



The Toronto Board of Trade

Overview

The Toronto Board of Trade (BOT) was founded in 1845 and is Canada's largest local chamber of commerce. The BOT's mission is to provide its members with innovative and valuable business tools as well as create opportunities for governments and the business community to work together on issues that are important to its members.

Regional Priorities

In an effort to improve the economic competitiveness, quality of life and overall business climate within the Toronto metropolitan area, the BOT has developed a comprehensive public policy and advocacy agenda that includes but is not limited to a new public finance model for Toronto ('new deal for cities'); education reform and financing; a new municipal governance structure for the City of Toronto; increased investments in the public infrastructure (i.e., rail and urban transit, local and regional roads, and highways, etc.); economic development (i.e., revitalization of the Toronto waterfront); skills development and integration of immigrants into the workforce; and a national affordable housing strategy.

The BOT has played a significant leadership role in the region with identifying and addressing regional challenges that affect Toronto's regional economy and quality of life. For example, over the last few years, the BOT has become quite concerned about the Toronto metropolitan area's ability to maintain its economic competitiveness and quality of life. As a result, the organization has advocated for the Federal and Ontario Provincial Governments to create a new public finance model for Toronto and other Canadian cities. In 2002, the BOT created the CEO Forum on Urban Competitiveness, a group of influential business decision-makers responsible for investment decisions for both people and products in the city and region. The CEO Forum on Urban Competitiveness reviewed Toronto's competitive position and released a report entitled *Strong City, Strong Nation: Securing Toronto's Contributions to Canada*. This report examined both the outflow of revenues to senior governments and the corresponding expenditures made by senior governments back

ORGANIZATIONAL SNAPSHOT

Type of Organization

Exclusively business-led

Unit of Membership

Equal representation of individuals and companies or employers

Number of Members

2003: 2,650
1998: 2,800

Membership by Company Size

Small Companies: 40%
Mid-sized Companies: 20%
Large Companies: 30%

Dues Determined by

12 levels of membership that each offer different value/benefit packages

Annual Dues Paid by

Largest Member Companies: \$15,000
Smallest Member Companies: \$150

Annual Operating Budget

2003: \$5 million or more
1998: \$5 million or more

Staff Members (FTE)

2003: 108
1998: N/A

Board Members

2003: 27

Regional Priorities

New Public Finance Model; New Governance Structure for City of Toronto; Short-Term Investments in Transportation and the Waterfront; Immigrant Issues

into Toronto. The report's findings showed that Toronto contributed significantly more revenue dollars to senior governments than the city received back. This resulted in three key recommendations: 1) senior governments need to make more investments in the infrastructure of Toronto (i.e., transportation, social services and waterfront revitalization); 2) a new finance model must be developed for Toronto; and 3) the city needs to develop a new governance model/structure.

In another effort to increase support for a new deal for cities, the BOT launched the 'Enough of Not Enough' marketing campaign in January 2004. This media campaign targets citizens of Toronto and encourages them to contact their elected representatives asking them to take decisive action for Toronto. The campaign is supported by print, radio, television and outdoor media which highlight the challenges facing the Toronto region. Torontonians who are concerned about the region's economic vitality and quality of life can access a web site, call a campaign number, or fill out a ballot. All letters generated through these means will be tallied and delivered to elected representatives calling on them to increase financial investments in the regional transportation system, reduce gridlock, increase the supply of affordable housing and revitalize the Toronto waterfront. To date, hundreds of thousands of citizens have signed letters to politicians.

In addition to its work to support a new deal for Toronto, the BOT has led the charge to help craft a new governance model for the city. Based on the CEO Forum on Urban Competitiveness' recommendation that called for a new municipal governance model for the City of Toronto, the BOT created the City Governance Task Force, a broad-based group of leaders from the political, social and business sectors. The City Governance Task Force was charged with defining the foundation of good municipal governance. In September 2003, the BOT's City Governance Task Force released the report, *Responsible and Representative: Better Governance for Toronto*. The report defined six principles that foster responsible and representative local governance: Leadership, Citywide Focus, Civic Engagement, Transparency, Accountability and Citizen-Focused Sound Management. The ultimate goal of the City Governance Task Force's principles is that they will pave the way and serve as guidance for change at Toronto City Hall.

The BOT has also carried out numerous activities to improve the economic competitiveness, quality of life and overall business climate of the Toronto metropolitan region. The organization has established an Infrastructure Committee that advocates for adequate investments in the metropolitan region's infrastructure. The BOT also created a Waterfront Task Force that is responsible for monitoring and encouraging transformation of Toronto's waterfront and ensuring that the business community is an active participant in the project. Finally, the BOT — under the leadership of the former President and CEO, Elyse Allan — has been successful at forging alliances with the government and other business-civic institutions. For example, Ms. Allan was able to represent the voice of the business community when she served as a co-chair for the first Toronto City Summit, a city-wide conference that brought leaders from all sectors together to discuss potential solutions to address challenges facing the Toronto metropolitan area. The City Summit led to the creation of the Toronto City

Summit Alliance (TCSA), a multi-sector coalition focused on developing an action framework for the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), of which the BOT is an active partner and supporter.

Structure and Operations

Currently, the BOT has about 2,650 members, is governed by a 27-member Board of Directors and has an annual operating budget of more than \$5 million. In an effort to increase and diversify its membership base, the organization offers 12 levels of membership dues, each offering different value/benefit packages to members. As a result, 40% of the organization's members are small-sized companies, 20% are mid-sized companies and 30% are large-sized companies.