



# *STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE*

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*-Final Report-*

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In 2004, the Sarnia Lambton Chamber of Commerce (SLCC) formed a Strategic Plan committee to pursue an update of the Strategic Plan. The goal of this action is to create a strategy that positions SLCC for long-term success.

The Strategic Plan committee engaged the Ivey Business Consulting Group (IBCG) to help identify new strategic issues and ultimately develop this update.

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## 2.0 PROCESS OVERVIEW

The Strategic Plan Update project consisted of several phases. During August 2004, the first phase was to conduct focus groups of chamber members and staff. 29 members took part in this process, along with eight staff members. Each focus group asked participants to assess the following:

- Mission Statement
- Vision Statements
- Core Values
- Membership Value
- Future Direction of the Sarnia-Lambton Business Community

The focus groups were also asked to develop strategic initiatives.

Along with focus groups, IBCG also administered a survey to SLCC government partners. Although several attempts were made to contact the identified partners, only three completed surveys were received.

After the focus groups were completed, IBCG developed a report of key findings and delivered this report to the Board. On September 8, 2004, IBCG facilitated a working session for the SLCC Board, where the primary objective was to first comment on the focus group findings and then finalize strategic initiatives. Along with the focus group key findings, the Board was asked to consider internal business issues and goals from the 2001 Strategic Plan Update in creating new strategic initiatives.

### 3.0 2004 STRATEGIC PLAN COMPONENTS

IBCG has created a Strategic Plan Update that outlines recommendations on the following strategic plan components:

1. Mission Statement
2. Vision Statements
3. Core Values
4. Core Functions
5. Strategic Initiatives (addressed in next section)

It is important to note that the overwhelming response of the member focus groups was that the SLCC should build on its successes and that the new strategic plan should be a refinement of the current direction.

#### *Mission Statement*

##### **Overview**

Both the focus groups and Board decided to refine the Mission Statement to embrace the Chamber's desire to be proactive and anticipate members' needs. It was also decided to remove the term 'collective' from the Statement. Moreover, the tag line, "The Business Voice of Choice", was appointed as a potential new slogan for the SLCC.

##### **Result**

***The Sarnia Lambton Chamber of Commerce is the voice of business committed to anticipating and serving the needs of our members and community.***

#### *Vision Statement*

##### **Overview**

During the Board working session, it was decided to refine one of the six Vision Statements. The statement in question was dealing with the SLCC being a resource for organizations in the Sarnia Lambton region. The goal of this change is to achieve clarity in articulating to members what is to be expected from the SLCC.

##### **Result**

- Advocacy for business to build a healthy business environment which creates jobs and enhances the quality of life.

- ***Business Information Clearing House as the connection for opportunities, the hub of business knowledge and source of services.***
- Community Development to champion projects that improve the quality of business and community life.
- “Business Connector” to enhance the business-to-business relationship.
- Membership focused to serve and build a diverse membership with value-added services.
- Foster partnership development and provide leadership on strategic issues of importance to our members.

## ***Core Values***

### **Overview**

Based on feedback collected during the member focus group sessions, the Board has decided to enhance one of the core values to articulate the value the SLCC places on partners in the region.

### **Result**

- Serving our members’ current needs and anticipating their future needs is the prime focus of the Chamber.
- ***Volunteers, staff and partners are key to the achievement of our mission and goals.***
- Integrity, relevance, open communications and responsiveness to our members are critical to our organization’s success.
- Respecting our historical roots while being a catalyst for growth in the community.
- Operating in a financially responsible manner.
- Promoting a strong entrepreneurial spirit and a responsible free market economy is the means to achieving a prosperous and well balanced community.

## *Core Functions*

### **Overview**

It was decided by the Board to re-craft the core function pertaining to Tourism. While the SLCC proudly supports tourism in the region, it is no longer the lead organization.

### **Result**

- Business Services – cost savings and member support
- Advocacy – issue and action development
- Networking – member business growth through connections
- Community Development – initiate or serve as catalyst for good of community on selected opportunities
- ***Tourism – to assist in fostering the business environment for tourism in Sarnia-Lambton.***
- Motor Vehicle Licensing Bureau – operate

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## 4.0 STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

After evaluating the strategic initiatives developed by the focus groups, along with considering internal business and continuity issues, the Board created the following strategic initiatives:

1. Communications
2. Governance
3. Member Recruitment and Retention
4. Advocacy
5. Catalyst for Community Improvement
6. Tourism
7. Financial Management
8. Revenue Generation
9. Real Estate
10. Motor Vehicle Bureau

The Board should review progress against each strategic initiative quarterly and add, delete, or revise initiatives as necessary.

Any committees that are formed to address the above-mentioned strategic initiatives should have well-defined mandates and clear objectives.

It is recommended that the Board appoint a liaison person for each committee. The Board may choose to appoint Committee Chairpersons and establish budgets (if necessary) at the inception of the task.

### *Communications*

#### **Goal**

To build and strengthen stakeholder relations to fulfill our mission through a new communication strategy

#### **Timeline**

New & Urgent – Fall/Winter 2004

#### **Tactics**

- The Board of Directors will create an ad hoc Communications Committee and challenge this Committee to develop a more effective communications strategy by a set deadline.
  - In creating a committee mandate, key areas for improvement should be prioritized.
  - Committee members should possess key skills required for the task, including public relations or media experience.
- The Board will place one board member on this Committee.

- The newly formed Communications Committee will also establish a communications channel for other committees to report into.
- Metrics to determine success should include membership event participation.

## ***Governance***

### **Goal**

To assure members that the Chamber is operating in a compliant, responsible and ethical manner

### **Timeline**

New & Urgent – Early 2005

### **Tactics**

- The Board will actively pursue a governance review and develop recommendations on governance structure and processes

## ***Member Recruitment and Retention***

### **Goal**

To retain and grow membership

### **Timeline**

Fall/Winter 2004 and Ongoing

### **Tactics**

To challenge Membership Committee to review opportunities to further enhance membership value such as:

- Sector specialized events and seminars
- Industry specific networking opportunities
- Explore sponsorship opportunities for all membership categories including small business

Processes should be implemented to understand member expectation and gauge satisfaction on an ongoing basis.

- Performance measures should be clearly defined (i.e. % retention, new memberships, desired attendance at chamber functions).
- Chamber should utilize improved communication channels to proactively uncover issues that are important to member base.

## *Advocacy*

### **Goal**

To positively influence government policy and actions in a manner that fairly recognizes the concerns and interests of the business community through a strategy for advocacy

### **Timeline**

Winter 2005

### **Tactics**

- The Board should clarify the role of the SLCC as it relates to advocacy and then explain it clearly to all members so that expectations are managed appropriately.
- Effective immediately, the President will add advocacy as a standing agenda item and report quarterly to the Board on progress and activities.

## *Catalyst for Community Improvement*

### **Goal**

To continue to be a catalyst for community improvement

### **Timeline**

Ongoing Attention

### **Tactics**

- The Board should clearly define the role of the SLCC with regards to community improvement to members – (it is impossible for the Chamber to be all things to all people).
- Staff and Chamber President will continue to monitor feedback from members.
- The Chamber President will report key findings to the Board.
- The Board should create a priority list of issues and identify appropriate partners with which to work on each issue.
- Community improvement Issues will be pursued when deemed appropriate by the Board.

## *Tourism*

### **Goal**

To assist in fostering the business environment for tourism in Sarnia-Lambton

### **Timeline**

In advance of expiry (2006) of the current agreement with Tourism Sarnia Lambton (TSL)

**Tactics**

- Monitor member attitudes and opinions concerning local tourism priorities, needs and opportunities
- The SLCC Board will evaluate and assess current and desired relationship with TSL including:
  - Considering new criteria in funding to TSL
  - Hold TSL accountable for strategy

## ***Financial Management***

**Goal**

To maintain a safe and accountable use of financial assets through an effective financial management strategy

**Timeline**

Ongoing Attention

**Tactics**

- The Board will rely on the Executive Committee as a resource for the internal business issues such as finance, real estate, and information technology
  - Utilize ad hoc committees as required
  - The execution of this tactic will be dependent on the results of the governance review.

## ***Revenue Generation***

**Goal**

To improve Chamber revenues by investigating alternative revenue generation opportunities

**Timeline**

Ongoing Attention

**Tactics**

- The Board will ask the President and Chamber staff to research what other chambers are doing to generate alternate means of revenue, including through Board committees where appropriate
- The process would include investigation of pricing scenarios(i.e. flat rates, bundling, etc.) for the full range of Chamber services and products

## ***SLCC Property Assets/Real Estate***

### **Goal**

Manage SLCC property assets to enhance value and reduce financial exposure by developing a proactive real estate strategy

### **Timeline**

Ongoing Attention/Maintenance

### **Tactics**

- The Board will rely on an ad hoc committee where appropriate or the Executive Committee to act as a resource for internal business issues such as finance, real estate and information technology.
  - The execution of this tactic will be dependent on the results of the governance review.

## ***Motor Vehicle Bureau***

### **Goal**

Commit to operational excellence and innovation in the operation of the MVB

### **Timeline**

Maintenance

### **Tactics**

- The Board will ask the Chamber President and staff to look for additional opportunities and be aware of potential threats.

