

Diversity & Inclusion Policy

This policy is intended to provide a framework for inclusion to promote diversity and inclusion at the Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC). The Board of Directors of the OCC believes in the benefits diversity brings and it recognizes that diversity of thought contributes to the formation of a strong organization. This has been demonstrated across the business community of which the OCC serves. The board recognizes that the most innovative and successful businesses, communities and economies are the most diverse. Having a board, management and staff that are composed of people with diverse skills, experience, backgrounds and perspectives can contribute to:

- a robust understanding of opportunities, issues and risks
- inclusion of different concepts, ideas and relationships
- enhanced decision-making and dialogue
- heightened capacity for oversight of the organization and its governance
- sustainability of the organization

For purposes of this policy, diversity includes, but is not limited to:

- skills and experience
- sex and/or gender identity
- race
- culture/ethnicity
- sexual orientation
- income
- disability
- age
- language

The board and management team will make good use of these differences and distinctions among individuals to determine the optimum composition of the board, management and staff. All board, management, and staff appointments must collectively reflect the diverse nature of the environment in which the organization operates and be made on merit, in the context of the skills, experience, independence and knowledge which the organization requires to be effective. The board is committed to ensure and maintain diversity and to diligently act to effect change. This policy applies to the board, management and staff of the OCC.

Principles

Diversity of thought is enhanced through intentional effort. The OCC will be intentional in ensuring diversity and inclusion. Credibility is enhanced through board and leadership diversity. There is a significant relationship between board and leadership diversity. Therefore, the OCC will pursue a well-rounded, diverse, and credible approach to ensuring board and leadership diversity.

The board values a diversity of voices and sees the value that they can contribute to creative and innovative thinking within the organization. To ensure the diversity strategy of the organization is viewed as a legitimate process, all appointments will be made on merit. However, the board acknowledges that there are many different skills and knowledges that will enhance the organization, its decision-making, and successful delivery of its mandate and so understands that merit is relative to the particular needs of the organization. Being transparent and public about the OCC's diversity and inclusion strategy is a helpful step in holding the board and management accountable, setting an example for both members and stakeholders, and providing thought leadership in the sector. Accessibility is enhanced through a powerful, collective voice. The board will balance the intent of this policy with the need to be a powerful voice for diversity in all of its forms.

Process

To achieve its diversity aspirations, the board will:

- ensure the board's composition considers the balance of skills, experience, knowledge, perspectives, independence and characteristics in alignment with the strategic needs of the OCC and the environment in which it operates
- identify suitable candidates for appointment to the board, considering candidates on merit against objective criteria, and with due regard for the benefits of diversity on the team
- continue to maintain an ongoing list of potential candidates for board positions
- work with management to ensure that all aspects of the organization, including its talent recruitment and business practices reflect the diversity and inclusion objectives of the board
- monitor and report annually to the membership, both at the Annual General Meeting of the organization and on the OCC website its progress with respect to this policy
- work with management to encourage OCC members to adopt similar diversity and inclusion policies, practices and goals, and ensure that the organization continues to educate its membership about the merits of building and maintaining a diverse workplace and inclusive business practices.

Review

Annually by the OCC Board of Directors.