

## IABC/Toronto: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

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IABC/Toronto is IABC's largest chapter with nearly 700 members. We serve communications professionals across the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) in a variety of industries and at varying levels of experience. Our members represent the diversity and multiculturalism of the GTA, and engage with the association for networking and professional development, as well as to recognize, mentor and amplify one another.

One of our greatest strengths as a chapter, is the involvement of our engaged members who consistently work to create a chapter that is representative and supportive of career growth and personal development. We have also been able to highlight successful communications professionals, teams and campaigns through our high-caliber professional development events and our awards program – OVATION.

Our **2019-2020 purpose** was: To create connection between professionals in the brand, marketing and communication functions and the broader business community to elevate our profession. We convene thought leaders with a unique and relevant point of view to facilitate learning and development opportunities for our community, our volunteers and our board.

Our **goals in 2019-2020** were to:

- 1) Keep our Purpose at the heart of all we do;
- 2) Be transparent and open with our stakeholders;
- 3) Maintain our financial health with a view to long-term sustainability.

### **Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Accessibility at IABC/Toronto**

Over the years, IABC/Toronto has drawn upon the skills, experience and diversity of perspectives of our members to contribute to and help lead the chapter. Across the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) there are communicators who hail from all different backgrounds, with different beliefs, experiences and ideas who are helping the communications profession grow and evolve. IABC/Toronto is a reflection of this diverse community. When you join IABC/Toronto, you are a part of a culture built on respect that recognizes the talent of all members from diverse walks of life.

June 2020 made it apparent that it was necessary to focus and formalize a process for encouraging feedback from, and for recruiting leaders, with different lived experiences.

### **Goals & Objectives**

Goals	Objectives
Recruit and recognize volunteers and future leaders from among IABC/Toronto's diverse membership.	Host one volunteer recruitment event in the Fall of 2019.
	Create a series of member spotlights promoted via social media and through our newsletter to highlight the work of IABC/Toronto's diverse membership and volunteers.
Provide opportunities to advance professional development, with a focus on support around inclusion, diversity, equity & accessibility.	Host 4-6 professional development events throughout the Board year, with 1-2 events focused on promoting diversity of perspectives.
	Host annual talent expo for students and communicators in transition to connect with potential employers.
	Host a minimum of 4 senior communicator circles by invitation only to ensure target audience is engaged.



	Publish four issues of <i>Communicator</i> , with at least one diversity-themed issue.
Highlight & recognize a GTA leader who demonstrates excellence in communications around diversity, inclusion, equity or accessibility.	Award and highlight the work of a high-profile leader in the GTA, outside of the field of communications, but who demonstrates excellence in communications, with the <i>Communicator of the Year Award</i> .
Create more space for inclusion and representation.	Ensure all in-person events meet accessibility needs.
	Review and update imagery on our website to be more representative of our diverse membership.
	Complete audit of accessibility for the IABC/Toronto website.
With feedback from members and communications professionals across the GTA, take a strong position on anti-racism.	Release a Statement from the President addressing global anti-racism protests.
Gather feedback and suggestions from members and communications professionals from across the GTA on how best to provide support around inclusion, diversity, equity & accessibility.	Host 4-5 open forums with members of underrepresented groups.
	Recruit volunteers to work on the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Accessibility (IDEA) committee to facilitate careful consideration of IDEA recommendations.

## Implementation

**Leadership:** IABC/Toronto depends upon the leadership and input from its members to volunteer in essential positions and to fill leadership roles within the chapter. We consistently seek out professionals from a variety of backgrounds, ages, experience levels, cultures, orientation, genders, abilities and with a variety of perspectives. This year, we also formed the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Accessibility (IDEA) committee to lead discussions, inform Board decisions, and provide recommendations on how to best support IABC/Toronto members moving forward. Board Members also sponsor and sit on this committee to ensure the full support of our leadership, as well as continuity of information.

**Recruitment & Retention:** Recruitment for Board positions often begins several months before the end of the Board year. Directors and experienced volunteers within portfolios are often approached to assess their interest, followed by personal contacts identified by Board members. Current and past volunteers are encouraged to continue to find fulfilling ways to donate their time and expertise through personal invitations and via email. There is typically a large, general push for applications at the beginning of the Board year, followed by specific promotion of remaining positions, or new positions as the need arises throughout the year.

As IABC/Toronto is a large chapter with a heavy Board load, 12-14 portfolios, and a variety of volunteer needs, our volunteer management has had to be decentralized. Each VP who has volunteers in their portfolio is tasked with ensuring their volunteers' goals are met during the year. Upon recruitment, volunteers identify their main goals and/or reasons for volunteering with the chapter, and are asked to identify the skills they would like to develop. VPs are encouraged to revisit those goals at least twice throughout the year to ensure volunteer needs are being met. This is our pool of future leaders, so engaging with them and helping them get the most out of their involvement with the chapter is critical to their success, and to the future of the chapter.

**Opportunity:** This year highlighted the necessity of connecting with communications professionals at large to discuss how best to support our community. The anti-racism protests in June 2020 motivated a series of open forums aimed at gathering feedback and suggestions for how best to support communications professionals around diversity,

inclusion, equity and accessibility. Dialogue on how the association could better champion and meet the needs of its diverse membership prompted the establishment of a dedicated group of volunteers to audit, continue discussing within the community and, ultimately, create recommendations to the IABC/Toronto Board of Directors.

In the 2019-2020 Board year, each issue of our digital magazine - *Communicator* - explored an important topic affecting professional communicators. One of these issues focused on diversity and inclusion. Another on career advancement. By seeking out accomplished members to create thought-leadership content, we were able to drive member value, create valuable professional development opportunities, elevate our reputation and further amplify members who contributed to these issues. To reach a broader audience, in 2019 we opened *Communicator* readership to non-members. We also regularly communicate with both members and non-members through our social media channels, with direct emails and through our newsletter.

**Programming:** We strive to ensure that our events are respectful, inclusive, accessible and that our speakers are representative of our membership. We also work to ensure that our volunteers have the support they need to plan and host events that run smoothly. As a result, we have created templates to help volunteers plan successful events, consider accessibility requirements, and ensure that each team of event volunteers is led by a volunteer experienced in event planning.

Events are planned with a variety of goals in mind, one of them being how to support our members in different stages of their careers. To accomplish this, we host an annual event aimed at new communicators, bringing them together with potential employers from a variety of industries. We also host quarterly senior communicators circles, allowing senior communications professionals to network and learn from one another. Our general PD events are planned to support varied knowledge and skill levels.

## Challenges

The pandemic forced a number of event cancellations and the necessity of innovative thinking to continue to deliver member value. While COVID did present an opportunity to step up and support our members through professional development, as well as peer and career support, it also caused unforeseen disruptions in revenue generation and of in-person events.

## Budget

Tactic/initiative	Budgeted	Actual
Volunteer recruitment event	\$1,000.00 (not revenue generating)	\$650.00
Senior Communicator's Circle	\$600.00 (not revenue generating)	\$0 (in-person events cancelled)
PD events	\$6,200.00 (cost) \$15,500.00 (revenue) \$8,900.00 (total revenue)	\$1,568.51 (cost) \$1,014.82 (revenue) \$553.69 (total loss due event cancellations)
<i>Communicator</i>	\$800.00	\$348.00
Communicator of the Year award	\$290	\$560.00 (award damaged during delivery)
Zoom	\$0	\$374.63

## Evaluation/Results

Objectives	Results
Host one volunteer recruitment event in the Fall of 2019.	<b>Objective met:</b> IABC/Toronto hosted one recruitment event, with a total of 47 participants.



Create a series of member spotlights promoted via social media and through our newsletter to highlight the work of IABC/Toronto's diverse membership and volunteers.	<b>Objective met:</b> Member spotlights were promoted ~2/month via social media and our newsletter.
Host 4-6 professional development events throughout the Board year, with 1-2 events focused on promoting diversity of perspectives.	<b>Objective met:</b> We hosted 6 PD events with a total of 384 participants. One focused on IDEA principles, and one on generational learnings, with 89 and 33 participants respectively.
Host annual talent expo for students and communicators in transition to connect with potential employers.	<b>Objective met:</b> We hosted one event, with a total of 38 registrants.
Host a minimum of 4 senior communicator circles by invitation only to ensure target audience is engaged.	<b>Objective not met:</b> 2 events were held, with a total of 19 attendees; 2 events had to be cancelled.
Publish four issues of <i>Communicator</i> , with at least one diversity-themed issue.	<b>Objective met:</b> We published a total of 4 issues, with one focused on diversity and inclusion and one on career advancement.
Award and highlight the work of a high-profile leader in the GTA, outside of the field of communications, but who demonstrates excellence in communications, with the <i>Communicator of the Year Award</i> .	<b>Objective met:</b> Jodi Kovitz, founder and CEO of #movethedial was awarded the COTY award. She promoted IABC/Toronto and the award via her social media channels and attended our AGM as a guest speaker.
Ensure all in-person events meet accessibility needs.	<b>Objective met:</b> Each in-person event chosen had an accessible entrance and all registrants were asked to identify any additional needs that IABC/Toronto could accommodate.
Review and update imagery on our website to be more representative of our diverse membership.	<b>Objective met:</b> Completed in Fall 2019 – but will be an ongoing initiative.
Complete audit of accessibility for the IABC/Toronto website.	<b>Objective met:</b> A detailed recommendations report was submitted by a volunteer with expertise in website accessibility. Implementation scheduled for 2021.
Release a Statement from the President addressing global anti-racism protests.	<b>Objective met:</b> Statement released in June 2020.
Host 4-5 open forums with members of underrepresented groups.	<b>Objective met:</b> Two virtual events were hosted in June, one in September and one in October, with more than 50 participants.
Recruit volunteers to work on the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Accessibility (IDEA) committee to facilitate careful consideration of IDEA recommendations.	<b>Objective met:</b> A working group was formed in September 2020; a list of committee advisors identified June-September.

### Work samples

Work sample #1: Statement by the president

Work sample #2: Open forum invitation

Work sample #3: IDEA committee webpage copy