

ABOUT THE SURREY BOARD OF TRADE PRESIDENT & CEO

Anita Huberman has been the President & CEO of the Surrey Board of Trade for 18 years for one of the top 5 Boards of Trade/Chambers of Commerce in Canada, and for one of the largest cities in Canada. She has been with the Surrey Board of Trade in a variety of roles for 31 years. Anita and her team serve more than 6,000 member contacts.

In 2023 and 2024, she was one of the [Top 50 Women Leaders in Vancouver](#)

In 2023, one of the top 500 Influential Business Leaders in BC as recognized by the Business in Vancouver Media Group.

In 2022, Anita won SFU's Distinguished Alumni Award.

In 2021, she was announced as being 1 of 15 Outstanding Canadians for her work in the private sector and through the pandemic.

She is an Honorary Captain of the Royal Canadian Navy (appointed by Canada's Minister of National Defence, serving her fourth term till 2027), holds the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal, was a Business in Vancouver Top 40 Under 40 award winner, awarded the 2019 Surrey Community Builder of the Year and received a Canada 150 Community Medal.

Anita Huberman's record of community service includes:

1. Co-Chair of Canada's Disability Business Inclusion Council
2. Surrey Representative for the Invest Vancouver Management Board: The standing committee of the Metro Vancouver Regional District (MVRD) Board responsible for providing strategic oversight and guidance for the Regional Economic Prosperity Service
3. SFU President's Advisory Council
4. SFU India Advisory Council
5. KPU Business Program Advisory Committee
6. City of Surrey Innovation and Investment Committee

Anita also served as a Trustee of Canada's National Film Board for six years, appointed by Canada's Minister of Heritage, on the Forum for International Trade Training (FITT) Board of Directors, OMNITV Advisory Council, IC-Impacts (UBC) Board of Directors, Greater Vancouver Urban Freight Council, Chair, Surrey Light Rail Links Coalition, Co-Chair: Local Immigration Partnership Committee with the City of Surrey, Co-Chair, City of Surrey Welcoming Inclusive Communities Committee, Committee member: Surrey Civic Treasures Committee (recognizing arts, culture and heritage.), Toastmasters-Charter Member of a Toastmasters Club, Surrey, Committee member: Canada-India Cardiovascular Initiative (SFU)

Anita is a highly visible advocate for Surrey businesses at all levels of government with a demonstrated history of evolving, reinvigorating and transforming civic, business & social organization industries.

DETAILS:

Anita began her journey of community service at the Surrey Board of Trade at the age of 19. Her hours of time working with the community, with local government, with different levels of government trying to instigate change for Surrey are integral to the success of the organization. She paid her own way through university wanting to excel in her life. Her life was challenging to the extent that she was a South Asian woman, with different expectations from her parents than what she had for herself. She was fiercely independent and paved her own path to who she is today.

Back in 2007, when Huberman was 32 years old, she stepped in to lead the organization, the Surrey Board of Trade was facing tough times. Just three employees managed the entire organization, which lobbies numerous government bodies on behalf of thousands of members, employees, and businesses. The Surrey Board of Trade was in the red, and its reputation and actionable results were abysmal. She was hired to turn the entire organization around. To do so, she built trust with stakeholders and politicians to build the organization into a respected brand capable of supporting and attracting business to Surrey through industry-specific programs and services.

She has managed to make the Surrey Board of Trade one of Canada's most respected Chambers of Commerce. She's accomplished that through professional growth and development. "I started by leveraging my expertise in communications while educating myself, performing research, and surrounding myself with mentors and experts to feed me knowledge," she explains.

Throughout her career, during which she climbed the Surrey Board of Trade's ranks from assistant, to manager, to executive, she always looked for leadership roles. "You can make the most effective decisions in leadership, and that's always appealed to me," she says. "As you grow, you learn how to implement strategies at the right time with the right team, and how to cultivate your work so you get buy-in for your vision and for how what you're doing fits into the larger picture."

Huberman focused primarily on relationships and resolved to work harder than anyone else. "I made it through four interviews, and when I got the job, I knew I would put in 12-14 hour days to develop my new brand as the new leader of this organization," she says. And although it took time and sacrifice, a young Huberman earned the trust of board directors, employees, politicians, and other stakeholders. Today, she leverages social media to build on her strong following, sharing priorities, thoughts, and projects—but she still relies on relationship building. "Social media has been instrumental in allowing me to build my brand. But face-to-face meetings can't be totally replaced. You can't only communicate through technology and expect to get big sales or nurture good relationships."

A degree in Communications allowed Huberman to make these strides quickly while also convincing governments and other groups to come to the Surrey Board of Trade for policy opinions and information. Simultaneously, Huberman used her skills to revamp the Surrey Board of Trade's strategies and set the organization apart from Canada's 450 commerce chambers.

Because Surrey will be the largest city in British Columbia before 2030, Huberman made international trade a top priority—and she did so by importing European methods. "Chambers in Europe, India, and Dubai have become international trade centres, so we've done the same in Surrey to promote global opportunities with a network of consulate offices and international organizations through which we promote Surrey, identify new opportunities, receive overseas delegations, and encourage trade. We're now an all-in-one centre for business," she says. The new Surrey Technology and Skills Centre, our

second location, with joint venture partner, Western Community College, will continue to revolutionize the chamber of commerce/board of trade model and brand.

Additionally, Huberman revitalized the Surrey Board of Trade's entire government advocacy portfolio to move it beyond the basics of taxes and employment to social policy issues like poverty reduction, healthcare, and childcare. Those often-overlooked issues, she says, affect economic productivity and the workplace. By seeking changes in legislation around social policy issues, she believed that the Surrey Board of Trade will make Surrey into a livable city that naturally attracts more businesses than ever before.

Today, the Surrey Board of trade is the region's go-to source for public policy information and is respected both city-wide and nationally. "There are 430 other boards/chambers, and we do things nobody else does," says Huberman, admitting that she is a shameless self-promoter. "Nobody else does it for you. You also get the criticism. Not everyone will like you, but you better accept that because it comes with being a leader," she remarks.

As the organization continues to advocate for business at all levels of government, the Surrey Board of Trade has also focused on three workplace development initiatives that Huberman says will drive future success: labor, immigration, and youth. Almost half of Surrey's population has a mother tongue other than English. The Surrey Board of Trade wants those people to be both economically productive and committed to the local economy. At the same time, a skills matching shortage threatens to wreak havoc. Huberman and her peers believe so strongly in the importance of labour, immigration, and youth that SBT is doing HR assessments at local companies and going into high schools to provide mentors and educate young people on the value of a career in the trades.

Anita Huberman has demonstrated distinguished leadership in Surrey's business community and through city-building activity that she has initiated and implemented. For 18 years as President & CEO of the Surrey Board of Trade, Huberman has been recognized for her dedicated work ethic and determination. She tirelessly composes and advocates for Surrey through policy resolutions instigating change at all levels of government. Huberman has the unique ability to blend social issues from an economic lens, unlike any other business organization. Huberman's media awareness has continuously escalated on issues related to crime, transportation, environment, international, transportation, social policy issues. She is influential because she is seen as a recognized credible voice of business on a variety of issues from transportation, fiscal and tax issues, free trade agreements, poverty reduction and more. She promotes these programs and resources that succeed in making lives better to enrich Surrey. Anita's creativity brings in new ideas, which engages businesses. She has worked to build successful relationships between the community and various levels of government through her thoughtfulness, perseverance, vision and intelligence.

Anita has produced and presented some very high profile policy papers to the different levels of government that has impacted peoples lives, example:

1. Business & Families: advocating for more and stronger services for childcare support for Surrey families to lower absenteeism, create less stressed employees and employers both and ultimately more productive workplaces;
2. Education Today Productivity Tomorrow: seeking government support of both K-12 and post secondary education in Surrey to ensure a properly educated workforce can meet the growing demand

for employees and entrepreneurs;

3. Surrey Business Action Plan on Homelessness: both federal and local initiatives that homelessness is harmful for community and business;

Anita has also developed the following unique award programs that celebrate community, volunteerism, leadership, family and health which are inextricably linked to a successful community:

1. Top 25 under 25 Awards;
2. Surrey Women in Business Awards;
3. Youth Leaders of Today, entrepreneurial program where over 500 Grade 4-7 and Grade 10-12 students have learned how to run a business and give back to the local charity;
4. Industry Recognition activities;
5. Refugee and Immigrant Workforce Development Programs.

Through Anita's leadership, like no other time, the Surrey Board of Trade's brand is well respected. She is a true champion for Surrey. She frequently lends her strong voice in support of the whole community provincially and federally.