



SOUNDING BOARD



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GVBOT and BCIT partner to provide environmental, social and governance leadership training

ESG | Innovating to future-proof our economy

The Greater Vancouver Board of Trade and the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) are excited to announce the launch of the Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Fundamentals Microcredential, an ambitious and innovative program designed to equip British Columbians with the skills and training to position our region at the forefront of the global ESG movement.

Participants will evaluate where they are on their ESG journey, connect current business practices to ESG strategy and reporting and disclosure opportunities, and design an action plan to further their commitment to creating a sustainable, regenerative economy.

Delivered by BCIT, the ESG Fundamentals Microcredential is a forward-thinking collaboration between the business community and academia that was



developed in response to the evolving demands of investors, shareholders and consumers alike.

Research from the Global Asset Management team at RBC indicates 75 per cent of institutional investors now incorporate ESG principles into their decision making, and the 2021 Consumer Intelligence Series survey on ESG from PwC indicated 83 per cent of consumers think companies should be actively shaping ESG

best practices. For organizations, improving ESG practices can provide an opportunity to innovate, find new growth opportunities, enter new markets and build stronger ties with stakeholders.

As the world grapples with the interconnected crises of climate change and social inequality, every company must develop and communicate its ESG strategy to remain competitive and collaboratively build an economy that takes care of people and

the planet. This program will ensure that there are British Columbians with the skills to build and advance an ESG strategy in all sectors.

“BCIT has been at the forefront of connecting education with industry and government to power economic sustainability, resilience, and growth,” said Jennifer Figner, Associate Vice President, Academic Operations, BCIT. “In collaboration with the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade, this newly developed ESG Fundamentals Microcredential program will help industries master in-demand competencies that are relevant for building an agile workforce with sustained and meaningful impact.”

“We are witnessing a fundamental paradigm shift in the way organizational practices are evaluated, and we are pleased to be working alongside BCIT to help businesses quantify and communicate the core values

embedded in their operations,” said Bridgitte Anderson, President and CEO of the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade. “This program has been designed to bridge the gap between the evolving demands of the global business and investment communities, and organizations which have yet capitalize on the benefits of a robust ESG strategy.”

The ESG Fundamentals Microcredential will provide 24 hours of training from BCIT instructors and industry experts over a five-week period. Participants will be evaluated on assignments that will equip them to design and implement an ESG strategy at their respective organizations, earning badges in four distinct areas: Governance Impacts, Social Impacts, Environmental Impacts, and ESG Roadmap. **SB**

Learn more at boardoftrade.com/esgmicrocredential

2022 Rix Award Recipients

RECOGNITION | Celebrating the best in our region

The Greater Vancouver Board of Trade will present its prestigious Rix Awards at the annual Governor’s Gala this spring.

The 2022 awards will be presented at the 34th annual Governor’s Gala. The annual black-tie gala brings together business, government, and community leaders to recognize the contributions of community leaders and to induct the Board of Trade’s immediate past chair into its Council of Governors.

The 2022 inductee is Brent Cameron, who currently serves as the Vancouver Office Managing Partner and Board Chair for Boyden Canada. Brent served as Board Chair with the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade

through an exceptionally complex year that brought myriad challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

2022 Rix Award For Engaged Community Citizenship – Chief Wayne Sparrow, Musqueam Indian Band

Chief Wayne Sparrow has served as elected chief of Musqueam Indian Band (MIB) since 2012, after serving as an elected councillor since 1998. Musqueam’s core vision is to be a complete and healthy community through protecting their inherent Indigenous rights and re-establishing their self-governance. To do this, Musqueam is building capable governing institutions and economies that match their



culture and enhance the quality of life now and for generations to come.

2022 Rix Award For Engaged Corporate Citizenship – London Drugs

London Drugs was chosen as this year’s Engaged Corporate Citizenship recipient in recognition

of their role as a champion for small businesses and their community initiatives in support of those in need.

Charitable giving is deeply embedded in the London Drugs identity. The London Drugs Foundation has been providing financial support to children’s charities, hospital foundations

and organizations promoting the arts in communities across Western Canada for more than 20 years.

2022 Special Rix Award For Outstanding Public Service – Dr. Bonnie Henry

The COVID-19 pandemic thrust a host of public servants in British Columbia into the public light, but none more so than Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry. In recognition of her unparalleled contribution to protecting British Columbians throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and the tireless efforts of healthcare workers, a Special Rix Award for Outstanding Public Service will be presented at the 2022 Governor’s Gala. **SB**

FORESIGHT | Five key takeaways from the 2022 Economic Outlook Forum

Unpacking the issues our region will face in the year ahead

As British Columbia recovers from the severe economic hardship brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for a long-term vision for our economic prosperity is more apparent than ever.

GVBOT's 33rd annual Economic Outlook Forum, presented by Scotiabank, provided our region's business leaders with a detailed, insightful and timely look at the key challenges and opportunities facing Greater Vancouver, British Columbia and all of Canada.

1. Global commodity boom to benefit B.C.

"We are a large commodity producer, we do lots of other stuff of course but when the prices of things we produce go up, and they go up significantly, that's a powerful driver of economic activity."

– Jean-Francois Perrault, Senior Vice-President and Chief Economist, Scotiabank

2. B.C. to lead Canada's job market

"We will put this pandemic behind us, we will recover, and we'll

recover stronger than ever. The early signs are very positive, B.C.'s economic recovery is well underway, we lead Canada in economic growth."

– The Honourable Ravi Kahlon, Minister of Jobs, Economic Recovery, and Innovation, Province of B.C.

3. Federal and provincial governments turn focus to housing supply

"In 2021 we finished the year with 26,000 housing starts, the previous record was in 2019 when we did 28,000 but in a market that's already short of housing we're just not keeping up, and I think if you look at immigration moving forward, it's only going to get worse. I'm hopeful the federal and provincial governments are going to wake up and I think they are."

– Neil Chrystal, President and CEO, Polygon Homes Ltd.

4. Innovation needed to reduce pressure on healthcare costs

"The last 24 months have laid bare the fractures in our health



system. Across the country, healthcare budgets at a provincial level are coasting at-or-above 40 per cent of provincial budgets and getting bigger. That's unsustainable, healthcare systems are going to bankrupt our country if we don't address it."

– Sue Paish, CEO, Digital Supercluster

5. Inflation anxiety here

to stay for 2022

"When 57 per cent of people say they are now finding it more difficult to feed their family, to meet the weekly grocery bill, that's pretty significant. And that's a number up from 45 per cent just last October. So, not only are people feeling it, but it's also intensifying that feeling."

– Shachi Kurl, President, Angus Reid Institute

The annual Economic Outlook Forum is a vital bellwether for business and government alike, looking for insight into the year ahead. These are the critical conversations the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade is proud to facilitate on behalf of our members and the business community as a whole. Our thanks to everyone who participated in or attended the event. **SB**

LEADERSHIP | One-to-one with Raghwa Gopal

Lifting others up

What inspires you?

To see people succeed in life, especially those that are marginalised. I'm very fortunate for having the opportunity to help some achieve their dreams, through mentorship and/or connecting them with the right resources. I get a front row seat to their journeys! Often, they haven't had an easy road and seeing them move past those obstacles with grace to achieve their goals inspires me to do more and better.

What was your first job?

My first job (part-time) was as a bottle washer in a small grocery store. I got this part time job when I was 11 years old (grade 6) to wash dirty bottles so that they could be refilled with oil etc.

My first official job was as a Software Developer for the Fiji National Provident Fund.

What keeps you awake at night?

Not much on a personal level as I am very content with where I am at in my life. For work, I am always thinking and planning about how I can find more resources to help the innovation and tech community in all regions of British Columbia - and how I can make sure that people that are marginalized (Indigenous, Women, people of color, LGBTQ, racial minorities etc) are given their fair share of support.

What is the biggest challenge you've faced in your career?

I have been an entrepreneur for almost all my working life, and I have seen and faced all the usual challenges that all entrepreneurs face but the biggest challenge for me has been in my current position. The need in our innovation ecosystem is so huge and the amount of



Raghwa Gopal

resources are so limited - so the challenge for me is to find more ways and resources to support that ecosystem.

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

Greater Vancouver is a beautiful destination with a growing global reputation as an ideal place to live and work. It boasts many reasons for companies to want to conduct business here

Life is a constant experiment. You are always learning from your experiences.



– Vancouver's convenient location serving as a global gateway, and its reputation for safety, multiculturalism and a commitment to sustainability are just a few. There's great appeal, which is why we've seen so many large global companies establish new offices here.

What is the most important lesson, business or otherwise, life has taught you?

Life is a constant experiment. You are always learning from your experiences - and most importantly, you get to do it all over again. And you cannot take anything for granted - as there are forces beyond your control that can change things in an instant. Appreciate and enjoy what you have!

What do you do when you aren't working?

I love traveling and learning about different parts of the world so when I am not working, you most likely will find me in some different part of the world.

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

I know my way around a farm having grown up farming. **RG**

Raghwa Gopal is the President and CEO of Innovate BC, a Crown Agency that helps entrepreneurs access resources to help them start and scale their companies - and stay in B.C.