



The Chamber
Greater Kingston Chamber of Commerce

January 2025 • Year 1 #1

we are

kingston!

Kingston's voice for Business since 1841

Influence • Connect • Support

THIS IS US



The Chamber
Greater Kingston Chamber of Commerce

01 | Access to all three levels of government

Offer 50+ unique engagement opportunities annually

02

03 | Provide relevant business resources and tools

Increase your brand visibility

04

05 | Contribute to building the unique local economy

Welcome to the Inaugural Edition of We Are Kingston! Business Magazine



We're thrilled to introduce We Are Kingston!, a business magazine created for our vibrant business community and beyond. This initiative has truly been a labour of love, and you might wonder: why now? Simply put, we recognized the need for a dedicated space to regularly highlight, share, and celebrate the remarkable achievements of our incredible community. Delivered directly to your inbox each quarter, the next edition is set to arrive at the end of March—stay tuned!

This first edition also shines a spotlight on the work your Chamber accomplished in 2024—supporting, connecting, and influencing all three levels of government on behalf of your businesses.

As Ontario's oldest Chamber, established in 1841, we have a long history of championing local businesses. Like the resilient business owners we serve, we've navigated both highs and lows.

As a member-driven organization, we continually strive to meet your needs, offer valuable services that strengthen your businesses, and advocate for the issues that matter most.

Of course, Kingston's business community is diverse. What works for a business in Williamsville may not apply to those in the downtown core, or in the west or east ends of the city. This diversity is both our challenge and our strength, which is why initiatives like this magazine are so important. They bring us together and remind us that, despite our differences, we are all part of a single, interconnected ecosystem.

Here's to you—the dreamers, the doers, and the difference-makers. Here's to Kingston. We are Kingston!

KAREN CROSS
Editor & CEO

STAFF



Karen Cross
Chief Executive Officer



Vitor Brumatti
Manager of Communications, PR & Member Experience



Zermaan Khan
Business Development & Member Success



Geoff Elliot
Marketing & Events Coordinator



Ava Ferguson
Business Data & Operations Specialist

a message from the Board Chair



Greetings!

On behalf of the Greater Kingston Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, I am delighted to welcome you all to the first edition of *We are Kingston!*

As communities face unprecedented challenges with the shifting economic, social and political landscapes both locally and globally, businesses and organizations have shown incredible resilience becoming more nimble, collaborative and innovative than ever before.

While the Greater Kingston Chamber of Commerce has been serving the Kingston business community for 184 years, these changes have led to a shift that necessitates the Chamber to be increasingly adaptive and responsive to the varying needs of businesses. Our new strategic direction reflects a holistic approach by the Chamber to be the ***Unified Voice of Business while Planning for Growth and Building Community all through a Culture of Collaboration.***

The dedication and governance of the volunteer Board of Directors and the efforts of the staff team led by Karen Cross have made it a year of remarkable achievements.

We continue to liaise with all levels of government and community partners to address workforce, housing, healthcare access and other infrastructure needs that impact the economic and social progress of our vibrant city. With a focus of supporting the local business community, building valuable connections through engagement opportunities, and offering resources to help businesses prosper

In closing, I share the Great Law of the Haudenosaunee, also known as the Iroquois Constitution: *"In our every deliberation, we must consider the impact of our decisions on the next seven generations"*.

Collectively and with intentionality, we can work towards building a thriving community that has a positive impact on the coming generations!

Thank you,

SUNITA GUPTA

2024-5 Board Chair
Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)
Consultant, Co-Founder,
I2C Immigration Consulting

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Sunita Gupta [Chair]

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Consultant, Co-Founder, I2C Immigration Consulting



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Lawyer, Cunningham Swan, Carty, Little & Bonham LLP



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Regional Director of Sales, Diamond Hotels Management Inc.



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Vice President, Group Operations, Empire Life



Bittu George [Board Member]

President, Friends of the Penitentiary Museum



Andy Larin [Board Member]

CEO and CTO, allCare I.T.



Adam Rondeau [Board Member]

CEO, Daft Brewing

Promote your business to the entire Kingston business community!



1,800+
Newsletter subscribers

90,000+
Social media content impressions



14,400+
Social Media followers



327,723+
Total views on website annually

37%
Average email open rate



16,000+
Total views in the member directory per month



Become a Greater Kingston Chamber of Commerce partner today.

Contact our team!



613-548-4453



info@kingstonchamber.ca



www.kingstonchamber.ca

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STRATEGIC PLAN 2025 - 2029

Culture of Collaboration

Objective: to collaborate with partners to further the Chamber's strategic objectives

Strategies:

- Enhance and strategically develop networking and connection opportunities for members and prospective members
- Develop targeted collaboration and strategic cross-industry partnerships
- Foster member-to-member collaboration, creating peer learning opportunities and developing programs to promote the value of being a part of the Chamber

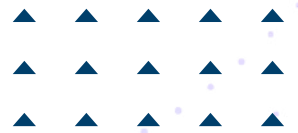


Unified Voice of Business

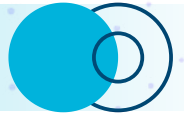
Objective: to be a leader in engagement and alignment with policy needs of members, and advocate for the business needs of organizations

Strategies:

- Liaise with all levels of government, industry associations, and other regulatory bodies
- Develop tools and mechanisms for engagement and input from businesses, government departments and nonprofits to better understand the issues that are important to them
- Continually prioritize actions, develop and assess strategic approaches to tackle these issues
- Engage members and partners, developing collective efforts to implement plans for advocacy and government relations



Building Community



Objective: to increase awareness and communicate our values, being seen as the Chamber for everyone

Strategies:

- Develop and implement targeted, multi-layer marketing plan, testimonials, member stories, to increase awareness of the Chamber, its services and programs
- Incorporate an equity, diversity and inclusion lens into all our work, utilizing demographic data, inclusion surveys, and grow representation in Chamber leadership and membership
- Connect with Indigenous communities to build relationships, learning, partnerships with Indigenous-led organizations, and start the journey towards Truth & Reconciliation
- Co-create events and programs with businesses of all sizes and sectors, including underrepresented, groups to ensure they see themselves in all Chamber initiatives



Planning for Growth

Objective: To be financially sustainable and build a strong operational foundation in order to meet our mission and objectives

Strategies:

- Develop business plans to enable the Chamber to reach a state of financial and operational stability, factoring in risk management and scenario planning
- Grow revenue through maintaining and growing a diverse and inclusive membership
- Explore and develop plans for diversification of revenue, building on leading practices and models that have been successful in other communities
- Invest in board, staff and leadership development and succession planning to ensure sustained operational capacity.

9 Essential Questions

Every Business Owner Should Ask about Meta Ads Manager

In today's digital landscape, leveraging platforms like Meta Ads Manager is essential for businesses aiming to thrive online. However, ensuring that your digital assets are well-managed and secure requires asking the right questions. Let's deep dive into the crucial questions every business owner should consider:

1. Who owns my digital assets? It's paramount to clarify ownership rights over your digital assets. Understanding who holds ownership ensures transparency and accountability in your digital marketing endeavors.

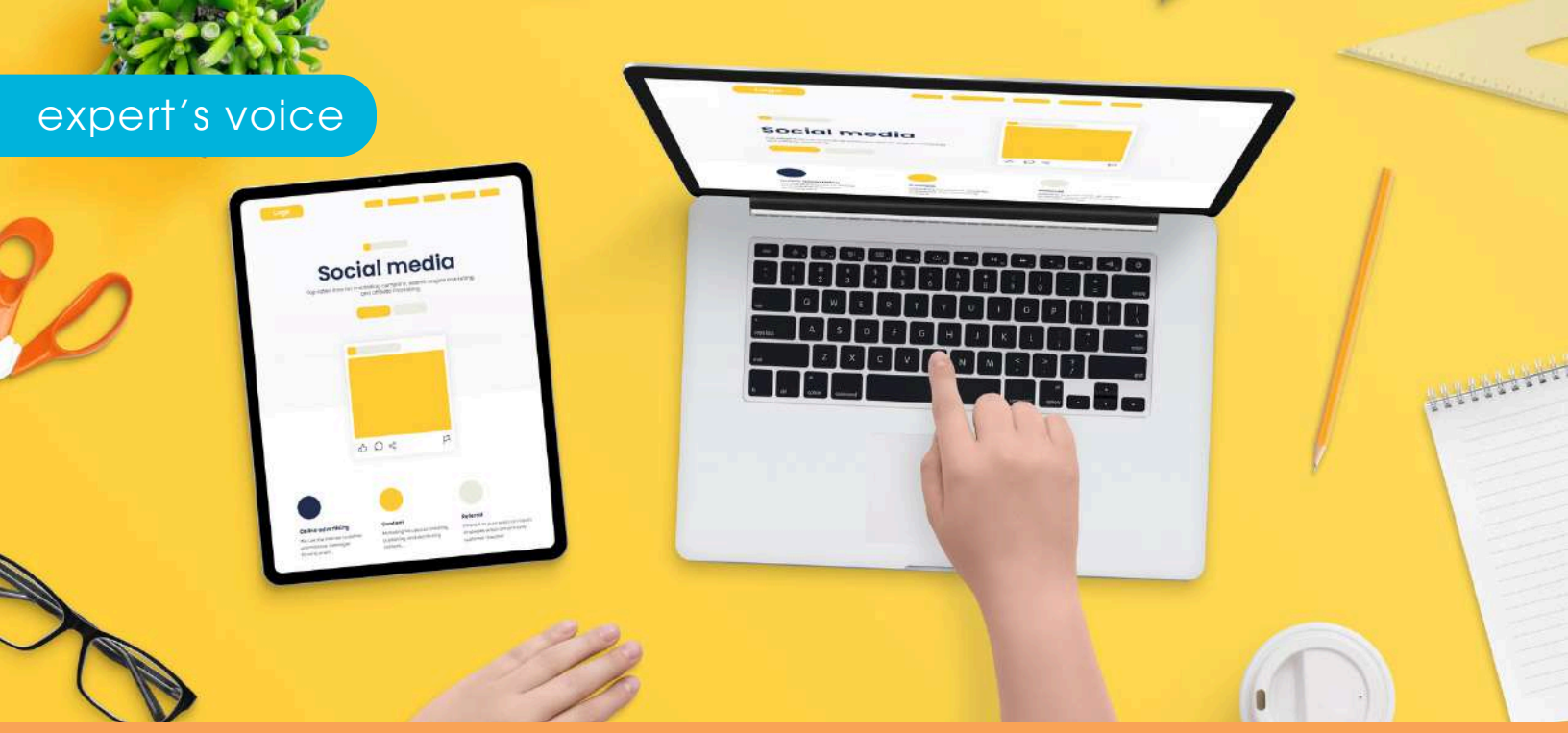
2. What are META business portfolios? Meta business portfolios serve as centralized hubs for managing various aspects of your online presence, including ad accounts, pages, and more. These portfolios streamline management and offer insights into your digital footprint.

3. Why do META business portfolios have a number, what does it mean? The numerical representation associated with business portfolios is a unique identifier assigned to each portfolio.

4. How is META business portfolio different from a Facebook page? While a Facebook page represents a specific entity or brand on the platform, a business portfolio encompasses a broader scope, including multiple pages, ad accounts, and other assets, offering comprehensive control and oversight.

5. What is a community manager? A community manager plays a pivotal role in fostering engagement and managing interactions within your online community. They oversee communication, address inquiries, and uphold your brand's reputation across digital platforms.

6. Who is my page's community manager? Identifying the individual responsible for community management ensures clear lines of communication and accountability for nurturing your online community effectively.



7. Who has access to my Meta Business Suite? Understanding the roster of individuals with access to your Meta Business Suite is crucial for safeguarding sensitive data and maintaining control over your digital assets. Regularly review and manage access permissions to mitigate security risks.

8. Is my two-factor authentication (2FA) on? Implementing two-factor authentication adds an extra layer of security to your Meta accounts, significantly reducing the risk of unauthorized access and potential breaches.

9. Who can access my two-factor authentication? Limiting access to two-factor authentication settings to authorized personnel enhances security measures and minimizes the likelihood of tampering or misuse.

Navigating Meta Ads Manager and ensuring the security and efficacy of your digital assets requires proactive review and vigilance. By asking these essential questions and actively managing your digital presence, you empower your business to thrive in the dynamic realm of digital marketing.



Jennifer Baker of JBC Pushing Digital Boundaries

ABOUT THE CHAMBER

We are the Greater Kingston Chamber of Commerce, one of Canada's oldest Chambers of Commerce. Though what we do and the way we do it has changed in 184 years, our core purpose remains the same: we champion the cause of business in Kingston and the surrounding area.

We build powerful connections that help our businesses grow and succeed. Through unique programming and advocacy, we bring together 650 organizations into a united front for business.



MISSION

We are committed to stimulating the growth and prosperity of the local community. We will influence public policy, be the catalyst for the connectivity, and provide unique competitive advantages for our members.

VISION

To be the indispensable partner for business sustainability and growth in the Greater Kingston region.



Mind the Gap:

3 Costly Risks to Navigate in Your Business Succession

Over the next decade, Canadian business owners will contribute to one of the largest wealth transitions in history.¹ This transition is filled with both unique challenges and opportunities such as tax incentives like the Lifetime Capital Gains Exemption and new Employee Ownership Trusts, family dynamics, and external factors like AI advancements. Creating a well-defined process to ensure smooth transitions is essential to avoid costly, disruptive exits.

Despite its importance, only 1 in 10 business owners have a formal succession plan. Here are three costly mistakes to navigate in your business succession:

1. Delaying the Process and Starting with the “How” Instead of the “Why”

Succession planning should ideally begin 5-10 years before an exit, but many owners delay the process due to the constant pressure of running their business. In some cases, succession planning is only addressed when a crisis arises—such as a critical illness—restricting options and diminishing the potential value of the business during a sale.

To avoid this, start by focusing on the why before diving into the how. Understand your values, vision, and the long-term goals of your family and business partners. This discovery process provides a foundation for your plan, clarifying what's negotiable and non-negotiable during your exit. When the planning process begins with personal goals rather than tax efficiency or financial details, you'll create a smoother succession that aligns with your vision. Involving all stakeholders from the outset helps minimize conflict and ensures everyone is on the same page.

2. Underestimating Tax Exposure and the 5 D's

Selling or transitioning your business involves a significant tax consideration. The Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), could take a substantial share of the sale if you haven't planned ahead. Begin the process at least two years before your exit to ensure you can maximize your tax efficiency options.

Additionally, business successions often span several years, so it's essential to secure airtight agreements that address potential disruptions. This includes the possibility of death, disability, disagreement, departure, or divorce (the 5 D's). Proper planning will reduce surprises and help protect your business and the value you have created.



3. Neglecting Non-Financial Capital

While business owners often focus on the financial aspects of succession—such as clean financials, growth potential, and business systems—they frequently overlook their non-financial capital. This includes the intangible aspects like personal relationships, unique skills, business philosophies, and leadership styles that have contributed to the success of the company. These elements are crucial to the business's identity and culture and must be passed on to your successors.

By creating a plan for transferring this non-financial capital, you ensure that the new leadership can carry forward the legacy of your business. These intangible assets, though harder to quantify, are vital for the future success and sustainability of the company.

In conclusion, effective succession planning requires proactive preparation, alignment of values, and attention to both financial and non-financial elements. By avoiding these costly mistakes, you can ensure a smooth and successful transition for your business, preserving its legacy and value for the future.

Notes:

1. [Women to inherit trillions in the 'great horizontal wealth transfer'](#) | [Financial Post](#)

To learn more, you can reach Elizabeth Teleki at elizabeth@parkplaceadvisory.ca



Elizabeth Teleki of Park Place Advisory

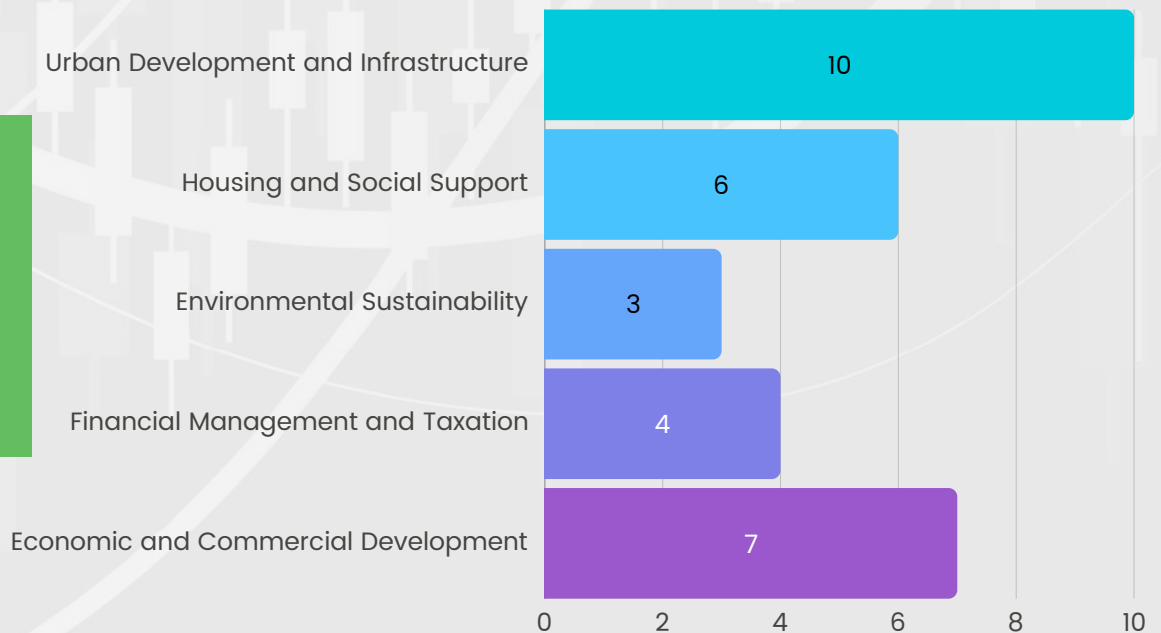
City Council

Advocating for Kingston's Business Community: *A Legacy of 184 Years*

The Greater Kingston Chamber of Commerce has proudly championed the interests of Kingston's business community since 1841. By following the work of City Council and identifying the motions most relevant to local businesses, the Chamber ensures that decisions impacting employers and workers remain transparent and aligned with community needs. This ongoing advocacy reinforces accountability within the council, while fostering a collaborative environment that supports economic growth and resilience.

As a member-driven organization, the Chamber serves as a powerful voice for businesses, engaging with all three levels of government to prioritize business concerns. Through strategic partnerships, policy advocacy, and community initiatives, the Chamber empowers its members to thrive while focusing on their daily operations. With a mission to stimulate growth and prosperity, the Chamber continues to be a trusted ally, amplifying the voices of its members and advancing a stronger, more vibrant Kingston business community.

The topics most discussed and voted on by the City Council in 2024



2024 Voting records on Business Issues



MAYOR BRYAN PATERSON
Mayor



COUNCILLOR GARY OOSTERHOF
District 1, Countryside



COUNCILLOR PAUL CHAVES
District 2, Loyalist-Cataraqui



COUNCILLOR LISA OSANIC
District 3, Collins-Bayridge



COUNCILLOR WENDY STEPHEN
District 4, Lakeside



COUNCILLOR DON AMOS
District 5, Portsmouth



COUNCILLOR JIMMY HASSAN
District 6, Trillium



COUNCILLOR BRANDON TOZZO
District 7, Kingscourt-Rideau



COUNCILLOR JEFF MCLAREN
District 8, Meadowbrook-Strathcona



COUNCILLOR VINCENT CINANNI
District 9, Williamsville



COUNCILLOR CONNY GLENN
District 10, Sydenham



COUNCILLOR GREGORY RIDGE
District 11, King's Town



COUNCILLOR RYAN BOEHME
District 12, Pittsburgh

In Favour	Against	Absent
28	0	2
27	0	3
30	0	0
27	3	0
30	0	0
29	0	1
30	0	0
28	0	2
29	1	0
30	0	0
28	0	2
29	0	1
26	0	4

Mental Health in the Workplace

Mental health continues to be a hot topic in all industries and yet many people question its relevance within the workplace. As a Registered Psychotherapist, I am biased towards believing that it is very relevant. As a pragmatist, I am biased towards believing that supporting mental health needs to align with business goals. Thankfully, research shows that supporting employees' mental health significantly contributes to achieving business goals.

Simply put, mental health is a person's overall state of wellbeing; emotionally, cognitively, socially and behaviourally. While one third of Canadians struggle with mental health issues, less than 25% of them feel comfortable talking to their employers about their overall wellness.

Looking at this through my pragmatist lens, research shows poor mental health in the workplace hurts the bottom line.

This can happen through increased absenteeism, higher turnover, reduced productivity and reduced quality of work. The Canadian economy loses an estimated \$50 billion per year due to mental health issues. Alternatively, research shows that each dollar spent on employee wellness sees an ROI of \$1.62 – \$4.10. The ROI range is significantly impacted by how long an organization has invested in employee wellness.

This leads to the question of how to support mental health in the workplace. Blindly throwing money at this topic is not wise and can build resentment when efforts do not produce the desired results. First, it is important to know your team, what they value, how they feel appreciation and what their needs are. Knowing your team can help determine how to support their overall wellbeing.



Means of supporting employee wellness either aim to reduce negatives or increase positives. Reducing negatives can involve developing Peer Support Teams, providing trainings and debriefing difficult situations. Increasing positives can involve having lunch time activities, frequently showing appreciation and expressing interest in employees' personal lives. Additionally, encouraging the use of benefits, vacation and sick time can help employees rejuvenate themselves. Knowing about resources in our community, such as Resolve Counselling Services, also helps when an employee needs more support than the workplace can offer.

A person's work is a major part of who they are and where they spend their time. A workplace that supports employees' mental health not only results in improved overall wellbeing, but also helps propel a workplace towards their goals.



Kaleb J. Verk of Resolve Counselling Services

The Social Benefits of Businesses

There is no doubt that businesses and their well being are critical to our community. But most often the benefits of business are viewed through a very narrow lens of jobs and money. While no one will argue the importance of that lens, when we widen it what we see is how important business is to the social fabric of our communities.

They Build Identity

Businesses, especially small local ones create a landscape that is recognizable to locals and tourists alike. They are a reflection of the community – owned, operated and maintained by local entrepreneurs and employees, and something of which we are often proud.

When you walk or drive down a street in Kingston the collection of shops, restaurants, offices, and other businesses creates an atmosphere that you immediately recognize. Often in other cities I'll meet someone who once lived or visited Kingston who has a fond remembrance of a local restaurant or business. It becomes a touch point for both of us in our conversation.

They Are Where We Meet

No doubt everyone reading this article has at one point been doing some shopping and bumped into someone they know, catching up on the latest news. And most of us have made friends or met our partners through work. According to most estimates 43-45% of people have met their spouse through work.



Businesses whether we are customers or employees of them, provide us with a meeting ground to create connections and build bonds. Let's face it we'd be lonelier and less informed without them.

They Give Back

Businesses and their owners tend to be involved with their communities. 52% of small business donate to charity. Whether it's donations to the food bank, participating in the United Way Campaign, or giving a portion of their earnings to a good cause they support research, healthcare, and some of those in greatest need. Businesses are also the ones who most often sponsor, organize and host local events directly or via community organizations – events that create a vibrant community.

Think for a moment about the music, sports and arts events you've attended that all have likely had a business sponsor.



Conny Glenn of Work Wellness Ergonomic Specialists Inc. and Councillor-Sydenham District City of Kingston

Influence

HON. RECHIE VALDEZ

In November 2023, The Chamber's staff and board members hosted a visit from Hon. Rechie Valdez, Minister for Small Business. An opportunity to share our members' priorities.



MS. NANCY HEALEY

In February 2024, The Chamber staff and members held a Round Table Discussion with Ms. Nancy Healey, Commissioner for Employers at the Canada Employment Insurance Commission. A very informative meeting for all participants

ADVOCACY DAY AT QUEEN'S PARK

The Chamber team attended Advocacy Day at Queen's Park in February. At the event the team met with a number of key ministers and politicians from all parties, sharing the needs of our business communities.



HILL DAY

GKCC staff Karen Cross and Zerman Khan attended Hill Day in Ottawa in April 2024 representing our business community. They met with various ministers and advocated on behalf of Chamber members and our city.



AGM & CONVENTION - CANADIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



GKCC staff attended the Chamber of Commerce Executive of Canada and the Canadian Chamber of Commerce AGM & Convention on October 15-19 in Halifax, NS. “We brought Kingston's business community perspective on their needs as we connected with our colleagues across Canada. We advocated on matters that supported the needs of our members!” Karen Cross, CEO of the Greater Kingston Chamber of Commerce.



ONTARIO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE'S ANNUAL BUSINESS CONFIDENCE SURVEY

Inform the 2025 Ontario Economic Report

SHARE YOUR VIEWS WITH QUEEN'S PARK

Deadline: Thursday, November 14, 2024

Take the 5 minute Survey | #OER2025

GKCC promoted the priorities of Kingston's business community by publicizing and encouraging participation in the Ontario Chamber of Commerce's Annual Business Confidence Survey.

PHYSICIAN RECRUITMENT WORKING GROUP

"The Chamber is proud to be involved in the Physician Recruitment Working Group. A huge thank you to Craig Desjardins for his outstanding leadership, and to Dajana Turkovic for her incredible organizational skills – keeping us all on track is no small feat! I'm also deeply thankful to my fellow group members: Allan Katz, Cathy Hamilton, Dr. Elaine Ma, Hong Chen, Dr. Joy Hataley, and Dr. Veronica Legnini. Your insights and collaboration have helped me better understand the challenges we face, and together, we're making a difference."
Karen Cross - CEO of Greater Kingston Chamber of Commerce



HOUSING

The Chamber supports local business growth and prosperity. With housing shortages impacting talent retention, we backed the high-growth scenario from the Watson & Associates report. A strong housing plan is vital for Kingston's growth. We urged council to adopt this approach and welcomed collaboration on the city's future.



CANADA POST

The Greater Kingston Chamber of Commerce supported the message sent in the joint letter from Canada's provincial, territorial and national chambers to the Minister of Labor and Seniors and the Minister of Public Services and Procurement and the Lieutenant of Quebec, which asked them to intervene and get the postal service back up and running for Canadians.



TRANSPORT

The Greater Kingston Chamber of Commerce (GKCC), in collaboration with its partners—City of Kingston, KEDCO, Tourism Kingston, and the Kingston Airport Partners—has been advocating for the return of this vital service for several years. This transportation link is essential for both the business community and leisure travelers to conveniently connect to Toronto.



Greater Kingston Chamber of Commerce was a signatory to the Joint Letter to Ministers on Possible Labour Disruption on Class I Railways. Acting together with the other Chambers of Commerce to advocate for our members and ensure that the activities of our business community were not affected.

GKCC was also a signatory to the Letter to Minister Steven MacKinnon Regarding Potential Air Canada Labour Disruption. This letter expresses the concerns of our business community and seeks ways to avoid the disruption of essential services to our businesses.



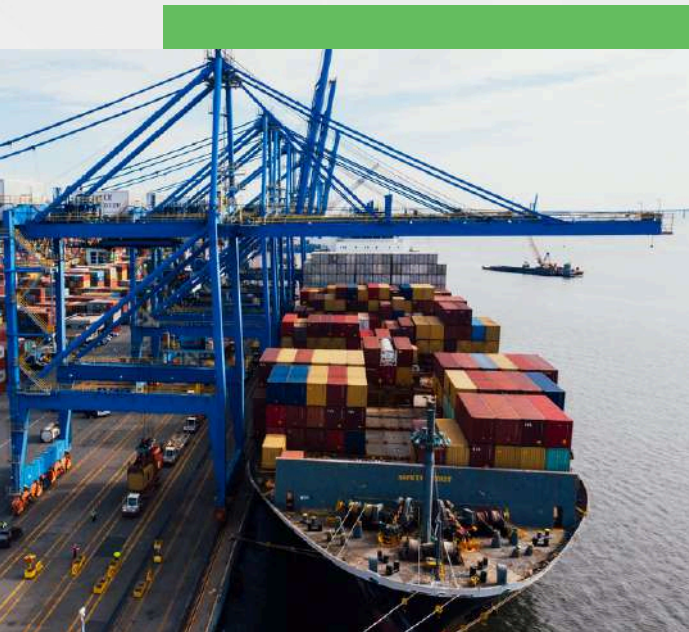
TRANSPORT



The Greater Kingston Chamber of Commerce partnered with Kingston Transit to offer all members and their 18,000 employees access to the Employer Transpass Program. Through this partnership, members offered their employees the benefit of purchasing a regular Kingston Transit monthly pass at a discount.

Along with 89 Chambers of Commerce and industry associations and federations, the Greater Kingston Chamber of Commerce signed a joint letter to Minister of Labour Steven MacKinnon regarding labour disruption at Port of Montreal.

An indefinite strike could have impacted 40% of the St. Lawrence's container handling capacity. It could have caused problems such as accelerating inflation, increasing costs for businesses and consumers across the country and seriously damaging Canada's reputation as a reliable trading partner.



Along with 116 Chambers of Commerce and industry associations and federations, the Greater Kingston Chamber of Commerce signed a joint letter to Ministers MacKinnon and Anand Regarding the Shutdown of British Columbia Ports.

This could have substantially impacted the exports of Canada's largest producers in sectors such as agriculture, forestry, mining and manufacturing, while at the same time it would have affected imports of consumer goods used by Canadian families in their daily lives.

AI and Business:

Unlocking Opportunities for Small Businesses

In 2017, I had the privilege of leading the launch of the Business Analytics program at St. Lawrence College here in Kingston. It was a rewarding experience to teach students about analytics and artificial intelligence (AI), guiding them in building statistical and AI models while supporting their career growth. One of my proudest moments was when my former students launched the Big Data and AI Club in 2018, culminating in the successful execution of their first Artificial Intelligence Conference that same year.

That year also marked a pivotal moment in my own journey with AI. During an analytics training session hosted by a major global tech company in Ottawa, I was introduced to an advanced analytics platform that required minimal coding. This platform empowered individuals with limited technical expertise to create powerful predictive models.

It was then that I realized the future of AI and data analytics would be shaped by platforms and applications capable of performing a wide range of tasks—from simple to complex—enabling users to achieve sophisticated outcomes through simple inputs. Ginni Rometty, the former CEO of IBM, reinforced this perspective in January 2019 when she stated, "Because of Artificial Intelligence, 100% of jobs will be different."

Today, the rise of Generative AI applications has brought this vision closer to reality. For small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs), this presents a unique opportunity to reimagine how value is created, delivered, and captured. While many are fascinated by tools like ChatGPT, Perplexity, Claude, and various productivity applications, others are still navigating how these advancements fit into their business models.



Consider the potential for a local café to integrate an AI-driven scheduling tool to optimize staff shifts, reducing errors and improving employee satisfaction. Or imagine a retailer leveraging AI-powered customer analytics to tailor promotions, resulting in higher sales. Another scenario could involve automating marketing efforts using an AI agent to save time, reduce expenses, increase returns on marketing investments, and enhance customer engagement. These examples highlight practical ways AI can empower SMBs to innovate and thrive in their communities. In fact, a local organization I supported last year reported a productivity boost of over 50% after integrating AI into a specific workflow within their operations.

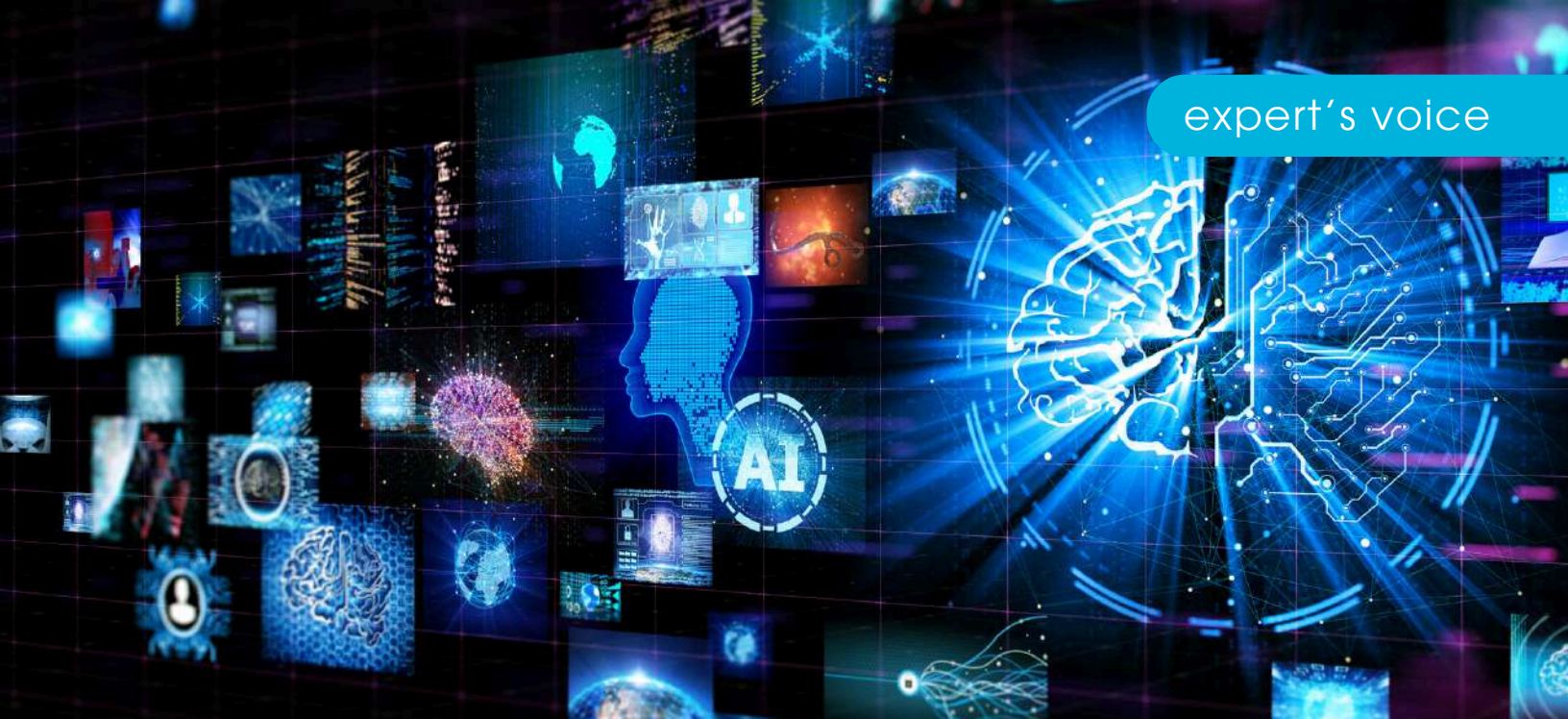
However, as we embrace AI, it's critical to approach its integration ethically and securely. For businesses, this means ensuring transparency in AI-driven decisions, being mindful of potential biases—or, in some cases, hallucinations—protecting customer data, and addressing security vulnerabilities.

Responsible adoption builds trust with customers and ensures that AI serves as an enabler rather than a risk.

As a small business owner and Chief AI Officer at Informanos Analytics & Artificial Intelligence, I often share two key recommendations with business owners exploring AI adoption.

First, clarify your “why,” “where,” “what,” and “how”:

- Why do you need to adopt AI?
- Where in your value chain can it make the biggest impact?
- What business goals and objectives will be achieved by integrating AI?
- What are the risks associated with adoption, and how can these risks be mitigated?
- How will it save time, reduce costs, or increase revenue?
- How will change management be handled within the organization?
- How will your customers be impacted?



Second, start with low-hanging fruit—implement one or two Generative AI productivity tools to achieve quick wins. These short-term successes not only build momentum but also foster buy-in as you strategically integrate AI into your organization.

It's important to acknowledge that AI adoption can feel overwhelming, especially with concerns about costs, technical expertise, or ethical implications. Fortunately, Kingston offers local resources and expertise to help businesses take the first step, including access to support, training, and, where applicable, funding opportunities.

As Eric Hoffer said, “In a world of change, the learners shall inherit the earth, while the learned shall find themselves perfectly suited for a world that no longer exists.” For small and medium-sized business owners, the challenge is not whether the value they bring to the marketplace can now be replaced by AI, but whether their competitors—leveraging AI for both short-term wins and long-term strategy—will outpace them in the marketplace.

The journey to integrating AI doesn't have to be daunting. With the right mindset, tools, support, and a commitment to ethical practices, small and medium-sized businesses can unlock incredible opportunities, ensuring they remain competitive in this rapidly evolving landscape.



Patrick Egbunonu of Informanos

2025 Partnership Opportunities

A programming
with over 50
events throughout
the year


Expand your network
and connect with
business leaders and
decision-makers

Highlight your
business to the
entire Kingston
community

READY TO START GROWING?

Become a Greater Kingston Chamber
of Commerce partner today.

Contact our team!

 613-484-3334

 info@kingstonchamber.ca

 www.kingstonchamber.ca

Cyber Threats:

How Businesses Can Protect Themselves

The risks of online scams, fraud, data breaches and data leaks are real for every business. We're increasingly seeing security breaches and compromises infiltrate private companies at all sizes. As a lawyer in our community advising private companies in areas of information technology (IT) and privacy law, I often advise owners how they can protect their business from these unique threats.

The first line of defense is in establishing reliable IT systems, policies and practices. That includes getting employees trained to know your legal obligations, comply with law, and avoid phishing scams and fraudsters. If you do end up in trouble, having appropriate cyber insurance in place can help cover your losses and even assist you and your IT team in containing and mitigating threats.

Your key employees also need to know the timing protocol required by your insurance policy to be able to access the policy, not void it, and not risk loss of evidence or information.

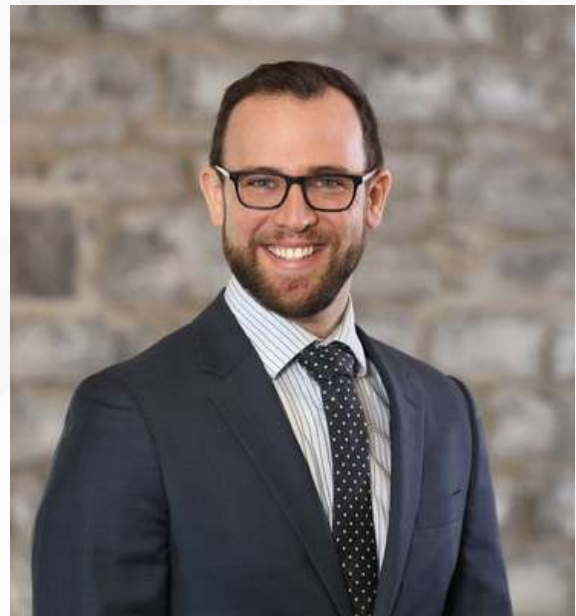
Stay up to date with changes in the IT and privacy laws. We are trying to make this easier for business owners and managers through timely advice and public posts. The big topic recently in this area is the pending Bill C-27, which could seriously increase the regulatory exposure businesses face. Presently, businesses collecting personal information in the course of commercial activity are subject to the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA). PIPEDA contraventions are punishable on conviction by a fine of up to \$100,000.



This is posed to change with Bill-C-27's introduction of the Consumer Privacy Protection Act (CPPA), which contains administrative monetary penalties up to 3% of gross global revenue or \$10 million (serious contraventions penalties increase to 5% of gross global revenue or \$25 million).

Bill-C-27 is also introducing Canada's first artificial intelligence legislation with the Artificial Intelligence and Data Act (AIDA), which would regulate use and trade in AI. These new laws may come into force as early as 2025, and businesses should monitor status and prepare to implement compliance measures if passed. The good news is that our community punches above our weight in taking on these issues.

We have a wealth of IT management experts, cyber security insurance providers, law enforcement and legal professionals who are coordinated and current on best practices and can help you navigate these waters – if you need help you don't have to look far.



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A Very Brief History

of Sonic Branding

Depending on how you define it, sonic branding goes back thousands of years to vendors chanting in the streets to sell their wares. But if we're going to limit it to mass media, we go back to 1926. At the time, Wheaties was a failing product. That is, until they decided to sing about it. That first radio jingle sent sales through the roof, making Wheaties the household name it still is today.

The first sonic logo came just a few years later with NBC. They needed a distinctive identifier to close each radio program. Due to the technical limitations of the time it had to be played live, and was done so on dinner chimes. At the time, its parent company was the General Electric Company, so the notes became G-E-C, which they've been using ever since.

Over the next few decades music became a powerful driver in radio and television advertising. In the latter half of the twentieth century it seemed like every commercial had custom music. But by the turn of the millennium, brand music was starting to burn out.

This was not for a lack of efficacy. It's not like people stop liking music. It was a lack of authenticity. The jingle became a genre instead of a medium.

But today we find ourselves in the midst of a sonic renaissance. Today everyone knows the McDonald's Ba-da-bap-bap-bah. Or that cool Ta-Dum sound from Netflix. Locally, you probably know the music of Shaw Insurance or Pleasure Island. In the last fifteen to twenty years, brands have built a new relationship with music.

But what changed?

Part of it was evolving technology. In addition to traditional media like radio and television, we have the rise of podcasts, electric vehicles, UX and UI sounds, voice interface, and even TikTok. If all your brand assets are visual, what happens when you find yourself in an audio-first medium? When you can't see the brand, you have to be able to hear the brand.



Today it's not just about sonic logos or jingles, but a whole brand sound. Sonic branding uses music, voice, and sound the way visual branding uses logo, colour, and typeface.

But what's really driving sonic branding is authenticity. Jingles burned out at the turn of the millennium because they all sounded the same. Back then a composer might take your name and slogan and make a silly song out of it. Today brand sounds are created based on the brand's unique traits and values, creating a sonic identity that is just as distinct and consistent as the visual.

But it goes further than that. Quite often, visuals convey information, but sounds convey emotion. With sound you have to delve deeper into the brand to find its unique emotional signature. This enables brands to create new connections, not just with their media, but with their audience. The deeper you can connect with yourself, the deeper you can connect with others. That's true in personal relationships, and it's true in business.

Everyone's got a visual identity. If you want to future-proof your brand and build a deeper connection, it's time to figure out how you sound.



John Sanfilippo of SoundWise

Connect

STATE OF THE CITY

Jan. 9th,
2024



Mental Health Panel Discussion

Jan. 23rd,
2024



Feb. 15th,
2024

2024 Economic Outlook



Feb. 28th, Mar. 7th
& Mar. 28th, 2024

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Monthly



Chamber
on tap

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Apr. 11th,
2024

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



Apr. 13th,
2024

The Local Show 2024



**NOMINEE
RECEPTION**

May. 2nd,
2024



Meet the nominees

Hospitality Award

- C C C
- C C
- C C
- C C

Social Impact Award

- C C
-
- C C

New Business of the Year Award

- C
- C C
- C C C

Skilled Trades Award

- C C C C C
- C C C C
- C

Young Entrepreneur Award

- G G G A A A
- A A A A
- A A A A A A
- A A A A

Customer Experience Award

-
- A A
- A A
- AA A A
- A A A
- A A
- A A
- A A A A A A
- A A
- A A A A A A
- A A A A A A
- A A A A A A
- A A A A A A
- A A A A A A

Business Person of the Year Award

- G G G A A A
- A A A A A A
- A A A A A A

Non-Profit Award

- A A A
- A A
- A A A A
- A A
- A A A A A A

Arts and Culture Award

- A A
- A A A
- R A A A A A

Employer of the Year Award

- A
- A A A A
- AA AA A
- A A A A A
- A A A
- A
- A A A
-



K KINGSTON BUSINESS AWARDS

May 16th,
2024

connect



Meet the Winners

Hospitality Award

D D D



Social Impact



New Business of the Year

H



Young Entrepreneur

D D D D



Skilled Trades

C C C



Customer Experience

A A A A



Non-Profit

C



Arts & Culture

i A A A A A



Employer of the Year

C C C



Business Person of the Year

A A A A A A



KINGSTON BUSINESS AWARDS

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Jun. 20th, 2024



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Sep. 9th, 2024






Sep. 19th,
2024

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Sep. 26th,
2024


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Oct 6, 2024

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Oct. 24th,
2024

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SUMMIT**



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Dialogue: Minority-
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Nov. 7th,
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Dec. 5th,
2024

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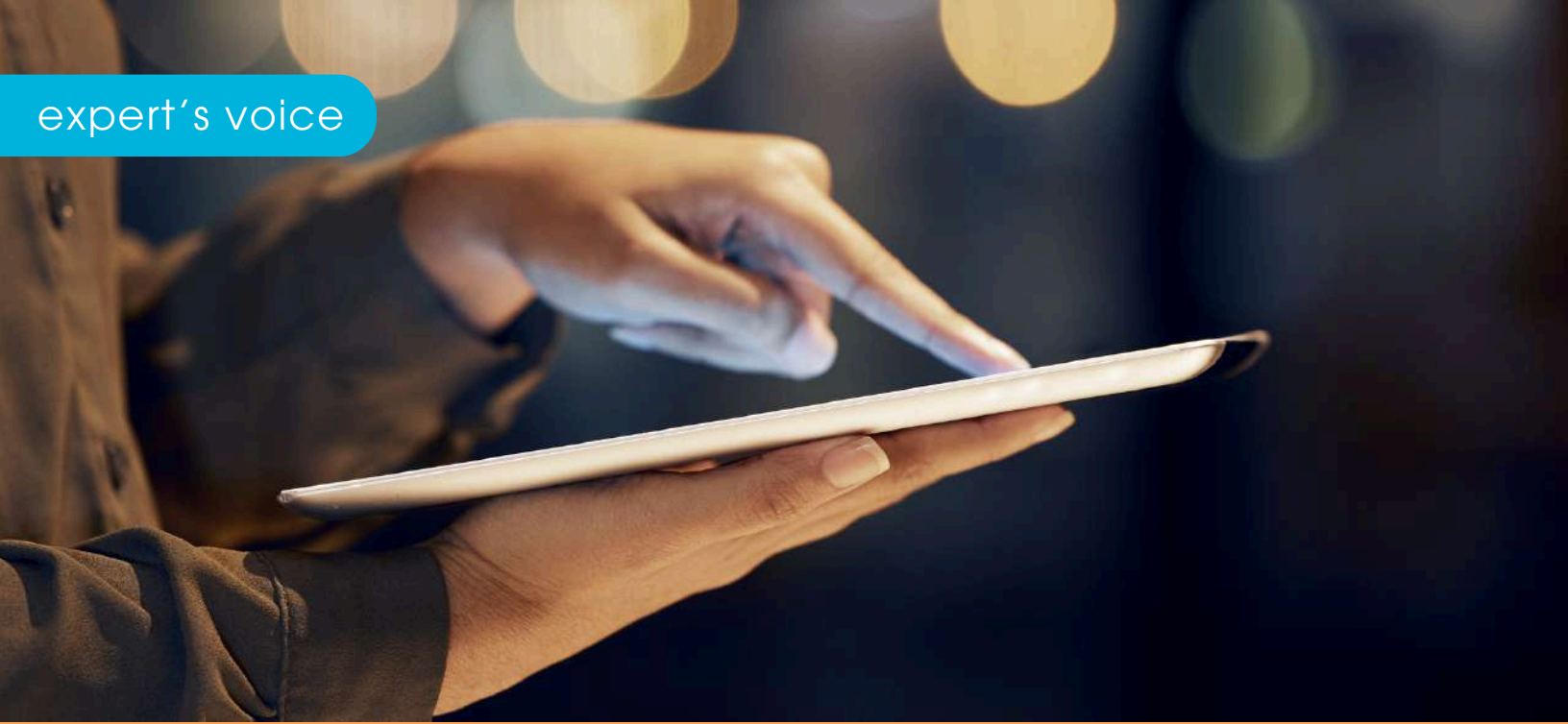
Off-duty Conduct

It's a bright Kingston morning and you've arrived at the office to start the week. The first email in your inbox contains the dreaded red exclamation mark and, when you open it, you find screenshots of one of your employee's social media profiles where they're posting negative comments about their co-workers. You mutter a few four-letter words under your breath before turning your thoughts to, "what am I going to do about this?" The good news is that you actually can do something about this, despite the conduct taking place outside the workplace.

Employees can be disciplined up to, and including, termination under certain circumstances for their off-duty conduct. The main consideration is whether the employee's off-duty conduct has had a negative effect on the employer's reputation or its ability to operate its business effectively.

If the discipline is rooted in reputational harm, the employer must establish a real and material connection between the off-duty conduct and the workplace, and the harm caused must be substantial. The discipline must be rooted in actual harm, not merely the risk or fear of reputational harm.

Negative public comments and conduct have grounded just cause for termination in certain circumstances. For example, Firouzeh Zarabi-Majd, a former Police Officer with the Toronto Police Service ("TPS"), was terminated for her twitter (now 'X') account "dirty shades of blue". Zarabi-Majd used this account to post negative public commentary about the TPS and their handling of harassment that she experienced by her co-workers.



Zarabi-Majd her termination was justified for negatively impacting the TPS's reputation and harming the public trust and confidence in the TPS. In another instance, teaching Assistant Kristin MacDonald was terminated for just cause from her employment with the Coquitlam School District for her OnlyFans account for a similar reason of harming the public trust in educators.

In the harassment context, employees can be disciplined for their off-duty conduct if it were to create a scenario where employees refuse to work with another employee because of harassment or bullying they experienced while off-duty. These types of work environments effect the employer's ability to operate its business effectively.

Under these circumstances, employers can discipline employees for their off-duty conduct.

A strong policy framework that extends beyond the workplace and addresses off-duty conduct can also be very helpful in enabling employers to maintain a harmonious workplace. When in doubt, contact our office for additional guidance.



***Tony Virgin of Cunningham Swan
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