

DESTINATION
TORONTO

WELCOME
TORONTO

CLIENT ADVISORY BOARD

NAVIGATING
TOGETHER

Toronto Client Advisory Board Minutes
September 26 - 27, 2024





CAB MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Alexandra Zapple	Sr. Director of Meetings and Member Experience	American Society of Nephrology
Cait Goldberg	Chief of Event Planning and Operations	Society for Science & the Public
Carol Reising	Strategic Account Director	Maritz Global Events
Courtney Miller	Director of Meetings	Society for Vascular Surgery
James Woollard	Head of Commercial Solutions	BLAST
Josh Henry	Meetings Manager	SPIE
Justine Friedman	Senior Event Manager, Sourcing	The Linux Foundation
Kathleen McClemmy	Director of Meetings	The Aesthetic Society
Kristi Casale	Sr. Vice President, Meetings & Continuing Education	American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry
Lancey Cowan	Chief Officer, Meetings & Community Engagement	Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO)
Lisa Parse	Director, Meeting Services	American Academy of Periodontology
Mariana Gallo	Director, Meetings & Programs	American Association of Physicists in Medicine
Megan Henshall	Global Events Strategic Solutions Lead	Google
Melissa Dewey	Events Director, Event Services	SmithBucklin
Nathalie Atkins	Director of Events	Tessitura Network
Ori Lahav	CEO	Kenes
Tia Benjamins	Co-Founder & Partner	The Honeycomb
Trey Weaver	Senior Meetings Manager	American Academy of Forensic Sciences
Vandana Patel	Sr. Experiential Marketing Event Sponsorship Manager	Workday

TORONTO LEADERSHIP

Andrew Weir	President & CEO	Destination Toronto
Tara Gordon	Senior Vice President, Global Sales & Service	Destination Toronto
Paula Port	Vice President, Global Marketing	Destination Toronto
Ron Pellerine	Interim President & CEO	Metro Toronto Convention Centre
Laura Purdy	General Manager	Exhibition Place
Bradley Sutherland	National Manager, Business Development	Air Canada



OUR FACILITATOR



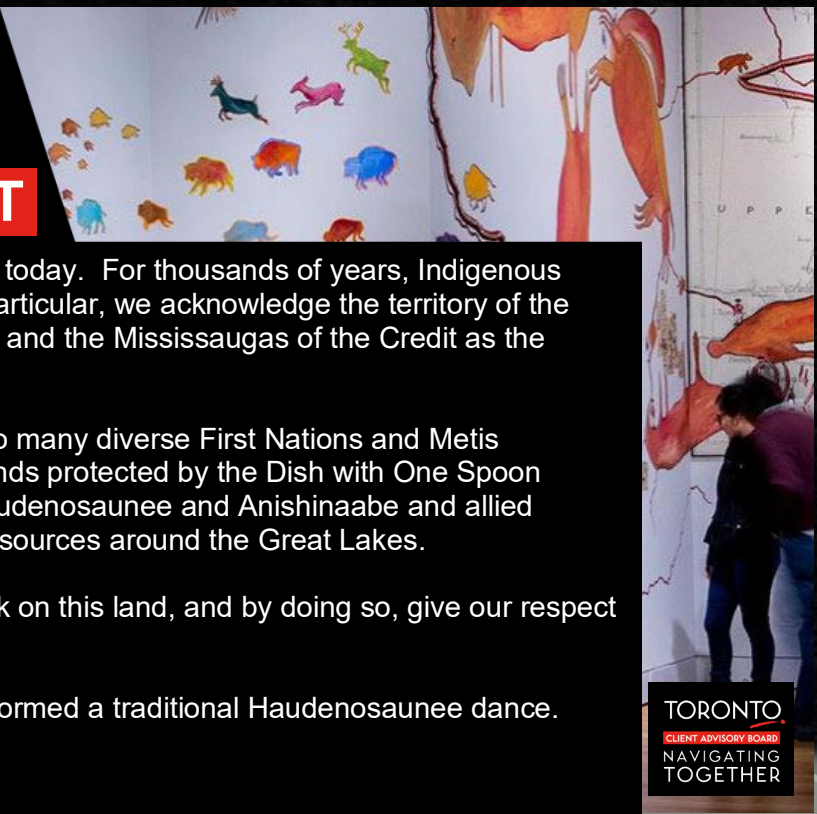
David Kliman
President
The Kliman Group

Meeting moderated and report authored by
David Kliman, CMM
 President - The Kliman Group
 415.713.2650
david@klimangroup.com



LAND

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

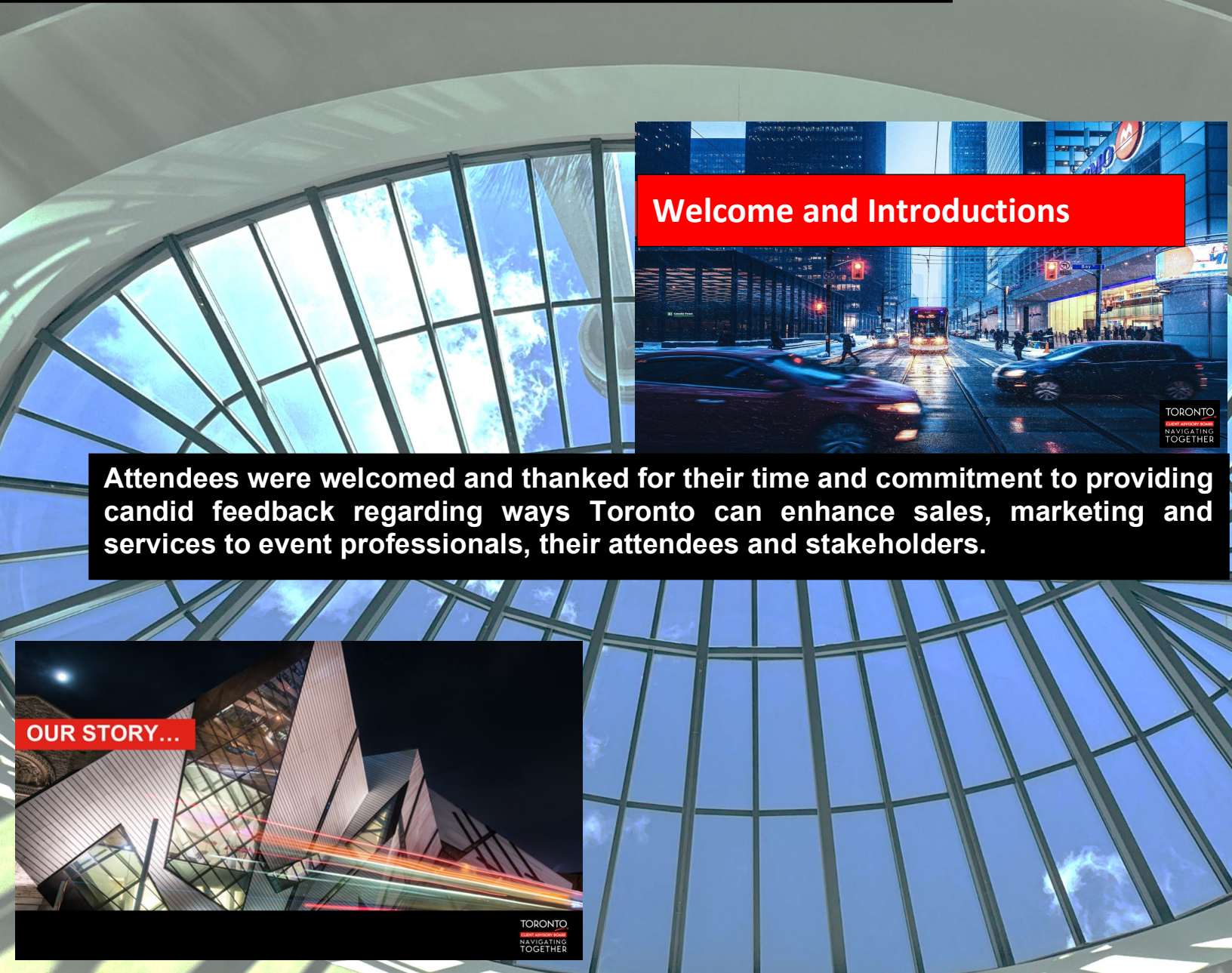


We acknowledge the land on which we gather today. For thousands of years, Indigenous peoples inhabited and cared for this land. In particular, we acknowledge the territory of the Anishinabek, Haudenosaunee, Huron-Wendat and the Mississaugas of the Credit as the traditional stewards of this land.

We also acknowledge this land is now home to many diverse First Nations and Metis people. The territory we are on is within the lands protected by the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt, an agreement between the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabe and allied nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes.

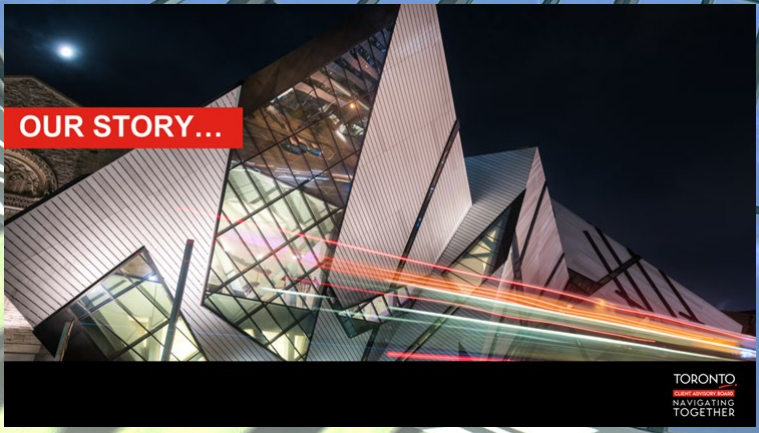
We are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land, and by doing so, give our respect to its first inhabitants.

Frazer Sundown was welcomed and then performed a traditional Haudenosaunee dance.



Welcome and Introductions

Attendees were welcomed and thanked for their time and commitment to providing candid feedback regarding ways Toronto can enhance sales, marketing and services to event professionals, their attendees and stakeholders.



OUR STORY...



**YOUR INSIGHT, OUR FUTURE:
NAVIGATING TOMORROW
TOGETHER**

[Greg Oates, Senior Vice President, Innovation, MMGY, Next Factor](#)
goates@nextfactorinc.com

- DMOs are expanding roles to support their destinations' products, community development, safety, security and infrastructure
- Business events sector is becoming increasingly competitive due to many evolving societal and marketplace trends
- 2024 trends include:
 - Rising costs for all event/travel products and services
 - Diminishing room blocks
 - Expanding competitive city sets
 - Increased demands for financial incentives
 - Politically driven destination selection including some groups now avoiding red states due to DEI&B issues
 - Leisure-first promotion highlighting the destination "vibe"
 - Focus on event KPIs
 - Defining legacy impact
 - CAB support/advocacy

OUR PRESENTER



Greg Oates
Senior Vice President, Innovation



CAB members were surveyed live to uncover trends in destinations and business events that impacts destination decision making, the following summarizes their comments:

- Factors regarding leisure experiences are very meaningful
- Cost evaluations are top of mind
- Safety & security very important
- Increased demand for intimate and unique/non-conventional meeting spaces
- Attendees and travelers in general seek memorable experiences
- Community partnership cited as meaningful
- Geopolitics playing an increased role overall
- Developing and seeking more risk sharing models between event organizers and DMOs
- Seeking financial incentives to offset costs
- Growing importance regarding the "perception and vibe" of destinations
- Workforce knowledge and capability
- Communicating economic impact and value to the destination community
- Booking far in advance isn't necessarily advantageous
 - Some CAB members booking out 2033+



Destinations emerging on CAB's radar include:

- ❖ Austin
- ❖ Louisville
- ❖ Detroit
- ❖ Salt Lake City
- ❖ Dallas
- ❖ Toronto
- ❖ Vancouver
- ❖ Calgary
- ❖ Lisbon
- ❖ Singapore
- ❖ Nashville
- ❖ Barcelona
- ❖ Las Vegas
- ❖ Saudi Arabia
- ❖ Shanghai



DestinationNEXT Futures Study highlights:

- Martha Sheridan, President & CEO, Meet Boston quoted in 2023:
 - “Is there consensus about what our real roles are today? We need to put some guardrails around that.”
- Top trends:
 - AI leading
 - Authentic travel experience
 - Community engagement
 - Sustainability
 - Industry/community/government alignment
 - Resident sentiment
- Top strategies:
 - Protect revenue to maintain funding
 - Developing authentic experiences for customers
 - Better integrate tourism and economic development
 - Defining destination development involves multiple factors, community, economic, experience, event, workforce, etc.
 - DMO mandate map: visitor engagement, partner support, destination development, community development
 - The rise of the convention centre “district”
 - Vibe is everything
 - Making decisions on our emotions and validating them cognitively; planners are saying the same thing goes for them and attendees
 - Using AI travel assistant integrated on DMO websites to plan your event

Open Discussion

- Focusing on understanding how the next generation wants to experience and plan events
 - Generational shift for needs and expectations
 - Senior management generally educating the younger generation
 - Relationships starting to shift
 - Digital native generation have complete fluency in digital technology
- GenZ employees and attendees would rather “move on than move up”, have strong desire for work that feels purposeful, doing things that feed their values and want flexibility and autonomy
- David Allison, CEO [Valuegraphics](#) was cited for creating and documenting an emerging framework for engaging with consumers in ways most meaningful to them
- Looking Ahead...
 - How can a DMO best collaborate with its CAB to help accomplish destination and community development goals?
 - Moving away from transactional conversations, looking to build relationships, long term benefits to the city and for the customer
 - What are we not talking about that we should be? What's next that we need to prepare for?
- Recommended reading: [Smart Brevity: The Power of Saying More with Less](#), by Jim VandeHei, Mike Allen, and Roy Schwartz

Sarah Sime, VP, Client Advice & Head of Project Management, Initiative
 Jamie Camden, Group Director, Strategy, Initiative



This session focused on the CAB's perceptions of Toronto as a brand, how they compare it to other destinations, and how they define Toronto's competitive set. The CAB's insights will help Destination Toronto identify key strategies and tactics for its marketing and sales efforts.

The following summarizes the discussions

The attendees were asked to create "Toronto Pitches" the following summarizes their work:



Group One

See yourself in Toronto!

- A place that feels like home
- A diverse place, a kaleidoscope of people, cultures and cuisine.
- Diverse industries: Medical, Tech, Entertainment, Education, Finance
- Different from other cities
- Big City, but approachable and not intimidating

Group Two

Welcome to Toronto, a vibrant melting pot that truly embodies the essence of a metropolitan city. Diverse cultures come together here in a respectful and genuine way, creating a unique tapestry of experiences.

- Toronto is not just a cultural hub; it's an economic powerhouse that's exactly what you need it to be.
- With thriving sectors in technology, finance, arts, and healthcare, the city fosters innovation and growth, making it an ideal place for professionals, entrepreneurs and visitors alike.
- Join us in Toronto, where opportunity meets community and everyone can thrive.
- Note: vital to include the Canadian Flag on the pictorial representation of Toronto noted here. →



Group Three:

- Toronto is a dynamic and vibrant city where sports, culture and neighborhoods come together to create a rich tapestry of experiences. From diverse culinary scenes and world class museums to active lifestyle and scenic lake views, there is something here for everyone. Our city's friendly and approachable vibe, combined with easy access through its major international airport and well-equipped convention centre, makes it an ideal destination for meetings and events. Toronto is not just a place to visit but a place to find your purpose and connection with people who share your passions. With a mosaic of cultures and the resources to support any endeavor, Toronto offers a unique fusion that encapsulates the spirit of Canada. Discover a city that's more than what meets the eye – come see for yourself and be surprised by what Toronto has to offer.

Welcome to Toronto!
Bienvenue à Toronto!

The attendees were then asked to outline aspects of “the perfect meeting /event you planned” and the following outlines their comments:

“Is there any consensus about what our real roles are today? We need to put some guard rails around that.”

— Martha Sheridan, President & CEO, Meet Boston (2023)

DESTINATIONS Next Factor



- Seamless event execution by all stakeholders
- Positive viral social media comments
- Meet or exceed all financial targets
- Achieve all sustainability and DEI&B goals
- Positive attendee and exhibitor satisfaction ratings
- Limited or no safety and security issues
- Deliver all key performance indicators
- All attendees “blown away by the experience and the city”
- Flexible meeting spaces that foster community and idea sharing
- Quality, creative and cost-effective AV and production
- No travel related issues
- Including DMO in event via programing, F&B etc.
- Local vendors easy to work with
- Quality and comfortable housing options
- Seamless airport arrival and departure experiences
- No lines for F&B at hotel or any venues
- Quality F&B
- Well trained service managers who listen and respond effectively and on timely basis
- Timely and accurate final billing
- Create experiences which generate attendee and key stakeholder desire to return to the destination
- Create genuine sense of community
- Streamlined communications
- No shipping or drayage issues
- Strong attendance numbers
- No attrition clauses
- High quality post event photos and highlights reel
- Post event sustainability data
- Innovative post event analysis

OUR PARTNER



Bradley Sutherland
National Manager, Business
Development



Air Canada

Bradley Sutherland, National Manager, Business Development, Air Canada

Brad and Air Canada were thanked for their partnership and support of the CAB and for providing airline transportation for the CAB members to fly to Toronto.

Brad outlined Air Canada's services to the business events industry and welcomes CAB members to reach out to him at any time.

Revitalization Roundtable: Collaborating for Growth

OUR PRESENTERS



Ron Pellerine
Interim President & CEO
Metro Toronto Convention
Centre



John Kaatz
Principal
CSL International

Ron Pellerine, Interim President & CEO, Metro Toronto Convention Centre

John Kaatz, Partner, CSL International

- Confidential survey results shared; 'what we know'
 - Proposal includes larger ratio of meeting room space to exhibit space in comparison with competitors
 - National planner facility preferences offer these desires/trends:
 - Highly sub-divisible multipurpose ballroom space
 - Large flexible meeting space
 - Informational LED signage
 - Open lobby areas including pop-up temporary F&B stations
 - Support for small gatherings in pre-function areas
 - Streaming/broadcast technologies for hybrid meetings and to accommodate accessibility
- *CAB Recommendations*
 - Very strong need for development of a connected large (1,200+ room) full-service hotel
 - Need more hotels in closer proximity to Convention Centre, blocks given by hotels are small requiring more hotels in overall block
 - Large hotels are too far from the centre; shuttle buses and Toronto traffic are challenging issues
 - Move proposed new large ballroom from top floor to one level above exhibit hall to ensure easier flow of people

WHERE WE'VE BEEN & WHERE WE ARE GOING



OUR PRESENTER



Jeff Ross
Director, Strategic Development



Reducing urban sprawl



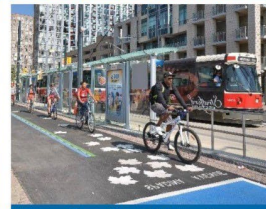
Building sustainable communities



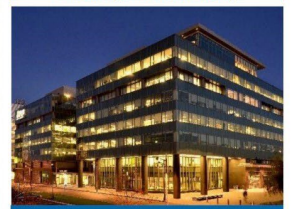
Increasing affordable housing



Creating parks & public spaces



Expanding public transit



Driving economic competitiveness

Toronto's Waterfront Revitalization: Leading Urban Transformation on a Global Stage

Jeff Ross, Director Strategic Development, Waterfront Toronto

- Outlined the reinvention of Villiers Island - Waterfront Events Park
 - Focus on revitalization not redevelopment
- Villiers Island is a new, complete community within the city, 50 acres of restored lakeside greenspace, 15,000 residents, and expected to welcome 2.5 million visitors a year
- Funding and completion of the Port Lands Flood Protection (2024) will unlock 500+ acres of public land, including Villiers Island
- The Eastern Waterfront will create 100,000 new residents + 90,000 new jobs
- Outcomes include advances enabling infrastructure, accelerates and supports early phases of development, anchors a destination on the waterfront, delivers community assets, provides needed arts, culture, festivals and event infrastructure, generates revenue
- Waterfront Events Park will be a community destination and a world class events site
 - When not used for events, fully accessible to the public, iconic waterfront gathering place, permanent access to waterfront
 - Purposeful and flexible design with 'plug and play' capabilities for events
- Designed to accommodate a range of cultural and sporting events with capacities of up to 10,000

CAB Feedback:

- Strong endorsement of the proposed plan due to need for venues that can accommodate large numbers
- Endorse plans to design the space purpose built for outdoor events, tent structure, electric and water well placed etc.
- Several CAB members: James, Josh, Kristi, and Megan offered to work remotely with Jeff during the design phases





The [Metro Toronto Convention Centre \(MTCC\)](#) is marking a dazzling 40 years of igniting inspiration during 2024, sparking ideas and crafting unforgettable memories. Since 1984, the MTCC has hosted 22,000+ events and welcomed 69+ million attendees. The MTCC pulled back the curtain as the CAB toured the front and back of the house to reveal the secrets behind four decades of creating iconic moments.



BANKING ON INTELLECTUAL CAPITAL

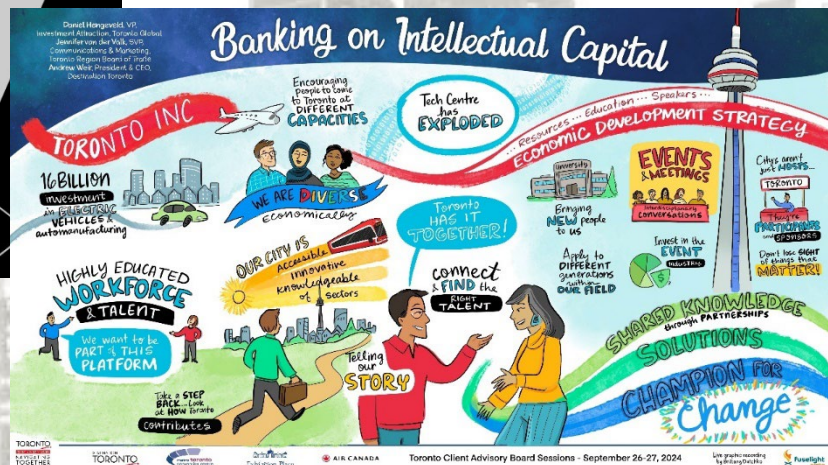
[Daniel Hengeveld](#), Vice President, Investment Attraction, [Toronto Global](#)
[Jennifer van der Valk](#), SVP, Communications & Marketing, [Toronto Region Board of Trade](#) (TRBOT)
[Andrew Weir](#), President & CEO, Destination Toronto

TORONTO
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Jennifer van der Valk
SVP, Communications & Marketing
Toronto Region Board of Trade

Andrew Weir
President & CEO
Destination Toronto

Daniel Hengeveld
VP, Investment Attraction
Toronto Global



- Toronto Inc. is a symbol and concept of partnership (but isn't an actual organization)
 - Encompasses 3 different organizations all working on enticing and encouraging people to come to Toronto
 - Started by building shared sales missions and creating more efficient ways of acting together as a community
- Toronto contributes massively to Canada's GDP
 - manufacturing, educated workforce translates to growing tech sector
- Advocacy work from TRBOT includes red tape reduction, infrastructure building, tax credits, all 3 levels of government willing to invest to maintain Toronto's global competitiveness
- Strategic investment and growth

- Toronto Pitch (in terms of knowledge-based jobs and roles to grow the economy):
 - Toronto Strengths
 - supply chain
 - innovation
 - highly educated talented workforce
 - livability
 - safe place to live, invest, visit and work
 - greenspaces
 - transit
 - ESG goals
 - political stability
 - quality of life
 - vibrancy of the city
- Some of the benefits of Toronto Inc collaboration:
 - Better connections with industry people, the right people to find out who is doing what
 - Engaging in the right way
 - Telling a story about the region, the landscape, attracting the right investment, attracting the right talent for growth
 - Convening the best business and industry leaders together, hitting multiple touchpoints, shared communication, knowledge and support to ensure growth and success

CAB Feedback

When asked if connections to local intellectual capital is relevant and impact destination decision is making; the following feedback was offered:

- It is highly relevant if the community and intellectual capital offered results in increased attendance and possible growth of association membership
- Seeing trend towards cities acting as genuine partners and sponsors, not just suppliers
 - Barcelona and Madrid cited for opting in as paid event exhibitors



When asked what turnkey tools should be available to meeting planners for this partnership?

- Resources, support and connections should be made available for both small and large groups
 - sometimes, small groups are the most important/influential groups to have based on their role in industry, i.e. C-Suite attendance
- Not necessarily helpful/applicable for every organization, but connections for speakers/education/industry experts could be useful at times



EXHIBITION PLACE TORONTO

[Laura Purdy](#), General Manager, [Exhibition Place Toronto](#)

Laura shared that since 2004, Exhibition Place has launched an environmental stewardship initiative called GREENSmart, which promotes sustainable development and implements cutting-edge green technologies and practices throughout the site. Additionally, she highlighted Exhibition Place's commitment to the Sustainable Tourism 2030 Pledge, reinforcing its role as Toronto's premier sustainable venue and aiming to enhance sustainability performance across all operational aspects in alignment with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. Laura then introduced Leor Rotchild.



HOW WE GATHER MATTERS

[Leor Rotchild](#)- Author, [How We Gather Matters](#)

Leor is a nationally recognized speaker, author, podcaster and consultant with 20 years of sustainable business experience. He spoke about event sustainability and the following summarizes his comments:

- Leor reflected on the land acknowledgement
 - We can only take so much for ourselves
 - Need to leave some for the generations beyond
- Sustainability should be viewed holistically, both environmentally and socially
- Creates an opportunity during meetings to advance reconciliation and renew the relationship with Indigenous Peoples, based on recognition of rights, respect, cooperation and partnership
- Focus on sustainability can bring an overall positive impact on the community and the world
- [UNSDGs](#) is a good place to start
 - The “world’s to-do list” signed by 162 countries and territories
- Destinations can go beyond growth of the visitor economy and have a positive impact on the well-being of the overall community
- Core Purpose of Sustainability
 - Fundamental reason to exist; your optimal strategic contribution to the long-term wellbeing of people and planet

CAB questions and comments:

- Are the offset programs meaningful and worthwhile?
 - Carbon offsetting has some cynicism associated with it due to a lack of standardization and regulation in the carbon offset market
 - Originally, practices faced little scrutiny, but now greenwashing—appearing environmentally responsible without meaningful changes—has fueled skepticism about the effectiveness of carbon offsetting as a true solution to climate change
 - The rules have changed, and the practices are now generally sound
 - It's valid to say that many organizations are experiencing "fatigue" around sustainability and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEI&B) efforts. Some organizations are struggling to maintain momentum or genuine commitment to these initiatives.

Purpose

Fundamental reason to exist; your optimal strategic contribution to the long-term wellbeing of people and planet.





NAVIGATING THE UNSPOKEN

David Kliman

The CAB discussed “third rail” issues impacting their professional lives, the following summarizes their comments:

- Polarized politicized topics have become overly contentious
 - Strong desire cited to have these conversations without radical interactions and reactions
- Some organizations are now avoiding some cities/states for being controversial
 - Some groups choose destinations because it says something about who they are as a organization
 - Deeply embedded emotional connections and feeling are new issues in the professional ecosystem
 - Choices we make say something about “us” or “me”
- Misinformation and misinterpretation have created an environment of misbelief
 - Curated news, seeing things that reinforce our own views (living in a bubble)
- Some say they’re “afraid to say anything wrong” in fear of creating an unintended offensive situation
- Resetting and refreshing is necessary, especially for the next generation
- Tiptoeing around people’s narcissism
 - “When we bring people together, we can’t personalize all aspects of every event”
 - “But should we work toward making all events fully inclusive or do we push back on some of this?”
 - Cab agreed there are many unanswerable questions for the moment

The CAB was thanked for their time and commitment to Toronto and the meeting was adjourned.



THANK YOU
TORONTO

CLIENT ADVISORY BOARD



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