to chambers throughout Greater Vancouver, including our Leaders of Tomorrow mentorship program for post-secondary students, our Company of Young Professionals, our Small Business Council, and our Women's Leadership Circle.

On Jan. 15, we will hold a meeting where our Members will have an opportunity to officially vote on our name change, as recommended by our board of directors, and help chart our path forward for the next 130 years.

Based on the feedback I have personally received so far, I am very optimistic about what lies ahead for this extraordinary organization.

ture across the region.

For all of those reasons above, we want to adopt a new name – in order to reflect what we've been doing for nearly 130 years. However, it's important to note that a change in our name will not change our very close working relationship with municipal chambers across the region. If anything, we hope to work even closer with them in the years ahead.

This desire to support and better engage the municipal chambers in Greater Vancouver directly impacted the structure of our new Membership model.



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Marriott International's top exec speaks this month

Company to play key role in new \$600M destination resort near BC Place

Join The Vancouver Board of Trade on Jan. 11 as we welcome **Arne Sorenson**, President and CEO of **Marriott International**, and **Don Cleary**, President of **Marriott Canada**, for a discussion on the company's future — both around the world and right here in Vancouver.

With more than 4,200 properties in 80 countries and territories, Marriott International is a global hospitality industry leader, with 19 different brands known world-

wide for exceptional quality and service.

Earlier this year, the company announced it was partnering with Vancouver's upcoming **parq** project — a \$600M destination resort and re-envisioned entertainment district adjacent to BC Place stadium. As part of that partnership, Marriott will operate parq's multiple hospitality touch points, including two spectacular luxury lifestyle hotels, convention and meeting space, and select

food and beverage venues.

The parq project will feature B.C.'s first JW Marriott hotel, offering "a luxury guest experience with refined design and intuitive service." The property will feature 288 guest rooms and 41 suites. Adjacent to the JW Marriott will be The Douglas, which is part of Marriott International's Autograph Collection.

It's estimated that parq will sustain hundreds of jobs each month over its two-year con-

struction period. Once complete, parq will offer 2,000 ongoing jobs throughout the new resort, including 650 positions currently held by employees of Edgewater casino. An estimated \$535 million will be contributed to the local economy through construction with more than \$260 million in combined in-resort and local spending by visitors on an ongoing basis once opened.

To register for this event, visit boardoftrade.com/events.



Arne Sorenson, President and CEO, Marriott International

EVENTS CALENDAR UPDATE

See our full events calendar at boardoftrade.com/events

THURSDAY, JANUARY 7, 2016

Members' Reception with Brooks Brothers

5 – 7 p.m.

Brooks Brothers
1026 Alberni Street

MONDAY, JANUARY 11, 2016

Marriott International: President and CEO, Arne Sorenson

11:30 a.m. – 2 p.m.

The Westin Bayshore Vancouver — Grand Ballroom
1601 Bayshore Drive

Arne Sorenson
President and CEO,
Marriott International

Presenting:
parq Vancouver

TUESDAY, JANUARY 12, 2016

Leaders of Tomorrow Social: Speed Networking Night

5:30 – 7:30 p.m.

Coast Coal Harbour Hotel — Coal Harbour A
1180 West Hastings Street

THURSDAY, JANUARY 14, 2016

Special Members' Reception:

New Year, New Connections

5:30 – 8 p.m.

Hard Rock Casino Vancouver
2080 United Blvd, Coquitlam

Host Chamber:
Tri-Cities Chamber of Commerce

Sponsor:
Hard Rock Casino Vancouver
Transportation:
Landsea Charters & Services

FRIDAY, JANUARY 15, 2016

Whistler Blackcomb: 50 years of going beyond

11:30 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Fairmont Pacific Rim — Star Sapphire Ballroom
1038 Canada Place

Dave Brownlie
President and Chief Executive Officer, Whistler Blackcomb

Panellist:

Barrett Fisher, President and CEO, Tourism Whistler

Val Litwin, CEO, Whistler Chamber of Commerce

Marsha Walden, President and CEO, Destination British Columbia

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Event Partner:
Whistler Chamber of Commerce

FRIDAY, JANUARY 22, 2016

Leaders of Tomorrow Executive Roundtable with Scotiabank

7:30 – 9 a.m.

Scotiabank — B.C. & Yukon Regional Office
3400 – 650 West Georgia Street

Winnie Leong
Senior Vice-President,
British Columbia and Yukon Region, Scotiabank

Event Partner: Scotiabank

TUESDAY, JANUARY 26, 2016

Economic Outlook Forum presented by BMO Bank of Montreal

7 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Vancouver Convention Centre — West, 1055 Canada Place

Session 1:
Success by the Numbers: The year ahead

Session 2:
Turning Election Promises into Economic Priorities

Session 3:
The Economic Balance Sheet: The CEO perspective of 2016

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NOTICE OF MEETING

Friday, January 15, 2016

Fairmont Pacific Rim – Emerald Ballroom

Registration: 10:30 a.m.

Meeting: 11 a.m.

The Vancouver Board of Trade's Chair has called a general meeting in order to vote on the following resolution:

WHEREAS The Vancouver Board of Trade ("VBOT") has been a leading voice for regional business for nearly 130 years; and,

WHEREAS the bylaws of the VBOT provide eligibility for membership for individuals and businesses from throughout the Greater Vancouver Area; and,

WHEREAS Article 2.1 of the bylaws provides that the VBOT shall work "in the enlightened interest of its members to promote, enhance and facilitate the development of the region as a Pacific centre of trade, commerce and travel" and,

WHEREAS the Board of Directors of the VBOT have unanimously by resolution recommended to the membership of the VBOT to change the name of the VBOT as set out below; and,

WHEREAS the Board of Directors believes that changing our name will enable VBOT to better represent the regional interests of our 5,000 Members, nearly 50 per cent of whom make their living or own businesses that operate outside the City of Vancouver.

BE IT PROPOSED AND RESOLVED:

1. The Members approve in principle that the name of The Vancouver Board of Trade be changed to "the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade", and (if successfully adopted);

2. The Members authorize the Secretary-Treasurer, in consultation with the Chair and the President and CEO, to present at a future General Meeting all necessary bylaw amendments for review and approval to enable the name change.

For further information regarding this meeting, please contact David Crawford, Vice President and Assistant Secretary-Treasurer of The Vancouver Board of Trade at:

Tel: 604-640-5457 Fax: 604-640-5485

Email: vp@boardoftrade.com

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A looming land shortage

New study finds trade-enabling industrial land in the Lower Mainland could be exhausted in the next decade

A new study commissioned by **Port Metro Vancouver** has found that the current supply of trade-enabling industrial land in the Lower Mainland will likely be exhausted roughly within the next 10 years.

The study, undertaken by **Site Economics Ltd.**, specifically examined the inventory of trade-enabling industrial land, going beyond previous studies that have explored the supply of all general industrial land in the region. Trade-enabling industrial lands are lands required to support goods movement in and out of the region, housing marine terminals and buildings such as distribution centres and warehouses. To facilitate efficient trade, these activities must be in close proximity to major roads and rail lines.

The new study found there are only roughly 1,000 acres of vacant trade-enabling industrial lands available in the region suitable for logistics and goods movement. Based on average annual absorption rates and anticipated demand, the supply of vacant trade-enabling industrial land

in the region could be depleted within a decade.

What's more, roughly 1,500 to 3,000 more acres of trade-enabling industrial lands are required in the next five to 10 years to meet the demands of a growing Canadian economy. The study found that the total direct and indirect economic impact of every 100 acres of logistics development is equal to approximately \$1.9 billion of economic value.

"Trade and logistics services that support goods movement are critical to the local and national economy, and contribute to our high standard of living," said **Robin Silvester**, President and Chief Executive Officer of Port Metro Vancouver. "Without sufficient trade-enabling industrial land to meet growing demand, we risk hitting an economic brick wall, with serious consequences for our quality of life here in the Lower Mainland."

The federal port authority is mandated to ensure the port is ready to handle Canada's future trade demands, in the interests

of all Canadians. The demand for Canadian trade is growing, and container traffic through Canada's Pacific gateway is expected to nearly double over the next 15 years. Trade-enabling industrial land will be required to meet this growing demand. If the current trend of a shrinking industrial land base continues, Vancouver's port may be unable to remain competitive with other trade gateways, the region will miss out on economic opportunities and the costs of goods may rise.

According to the new study, the supply of trade-enabling industrial land in the region is being threatened by a number of factors, including rezonings and encroaching residential development. The re-development of industrial land near critical transportation corridors for uses other than trade is also a reality impacting the supply of land for efficient goods movement.

"This issue is critical to the future of the Canadian economy, considering nearly 20 per cent of the value of all goods traded by Canada pass through the port

Supply and Demand

Over the past 30 years, municipalities in the region have rezoned more than 7,400 acres of trade-enabling industrial land for other uses.



Today, the available supply of trade-enabling industrial land is dwindling.

Throughout the region, only 1,000 acres of land suitable for medium-term goods movement development remain.

However, estimates show that between 1,500 and 3,000 acres will be needed to meet trade demands for the next 5 to 10 years.



This means that the amount of vacant land suitable for goods movement will be exhausted roughly within the next 10 years.

here in Vancouver. We hope all levels of government will take the necessary steps to ensure this key region has sufficient land to support future growth," said

Silvester.

More information, including video, infographics, and the full report, are available at portmetrovancouver.com.



Economic Outlook Forum

Presented by *BMO Bank of Montreal*

Tuesday, January 26, 2016 | 7 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Vancouver Convention Centre — West | 1055 Canada Place Way, Vancouver

Title Sponsor:



Choices, Challenges and Change

For 27 years, The Vancouver Board of Trade's annual Economic Outlook Forum has given our region's business leaders a detailed and insightful look at the year ahead by blending local, national and international perspectives.

It's the kind of practical conversation our Members expect as they review their own plans for the coming year. This year's forum builds on that reputation, with sessions including an update from the new federal government about their plans for Canada's economy.

It all adds up to one of the most influential days of the year and one of the "must-attend" events on the 2016 business calendar.

Panel Sessions

SESSION 1:
**Success by the Numbers:
The year ahead**

SESSION 2:
**Turning Election Promises
into Economic Priorities**

SESSION 3:
The Economic Balance Sheet: The CEO perspective of 2016

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SOUNDING BOARD

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As the official publication of The Vancouver Board of Trade, the *Sounding Board* newspaper provides analysis and discussion of regional and national issues facing the business community, along with input from member companies, allowing them to raise their profile in the business community.

Sounding Board is published 12 times per year by Business in Vancouver Media Group in partnership with The Vancouver Board of Trade.

Sounding Board is read by leading business executives and their employees. The paper has a primary circulation of 12,500 and a conservatively estimated total readership of 37,500.

ABOUT THE VANCOUVER BOARD OF TRADE

The Vancouver Board of Trade is Vancouver's chamber of commerce. Since 1887, The Board of Trade has been an active proponent of business in Vancouver. The World Trade Centre Vancouver is the international division of The Vancouver Board of Trade and is affiliated with more than 300 WTCs worldwide.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

The Vancouver Board of Trade works in the enlightened interest of its members to promote, enhance and facilitate the development of the region as a Pacific centre for trade, commerce and travel.

OUR BASIC PRINCIPLES

The Board of Trade believes that the market system is the only system that works effectively in the allocation of scarce economic resources for efficient and stable economic growth and job creation. The Board of Trade recognizes the imperfections of the market system and supports the need for publicly provided services such as social services, health services and public education. The Board supports the philosophy of less government involvement in the business sector and believes that governments should not do what can be done in whole or in part by the private sector.

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Natural Gas: B.C.'s opportunity to build a cleaner world

BY IQBAL AHMED

While the global shift to a low-carbon economy may create uncertainty within the Canadian energy sector, it provides a unique opening for B.C.'s budding natural gas industry, but only if it is well positioned to seize it.

Last month, delegates from 197 countries gathered in Paris to negotiate a new climate change treaty. After two grueling weeks, they successfully struck an agreement on reducing global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and limiting total warming to less than two degrees Celsius. This comes fresh on the heels of Alberta's announcement to price carbon and speed up the retirement of coal-fired power plants across the province. Although British Columbia has been ahead of the pack on climate policy, these initiatives point to an accelerating trend towards a low-carbon world economy. One which discourages the use of high GHG-emitting fuel sources and incents cleaner alternatives. This greener economic future can only be achieved through the use of natural gas.

These changes carry important implications for the long-term competitiveness of the energy sector. Coal, for example, with its low-cost and high-energy yield, has seen great success in feeding growing energy demand from the developing world. However, its carbon intensity points to an uncertain

future, especially as growing economies such as China and India look to reduce their carbon footprints and less carbon intensive alternatives. With these two countries alone representing a significant share of future energy demand, this provides the natural gas industry with a unique opportunity.

Natural gas has the potential to provide low-cost, clean-burning energy to economies around the world. While the current slump in energy prices has raised some questions around the future of the industry in British

“Natural gas is necessary for jurisdictions such as China, and even Alberta, to shift to a cleaner economy. The question now becomes, who will meet this demand?”

Columbia, the province is now presented with the opportunity to meet growing energy demands in a climate conscious manner. Natural gas is vital in the transition away from high-carbon fuels such as oil and coal, and provides a bridge to future green technologies—many of which are still too costly, even for advanced economies.

During **The Vancouver Board of Trade's** Energy Forum last month, B.C.'s Minister of Natural Gas Development **Rich Coleman** echoed these sentiments. He told the audience of the global responsibility to address en-

vironmental issues such as air quality, pointing to the extreme pollution warning in Beijing. He expressed how the only way to currently address these problems is with natural gas, for it provides a cleaner environment while keeping industry competitive with its low cost.

Natural gas is necessary for jurisdictions such as China, and even Alberta, to shift to a cleaner economy. The question now becomes, who will meet this demand? British Columbia must move quickly if it is to be a major player in this shifting market.

In no way does British Columbia have a monopoly on the global supply of natural gas. What it does have, however, is strategic positioning as Canada's Pacific Gateway. It is vital that these advantages are leveraged, or the opportunity presented by powering a greener future will surely slip away.

Iqbal Ahmed is Manager of Public Policy Development at The Vancouver Board of Trade. He recently joined The Vancouver Board of Trade from the Calgary Chamber of Commerce, where he worked as a policy analyst.

Missed last month's Sounding Board?

Read past issues online at boardoftrade.com/soundingboard

'Failing to travel is like reading only one page of a book'

Board of Trade Director Jan Grude shares insights on travel, the outdoors, and immigrating to Canada

Describe what you do in 10 words or less.

I am very privileged to lead the largest health care insurance company in British Columbia.

Where is your hometown and how did it shape you?

I was born in Stavanger, Norway. When I was young my parents emigrated from Norway with two kids, two trunks, and \$38 in our pockets. It was the immigrant experience which shaped me — arriving with nothing and striving to be successful through hard work, seeking new opportunities, education, and moving whenever and wherever necessary.

What was your first job?

While I had the usual paperboy and babysitting jobs, my first "real" job was when I was 13. I worked as a busboy and dishwasher from 7 a.m. until 10 p.m. on Saturdays and earned \$5 — and I thought I was rich! From that experience I certainly developed a work ethic which took me through a variety of roles in the hotel industry by



Jan K. Grude, President and CEO, Pacific Blue Cross

the time I was 17 — cleaning rooms, waiter, bellboy, front desk, night auditor. You learn to grab the next job up when the opportunity presents itself — a good life lesson.

What is the most important lesson you learned from your parents?

Never be afraid to go where the opportunities are. It's what we did as a family growing up, leaving Norway in search of adventure and opportunity.

I have done the same, and as a result have had the privilege of working in many countries and travelling the world. And I have given the same advice to my children which now has each of them working in cities and countries away from Vancouver, I'm afraid. If your only interest is a certain single-location lifestyle, then stay where you are. If you want to see the world and advance yourself, grab the opportunity to go elsewhere. You can always come back.

Why did you join The Vancouver Board of Trade?

Our company is an avid supporter of The Vancouver Board of Trade and other Chambers of Commerce in communities where we do business. Since we provide health insurance coverage for one half of the working population of British Columbia and their dependents, involvement in the business community and the community in general is part of our 75-year history. It's core to who we are, our values, our commitment to local communities, the Province

and the country. The Vancouver Board of Trade allows us to live those values.

If you retired tomorrow, how would you keep busy?

One thing I am not short of is hobbies and interests, plus I have four kids who are now busy having their own families. Visiting with them could occupy all of my retirement time. I am an avid fisher, boater, explorer of British Columbia's coastline, kayaker, traveler, skier, hiker, mountaineer, and adventurer. As St. Augustine said "Failing to travel is like reading only one page of a book." And my own book has a lot of pages.

What do you think makes Vancouver a great city?

Location, location, location! We have a city which has taken, and continues to take advantage of, its fabulous location. The gateway to Asia provides us a picture window on the world and has created such an incredible diversity of population and experience. Everyone can feel at home here.

What is your creative outlet?

The outdoors is a lifeblood for me. It is what rejuvenates my body, mind and spirit. A weekend on the water or in the mountains brings out all the creativity I need — just looking at the vistas around me is life-giving and a reminder of how lucky I am. That is what keeps me creative and motivated.

What is something that most people don't know about you?

I paid my way through university each year in two ways — by raising and selling 200 chickens each summer, and also by singing commercially (vocal work for radio and TV ads — just imagine the dooby-do from the men's quartet in the background and you get the idea). Amazing the things we will do to pay our way in life!

The Vancouver Board of Trade is fortunate to have 36 of Greater Vancouver's top executives and business leaders on its board of directors. For more information on these individuals, visit boardoftrade.com/directors.



Monday, April 11, 2016 | 6 – 9:30 p.m. | Vancouver Convention Centre — West | 1055 Canada Place Way, Vancouver



Council of Governors Inductee

Janet Austin
CEO, YWCA Metro Vancouver



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Around the Board

Photo highlights from recent events and activities

Clockwise from top left: 1) The Honourable Rich Coleman, B.C.'s Minister of Natural Gas Development, delivers the keynote address at The Vancouver Board of Trade's 2015 Energy Forum on Dec. 9, presented by Suncor Energy. *Photo by Matt Borck* **2)** John Furlong (right) waves to the crowd while receiving a standing ovation from hundreds of business leaders on Nov. 25. In his first speech in three years, the former VANOC CEO shared his emotional personal journey since the conclusion of the 2010 Olympics. *Photo by Matt Borck* **3)** The Honourable Peter Fassbender speaks to media following his VBOT address on Nov. 26. During the speech, Fassbender discussed regional priorities, including the future of TransLink. *Photo by Matt Borck* **4)** Peter Brady and Larissa Streu of the British Columbia Securities Commission speak

to Members of VBOT's Small Business Council on Nov. 25 about crowd-funding and raising capital. **5)** Mehrnaz Kobari, Student Engagement Coordinator for SFU Beedie School of Business, prepares to carve the turkey during VBOT's annual Holiday Lunch and year-in-review event on Dec. 1. *Photo by Matt Borck* **6)** A panel of local journalists discuss the top news stories of 2015 at VBOT's annual year-in-review event. L-R: Iain Black, VBOT's President and CEO (moderator), Globe and Mail contributor Frances Bula, Business in Vancouver reporter Tyler Orton, B.C. broadcasting icon Bill Good, and Global BC sports anchor Squire Barnes. *Photo by Matt Borck* **7)** Port Metro Vancouver's President and CEO Robin Silvester (right) sits down for a moderated Q&A with Global BC News Hour Anchor Chris Gailus on Nov. 27. *Photo by Matt Borck*





2020 Vision: Where next for the Board of Trade?

Young professionals share ideas and help chart a course for the next five years

BY HAYLEY WOODIN

It's said that if you ask, it will be given. So when **The Vancouver Board of Trade's** President and CEO **Iain Black** asked a room full of young professionals "Where next?" dozens of innovative ideas were given on how the region's emerging leaders want to see their board of trade evolve.

The ideas were generated as part of a Leadership Café — a semi-annual event hosted by the Company of Young Professionals program, during which Members brainstorm ideas to help local or-

ganizations deal with challenges in their industry.

Past Leadership Café events have focused on organizations such as the **United Way of the Lower Mainland**, **Great Canadian Gaming**, and the **Vancouver Art Gallery**. This was the first time that a Leadership Café event had an inward focus, giving CYP Members the opportunity to discuss how The Vancouver Board of Trade could evolve and better support young professionals.

Having more opportunities for networking — both within a given profession and across different

sectors — emerged as a theme throughout the evening, as did the need for mentorship, training and increased advocacy.

Members also expressed their desire to contribute ideas and broadcast the voice of young professionals, and as groups took to the podium and animated collaboration filled the ballroom, it was clear that CYP Members have a lot of valuable input they are happily willing to share.

It was an exciting night for CYP Members, and served as a great prelude to the eventful and energized year ahead.

In terms of looking forward, the program's signature Peer Leadership Forums are preparing to launch a major new initiative on Jan. 28, at the first ever *Takeoff*.

Hosted two days after The Vancouver Board of Trade's highly anticipated Economic Outlook Forum, the *Takeoff* event will also focus on big regional ideas, including the launch of a community challenge to solve a key issue facing Greater Vancouver.

In February, CYP Members will be given the unique opportunity to share ideas and thoughts on regional transportation priorities

at an exclusive Leadership Café with **TransLink**. And in March, the annual TED-inspired event, *CYPx*, will return with a series of thought-provoking presentations on innovation and growth.

For more on The Vancouver Board of Trade's under-35 program and how you can get involved, visit boardoftrade.com/CYP.

Hayley Woodin is a freelance journalist and media specialist at Kwantlen Polytechnic University. She sits on the CYP advisory committee and chairs the program's events committee.

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The Vancouver Board of Trade



Wednesday, February 17, 2016 | 11:15 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Fairmont Hotel Vancouver, 900 West Georgia Street, Vancouver

Join The Vancouver Board of Trade for an official address by a Senior Government Official, following the tabling of the 2016-17 Provincial Budget.

The presentation will provide the city's business community with an overview of the recently unveiled budget and an update on the state of B.C.'s economy.

Don't miss this opportunity to hear directly from the Province on how the 2016 Budget will impact your business and your family.

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WOMEN'S
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The blind spot

How identifying your unconscious biases can make you a better decision maker and business leader

BY LAURENCE LEMAY

Bias is normal. The question is not if you are biased — we all are by nature. As humans, we are mainly the product of our upbringing and past experiences.

But bias is not a thing we brag about. There is a negative connotation associated with the word, because the majority of people want to be in complete control of their actions and behaviours.

The title of this article refers to the book *Blindspot: Hidden Biases of Good People*, which explores hidden biases that we all have from our past life experiences. This “blind spot” metaphor illustrates the portion of our mind that houses hidden biases.

With that in mind, the question isn't whether we have hidden biases. Instead, the question is “to what extent do our unconscious biases influence



Laurence Lemay

our decisions?”

From a business perspective, unconscious bias may have unintended consequences on corporate culture and may also perpetuate hiring and promoting practices, often evident by the disproportionate number of men in executive positions or sitting around the boardroom.

In an effort to identify and measure unconscious biases, numerous organizations have developed specific tests, such as the Harvard Implicit Association Test. The results of these tests are often surprising to many people.

Fiona Macfarlane, Managing Partner and Chief Inclusiveness Officer at EY, says that “self-awareness is good leadership” and identifying your own unconscious bias is the first step toward becoming a better leader.

According to Macfarlane, you cannot get rid of your biases, but you can interrupt them.

So if you are in a leadership position, where do you start and how do you implement these “interruptions?”

Macfarlane recommends the following four steps to increasing consciousness:

First, measure and collect statistics that could illustrate bias.

Second, identify and under-

stand the causes of key issues.

Third, determine your priority areas.

“Unconscious bias may have unintended consequences on corporate culture and may also perpetuate hiring and promoting practices.”

And finally, implement change through competency and leadership.

We may not control our biases but we can become aware of their existence and consciously aim to align our behaviors with our intentions and corporate objectives.

So, the next time you make a decision, look out for your blind spot — you may be surprised by what you see.

Laurence Lemay is Senior Manager of Business Development and Public Affairs at Ferus. She is also a Member of The Vancouver Board of Trade Women's Leadership Circle Policy Subcommittee. For more info on the Women's Leadership Circle, visit boardoftrade.com/WLC.

The Women's Leadership Circle hosts a panel discussion on unconscious bias Jan. 25 as part of the popular Morning Leader event series. Learn more or reserve your tickets at boardoftrade.com/unconsciousbias.



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