



Rewriting the rules of engagement with government, media and business

The BC Chamber of Commerce closes the data gap to drive policy change, improve advocacy efforts and generate revenue

Changing policy and legislation takes a long time. It begins with advocacy, a cumbersome, lengthy process that is largely dependent on data collected from slow and expensive sources with limited reach. To overcome this legacy of data gaps and fractured engagement, the BC Chamber of Commerce activated BCMindReader.com to engage businesses from every size, sector, and region of BC's economy and uncover agile insight that represents both regional and provincial business interests. This approach has transformed and modernized the brand, giving the BC Chamber of Commerce a stronger voice when it comes to government policy, increased media coverage and opened up new revenue streams.



Our insight community has legitimized our position as the leading voice of business in BC, it has enhanced our relationship with government and transformed our interactions with the media. Improvements that are win-win for everyone. For us specifically this journey has also uncovered new and exciting revenue streams that complement our mission and vision as an organization.



Val Litwin
President and CEO
BC Chamber of Commerce

Represents a new revenue opportunity in a business category that needs to innovate

Leading brands have stepped up their financial commitment by 100%

Generated \$75K in ad equivalency with just one story

Signed an 18-month government contract within 3 months of launch

Challenge

For decades the BC Chamber of Commerce relied on the traditional model of government advocacy and policy development. They started by going into communities across BC with town hall meetings, focus groups, or conducting third-party telephone surveys, to learn what businesses think, and how they should direct their efforts. Even though the data was limited in scope, it still needed to be compiled, segmented and analyzed for discussion, recommendations and policy consideration — costing both time and money.

Sample sizes were small and somewhat superficial. They couldn't tell the full story of the BC business landscape, or divide data easily by region, sector, or business size. For smaller communities, collecting and analyzing data was a time-consuming, expensive process that many local chambers didn't have the capacity or resources to undertake, leading to large data gaps across the province. Consequently, the Chamber's overall influence on the government was limited in the data space, the scope of their activities was constrained by circumstance, and their ability to generate media coverage was impeded. Moreover, the entire process was a drain on their resources and budget.

Solution

BCMIndReader.com: The solution of the future

The BC Chamber of Commerce created BCMIndReader.com to provide government with faster and more representative insights about BC business and the BC economy. With the 1500+ businesses represented in BCMIndReader.com, the BC Chamber can gather and splice business data from every size, sector, and region of BC's economy, and instantly share that information with all levels of government. It's the natural, digital evolution of the Chamber's core organizational purpose — to Know What's on BC's Mind. With this access, the Chamber also identified new partnership opportunities with government, media and the private sector s, that continue to increase their profile as a business leader across BC.

Turning up the volume on feedback

Other sources of insight from business yield a very small response, usually fewer than 100 voices. With BCMIndReader.com, 600+ people typically weigh in on issues, so government and media are more likely to listen. The Chamber typically sees a 25% response rate and they conducted an average of two studies per month in 2018. Since businesses consent to give ongoing feedback, BCMIndReader.com is always on, and people are excited about having their voices heard. The Chamber leverages partnerships (eg: Tourism associations) to promote invitations to join BCMIndReader.com in exchange for asking a question, and uses targeted digital promotion focusing on the pain point they could solve if they had more voices and perspectives. By the end of 2019 they're aiming for 3500 business members, with 1000 businesses completing each study.

Providing both the local and provincial perspective

In the past, data from regional BC businesses was limited. The BC Chamber and local chambers relied on unscalable in-person sessions and town halls, and province-wide surveys that had low participation and offered limited local perspective. With BCMindReader.com, the Chamber can see statistically relevant data community by community, on how various policies affect businesses of varying sizes and sectors—and use this data to make policy recommendations to all levels of government. For example, at a presentation in Whistler, they used BCMindReader.com data to speak to the unique business challenges in the Sea-to-Sky corridor, and how businesses in the area can work with the BC Chamber and their local chambers to address these challenges.

BCMindReader.com elevates the voice of business to government

The BCMindReader.com platform drove the Chamber's 2018 Collective Perspective Survey, the largest and most comprehensive economic survey in BC. The Chamber identified pain points for business according to region, business size, sector, and more. Results indicated that business costs are rising, and confidence in the BC economy has dropped by over 50%. Data from the Collective Perspective survey identified key issues, that will drive policy and legislative changes that better support regional business needs. This insight was not previously available from any other source.

Businesses participate because there is a clear value exchange

The Chamber's perspective on engagement is that behind every business there's a person. So, their engagement strategy is very similar to how they'd engage in a B2C environment. Since all studies are used in some way for advocacy, and often results are covered by media, it is easy for people to clearly see the impact of their voice. Where sample sizes are large enough, the Chamber also shares local results so businesses can see how their perspective compares to the rest of the province. From the local business perspective, it's a lot easier to engage with a quick perspective by answering a couple of questions on an issue and give feedback through BCMindReader.com, rather than all at once in an endless survey.

Effectively staying on top of evolving issues

The agility and speed of BCMindReader.com means the Chamber can quickly gather the perspective of BC businesses to effectively manage issues that come up out of the blue or are getting covered unexpectedly by media. For example, there was an announcement about the restrictions to the west coast fisheries which could have a devastating impact on coastal communities. The Chamber invited businesses on Vancouver Island to participate in a survey on BCMindReader.com. Within a week they had 400 responses from people who are directly or peripherally linked to the fishing industry. They delivered the insight to the Federal Fisheries Minister, crisply communicating the impact to coastal communities. The whole process took two weeks from start to finish and ensured BC coastal businesses were heard.

Our strength has always been our size and our brand—but now it's also our insights. In an age where data is king, BCMindReader.com helps us quickly and effectively tap into demographic segments, regions and sectors so we can focus and prioritize our policy and advocacy efforts with much greater affect.



Val Litwin
President & CEO
BC Chamber
of Commerce

Agile insight increases their influence over media and ensures balanced coverage

The Chamber has a media strategy integrated with BCMindReader.com. They give media exclusive access to stories which helps the newsroom scale and get great coverage on the perspective of business. When media wants to dig deeper into a story, the Chamber can recommend specific local businesses who have opted in to provide anecdotal insight. It's a win-win for everyone. In one example, data from the Collective Perspective, received front page coverage in a provincial magazine with the headline "Is BC Losing Its Edge". And in another example about energy projects, data revealed the vast majority of the BC business community are in favor of pipelines. This insight helped inform more balanced media coverage. The chamber also partnered with The Vancouver Sun on a co-branded survey about pain points for BC businesses. The result was almost 700 responses, and a front-page story that was leveraged to further the Chamber's advocacy position around tax competitiveness, and its unique value proposition to members - high-profile insight partnerships that no one else has.

Outcome

Government views the Chamber as an expert information source

When there's an emerging issue, government knows who to call. Government now views the Chamber as a key source for hyper-detailed, real time business data and insight – and not just policy think-tank. Evidence of this transformation is that within the first three months of launching, the Chamber conducted four province-wide labour market studies with the BC government on BCMindReader.com. The results will inform policy changes in key labour market areas. The first study focused on topical labour market issues—such as skills shortages, barriers to recruitment, challenges with retention of top performers, skills mismatches, and other human resource issues facing BC businesses. The second focused on automation, and the labour forecast on how automation is impacting BC's workforce. The last two will launch in 2019. BCMindReader.com is also the only online platform used in government consultation on the emerging economy.

Improved brand legitimacy and prestige with high-profile media coverage

Media coverage adds significant advertising equivalency, in one instance alone \$75K, and the direct endorsement of BCMindReader.com by editors build brand value.

Secured sponsorship by leveraging the revitalized brand

BCMindReader.com and the insights gathered through the community have revitalized the BC Chamber of Commerce brand—leading to bigger sponsorship dollars. Several leading brands have stepped up their financial commitment by 100% to the BC Chamber to support work with the BCMindReader.com platform.

Streamlined and focused policy and advocacy work

BCMIndReader.com better informs the Chamber's policy work through deeper business insights from across the province as a whole, and localized when perspectives differ. It empowers BC business with a direct line to the provincial government, which puts the BC Chamber, and their members in a position of even more power and influence within the BC policy development space. For example, insight from BCMIndReader.com helped drive the conversation around bringing ridesharing to BC. Results showed overwhelming support for ridesharing, and the BC government ultimately passed ridesharing legislation in December 2018.

Generated new revenue streams

Through leveraging access to BCMIndReader.com the Chamber has identified new revenue streams including paid partnerships with the BC Government (labor market surveys) and the private sector. Within the first three months of launch they partnered with the BC provincial government to conduct four province-wide labour market studies. The first study was so successful, BCMIndReader.com will be used in the future by government to talk to members about BC's economy.

Added value to business memberships

Adding increased value to BC Chamber Memberships helps to drive membership sales. Insights from BCMIndReader.com raise the profile of smaller chambers in their local communities by putting them in a position of influence with local businesses and government officials. In 2019, the Chamber signed on two new local chambers because of the perceived value.

Reduced community consultation costs

Gathering insight through BCMIndReader.com has changed the way the Chamber consults with their community. In the old model, they gathered business insight by either going to communities across BC, or through third party organizations. They can now gather insight without leaving the office, and having BCMIndReader.com means they don't need to access third parties for data gathering and insight consultation. They also leverage in-kind marketing partnerships from various BC business associations to drive participation.

Takeaways

Agile insight increases influence over media and ensures balanced

Repeatable, scalable engagement helps streamline and focus policy and advocacy work

High levels of participation and member engagement positions the Chamber as an expert source for government

About BC Chamber of Commerce

Representing more than 125 Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade along with 36,000 businesses of every size, sector and region of the province, the BC Chamber of Commerce is 'The Voice of Business' in BC. Unique in their approach, the BC Chamber of Commerce effectively leverages data to influence government economic policy and create new revenue streams.

About Vision Critical

[Vision Critical](#) builds customer trust and creates new business value through the collection and application of consent data. With its unique, relationship-based approach, Vision Critical's Sparq platform lets brands directly interact with insight communities of opted-in customers. Unlike traditional voice of customer methods, Vision Critical unlocks the real-time feedback that companies need to build better products, deliver better services, and achieve better business outcomes hand in hand with their own highly engaged, well-profiled customers.

Hundreds of high-performing organizations across multiple industries benefit from Vision Critical's technology and guidance. To learn more about Vision Critical, follow us on [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#), or visit us at www.visioncritical.com.