



SOUNDING BOARD



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Get Connected with GVBOT this September

EVENTS | Upcoming networking and industry insights

The Greater Vancouver Board of Trade has an exciting lineup of programs and events scheduled for the month of September. Featuring career growth opportunities and access to industry leaders discussing the future of our region, these events will also offer the opportunity to connect with fellow members and learn from business and thought leaders from a variety of sectors in the region.

Members' Social - Oxford Properties - Social 7 Lounge - Thursday, September 14

GVBOT members are invited to explore Oxford Properties Social 7 Lounge, and discover the unique amenities of this Oxford property. Located on the 7th floor, MNP Tower (1280 - 1021 West Hastings St), the Social 7 Lounge features an 85-inch Smart TV's, arcade games, PlayStation and comfortable seating for tenants of Oxford Place to enjoy - the perfect time to bond over food and games.

Indigenous Opportunities Forum 2023 Presented by CN - Friday, September 15

Join us as we bring together local First Nations, Greater Vancouver businesses and economic development leaders to connect, discuss and learn about partnerships and opportunities for growth and sustainability in the region. Through a series of presentations and panel discussions, this event will provide a closer look at some of the projects that are reshaping our region and addressing the most pressing challenges including sustainable infrastructure, housing, and labour shortages.

Members' Experience - Whitecaps FC - National Soccer Development Centre - Monday, September 18

A unique and exclusive opportunity for GVBOT members, the Members' Experience with the Whitecaps FC will provide a behind-the-scenes tour by former White-

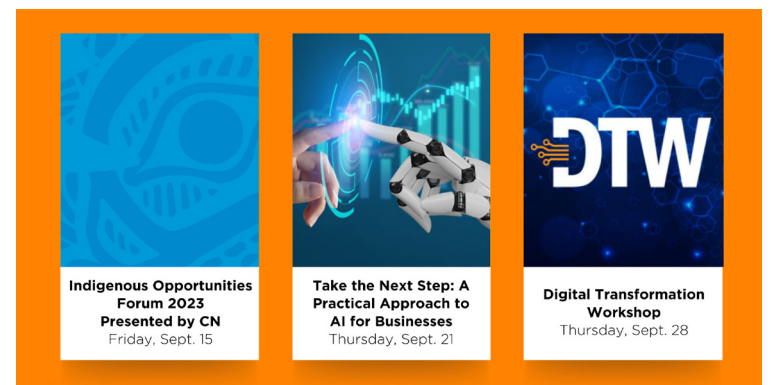
capsFC player Tosaint Ricketts. Following the tours, members can connect with each other and even practice some moves on the field.

Take the Next Step: A Practical Approach to AI for Businesses - Thursday, September 21

Explore the power of AI and gain insights on taking the first steps of AI integration through a discussion with Gerri Sinclair, B.C. Innovation Commissioner, Province of British Columbia and a panel discussion. Learn how you can leverage it for the growth of your business. This breakfast event will take a practical approach to AI for businesses with a focus on applications that can help unlock growth.

Digital Transformation Workshop - Thursday, September 28

This interactive one-day workshop will assist leaders in driving business growth and resilience by embracing digital reinvention. By attending this workshop, busi-



ness leaders will gain valuable insights and practical strategies to keep up with the rapidly evolving global markets and stay competitive through digital transformation. The workshop provides a unique opportunity to create a digital blueprint and learn from experts about leveraging technology to improve customer experiences.

Members' Experience - BC Lions Tailgate Party - Friday, September 29

Join us at the line of scrimmage and have fun networking with fellow members at the GVBOT Tailgate Party, followed by the BC Lions game. In recognition of Canada's National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (Sept. 30) participants are encouraged to wear orange. ^{SB}

Tickets to all of our upcoming events are available at boardoftrade.com/events.

Empowering Local Businesses: A Year of Achievements at the Scale-up Centre for SMEs

PROGRAMS | Recapping the 2022-23 year

A message from Kim Osborne, CEO of Chemistry Consulting Group Inc. and outgoing Chair of the Scale-up Centre for SMEs (SCS) program by the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade.

A Year of Progress

At the Scale-up Centre for SMEs, our mission has always been to support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the Greater Vancouver area. Over the past year, we've made significant strides in achieving this goal. While you may already be familiar with our program, here's a quick refresher: The SCS was created to provide high-potential SMEs from various sectors with the resources and guidance they need to overcome growth barriers and thrive in the competitive business landscape.

Strengthening Relationships and Building Partnerships

One of the core principles of the SCS program is collaboration. We firmly believe that by working together, we can achieve more for our local business community. During my tenure as Chair, I've had the privilege of witnessing the power of building strong relationships among our committee members and the broader business community. These connections have translated into meaningful strategic alliances that continue to benefit local businesses.

Supporting Growth Through Events

Our commitment to empowering SMEs is exemplified by the diverse range of events we've organized throughout the year. These events

have been carefully designed to address the evolving needs of Greater Vancouver's business climate. Whether it's through workshops, seminars, or networking sessions, we've provided valuable resources and insights to help SMEs navigate the challenges and seize the opportunities in today's dynamic market.

The Business Distinction Awards: A Proud Achievement

One of the highlights of my time as Chair has been our involvement in the founding committee of the Business Distinction Awards. Over the past three years, this event has grown in stature, drawing exceptional nominations from the business community. The committee takes immense pride in the work we've done to recognize and celebrate the outstanding achieve-



ments of local businesses.

Looking Ahead

As I pass the torch to the incoming Advisory Committee for the Scale-up Centre for SMEs in 2023-24, I have a simple message: Be present, contribute your knowledge, and sa-

vor the opportunity to give back to the business community. Your dedication will undoubtedly play a vital role in the growth and prosperity of Greater Vancouver's SMEs.

As my term as Chair concludes, I am excited to see the SCS program continue to flourish. By empowering SMEs, we are not only helping them defy gravity in their growth journey but also contributing to the vibrant economic landscape of Greater Vancouver.

Thank you for the privilege of serving as Chair, and here's to a bright future for our SMEs! ^{KO}

Kim Osborne is the CEO of Chemistry Consulting Group Inc. Chemistry is a B.C. based HR Consulting firm.

Join us to celebrate businesses at the 2023 Business Distinction Awards on Oct. 25. Register at boardoftrade.com/awards-2023

What B.C. Businesses Need to Know About the EV Transition

ZEV | Understanding new regulations & legislation

British Columbia is leading the way in Canada's shift to zero-emission vehicles (ZEVs). Statistics Canada says that nearly one in five of all new vehicles registered in the province in the first quarter of 2023 was a ZEV, the highest percentage in the country.

There is still a long way to go in the transition to electric vehicles—and businesses need to consider how ZEV sales targets, provincial and federal incentives, B.C.-wide charging infrastructure and new regulations and legislation could affect them.

ZEV Sales Targets

The CleanBC plan was released in 2021 and strengthened the Zero-Emission Vehicles Act to require 26% of light-duty vehicle sales in the province to be ZEV by 2026, 90% by 2030 and 100% by 2035.

Proposed federal regulations were announced in December 2022. They set similar annual sales targets for new light-duty zero-emissions vehicles offered for sale in Canada, also reaching 100% by 2035.

Nationally, ZEVs accounted for 8.6% of all new motor vehicles registered in the first three months of 2023. This is up from 7.7% in the first quarter of 2022, but a decline from 9.6% in Q4 2022.

ZEV Incentives Available to Businesses in B.C.

B.C.-based businesses can get provincial rebates of \$3,000 off battery electric and long-range plug-in hybrid vehicles and \$1,500 off plug-in hybrid vehicles with an electric range less than 85 km. The maximum manufacturer's suggested retail price for eligible cars is \$55,000 and \$70,000 for larger vehicles.

The federal Incentives for Zero-Emission Vehicles (iZEV) Program provides up to \$5,000 toward the cost of buying a light-duty vehicle and has been broadened to capture larger ZEV models. This is applied in addition to B.C.'s incentive.

There are also federal tax write-offs for all businesses to purchase EVs. Businesses that receive an incentive from the federal iZEV Program cannot use the tax write-off for ZEVs.

There has been a wide range of new federal incentives announced in the past year to support the EV transition in other areas, including the Critical Mineral Exploration Tax Credit, the Clean Technology Manufacturing Tax Credit and the Clean Electricity Investment Tax Credit.

Charging Infrastructure

Meeting British Columbia's ZEV targets will require a significant build-

out of its charging infrastructure. BC Hydro is predicting there will be around 350,000 EVs on the province's roads by 2030. Businesses with EV fleets need to be sure the network is keeping up with their vehicle purchases and unique needs.

B.C. has one of the largest public charging networks in Canada, with more than 3,800 charging stations at the end of 2022. New funding for 250 more was announced in April 2023.

The standardization of charging stations is a hot topic in EV adoption. Canada does not currently have federal performance and reliability standards for EV chargers. In the private sector, numerous auto makers are working towards using standardized EV charging networks.

The commercial real estate sector should be thinking about the siting of chargers in both existing and new buildings. In May 2023, the B.C. government passed legislation to enable strata corporations and owners to more easily install EV charging infrastructure.

Canada's Clean Electricity Regulations

The federal government announced its draft Clean Electricity Regulations (CER) on August 10, 2023. Ottawa says that to achieve a net-zero emissions economy by 2050, Canada's electricity supply will need to



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Partner, Bennett Jones

at least double by then to meet surging demand. B.C. is projected to see the greatest net cost savings by province (by far) under the proposed regulations. About 95% of the electricity produced in B.C. comes from renewable sources.

A 75-day consultation period is now open and businesses can provide feedback on the regulations until November 2, 2023 through the Online Regulatory Consultation System.

Right to Repair

Businesses should be following the significant "right to repair" legislation that is drawing increasingly closer to becoming law in Canada. It is expected to have a big impact on the automotive repair industry and owners of EVs.

An Act to amend the Copyright Act (diagnosis, maintenance and repair) would reduce the ability of original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) to lock access to in-built

and embedded software, where the access is necessary for diagnosis, maintenance and repair of products and equipment.

A Challenge and an Opportunity

The rapid shift to ZEVs offers businesses in greater Vancouver an opportunity to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions intensity, and potentially to reduce costs and modernize operational processes.

Such a major transition is not, however, without its risks. Businesses who have never worked closely together (or even at all) may find themselves integrated on new projects. Complex new, and overlapping, legal relationships are emerging regularly.

Businesses should anticipate how they will manage these kinds of issues to mitigate the risks of a new ZEV normal in Canada. DM

Duncan McPherson is a partner in Bennett Jones' Vancouver office, who advises on energy and infrastructure transactions.

Measuring Progress on Inclusivity, Diversity, and Equity

LEADERSHIP | New Challenges, Fresh Opportunities

For years, if not decades, companies have used data to hold themselves accountable for diversity initiatives under the adage, "What gets measured gets done." Companies now have digital tools to collect and access inclusivity, diversity, and equity (ID&E) data more efficiently and face regulatory requirements requiring ID&E metrics, such as pay transparency legislation. As companies face increasing pressure to collect and use ID&E data, it's important to proceed carefully and thoughtfully.

What can ID&E data be used for?

ID&E data enables companies to measure progress, which can then be used to set priorities and develop ID&E programs, including HR practices, pay gaps, barriers to recruitment, accessibility and diversity in leadership.

Aren't we not supposed to ask about these kinds of things?

Many HR teams have been trained not to ask questions about grounds protected by human rights laws. However, these laws include an exception for programs intended to improve the employment experience for equity-deserving groups. In other words, ID&E metrics cannot be used to discriminate against an employee but to improve access to opportunities at the workplace.

Isn't this all just reverse discrimination?

"Reverse discrimination" is not a recognized legal claim in Canada. Canadian human rights laws protect programs intended to address systemic discrimination. Our Courts have consistently stated that identical treatment can perpetuate disadvantage and that achieving equality sometimes requires different treatment.

Are we increasing our legal risk by collecting this information?

When companies start to gather ID&E data, there are many unknowns. What if someone leaks the information? What if the data reveals discriminatory practices? Will it open the door to litigation? There are legal risks involved in gathering data. But, these risks can and should be balanced against the risks of failing to track progress and encourage transparency about ID&E initiatives.

Shouldn't we just focus on getting the most qualified candidate?

Using ID&E metrics often attracts criticism that employment decisions should be based on "merit" and not on individual characteristics. It is important to address this question head-on. No one should have to prove that they deserve to be hired or promoted.

Questions about "qualifications" and "merit" tend to assume that the company's hiring processes are equitable, inclusive and accessible.



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It suggests that only the majority group is qualified to perform the job—without taking steps to ensure this is the case. Designing a more equitable program involves scrutinizing the hiring and promotion process. Collecting ID&E metrics enables the organization to measure the effectiveness of these programs and identify where more work is needed to attract and retain diverse candidates.

Recap: Collecting and using ID&E metrics

As a recap, as you collect data and quantify progress on ID&E – identify your purpose. Have a plan. Get legal advice. Gathering ID&E data is critical to making progress, but companies must be thoughtful in addressing the talent and legal risks of gathering personal information. JF

Jillian Frank is an experienced employment lawyer and inclusive leader with both legal and operational knowledge of workplace issues.