

Chamber Accreditation Council of Canada

CORE DEFINITION: CHAMBER OF COMMERCE/BOARD OF TRADE

Chambers across Canada have a longstanding tradition of being the 'voice of business' within their communities. First and foremost these organizations represent members in their community. The Chamber's existence is based upon the following common elements:

- competition in a free market
- excellence in customer service and satisfaction
- broad economic and social community prosperity
- law and order
- reasonable profit
- private ownership
- individual integrity and responsibility
- efficient and effective government
- public policy framework that supports economic progress and fosters business success

Above and beyond these common elements all Chambers must meet the principles of the Core Definition of a Chamber of Commerce/Board of Trade prior to submitting their applications for accreditation. These principles indicate that the chamber applying for accreditation is operating on sound principles of good management.

Core Definition of a Chamber of Commerce/Board of Trade

- Chamber documentation must clearly state the community, geographic or otherwise, served by the said chamber.
- Must be incorporated, either provincially or federally.
- Must have a paid membership.
- Must keep an up-to-date membership list/database.
- Must have a mission statement/vision statement/values statement.
- Must have a clearly defined code of ethics within which the chamber operates, demonstrating that the chamber operates under the principles of competition in a free marketplace and in a fair and equitable manner.
- Must demonstrate the existence of an official governance model that is well understood and practiced.
- Must have bylaws that clearly outline the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of the governing body.
- Must have a board that holds regularly scheduled meetings, at a minimum quarterly.
- Must hold an Annual General Meeting open to all members.
- Must have a designated spokesperson.
- Must have Directors' & Officers' insurance.
- Must have, at minimum, an annual review of financial statements conducted by a qualified professional, e.g. by a chartered accountant (CA) or certified general accountant (CGA).
- Must have an annual, updated business plan for the organization.
- Must be a member of the provincial/territorial or national chamber of commerce and within two years a member of both.
- Must produce an annual report or summary of activities, which includes a list of the governing body.
- Must demonstrate that the chamber's work environment provides a professional location for both staff and the community.
- Must demonstrate that the chamber adheres to pertinent privacy legislation and has a privacy officer in place to answer any questions relative to privacy issues.

