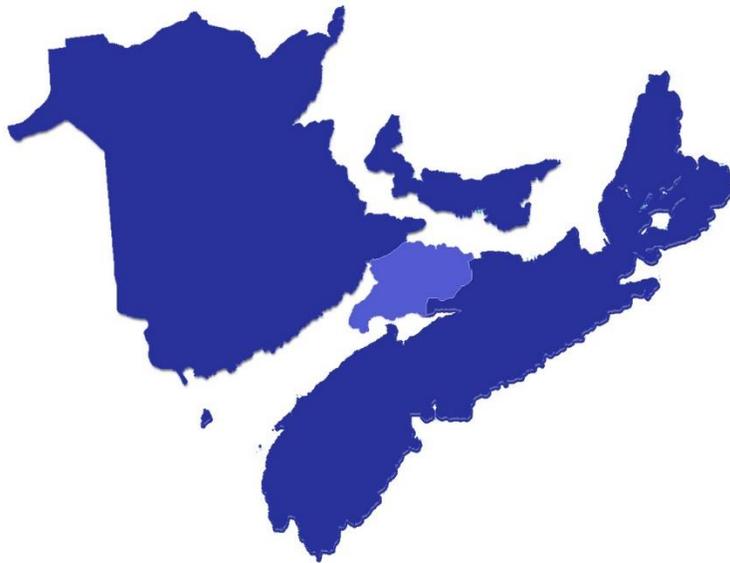




Cumberland Business CONNECTOR

2020-21 Strategic Priorities
of the Cumberland Business Connector



Executive Summary

In a typical year we could speak confidently about general trends in our economy, and provide a concrete strategic plan for the upcoming year. This isn't a normal year. Our economy is beginning to emerge from its COVID induced shutdown but it is still too soon to understand the complete fallout of the shock that has hit our economy.

As we move ahead, even if Atlantic Canada successfully minimizes and contains new outbreaks of COVID, many of our trading partners will not be as fortunate. We must expect some demand destruction in export markets, as well as only a partial rebound domestically particularly in certain service sectors.

With this in mind, the Cumberland Business Connector's focus through the spring and summer of 2020 is on assisting businesses as they navigate through the start-up and recovery stage. We will adapt to business needs as they change, but our key focus will continue to be on "connecting businesses to the resources that they need to be successful." In order to do this effectively, we have allocated funds in our budget so that we will be able to assist businesses with their needs. This may include providing workshops, webinars, assisting with online market development, etc.

By the time that we get into the fall, we will have a better understanding of how our economy and region have survived and adapted. At that time, we will outline additional specific steps to meet the changing needs of the business community.

Mission Statement and Brand Attributes

Mission Statement: The Cumberland Business Connector is a business led, not for profit organization whose focus is to foster a strong business environment in order to strengthen Cumberland County by removing barriers to businesses, and connects businesses with the resources that they need to be successful

Brand Attributes

In February and March 2019, BrainWorks Razor Marketing facilitated consultation sessions with the Board of Directors and the CEO of the Business Connector. The focus of **The DIG** session was on branding and messaging. Some of the highlights from this include:

We are a County-wide, business-led organization supporting businesses in all sectors with a voice that inspires them to take action and continue to invest in the communities in the Cumberland Region.

Our primary focus will be on supporting the goods producing sectors of our economy which includes manufacturing, construction and natural resource industries. Growth in these industries will support the broader service sector's growth. Our secondary focus will be on supporting for-profit service sector businesses where appropriate.

The result of the Connector being effective includes:

- businesses have increased sales, increased productivity and/ or reduced costs.
- These changes will result in increased stability, profitability and reinvestment in the business.
- Attracting and retaining an increased workforce will facilitate business growth as well as reduce job vacancies.
- Business growth and investment will lead to community stability and growth

The Year Ahead

As the Cumberland Business Connector enters its 2020-21 year of operations, we continue to focus on our three priority areas of (1) advocating on behalf of businesses, (2) assisting and supporting existing businesses, and (3) creating a job ready workforce.

Our Strategic Priorities include:

1. **Assist businesses navigating through recovery** – to recover & increase productivity
 - Continue with business outreach to identify needs and priorities
 - Connect resources to local businesses based on the needs identified
 - Refine and expand the CUMBERLAND BUSINESS ACCELERATOR program to support more businesses with high growth potential
 - Support the Forestry Sector on market development work as this sector needs to rebuild its markets following the closure of Northern Pulp.
2. **Build Relationships that will support business recovery/productivity gains in Cumberland County**
 - For Business - provide Information Sessions / Business Workshops /On-Line Webinars or interactive workshops
 - With Partners - Work collaboratively with Municipal Staff to minimize duplication of service, increase efficiency, and enhance co-ordination in priority areas of Economic Development. The development of a joint 2020-2026 Community Economic Development Strategy for the Town of Amherst, the Town of Oxford, The Municipality of the County of Cumberland, and the Cumberland Business Connector is on track to be completed in the summer of 2020.



- Work with other business organizations and economic development partners. The objective is to support each other to increase efficiency, and enhance coordination to better support the local business community

3. Build the workforce of Cumberland County



This continues to be a priority of the Cumberland Business Connector. One new focus will be identifying opportunities for workers who have been laid off due to COVID 19 to transition to other employment opportunities within our region.

4. Improve Communication – in support of our identified priorities

The Connector will continue to build our on-line presence and will continue to collaborate with our partners in order to expand our distribution of information to local businesses.

A New Program – the Cumberland Virtual Advisor Program

To help more companies adapt who have been impacted by COVID-19, the Cumberland Business Connector in partnership with the Regional Enterprise Networks across Nova Scotia are unveiling The Virtual Advisor Program.



Powered by employment technology platform Boomers

Plus, the Cumberland Virtual Advisor Program will match qualified companies from Cumberland County with an experienced business advisor who can advise and help their business manage and recover from covid-19. Businesses are now able to apply on our website. The applications will be reviewed by our staff, and businesses that are accepted in the program will be matched with an experienced business professional through the Boomers Plus platform.

This program will be free to local businesses. Participating businesses will have access to four or six conference calls or online meetings with their advisor over the next few months. **Check out our website for more details.**