



SOUNDING BOARD



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Labour shortages and economic recovery top priorities

RECOVERY | Survey of members identified key issues for local businesses

In September, the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade released the findings of a survey conducted by Mustel Group, intended to lay out the priorities for the business community in the federal election, and serve as a roadmap for the incoming government to craft policy that will support economic recovery.

For the region's business community, the top issues are the economy/economic recovery (44%) and the business environment (regulatory, tax burden, etc.) (34%). This was followed by the environment and climate change (30%), fiscal responsibility (29%), government ethics, honesty and leadership (26%) and taxes (22%).

Environment

The environment is a top issue for businesses, ranking third in

the list of most important issues. There is strong consensus among Greater Vancouver businesses (54%) that the incoming federal government should focus more on climate change.

Housing

There is also a strong consensus that the government should focus more on housing affordability, according to 60% of businesses that participated in the survey.

While housing is generally seen primarily as a personal issue, in Greater Vancouver it is a core business issue as well with 57% of businesses reporting difficulty hiring and retaining workers due to housing affordability issues.

Proof of Vaccination

Despite some protests, there is



widespread support for a vaccine certification system with 86% of businesses and 82% of the public in support.

Both businesses and the public see the primary benefits of a system of certifying COVID safety to be the avoidance of further lockdowns, ensuring the safety and health of workers, and providing consumer confidence in participating in activities.

Employment and Immigration

A significant majority (72%) of businesses support increasing efforts to attract highly skilled immigrants and over one third of businesses support increasing the rate of immigration.

Labour issues, such as the recruitment and retention of workers, are the most prevalent challenge businesses are facing as they recover from COVID-19,

with 50% of respondents indicating it is their key challenge.

Other issues

- 81% of businesses would like to see the incoming federal government do more to support the sustainable development of B.C.'s natural resources.
- 80% of businesses would like to see the incoming federal government continue to invest in public transit expansion projects in the region and 74% would like to see more done to prioritize new transit projects.
- 76% of businesses would like to see the incoming federal government increase the capacity of trade enabling infrastructure.
- 72% of businesses would like to see the incoming federal government support the tourism industry. SB

Marking the inaugural National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

RECONCILIATION | History of residential schools subject of renewed focus

The discovery of 215 unmarked graves at a former residential school in Kamloops was a watershed moment that resonated across Canada, and internationally. As a result of the findings, and subsequent discoveries at other sites, the

Federal Government announced that September 30, 2021, would be the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

In June, the Board of Trade hosted Regional Chief of the British Columbia Assembly of First Nations Chief Terry Teegee. During



his comments, Teegee addressed the graves that had recently been discovered, noting, "these

interventions were deliberate, and poverty was a desired outcome."

The Greater Vancouver Board of Trade is committed to reconciliation, providing a platform for Indigenous leaders to speak directly to the business community, training on issues of diversity and

inclusion through the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion (CCDI) and opportunities for Indigenous-led businesses to reach new markets.

We encourage our community to actively engage in reconciliation, not just on Sept. 30, but everyday. SB



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GROWTH | World Trade Centre Vancouver celebrates four years of success, new Global Partner

Accessing new markets key to growth

September 27 marked four years since World Trade Centre Vancouver at the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade launched the Trade Accelerator Program (TAP) in British Columbia, with the goal of increasing the export capacity of small and medium-sized businesses in our province.

To date, TAP has connected more than 300 B.C. businesses with 44 new international markets, increasing average export revenue growth by 75% within two years of program completion. Participants have shown remarkable resilience over the past year, crediting TAP with the creation of an average of 2 jobs per company during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Building on the remarkable success of the program, World Trade Centre Vancouver welcomed Purolator into their circle of Global Partners which includes Air Canada and Fasken LLP.

"Purolator is pleased to become the newest Global Partner of

World Trade Centre Vancouver as we work together to help companies grow domestically and internationally. With one of the country's most extensive transportation, logistics and supply chain networks, we simplify the process for companies by offering a single streamlined supply chain management solution," said Paul Merrick, General Manager, Western Canada, Purolator.

"Purolator has been a supporter of both the Trade Accelerator Program and our Integrated e-Commerce Essentials program for more than two years and this partnership reflects their ongoing commitment to growing our regional economy and supporting local businesses," said Austin Nairn, Executive Director of World Trade Centre Vancouver. "Building on the success of our Indigenous-led business cohort formed in partnership with the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Businesses, last week, we were delighted to launch the first Women-led TAP businesses



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Now more than ever, trade diversification is increasingly important as we help companies continue to grow, create jobs, and increase their productivity



cohort alongside the Women's Enterprise Centre."

TAP first launched in the Toronto region in 2015. Over the past six years, the program has helped more than 1,000 Canadian companies trade globally. Thanks to the support of the Province of British Columbia, the Government of Canada, and various private sector partners, the Program was brought to and has thrived in British Columbia.

"As we navigate through this pandemic, helping small and medium-sized businesses get a leg up is more important now than ever before," said George Chow, Minister of State for Trade. "As the Trade Accelerator Program continues to grow, more Metro Vancouver businesses will be able to expand their international market reach and support their local economy and communities."

"We are all inspired to see TAP

Alumni companies grow and thrive as a result of the Program. This is made possible thanks to the drive of B.C. SMEs and the outstanding support of partners in the public and private sector." Robin Dhir, World Trade Centre Vancouver Advisory Committee Chair

Some notable results to date:

- Hosted 21 TAP cohorts in six B.C. communities
- Graduated 306 qualified companies from across the province
- Coordinated 2,459 Mentorship Meetings with industry experts
- Helped alumni companies reach 44 countries around the globe

"Now more than ever, trade diversification is increasingly important as we help companies continue to grow, create jobs, and increase their productivity," added Bridgitte Anderson, President and CEO of the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade. "Companies and communities across British Columbia have and will continue to benefit from the Trade Accelerator Program (TAP)." **SB**

INSPIRATION | Stephen Gaskin One-to-one

A move to Vancouver led to a new appreciation for the outdoors

Welcome to the latest installment of Q&A, our regular series of one-to-ones with some of Greater Vancouver's leading business figures.

Our subject this week is Stephen Gaskin, Scotiabank Senior Vice President, BC & Yukon Region

What inspires you?

I am most inspired by people and their resiliency in overcoming tough circumstances. Originally, I was fascinated by people who undertook big and dangerous adventures. More recently, I've been most inspired by the incredible day-to-day stories of resiliency I have encountered having more serious and open conversations with individuals who would identify as BIPOC or LGBT+.

How do you relax?

Moving to B.C. from downtown Toronto in January has really inspired my wife and I to get out and enjoy nature. We are always looking for the next great trail

to hike. I also love sailing, golf, music, and good wine.

What was your first job?

It was in the Canadian Forces Reserves where I rose to the 'lofty' rank of Corporal. The experience exposed me to adventure and challenge early in life and built confidence. This limited experience has given me great respect for anyone who has chosen service as a full-time calling. I belong to our Veterans Network at Scotiabank and support employers actively recruiting individuals who have served.

What do you like most about doing business in Greater Vancouver?

There's a sense of possibility here that creates this amazing energy. There is an entrepreneurial spirit that is unmatched anywhere else. I see that spirit in the customers I visit, the community organizations we partner with and the community leaders I'm



Stephen Gaskin

privileged to meet.

What might (someone) be surprised to know about you?

I mentioned I like music previously. What might surprise people is I love the Canadian rock trio Rush. I have been to 58 live shows around the world.

What do you think Greater Vancouver needs more of?

Fewer barriers to advancement and increased access to opportunities. We need newcomers to feel at home faster, and we need

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to remove barriers to advancement for disadvantaged groups. More people participating fully in our economy will benefit all of us.

What do you think Greater Vancouver needs less of?

Red tape in every aspect of life. Moving my family interprovincially was so paper-driven and I encountered so many slow and tedious processes. I find this the same when I try to solve business issues. Despite this, there is still no place I'd rather be.

If you could leave one professional legacy behind, what would it be?

I hope employees, customers, and community members I've interacted with found me kind and respectful always – even in situations where I needed to be direct and honest. Even better if they were inspired to do the same – especially in these difficult times.

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