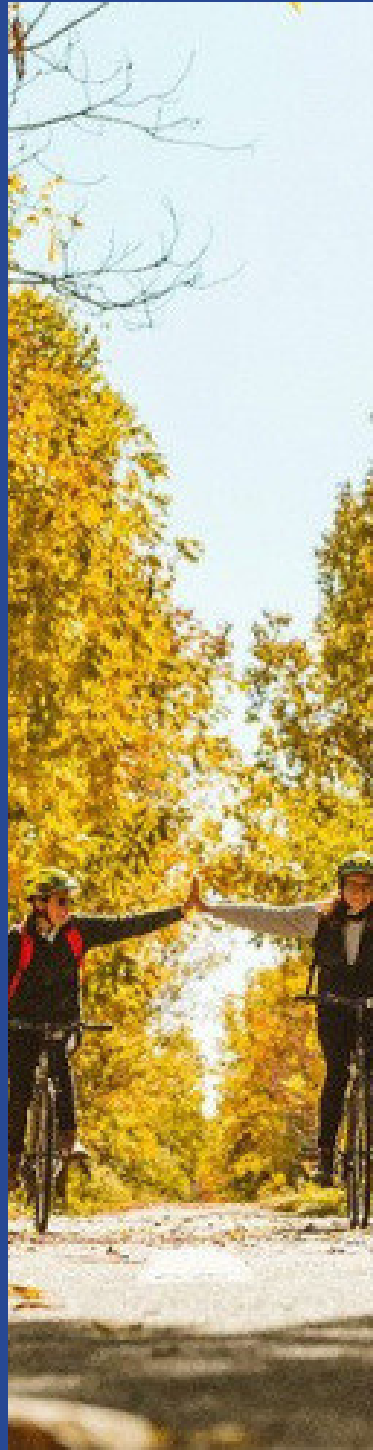
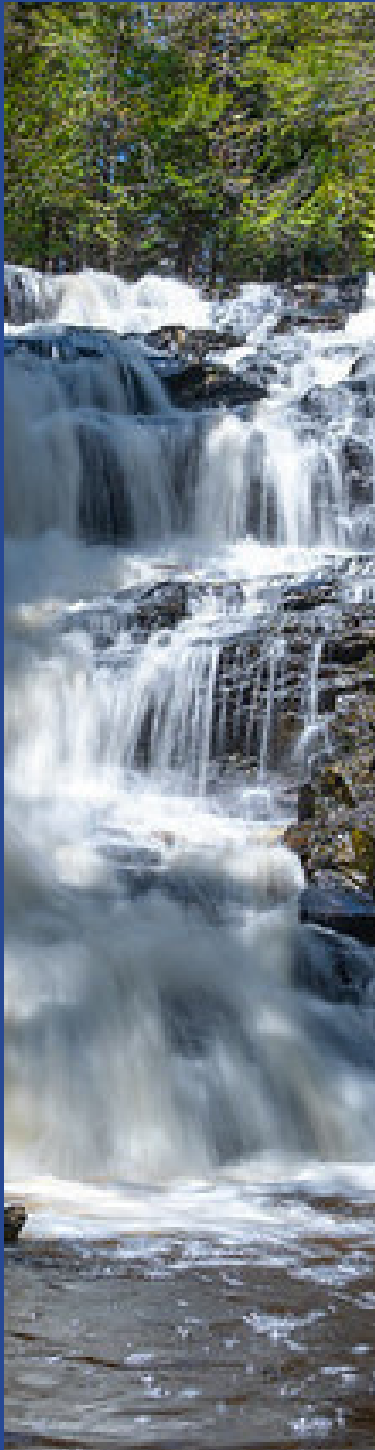




IGNITE

2023 Q4 REPORT



LOCALLY FOCUSED | REGIONALLY CONNECTED | GLOBALLY AWARE

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OUR MISSION

to lead integrated economic development growth through diverse initiatives that create an environment for our communities and businesses to be successful



Sarah Corey Hollohan CEO

EXECUTIVE REPORT

In the last quarter of 2023, our organization showcased remarkable achievements across both the Business Growth and Workforce Strategy fronts, contributing significantly to our overall mission. The Business Growth department's strategic services and support left a lasting impact, with the Business Development Team aiding 135 clients in expanding their ventures, securing funding, and generating employment. Simultaneously, our Business Startup Specialist empowered over 60 entrepreneurs, resulting in the establishment of 10 new businesses and the creation of 11 jobs.

Moreover, Ignite's robust programming sustained its commitment to nurturing a thriving local business community. Concurrently, our Workforce Strategy action plan executed during the same period yielded impactful results, emphasizing the creation of a talent funnel, promoting diversity in hiring, and enhancing employment readiness. These combined efforts underscore our dedication to empowering businesses, fostering economic growth, and strategically addressing workforce needs in our region.

FORWARD THINKING

As we reflect on the strides made by our Business Development team in 2023, we eagerly anticipate the transformative impact our collective efforts will have on our business ecosystem in 2024. To build on this momentum, we have crafted innovative programs, informed by valuable client feedback, poised to empower and fortify our vibrant business community. In the realm of Workforce Development and Attraction, 2024 marks a pivotal year as we launch a comprehensive three-year Newcomer Attraction, Integration, and Retention strategy. Concurrently, we enter the third year of implementing our region's workforce strategy, aiming to foster collaboration internally and externally. In the spirit of driving positive change, our commitment extends to distinct initiatives that enhance newcomer employability, integration, and retention, setting the stage for a dynamic and impactful year ahead.



Andrew Lockhart - Director

ACHIEVEMENTS / MILESTONES

SUPPORT

Wrapping up the year in Q4, our team of Business Development Officers provided tailored services to a diverse portfolio of clients across various industries. This support included strategic planning, market research, operational efficiency optimization, financial analysis, marketing assistance, and customized technology solutions. The team facilitated access to funding opportunities, enabling clients to secure capital for expansion. Through workshops, training, and networking events, the Business Development Team empowered SMEs to navigate challenges and seize growth opportunities, ensuring their success in a competitive business landscape and making a positive impact on the local economy.

- BDO Central supported 45 clients in the Fredericton and New Maryland entities.
- BDO East supported 55 clients in the Oromocto, Grant Lake, Arcadia, Fredericton Junction, Tracy, Sunbury-York South, and Rural District entities.
- BDO West supported 35 clients in the Hanwell, Harvey, Nackawic-Millville, Nashwaak, and Central York entities.
- The Business Startup Specialist engaged with more than 60+ entrepreneurs, dedicating over 500 hours of business coaching and programming which resulted in 10 new businesses and 11 new jobs!

PROGRAMMING

During this quarter, Ignite hosted a range of events to support & promote our business community across the capital region. Events included the Grow with your Business program, Small Business Week, Global Entrepreneurship Week, Fireside Chat, Planning for Growth Workshop, Managing your Digital Footprint, Funding panel, Q&A Ecosystem Panel, McInnes Cooper Info Session, and more! Our programming continues to support business leaders in identifying opportunities to enhance their managerial proficiency and optimize business operations. We also continued our Social Entrepreneurship Program with St. Thomas University and hosted our second Business Builder Botocamp helping entrepreneurs build their businesses.

PLANET HATCH

Planet Hatch concluded the year with welcoming 42 new members over the course of the year. These members consist of remote workers, entrepreneurs and Start-up Visa (SUV) Clients.

START | GROW | THRIVE

FORWARD THINKING

Reflecting on the development our Business Development team has made in 2023, we are excited to see these collective efforts have not only elevated our business ecosystem but have also laid the groundwork for an even more impactful 2024. Moving into 2024, we have created a series of new innovative programs designed to empower and support our thriving business community. This programming and support is a result of extensive feedback from our clients, and we look forward to continuing to work with our business community in driving positive change and creating impact.

BUSINESS GROWTH

Team KPI's and IMPACT to date

CAPITAL REGION



Andrew Lockhart
Director



Ori Cordido
Specialist



Mikala Watson
Coordinator



Tara Leavitt
Coordinator



Hannahbelle Weaver
BDB



Danielle Connell
BDB



Sofia Urrea
BDB

JOBS SUPPORTED THROUGH BUSINESS GROWTH ACTIVITIES

112

410 HOURS OF CONSULTATIONS & COACHING HOURS

Planet Hatch is everything that I needed and more. It is clean, comfortable, and well-equipped, with all the necessary amenities to help the members be productive. I am impressed by the space's professional atmosphere and appreciate the quiet environment and 24/7 availability, allowing me to focus on my work without distractions. Once again, thank you so much for providing us with such an outstanding facility and making our time so enjoyable.
Behzad Mirarabshahi, JBAtlantic

PROGRAMMING HOURS 329

NEW BUSINESS STARTUPS

10

The program was incredibly informative and refreshing! It was eye-opening to discover aspects we often overlook while managing a business. Levi did an excellent job delivering a wealth of information in just one day. I highly recommend this course to all business owners.
Jamie Murdock, Journey Fitness NB – Managing your Digital Footprint

This course was exactly what I needed! As a full time business owner with no other full time staff, it was great to sit down, reset and refocus on my business. Joe was awesome and provided tons of one on one instruction and got to know your business! Can't say enough great things about this program!
Cassidy Hilworth, Total Speed Hockey - Grow with your Business Program

Take the course. Learn from Ignite Experts and other like minded entrepreneurs. The Hands-on approach is invaluable and not something you will find elsewhere!
Kristin Neville - Business Builder Participant

8 IMPACT LOANS APPROVED = \$180K OF FUNDING DISBURSED

START | GROW | THRIVE

05

LEADING REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GROWTH



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & ATTRACTION

Creating pathways for labour force connections through skilled worker/newcomer attraction

CAPITAL REGION



Naushveen Ali - Director

ACHIEVEMENTS / MILESTONES

WORKFORCE STRATEGY

We continued to focus on the implementation of the workforce strategy action plan during Q4. Our focus remained on:

- Creating and scaling a talent funnel to improve access for companies
- Promoting employer readiness to hire diverse talent
- Promoting employment readiness among job seekers through capacity building
- Promoting integration and retention through networking and connection building activities.

Our most prominent activities in Q4 included the InnovateNB Career Fair, welcoming 15 employers from the tech sector and over 100 participants. We also participated in a job fair in Grand Lake by the Rural Settlement Network. To promote professional networking, our team organized the inaugural Connector Appreciation night welcoming over 150 participants and was instrumental in promoting connections and networking opportunities.

WORKFORCE ATTRACTION

Our Startup Visa program saw steady growth and after the year's last due diligence committee presentations, we hit our annual target of welcoming 12 innovative startups to the region.

During Q4, we delivered two exploratory presentations to potential immigrant entrepreneurs. We also published our second article on the CIC platform which broke all records of engagement and reached over 30,000 people around the world.

INTEGRATION & RETENTION

The third cohort of our Integration Success program for international students ended with 28 students graduating and becoming ready for the workforce. Over 100 students also participated in the Thanksgiving celebration hosted by Ignite, helping them feel at home at a time of celebration. We also began preliminary work to kick-start the development of our new Capital Region Newcomer Attraction, Integration and Retention strategy. To wrap up the year, we were honoured to receive a bronze award for our Economic Empowerment and Integration Success programs from the International Economic Development Council (IEDC). These award winning initiatives embody our commitment to empowering immigrant women with essential soft skills crucial for navigating the Canadian business landscape and workforce as well as preparing international students for success in the Canadian workforce.

CAPITAL REGION INTEGRATION NETWORK (Formerly LIP)

The most notable achievement for the CRIN was the launch of our first Immigrant Advisory Council (IAC), which will operate in conjunction with the NPC to establish a strategic plan for the year. There are 13 members of the IAC, representing 8 countries of origin and various immigration statuses. In November we also launched the Welcoming Kitchens Network, engaging 6 partner organizations to address food insecurity among international students. We capped off the year by hosting a CRIN Holiday Networking Social, where CRIN members engaged with members of the City of Fredericton's Social Inclusion Committee and Youth Advisory Committee on our shared goals of building more welcoming, inclusive communities.

FORWARD THINKING

We foresee 2024 as a significant year in moving our integration and retention agenda forward by launching the next three-year Newcomer Attraction, Integration and Retention strategy for the region. We will also move into the third year of implementation of the region's workforce strategy.

We will continue to foster internal and external collaboration to deliver our programs and partake in distinct initiatives to enhance newcomer employability, integration and retention

CONNECT | INTEGRATE | RETAIN

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & ATTRACTION

Team KPI's and IMPACT to date

CAPITAL REGION



Nausheen Ali
Director



Ashaan Sami
Coordinator



Aman Chauha
Coordinator



Kratika Shinde
Coordinator



Doyin Somorin
Manager



Andrea Escobar
Coordinator



Sarah Caissie
Specialist



Juan Diego Rivas
Coordinator

Some incredible advice that I believe can benefit anyone who is looking for a job. One of the keys is organizing yourself before you organize your job search. This means taking the time to understand your strengths, skills, and goals, and then creating a plan of action that is tailored to your needs. Thank you, Ignite team, for giving me this incredible learning and for the opportunity to be a connectee.

Gejoe Varghese George - Connectee

HRS OF ONE-ON-ONE COUNSELING

326

HOURS OF PROGRAMMING

2,064

3 STARTUP VISA FILES APPROVED

JOBS SUPPORTED THROUGH WORKFORCE ACTIVITIES

105

I want to extend my gratitude to the Ignite team for being such a wellspring of knowledge and guidance. Your expertise is truly a beacon for professionals such as me who are dedicated to evolving and thriving. Here's to embracing authenticity, fostering meaningful relationships, and crafting a personal brand that shines brightly. Let us keep inspiring and supporting one another on this incredible journey!

Meisam Rahimi L. - Connectee

44 NEW CONNECTEES

NEW CONNECTORS

31

27 MATCHES MADE

3 ATTRACTION EVENTS
30K INDIVIDUALS REACHED

The (Integration Success) program has been more than a curriculum; it has been a transformative experience that has equipped me with valuable skills, insights, and a sense of accomplishment. The unwavering support and guidance, alongside the collaborative spirit that defined the cohort, played a pivotal role in our success.

Adaeze Emeka - ISP

CONNECT | INTEGRATE | RETAIN

BUSINESS GROWTH & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT WESTERN NEW BRUNSWICK



Adrian Witt - Director

CONNECT | INTEGRATE | RETAIN | START | GROW | THRIVE

ACHIEVEMENTS / MILESTONES

As we wrap up Q4 in the Western NB region, we have seen a lot of growth within our team adding two new team members, rolled out our first event series in the region “Ignite Your Community”, tours with local businesses, continued work on a variety of committees, and increased our community presence and support.

We are very excited to have two new team members joining our WesternNB team. Bryce and Amy have joined us as Workforce Coordinator and Office Coordinator. As Workforce Coordinator for the WesternNB region, Bryce brings many years of B2B experience and will be leading our Workforce strategy hosting job fairs, career improvement sessions/events, and working closely with our BDO to assist in creating a healthy workforce community. Amy has recently joined us as Office Coordinator for the WesternNB office. Amy will be in charge of ensuring our office is running at a top level while assisting in events, logistics, planning and office duties. Both Bryce and Amy will be great assets and additions to the WesternNB team.

In Q4 we saw tremendous growth and reach with businesses throughout the region as our BDO Julie hit the ground running and visited with many clients ranging from start-ups to large enterprise industry leading businesses. There has been an overwhelming amount of support and networking from the business community as we drive further into the market in the WesternNB region and extend our reach into each entity within the region.

We ran our first event series in the region in October. Our “Ignite Your Community” events provided us with an opportunity to introduce Ignite, our team and what we are planning for the region while engaging with our clients, building relationships, and setting the groundwork for future events.

Our team continued with our relationships and presence on a number of committees in the region ranging from Housing Committee WesternNB, NBCC Community and Engagement Committee, Eclipse 2024 Co-Chair as well as local Chambers and Rotary Clubs. We continued to support our communities in Q4 and we proudly sponsored a few local events including River Valley Wedding Show and the Rotary Woodstock Haunted Hay Ride event. Ignite hosted our first holiday event, Ignite Your Holidays was a networking and celebration of our first year in WesternNB. Held at the Amsterdam Inn, we had over 50 attendees of clients, business owners, mayors and staff. It was a great evening of music, food, and networking. Our team also supported and attended many events throughout the region, province and surrounding areas. This included Hub Recruitment event - Halifax, Business Growth Summit - Fredericton, Atlantic Economic Council - Saint John, and the Annual Tourism Summit - Moncton.

FORWARD THINKING

- Q1 – 2024 will see increased event presence with job fairs, career builders, industry training events, networking events, local sponsorships and community support
- Q1 – Growth of WVR team with addition of second Business Development Officer
- Q1 - Increased marketing footprint, supporting more local events while taking the leading role of economic and workforce development throughout the region

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT & WORKFORCE

Team KPI's and IMPACT to date

WESTERN NEW BRUNSWICK



Adrian Witt
Director



Julie Williams
Business
Development
Officer



Bryce Barry
Workforce
Development
Coordinator



Amy Lawson
Office
Coordinator



350

HOURS OF
CONSULTATIONS &
COACHING HOURS

NEW BUSINESS
STARTUPS

5

“ I am pleased to collaborate with Adrian and the Ignite team. Our shared vision of growth, development, and retention is a great match, and the team’s dedication to fostering collaboration among key stakeholders demonstrates a strong commitment to enhancing the Western Valley region. Collaboration truly is the key to success, and I’m confident that everyone’s joint efforts will yield positive results. Terri Langdon, Director, River Valley Strategy McCain Foods, Florencerville-Bristol ”

7 NETWORKING /
CONNECTION
BUILDING EVENTS

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT /
CAPACITY BUILDING
HOURS 3

CONNECT | INTEGRATE | RETAIN | START | GROW | THRIVE



Paula Lehr - Director

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

Core Services

ACHIEVEMENTS / MILESTONES

The last quarter of the year, the Marketing & Communications team kept busy creating articles and new content for the Ignite website along with launching the new Economic Snapshot page. With the growth of the team, MarComs continued to enhance our storytelling and spotlights of regional clients and newcomers. We published several articles including 3 Small Business Collaborations in the Capital Region which highlighted several local businesses and their collaborative efforts; Finding Success Through Connections, written by our student intern and highlighting the success of some of our Connectees in our Connector Program; and AI – The Future of City Planning, a business profile of The Black Arcs and their innovative digital twin technology. Working with our STU Intern, Katherine Del Salto, we created several video assets specifically for the ISP Program to use on our website as impact testimonials and one video will be used to promote the next cohort in 2024 across our social platforms.

Based on feedback from our BDO's and the Workforce team, the MarComs team created several assets and resources to help support and assist team members, including:

- BDO Facebook persona and 'business' pages were created
- Social media policy was written and shared
- A "Quick Links" internal document that features the most frequently used Mar Comms assets and forms

There were several large-scale initiatives and activities across the two pillars in Q4 which resulted in a variety of projects for MarComs to complete including

- Trade Show & Career Fair (Innovate NB - Ignite led)
- Small Business Week - several events hosted across the region and virtually
- Integration Success Program (ISP)
- Connector / Connectee Appreciation event
- Business Forum Power Point, event kits and playbook
- Wrap up infographic – Western NB
- Ongoing brand awareness in the Western New Brunswick region
- NEW revised Welcome Guide – draft completed for year-end deadline! French version to come in early 2024

Fredericton was the host location for the 2023 [Innovate NB Celebration](#) event on October 12th recognizing the outstanding achievements in innovation across New Brunswick. We collaborated with TechImpact and other partner organizations (Propel, McKenna Institute and NBIF) to promote attendance, nominations, and overall logistics of the event. The day was filled with programming including sessions and workshops devoted to innovative topics that affect the lives of New Brunswickers, as well as the trade show and career fair which was led by the Workforce team at Ignite.

FORWARD THINKING

As outlined in the 2024 Business Plan, 2024 will see continuous improvement of digital-first marketing efforts, paired with more robust strategic planning and increased engagement with clients and communities. Marketing & Communications will focus on two distinct areas: IMPACT, ENGAGEMENT & ECONOMIC ANALYSIS. It is with this in mind that the Marketing team will work alongside the team to craft a robust marketing strategy for 2024 and beyond.

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

Team KPI's and IMPACT to date



Paula Lehr
Director



Julia Pazzano
Coordinator



Rey Cassante
Coordinator



Ashleigh Corey
Coordinator

PAID PROMOTIONS/ ADVERTISING

- Fredericton Chamber e-blast
- CIC December Article
- Stingray radio Innovate NB
 - Ignite Tradeshow and Career fair
- Robert Simmonds magazine ad



AWARDS

IEDC* Bronze Award was presented and celebrated across our socials



EARNED MEDIA

- Innovate NB featured in Entrevestor
- Innovate NB featured in All New Brunswick
- New Canadian Media featured the ISP Program
- Robert Simmonds Magazine - featuring BDO Hannahbelle Weaver & Ignite



SPONSORSHIPS

- Parliamentary Breakfast - Fredericton
- Rotary Haunted Hayride - Woodstock
- CMHA Golf Tournament - Fredericton
- River Valley Wedding Show - Woodstock
- Christmas in the Village - Gagetown
- Mayor tree lighting - Fredericton
- Oromocto Chamber Christmas Social

“ Just sending a note to thank you for the generous IGNITE support of the "Christmas in the Village" event held this past weekend in the Village Gagetown. The 26th CITV event featured more than 50 local businesses/vendors from across Arcadia. The event drew an estimated 2000 visitors to the village for 'early' Christmas shopping featuring artisans, craftspeople, distilleries, restaurants, and farm market produce! IGNITE's generosity to the Village of Gagetown and Area Chamber of Commerce in support of the event is greatly appreciated, and the VGACC appreciates the generosity and support of "Christmas in the Village." ”
J. Allan Giberson - Secretary, VGACC

ARTICLES

In Q4 the MarComms team published a thought leadership piece focused on the success of the Connector program and another showcasing collaboration and businesses that support and aid the work of other small businesses.



AI - The Future of City Planning



Finding Success Through Connections



Capital Region Economic Profile



3 Small Business Collaborations in the Capital Region

ECONOMIC SPECIALIST

IMPACT to date



Paula Lehr
Director



Deepty Sarder
Specialist

As Ignite's Economic Specialist, Deepty has immersed herself in a variety of projects and new initiatives through a series of impactful projects aimed at elevating the economic landscape of the Capital Region and beyond.

ECONOMIC DASHBOARD PROJECT

In November, we successfully launched the Economic Dashboard for the Capital Region. This cutting-edge platform aims to attract a diverse array of stakeholders, including investors, immigrants, and international students. Regular updates are consistently implemented to ensure the dashboard maintains its relevance and provides accurate information to its users.

DATA ANALYSIS AND REPORTING

Authored a one-page commentary titled "Immigration: The Leaky Bucket." Additionally, produced a comprehensive 2-page report on the "Capital Region." Responded to the Mayor of Nackawic's request by delivering a research piece titled "A Two-Decade Overview of Nackawic-Millville's Population, Workforce, and Labor Force Dynamics." Efforts were made to comprehensively understand the Western New Brunswick Region and to work with the IRDT Students to ensure their Economic Report was comprehensive. With that, it was realized that in order to build a dashboard for the Western NB Region - more data collection and analysis is required - this focus will continue into Jan with the launch of a Western NB dashboard due in mid - late February.

IMMIGRANT RETENTION

Information was gathered on the retention of immigrants in New Brunswick, resulting in the creation of a one-page report.

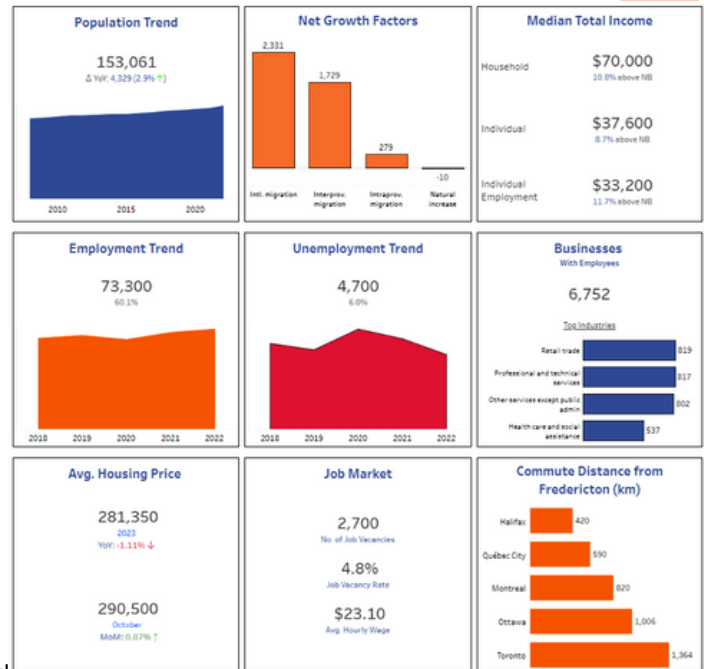
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Building meaningful relationships with key stakeholders, including universities, colleges, and various councils and organizations, was a priority.

Capital Region Snapshot

(click a title for more information)

Francis



GATHER | ANALYZE | REPORT

FORWARD THINKING

ECONOMIC DASHBOARD PROJECT - Western New Brunswick, with the primary goal of enticing investors, immigrants, international students, and other stakeholders. The dashboard will receive regular updates with the latest data to ensure its relevance and accuracy, enabling Ignite to utilize data for storytelling and position ourselves as industry experts. This supports a forward-looking approach to leveraging technology for Ignite's growth and expertise.

Looking ahead to 2024, our team has set an ambitious goal of dedicating an entire webpage to economic articles on our website. Bi-monthly, we will release insightful economic updates and explore trending topics, transforming the Economic Snapshot page into a comprehensive resource beyond a dashboard. Our goal is to curate articles and commentary write-ups, catering to a diverse audience keen on staying informed about the latest economic developments.



Michelle Hull - Manager

HUMAN RESOURCES & ADMINISTRATION

Core Services

HUMAN RESOURCES & ADMINISTRATION

We welcomed one new team member in Q4, with another due to begin in the new year. These roles are both within our Western NB team and include a Workforce Development Coordinator and Office Coordinator. We also had two students from St. Thomas University who worked alongside the Workforce and Marketing teams throughout the Fall term.

With rapid growth in 2023 and a large portion of our team being new to the organization, we felt it was more important than ever that our team culture was approached in a modernized way and that we ensured our policies and procedures are reflective of our vision, mission and culture. We completed a review of our policies and procedures and revisions and updates have been finalized, most notably to our employee handbook, now rebranded as our "Culture Book". Final documents will be rolled out in early 2024 aligned to our annual performance review process which will begin in January 2024.

In December, our team had the opportunity to work with an HR consultant, Kim Burkholder, to review our Team Charter. This was first developed in 2018 and has been foundational for our team and continues to guide our culture and communication strategies. Although it has been reviewed regularly since it was created, now that the team has grown significantly in 2023, we felt it was important to have an in-depth session to review and update and ensure all current team members have had input.

Our team had the opportunity to celebrate the holiday season through several internal team activities, while also giving back to the community through organizing donations and taking part in community events.

There was also focus in Q4 on administrative activities related to the new Ignite corporation and account set up, ensuring a smooth transition for employees, vendors and clients. Administrative processes continue to be streamlined where possible to provide better internal controls and efficiency.

FORWARD THINKING










After rapid growth in 2023, the Ignite team will be entering 2024 with a dynamic and thriving staff. Our primary focus will be on continued employee investment through quarterly team development sessions and professional development opportunities. A snapshot of our employee value proposition has been developed and we will continue to assess areas for development and growth to ensure our benefits, professional development opportunities and work environment are reflecting the needs of our team. Our administration and organizational processes will continue to be assessed and enhanced/modernized to streamline and automate wherever possible.

COMMUNICATION | CLARITY | CULTURE

REGIONAL KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Scorecard to measure progress

CAPITAL REGION

Strategic Pillar	KPI	2023 Objective	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	TOTAL
	Job Creation Support (FTE)	480	87	72	139	217	515
	Consultations/Coaching hrs	2,175	475	1,068	1,486	760	3,789
	Skills Development/Capacity Building hrs	2,880	903	4,035	1,641	2,393	8,972
	Networking/Connection Building Events	12	2	3	5	3	13
	New SEED Grant	10	11	0	0	10	21
	New Businesses / Startups	40	11	18	18	10	57
	Investment Attraction Wins	3	0	0	0	2	2
	Job Fairs / Micro Hiring Events	10	2	2	3	3	10
	Attraction Events/People Reached	15/20K	6/6.9K	6/7.5K	3/20K	3/30.4K	18/64.8K

 WORKFORCE ATTRACTION

 BUSINESS GROWTH

Please note: Western New Brunswick KPI's and scorecard will be added in 2024



LEADING REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GROWTH



@MyIgniteNB

@My-Ignite