



SOUNDING BOARD



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GVBOT announces recipients of the 2024 Rix Awards

EXCELLENCE | Recognizing outstanding contributors to the community

The Rix Awards are an initiative of the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade, presented annually in honour of the late Dr. Don Rix, who served as Chair of the organization in 2008-09. Award recipients are chosen each year by a special selection committee of the board of directors, based on a number of criteria.

The Rix Award for Engaged Community Citizenship is presented to an individual who applies their exceptional skills, talents, and drive to making a positive impact in society. Hallmark characteristics of community citizenship include trust, purpose, connectedness, leadership, social capital, passion, empathy, ethics, and responsibility.

This year's recipients of the Rix Award for Engaged Community Citizenship are Arran Stephens, O.B.C. and Ratana Stephens, O.B.C., a dynamic duo whose life mission is to always leave the earth better than they found it.

Their journey began over 50 years ago when Arran opened Canada's first vegetarian restaurant in

1967. After their marriage in 1969, their partnership extended to various ventures, including LifeStream, Canada's first natural foods supermarket, and Woodlands restaurants. The watershed moment came in 1985 when they founded Nature's Path, North America's first certified organic cereal manufacturer. Today, Nature's Path is the world's largest independent certified organic cereal and snack food brand, found in over fifty countries.

The couple's impact goes beyond business, as they've generously contributed over \$40 million to philanthropic and community service efforts, including food banks, hospitals and learning institutions since 2008.

Over their careers, both Arran & Ratana have been recognized with many prestigious awards, including honorary doctorates from UVIC in 2021. Together, Arran & Ratana have been inducted into the Canadian AMA Marketing Hall of Legends, and the BC Laureates Hall of Fame, and are co-recipients of the Order of British Columbia (2021).

The Rix Award for Engaged Corporate Citizenship is presented to an enterprise that demonstrates, both in policy and practice, the highest standards of stewardship towards the long-term well-being of customers, employees, owners, partners, the environment, and the broader community.

This year, the award recipient is Odlum Brown for their unwavering commitment to exemplary stewardship in all aspects of their operations. Odlum Brown showcases outstanding leadership and community impact in various sectors, including healthcare, the arts, sports, and education.

Their community-focused endeavors extend far and wide, encompassing over 150 organizations annually, with a combined commitment exceeding \$1.5 million. These initiatives touch upon healthcare, education, arts and culture, youth development, environmental conservation, sports and active living, and community enrichment.

They are highly committed to educational and community ad-



vancement as highlighted by the establishment of the Odlum Brown Limited Leadership Awards at UBC's Sauder School of Business and the Odlum Brown Award for Indigenous Learners at Vancouver Community College. In response to the Okanagan wildfires that affected their team and clients, Odlum Brown made a remarkable aggregate donation of \$50,000 to support wildfire recovery. Additionally, the firm acts as a monthly food bank donor in all its branch communities, contributing a substantial \$85,000 in 2022.

The 2024 awards will be presented at the 36th annual Governor's

Gala, an annual black-tie event that brings together business, government, and community leaders to recognize the contributions of community leaders and to induct the Board of Trade's immediate past chair into its Council of Governors. The 2024 inductee is Radha Curpen, who currently serves as Vice-Chair, Vancouver Managing Partner, National Leader of ESG Strategy and Solutions and co-head of Bennett Jones's Environmental Law practice. **SB**

The 36th Governors' Gala and Rix Awards will be held on Monday, April 22, 2024. If you are interested in purchasing a table, email governorsgala@boardoftrade.com.

Resilience and Progress: GVBOT's 2022-23 Journey

AGM | A year in review

As November draws to a close, we reflect on an extraordinary year for the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade. In 2022-23, we witnessed remarkable progress and resilience, and we are honored to share our journey with our dedicated members, partners, vendors, and supporters.

This past year was a testament to our collective strength, agility, and commitment to the betterment of our region and its business community. In a world recovering from the pandemic, we celebrated a return to in-person events with palpable enthusiasm. Over one hundred gatherings brought together more than 10,000 people, covering a wide array of topics crucial to the state of Vancouver, leadership skills, housing, Indigenous reconciliation, entrepreneurship, networking, and more.

Notably, our digital transfor-

mation took center stage. Thanks to the hard work of our IT and accounting teams, we now possess new systems that will enable us to better connect with and serve our members.

The annual Governors' Gala and Rix Awards were a highlight, honoring those who have made significant philanthropic and fundraising efforts through organizations like the Lisogar-Cocchia Family Foundation and the Pacific Autism Family Network.

This year, our policy team actively addressed pressing challenges, from the strike in Canada's western ports to rising costs and ongoing climate disasters, exacerbating supply chain issues. Despite these hurdles, our organization grew as our membership base increased and retention rates exceeded yearly targets.

The World Trade Centre Vancouver (WTC-V) remained dedicated to its mission of facilitating international trade for small and medium-sized enterprises in British Columbia. Notably, the Trade Accelerator Program (TAP) stood out as a flagship initiative, successfully graduating export-ready companies while maintaining a 100% graduation rate.

While we bid farewell to our outgoing Chair Radha Curpen, we eagerly anticipate witnessing the exceptional work that our incoming leadership, under Juggy Sihota-Chahil, will undertake. The future is bright for the Greater Vancouver business community, and we are excited to be a part of it.

Our dedication to advocating for our members, discovering innovative methods to engage and connect with them, equipping



them with the tools to navigate an ever-changing business landscape, and creating programs that empower their growth and expansion is deeply ingrained in the very essence of the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade.

As we close this chapter and embrace the future, we extend our

heartfelt gratitude to all those who have been the driving force behind our successes. We eagerly look forward to continuing to support our mission in the years to come. **SB**

The 2022-23 GVBOT Annual Report is now available. Read more about what the past year looked for GVBOT here: boardoftrade.com/about/annual-report

Update on British Columbia Pay Transparency Requirements

HR | What the new bill means for your business

*Disclaimer: We regret that this article is shorter than its complete version due to space constraints. For the full and unabridged content, please visit our online blog, where the article is published in its entirety.

Beginning on November 1, 2023, in accordance with British Columbia's Pay Transparency Act (the "Act"), employers will be required to specify the expected salary or wage or expected salary or wage range, as well as any other information prescribed by regulation, for any publicly advertised job opportunity.

Purpose of the Act

The purpose of the Act is to address systemic discrimination in the workplace and reduce pay gaps which disproportionately impact women, people of colour, people with disabilities, and non-binary people.

Job Posting Requirements

The requirement to post wage and salary information applies to all employers, including those based outside of British Columbia, who post a publicly available job opportunity that is open to B.C. residents and that may ever be filled by a B.C. resident, either in-person or remotely. To comply with the Act, Employers will need to specify either an expected salary or wage (i.e. \$20 per hour

or \$50,000 per year) or an expected salary or wage range (i.e. \$20-\$30 per hour or \$50,000-70,000 per year). A statement that the compensation will be "\$20 per hour and up" or "start at \$50,000 per year" will not meet the requirements in the Act. At this time, the provincial government has not limited how large the advertised salary or wage range may be; the determination of the range is up to the employer and should reflect the employer's expectation of what the range will be.

Reporting Requirements

The Act requires certain employers to prepare annual Pay Transparency Reports available to all employees and the public, including information about differences among prescribed groups of individuals in relation to pay, a description of trends in relation to the differences in pay for the prescribed groups of individuals, the number of reports of the employer's non-compliance with the Act and the nature of those reports, and any other prescribed information. The British Columbia government and the largest provincial Crown corporations are required to publish their first annual pay transparency reports by November 1, 2023. After 2023, private employers will need to



prepare their first annual Pay Transparency Report and make it available to all employees and the public as follows:

- By November 1, 2024 if they have 1,000 employees or more in British Columbia;
- By November 1, 2025 if they have 300 employees or more in British Columbia;
- By November 1, 2026 if they have 50 employees or more in British Columbia; and
- By November 1, 2027, if they have less than 49 employees in British Columbia, but more than a number prescribed by regulation.

The province is currently working on regulations to the Act which are expected to be released later this Fall and which will provide additional clarity about reporting requirements.

Impact of the Act

Employers will need to revise their publicly available job advertisements to ensure that the language in the advertisements complies with the requirements of the Act. Employer representatives will need to ensure they are aware of their obligations under the Act, including the prohibition on inquiries regarding pay history and reprisals.

As the Act will make salary or wage information available to employees from the outset, employees may be better able to determine whether the compensation for a specific role is aligned with their expectations. However, the Act does not prohibit employees from negotiating the salary or wage associated with a role, and access to the salary or wage information associated with a position may empower an employee

to negotiate higher compensation than they would have otherwise received. Employers will need to be ready for employees to be better equipped to negotiate compensation.

We will continue to update you regarding new obligations related to pay transparency as more details emerge. If you have any questions in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact the authors or your regular Fasken lawyer. [D&N](#)

This post was originally posted on the Fasken website. [Read the original article here.](#)

About the Authors: David G. Wong is a Partner and co-leader of the Labour, Employment and Human Rights group, he is also the leader of the firm's national Human Rights practice.

Naya G.K. Dhatt is a labour, employment, and human rights lawyer in Fasken's Vancouver office, providing practical and effective legal advice to a broad range of employers.

2023 Business Distinction Award Recipients announced

EVENTS | Celebrating organizational excellence in Greater Vancouver

On October 25, 2023, the Vancouver business community gathered at the Pinnacle Hotel Harbourfront for the annual GV BOT Business Distinction Awards.

The awards were presented to businesses that have gone above and beyond to set themselves apart in one of seven distinct categories.

Winners

Business Growth up to \$5M in revenue

Hypercharge Networks Corp. is a leading authority in smart EV charging solutions, serving residential, commercial, and fleet sectors. Rapid expansion defines Hypercharge, with a remarkable 3,000% revenue growth in just two years.

Business Growth over \$5M in revenue

Tru Earth Environmental Products Inc. is a fast-growing global enterprise, focusing on biodegradable household cleaners with a mission

to eliminate plastic. In their most recent financial year, they achieved a remarkable 135.69% revenue growth.

Community Impact – For Profit

Hudson Pacific Properties, founded in 2006, began as a real estate company with a focus on media and tech innovation hubs. They've broadened their community impact, supporting charity, in-kind donations, and volunteering, with a special emphasis on addressing homelessness. They raised over \$100,000 to assist Covenant House and homeless youth.

Community Impact – Non-Profit

Established in 1983 as a response to the hunger crisis, the Greater Vancouver Food Bank has grown into a crucial institution aiding around 16,000 individuals monthly in Greater Vancouver. The Covid-19 pandemic led to an unprecedented surge in new clients, averaging 800 to 1,000 each month. Despite this

influx, GVFB is among the few food banks accepting new clients daily, committed to ensuring accessibility.

Digital Transformation

With over 30 years of experience, Reotech is renowned for delivering projects on time, within budget, and with unwavering quality. Recently, Reotech Construction embarked on a comprehensive rebranding journey, unveiling a new website. This redesigned platform places a premium on SEO optimization, user-friendliness, and an exclusive section dedicated to company culture. The introduction of a company Intranet promotes seamless connectivity among colleagues, whether in the office or the field.

Employer of the Year:

Mayfair Lakes Golf & Country Club, owned and operated by Burrard International and GolfBC, a Vancouver-based golf and resort management company, prioritizes team member motivation and de-



velopment. Their vision is to be the "First Choice for Golf," which extends to being the "First Choice for Team Members." They remain dedicated to motivating and rewarding team members with flexible work schedules, merchandise incentives, recognition, and service milestone celebrations.

Sustainability Impact:

Fresh Prep Food Inc, founded in 2014, leads sustainability in the convenience food industry, tackling single-use plastic packaging. They prioritize reusable cooler bags, re-

ducing ice packaging. In 2022, they diverted 15,560 kg of plastic waste, equivalent to 778,000 plastic water bottles. Their software ensures a remarkable 98% return rate for reusable bags, 95% for zero waste kits, and 65% for single-use packaging, which is then recycled. Fresh Prep also donates 0.6% of leftover weekly spending to combat food waste. [SB](#)

The Scale-up Centre for SMEs (SCS) is an initiative of GV BOT. The SCS works to understand the trends, forces, and issues impacting SME growth, innovation, and competitiveness and develops programming and policy to address these issues.