



GREATER VANCOUVER
BOARD OF TRADE



Business Distinction Awards

— 2026 —

NOMINATION PACKAGE

OVERVIEW

The Business Distinction Awards were created in 2022 by the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade (GVBOT) to recognize and celebrate small and medium-sized businesses who have gone above and beyond to set themselves apart in the Greater Vancouver region. The awards celebrate businesses, entrepreneurs and non-profit organizations for their leadership, vision and innovation that create community impact, economic growth and prosperity.

SELECTION PROCESS

Nominations are reviewed and shortlisted by the Scale-up Centre for SMEs advisory committee. Three finalists will be announced for each category. Finalists will be made public in the late spring/early summer via GVBOT's marketing and communications channels.

The final winner selection is made by volunteer judges representing the large and diverse GVBOT membership and includes board members, advisory committee members, media representatives, business leaders, entrepreneurs and more.

[NOMINATION FORM](#)

Visit : boardoftrade.com/bda-nominations

ANNOUNCEMENT AND RECOGNITION

(subject to change – final details will be confirmed closer to the event)

FINALISTS:

- Featured in a category-specific highlight video, produced by the GVBOT and presented at the fall celebration
- Receive two complimentary tickets to the fall awards ceremony.

WINNERS

- Announced during the fall awards ceremony where they have an opportunity to say a few words and receive a trophy
- Eligible for a complimentary feature placement in the GVBOT Weekly E-Newsletter, subject to approval by GVBOT. This special placement is not available for purchase and provides valuable visibility to our highly engaged membership audience.
- Winners will be featured on GVBOT website and social media channels.

AI GUIDELINES

We acknowledge the increased use of AI to support the work of putting together nominations however we encourage thoughtful use in order to avoid generic and potentially repetitive information among nominees.

- **AI may be used to:**

- ✓ Refine and polish language.
- ✓ Improve grammar, spelling and tone.
- ✓ Generate an outline for responses

- **AI cannot be used to:**

- × Generate company information

- × Manipulate images, videos or documents to misrepresent the company

- × Generate fake datasets, performance metrics or supporting documents

APPLICANTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- Reading and reviewing your final application to ensure that the information provided is accurate, relevant and represents the company appropriately.
- Editing any use of AI that has created a generic or non-specific responses.

Example of Poor AI use for an Application Response

(Generic, Vague)

We believe our people are our greatest asset and are committed to creating a positive and inclusive workplace. We invest in leadership development through regular training sessions and mentorship opportunities. Our managers are encouraged to support employee growth and professional development.

We foster employee engagement by maintaining open communication and promoting collaboration across teams. We conduct employee surveys to ensure staff feel heard and valued.

Diversity and inclusion are important to us, and we strive to create a welcoming environment for individuals from all backgrounds. We celebrate diversity through internal initiatives and encourage equal opportunity hiring practices.

As a result of these efforts, we have built a strong team culture and continue to grow as an organization.

Example of Responsible AI use for an Application Response

(Specific, Measurable)

Over the past two years, we invested 3% of payroll annually into structured development programs. In 2024, 18 emerging leaders completed our 9-month leadership academy, with 6 promoted into management roles within 12 months.

Employee engagement is measured biannually. Our engagement score increased from 72% to 86% in two years, with voluntary turnover declining from 18% to 9%.

We implemented a mentorship program pairing senior leaders with high-potential staff; 80% of participants reported improved career clarity and performance outcomes.

On diversity, 52% of leadership roles are now held by women, up from 38% in 2022. We introduced structured hiring panels and bias training, resulting in a 40% increase in diverse candidate shortlists.

These investments have strengthened retention, internal promotion rates, and overall productivity per employee, which has increased 14% year over year.



Business Distinction Awards

2026 AWARD CATEGORIES



Non-Profit of the Year

This award recognizes a non-profit organization with charitable status that has demonstrated excellence in achieving its goals, volunteer engagement, stakeholder engagement and a plan for long-term sustainable growth.



Employer of the Year

This award recognizes a business that has invested in leading practices in the last 12-18 months that contribute to an overall positive workplace culture.



Business of the Year

1-20 Employees

This award recognizes an outstanding small business that demonstrates excellence in performance, leadership, and community contribution while operating with a lean team. The recipient exemplifies resilience, innovation, and strong stewardship of resources.



Business of the Year

21-250 Employees

This award honours an established business that has achieved sustained success, strong operational performance, and meaningful impact within the regional economy. The recipient demonstrates strategic leadership, organizational excellence, and responsible growth.



Environmental Impact

This award recognizes a business for its positive contributions to environmental sustainability and conservation efforts through a recently introduced or reimagined product or service.



Greater Vancouver Vibrancy Award

This award celebrates and showcases the outstanding contributions of businesses that enrich the cultural fabric of the region, promote diversity and inclusion, and contribute to its overall vibrancy and livability.



Non-profit of the Year

DESCRIPTION

This award recognizes a non-profit organization with charitable status that has demonstrated excellence in achieving its goals, volunteer engagement, stakeholder engagement and a plan for long-term sustainable growth.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Describe the goals and outcomes your non-profit set out to achieve in the most recent financial year. Were they achieved and what was the impact? You may answer this in a list format. (Weight = 40%)
2. Describe how your organization effectively engages staff and volunteers. What strategies, programs, culture, and professional development processes and practices do you have in place to ensure high retention? (Weight = 30%)
3. Describe how your organization collaborates and engages with the community. How do you mobilize volunteers, donors, and other stakeholders to support your objectives? What are some partnerships that have been effective in maximizing impact?
4. Describe your organization's long-term vision and impact and how will you build capacity and fundraise to ensure continued success and impact into the future. (Weight = 10%)

APPLICANT JUDGING CRITERIA

CRITERIA	WEIGHT
Achievement of measurable outcomes that create positive change	40%
Staff and volunteer engagement, development, and retention	30%
Collaboration and engagement with the community; effectiveness of partnerships	20%
Long-term vision and impact	10%



Employer of the Year

DESCRIPTION

This award recognizes a business that has invested in leading practices in the last 12-18 months that contribute to an overall positive workplace culture.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Describe practices implemented recently to improve employee happiness and well-being and overall workplace culture. (Weight = 25%)
2. Describe your recruitment, retention, and talent development processes and how they have been successful. (Weight = 25%)
3. Describe your employee wellbeing and inclusion programs and how they have benefitted your employees. (Weight = 25%)
4. Please submit verifiable data which may include but isn't limited to: (Weight = 25%)
 - a. Summary of employee engagement survey results including questions asked
 - b. Employee retention percentage
 - c. Press releases or media acknowledgments.
 - d. Testimonial(s) or reference from employees which include outcomes
 - e. Partner or client testimonial(s)

APPLICANT JUDGING CRITERIA

CRITERIA	WEIGHT
Employee Happiness, well-being and overall workplace culture	40%
Retention Engagement, and Development of Talent	30%
Employee Wellbeing, Inclusion Programs, and Benefits	20%
Team innovation and contribution to the organization's mission and success	10%



BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

1-20 Employees

DESCRIPTION

This award recognizes an outstanding small business that demonstrates excellence in performance, leadership, and community contribution while operating with a lean team. The recipient exemplifies resilience, innovation, and strong stewardship of resources.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Describe your company's performance over the past two years. Include revenue growth (percentages acceptable), key milestones, and how you have adapted to market or economic changes. (Weight = 20%)
2. What differentiates your business in the marketplace? Provide specific examples of innovation, new offerings, or operational improvements that strengthened your competitiveness. (Weight = 20%)
3. How do you foster a strong workplace culture while delivering exceptional customer experience? Provide measurable outcomes such as retention rates, employee engagement initiatives, testimonials, or customer satisfaction metrics. (Weight = 40%)
4. Describe how your business contributes to the local community or broader economy. Include partnerships, volunteerism, mentorship, or economic impact. (Weight = 20%)

APPLICANT JUDGING CRITERIA

CRITERIA	WEIGHT
Business Performance & Growth	20%
Innovation & Entrepreneurship	20%
Leadership & Workplace Culture	20%
Customer Impact & Market Reputation	20%
Community Contribution	20%



BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

21-250 Employees

DESCRIPTION

This award honours an outstanding small to medium-sized business that has achieved sustained success, strong operational performance, and meaningful impact within the regional economy. The recipient demonstrates strategic leadership, organizational excellence, and responsible growth.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Outline your organization's financial performance and growth strategy over the past two years. Include key metrics and how leadership positioned the company for long-term success. (Weight = 20%)
 - a. Please include:
 - i. Revenue Range (select one):**
 - Under \$500,000
 - \$500,000 – \$2 million
 - \$2 million – \$10 million
 - \$10 million – \$50 million
 - \$50 million+
 - ii. Revenue Growth (past two years):**
 - Decline
 - 0-10% growth
 - 10-25% growth
 - 25-50% growth
 - 50%+ growth

iii. Profitability Status:

- Profitable
 - Break-even
 - Reinvesting for growth
 - Pre-profit / early stage
4. Describe how your organization drives operational effectiveness and innovation. Include governance practices, systems improvements, technology adoption, or risk management strategies that strengthened performance. (Weight = 20%)
 5. How does your organization invest in its people? Provide examples of leadership development, employee engagement, diversity initiatives, and measurable outcomes.(Weight = 20%)
 6. Describe your organization’s impact on the regional economy and community. Include job creation, partnerships, social responsibility initiatives, or sector leadership. (Weight = 20%)

APPLICANT JUDGING CRITERIA

CRITERIA	WEIGHT
Financial Performance & Strategic Growth	20%
Operational Excellence	40%
Workforce Development & Culture	20%
Community & Economic Impact	20%



ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

DESCRIPTION

This award recognizes a business for its positive contributions to environmental sustainability and conservation efforts through a recently introduced or reimagined product or service.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Describe how your product or service addresses an environmental issue. (Weight = 20%)
2. What is the measurable impact of your product or service on any/all of the following in the last 12-18 months: (Weight = 60%)
 - a. Resource conservation and efficiency
 - b. Carbon footprint reduction
 - c. Pollution prevention and waste reduction
 - d. Other?
5. Describe the long-term vision for your product or service to make an increasingly positive impact on the environment. (Weight = 20%)

APPLICANT JUDGING CRITERIA

CRITERIA	WEIGHT
Clearly defines issue and solution	20%
Measurable impact on environment	60%
Long-term vision	20%



GREATER VANCOUVER VIBRANCY AWARD

DESCRIPTION

This award celebrates and showcases the outstanding contributions of businesses that enrich the cultural fabric of the region, promote diversity and inclusion, and contribute to its overall vibrancy and livability.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Describe your business' tangible contributions to the Greater Vancouver region and initiatives that foster community engagement and cohesion. (Weight = 20%)
2. Describe how your business is unique and innovative in its offerings of products or services that differentiate it from competitors while contributing to the city's social development. (Weight = 30%)
3. Describe your business' commitment and long-term vision for ongoing enhancement of our region's cultural landscape, ensuring arts, culture, diversity and inclusion remain integral to our regions' identity and future prosperity. (Weight = 50%)

APPLICANT JUDGING CRITERIA

CRITERIA	WEIGHT
Business' tangible contributions to any of the following areas: arts and culture, diversity and inclusion, belonging, and community engagement.	50%
Innovation and differentiation of product or services from competitors that contribute to social development	30%
Contribution or enhancement of cultural identity and vibrancy of region	20%