

Toward Prosperity

Alliance of Manufacturers & Exporters Canada Consultation

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Discussion

Strategy:

- Things keep coming up and getting shot down.
- If you want us to play - listen and then act.
- Need to do things early that are tangible to raise credibility.
- The members of the manufacturer's alliance are very committed members of their communities - what they say counts.
- Need to *do* something, and have measurable goals.
- There should be a section in the document identifying strengths and weaknesses
- Need to protect what we have while we are pursuing growth.
- Must break down the interprovincial barriers.

Infrastructure:

- Transportation, infrastructure is critical.
 - Currently is fractured, weak and aging
 - Current transportation strategy is too broad and unfocused
 - Must get goods and services to market
 - Concerned about the single airline situation.
- Want the Dept. of Economic Development to take a lead role in the amendment of the transportation strategy.
- Investment in roads is an investment in the future.

Business Climate:

- Need a good environment for businesses to flourish - low taxes etc.
- Average age of tradespeople is around 54 - we will soon have a vacuum of skilled people.
- Some of the requirements for certification are outdated.
- The best way to increase opportunities for export and business with foreign countries is to have international students at our universities. They don't *know* us.
- Need a better immigration policy (we don't have one)
- The development of film etc needs very little physical infrastructure (investment tax credits etc.) - short term strategy.

Vision:

- The term "self-sufficient" is problematic
- The term, "industrial Cape Breton" gives the wrong impression.

Government Role:

- Provide incentives - business will decide if it is a good investment.
- Set the climate and then get out of the picture.
- Government's role is to do what people can't do for themselves.
 - Problems arise when government tries to work like a business.
 - Government and business have different reasons for being at the table - must keep that in mind in partnerships.
- Should make companies earn their incentives.
 - Meantime get money in revenues so that even if only spend a dollar to earn a dollar - there is no net loss.

Capital Formation:

- Venture capital is more of a problem for new companies - IT
 - Essentially a problem of attitude and a lack of entrepreneurial spirit.
 - Also must encourage the banks to back projects in Nova Scotia.
- Also need more incubation work, companies more than just a loan they need advice and guidance.

Management Expertise:

- There are people in Nova Scotia with the necessary expertise.
- For a province the size of Nova Scotia, we don't know each other as well as we should.
 - communications problem
- Should be asking business people to sit on volunteer business councils so that can share their expertise with newer companies.

Business Expansion and Retention:

- Need a long-term trade strategy.
- Given a limited amount of money, need to figure out how to make the most noise.
 - Trade committees to share opportunities