Ideas for Belonging

IDEA Committee Recommendations Report 2020–2021



Presented to:

IABC/Toronto Board of Directors February 24, 2021

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Letter from the IDEA Committee Chair

On behalf of the IDEA Committee, I'm very pleased to present Ideas for Belonging: IDEA Committee Recommendations Report 2020-2021.

This report is the result of many hours of planning, conversations and deliberations. We want to thank each and every person who has helped along the way, especially each and every person that took time to share their thoughts with us.

We humbly realize that neither our Committee, nor this report will instantly solve the gaps of inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility that lie within our community. However, we believe that with each year, as we continue to evaluate, converse and adjust, the support offered by IABC/Toronto will continue to evolve to better meet the needs of our diverse members and our community.

During the course of putting together this report, we heard many valuable ideas and opinions. We wish we could include them all in this report, but of course that's not possible. The committee has diligently worked to ensure that the recommendations in this report are balanced. The tactics recommended are those that were most embraced, and that we believe will be the most impactful and practical for a volunteer-run association to act on.

This report is also not intended to be prescriptive for each Board portfolio, but rather to inspire conversations and brainstorming at the beginning of the Board year and between the volunteer teams about specific tactics to achieve.

One of IABC/Toronto's strengths is that Board m embers and their portfolio volunteers have the freedom to shape their plans each year and develop tactics that each team believes will accomplish the overall chapter goals and objectives. This report is not meant to take that away, but rather to help teams be mindful of some very important considerations as they develop those plans - and to keep diversity, inclusion, equity and accessibility top of mind, as they do so.

This report may just be one step, but it is a step forward for our chapter and profession.

Sincerely,

Lindsay Grillet

Chair, IDEA Committee & Past President, IABC/Toronto

About the IDEA Committee

Communications professionals across the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) represent different backgrounds and have different beliefs, needs and ideas. They have helped the communications profession grow and evolve, and IABC/Toronto is a reflection of this diverse community. When you join IABC/Toronto, you're a part of a culture that is built on respect, and that recognizes the talent of all members – no matter their background. We want each and every IABC/Toronto member to feel supported and represented.

Who we are

The Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) Committee (the Committee) is a group of IABC/Toronto members focused on driving strategic and tactical recommendations to the IABC/Toronto Board of Directors. Our mandate is to further inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility within the communications profession in the GTA, and to ensure that IABC/Toronto continues to adequately support all of its members. The IDEA Committee will be a standing committee that will drive and refine IDEA initiatives, evaluations, discussions and recommendations.

How we came to be

In an effort to raise the bar on representation for local communicators, IABC/Toronto's leader-ship and GTA communications professionals formed an informal working group in June 2020 and began a dialogue on how the association could better champion and meet the needs of its diverse membership. The working group engaged and consulted with members and non-members from across the industry.

The overwhelming feedback from the working group's groundwork was that a dedicated committee of volunteers should be established to conduct an audit, initiate discussions and feedback with the community and, ultimately, develop recommendations for the IABC/Toronto Board of Directors to consider. The IDEA Committee was formed in September 2020 by a team of dedicated IABC/Toronto members. The IDEA Committee's mandate and membership will continue to evolve year-over-year.

What Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility mean to us

Inclusion is about the collective. It's about creating a culture that strives for equity, and that embraces, respects, accepts and values differences.

Diversity is about the individual. It's about the variety of unique dimensions, qualities and characteristics we all possess.

Equity is about fairness. Ensuring everyone has equal access to the same opportunities.

Accessibility is not just about the physical environment. It's about access to and representation in content for all.

Current committee members

Com mittee Chair: Lindsay Grillet, CAAT Pension Plan

Board Representative: Alice Namu, Lighthouse Communications Consultants

Survey Manager: Pamela Bishop-Byers, Nuclear Waste Management

IDEA Auditor: Matthew Collis, Ontario College of Pharmacists

IDEA Auditor: Jeannette Holder, CAAT Pension Plan

IDEA Auditor & Writer: Krista Henry, University of Waterloo

Recommendations Report Manager: Nathalie Noël, The Law Foundation of Ontario and

freelance consultant

Listening to Communicators

From September 2020 to April 2021, the IDEA Committee, in consultation with the Board of Directors and communications professionals from across the GTA, defined its mandate then developed and carried out an action plan. This report is the culmination of that action plan. The recommendations in this report were primarily informed by the following three research activities.

IABC audit (Fall and Winter 2020)

With the ultimate aim of providing more diverse and inclusive resources, the Committee conducted audits of the current programs, initiatives, and websites of IABC/Toronto and IABC International. In our review we looked at:

- 1. The availability of statements and resources on IDEA
- 2. Accessibility to resources
- 3. Factors such as cost and technology
- 4. The inclusiveness and diversity of perspectives and representation within leadership, content and content providers, imagery, language and tone

Open forums (Spring and Fall 2020)

To foster discussions and gather valuable candid feedback and recommendations from a wide audience, the IDEA Committee hosted four open forums. These forums were approximately one-hour sessions held via Zoom and facilitated by members of the Committee. All forums were open to IABC members and non-members and were promoted via IABC/Toronto's website, newsletters and social media channels. More than 50 members and non-members participated in the forums and subsequent one-on-one conversations held with Committee members.

Forum 1: Black Communicators' Panel

June 29, 2020

The first forum was held exclusively with Black communications professionals. The conversation focused on the participants' experiences and received feedback on ways that IABC/ Toronto could better support them. This forum examined what support mechanisms for Black communicators were most suitable, and how IABC/Toronto could be more inclusive in its events, programs and resources.

Forums 2, 3 and 4: Help IABC/Toronto become more inclusive

June 29, September 29 and October 14, 2020

Although the second, third and fourth forums were open to all communicators, emphasis was placed on individuals that self-identify as being part of an underrepresented group(s). The conversations focused on participants' experiences and on ways that IABC/Toronto could broaden the diversity of its membership – to make communications a more inclusive profession.

Member survey (December 2020)

Based on chapter and committee conversations, feedback from the forums and the early audit results, the IDEA Committee developed a list of potential tactics for the chapter leadership to consider. The committee narrowed down this list of tactics further, focusing on the first year of work. This list of tactics was turned into a survey to gather members' feedback on the tactics they believed would be the most impactful and supportive to them.

The SurveyMonkey link was emailed to IABC/Toronto's distribution list of 4,033 on December 1 and December 29, 2020. It was also promoted on the chapter's website and social media channels. The four-question survey organized a total of 12 tactics under three themes: Stewardship; Advocacy and Sustainability. Respondents were asked to select the tactics that "you believe will have the most impact/provide the most support to you, personally". The survey also included one open-ended question allowing for "any additional feedback" and asked a series of eight optional demographics questions.

Of the 68 people who responded to the survey:

- 64% identified as having a Professional category IABC membership
- 15% identified as non-IABC members
- 85% identified as female
- 7% identified as a member of the 2SLGBTQ+ community
- 31% identified as a communications professional who is Black, Indigenous, or a Person of Colour
- 44% identified as a communications professional from an underrepresented group
- 6% identified as a new Canadian resident
- 2% identified as a person living with a disability

Key Themes

We were presented with a wide range of topics during the consultation process. Digging into the feedback, six broad themes emerged. These six key themes were raised most frequently and helped guide our recommendations:



Data



Leadership



Education



Partnerships



Promotion



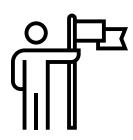
Barriers



Data: Know the demographics

Currently, the demographic data of members (IABC/Toronto and IABC International) is lacking. Getting accurate demographic data of members, and even of GTA communications professionals more widely, is critical to progress. As we well know, "you can't manage what you can't measure."

The first step is gathering data. What does IABC membership really look like and then establishing why. survey respondent



Leadership: Lead by example

As IABC's largest chapter worldwide, it's important that IABC/Toronto leads by example. Integrate further the principles of IDEA into IABC/Toronto's strategies and operations, and continue to recruit Board members and volunteers into other leadership positions who represent the diversity of the GTA and who identify as being from underrepresented groups.

"It will be important for the Toronto chapter to embody IDEA as an integral component of its mission, vision and values so that it is not perceived as an isolated initiative that can be marked "completed" and then set aside. IDEA must be infused into the fabric of the organization." survey respondent



Education: Deepen and share knowledge

Communications professionals are being asked to play supporting roles in advancing diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility. Create opportunities to deepen members' knowledge about IDEA-related topics and develop resources to support communications professionals where this is their role. Also, facilitate opportunities for members who identify as being from underrepresented groups to connect with each other.

"Communicators play a huge role in D&I and guiding that conversation for our organizations... It would be helpful to have more strategy resources and planning documents." forum participant



Partnerships: Develop relationships with affinity communications groups

Inclusion involves reaching out. Initiate partnerships with organizations and groups that promote diversity within business and communications professions. This includes newcomer employment agencies, colleges and universities and associations that connect underrepresented communities, such as the Code Black Communicator Network.

"I've always believed outreach to various college and university PR & communication programs is essential so that students and those from underrepresented communities are made aware of the wealth of volunteer opportunities and resources IABC has to offer." survey respondent



Promotion: Amplify communications professionals from underrepresented groups

Traditionally, communicators from underrepresented groups have been under-recognized by the profession. IABC/Toronto can help amplify the work, voices and successes of communicators from underrepresented groups through its existing communications channels and through the creation of new opportunities and avenues.

"Definitely make an effort to include diverse presenters even when the topic isn't about diversity or accessibility. These speakers can offer expertise on a multitude of topics. For example, women developers shouldn't only be brought to panels to speak about being a woman in development." survey respondent



Barriers: Explore opening programs to include more people

There are barriers preventing some communicators from entering or advancing within the association. Cost is the top one identified. Economic barriers disproportionately affect underrepresented groups, such as newcomers re-building their careers in a new country. IABC/Toronto could explore flexibility in the areas it manages, such as allowing non-members to volunteer and participate in programs, like the Mentorship Program.

"The primary reason many people join associations is to begin their career, enhance their career or to advance their career. I think there is an opportunity to support underrepresented groups with greater career support." survey respondent

Objectives and Tactics Recommendations

The goal of this inaugural report is that it acts as a practical guide for the IABC/Toronto Board of Directors to actively and purposefully support and promote inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility within the IABC/Toronto community. This goal is supported by the following 12 recommended tactics, which are organized by six broad objectives.

Objective 1: Help integrate diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility into the fabric of the association.

- 1. Continue to recruit engaged members and volunteers from diverse backgrounds for leadership positions within the association.
 - a. Brainstorm how to achieve this and if/how to measure during strategy/orientation Board meeting at the start of the Board year.
- 2. Review chapter goals and incorporate explicit wording addressing a commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility.
 - a. Current: Purpose: IABC/Toronto exists to create connections between professionals in the brand, marketing and communication functions and the broader business community to elevate our profession. We convene thought leaders with a unique and relevant point of view to facilitate learning and development opportunities for our community, our volunteers and our board. Goals for 2020-2021: 1) Keep our Purpose at the heart of all we do; 2) Be transparent and open with our stakeholders; 3) Maintain our financial health with a view to long-term sustainability.

- b. Recommendation: Purpose: IABC/Toronto exists to create connections between diverse professionals in the brand, marketing and communication functions and the broader business community to elevate our profession. We convene thought leaders with unique, relevant and diverse lived experiences and points of view to facilitate learning and development opportunities for our community, our volunteers and our Board. Goals for 2020-2021:

 Keep our Purpose at the heart of all we do;
 Be transparent and open with our stakeholders;
 Support members, volunteers and leaders in promoting inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility;
 Maintain our financial health with a view to long-term sustainability.
- 3. Publish a Chapter statement addressing a commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility.
 - a. Recommendation that this results from a collaborative discussion among Board members.
- 4. Based on the audit findings, upgrade chapter resources (e.g. website, writing and style guide, documents), ensure AODA compliance, incorporate accessibility best practices and inclusive language, imagery and tone, as needed.

Objective 2: Increase knowledge and transparency around membership composition.

- 1. Advocate to IABC international for improved membership data health through demographic collection and analysis.
- 2. Take steps to better understand IABC/Toronto demographics (independent of IABC International's efforts).
 - a. Add a poll to the welcome/welcome back letter explaining opportunities for involvement in IDEA-related activities and ask members to consider self-identifying.
 - b. Add the same poll to the IDEA page.
 - c. Metrics: Track the engagement and follow up/analyze data to determine value of this add-on.

Objective 3: Increase the visibility of the diversity and success of communications professionals across the city by creating more opportunities to highlight and recognize underrepresented communications professionals in the GTA.

Tactics:

- 1. Amplify and support underrepresented voices in the industry by sharing, via social media, any relevant articles, videos, presentations, etc.
 - a. Metrics: Track number of IABC/Toronto shares.
- 2. Develop partnerships with communications educators in Toronto to amplify and highlight the presence of a support system of Toronto communications professionals representing a variety of backgrounds, experiences and cultures.
 - a. Metrics: Track ongoing partnerships and resulting engagement (i.e. presentations, requests, collaborations, etc.)

Objective 4: Create a more inclusive association for those who are economically disadvantaged, which disproportionately affects minorities and new Canadians.

- Explore the feasibility of opening member-only benefits to non-members.
 Volunteering and mentorship were two key areas identified as being advantageous for new communications professionals, new Canadians and members of underrepresented groups.
 - a. Offering the Mentorship Program to non-members for a modest fee (\$50) or on a merit-based competition, may be one way to support communications professionals who are experiencing financial barriers.
 - b. Opening up select volunteer opportunities to non-members may be another way to support communications professionals who are experiencing financial barriers.
 - c. Metrics: Track the number of non-members who volunteer and/or participate in a program for a fee and satisfaction/impact of that experience.

- 2. Develop partnerships with organizations serving new Canadians and BIPOC populations in Toronto to amplify and support a diverse Toronto communications industry.
 IABC/Toronto members could speak at events or deliver workshops in order to provide added value to these partners and demonstrate the value of engaging with IABC.
 - a. e.g. Job Start, Code Black Communicator Network.
 - b. Metrics: Track ongoing partnerships and resulting engagement (i.e. presentations, requests, collaborations, etc.)

Objective 5: Create opportunities for underrepresented groups to share experiences, opportunities and advice.

- 1. Create resource groups based on the association's various dimensions of diversity. These are groups comprised of association members that identify with certain dimensions, such as BIPOC, LGBTQ2+, women in communications, communicators living with disabilities, etc. This provides association members with a safe space to share lived experiences, seek and receive input and advice, learn more from each other and develop thought leadership around supporting these dimensions in the communications field. Some ideas on how to get started:
 - a. Conduct a poll to assess specific groups that may be interested in participating in these events list individual groups.
 - b. Research has proven that for these groups to be successful, they need support from senior leadership. It is proposed that a Board member act as a sponsor for each group to listen, learn and guide them in creating change. The Board member's role would be to be involved in a group that differs from how they identify is different from themselves and to assist the group in getting any issues and concerns heard from a high-level perspective. The Board member can share insights about improvements to the organization based on their learnings (e.g. maybe there is an idea on how to increase membership) as part of the "diversity" agenda item.
 - c. Brainstorm with the group to create a realistic calendar of events.
 - d. From these groups, we could find a champion or two to act as informal/formal leaders to drive various events to network, celebrate leadership in these underrepresented groups, discuss topics in communications and possibly develop targeted features and blog posts that educate and create awareness.

- e. There is potential with these groups to build relationships with other IABC chapters from across the world to share insight, to act as virtual guest speakers and create a positive image of the work being done by the Toronto chapter for diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility.
- f. Note: Successful resource groups aren't meant to be exclusive. While there must be an opportunity for frank discussion, support and mentoring, having a board member that varies from the group itself who serves as the group's sponsor, will enforce the impression that all members of the association can be involved in some way. Usually this means building effective allies, the board member in support will be a visible ally in a leadership position.

g. Metrics:

- i. Assessing interest based on poll results.
- ii. The number of groups created that indicated interest.
- iii. Measure growth and activities of each group (first year aim for four events).

Objective 6: Create opportunities for communications professionals to create and continue conversations about diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility in their workplaces.

- 1. Offer professional development events for both communicators, in general, and underrepresented groups, in particular that focus on supporting the promotion of inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility.
 - a. Speakers who are strong leaders in other chapters and countries offer excellent learning opportunities and may want to be virtual guest speakers.
 - b. Metrics: Number and satisfaction of IDEA-specific professional development events.

Additional:

Continue the very mindful work that began in 2020 on promoting inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility. These include:

- 1. Collecting and promoting diversity and inclusion data.
- 2. IABC/Toronto website:
 - a. Review and update imagery to ensure our diverse membership is represented.
 - b. Complete audit of accessibility ongoing through 2021. Next steps: To create a plan for how to meet AODA standards and maintain compliance through annual writing for web/accessibility training for Board of Directors and volunteers.

3. Events:

- a. Seeking out speakers that represent a variety of backgrounds, cultures, gender identities, industries, experiences etc.
- b. Increased offerings of IDEA-related topics.

4. Advocacy:

- a. Increased advocacy within and across IABC of initiatives that support inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility.
- b. Increased collaboration with partners and educational institutions to support inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility.

5. OVATION Awards:

a. Categories and programs that represent the diversity of communicators and communications in the GTA.

6. Communicator of the Year

- a. Recognize professionals in the GTA who advance and advocate for IDEA principles through excellence in communication.
 - Continue to broaden the outreach of the Communicator of the Year Award program to new and underrepresented stakeholders and consider revisions to the award criteria to include IDEA values and contributions.

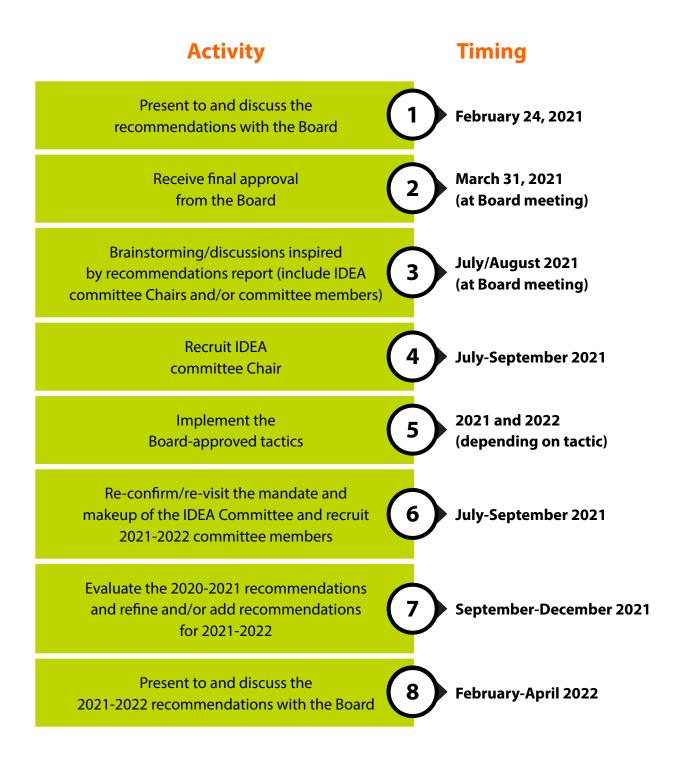
- 7. Renewed commitment to bring greater representation to communications professionals in Toronto through:
 - a. IDEA Committee:
 - i. Continue to form an inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility (IDEA) committee each year, supported and sponsored by a Board Member, but with an independent Committee Chair.
 - ii. The mandate: Within any given Board year, the IDEA committee shall evaluate the outcomes of recommendations from the previous year, engage in discussions with GTA communications professionals with a focus on IABC/Toronto members, and develop an updated recommendations report.
 - b. Student Communicators Circle.
 - c. Commitment to profile IABC/Toronto's diverse members and volunteers.
 - d. Mentorship opportunities
 - i. Continue to promote the Mentorship Program and reinforce the value proposition of having participants from diverse backgrounds, both as mentors and mentees.
 - ii. Recruit IABC/Toronto leaders who represent a variety of backgrounds, cultures, gender identities, industries, experiences, etc..

Looking Ahead

The IDEA Committee is mindful that ongoing dialogue, evaluation of tactics and re-introduction of fresh ideas and initiatives will be necessary moving forward. Diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility is an ongoing journey, and not a destination. IABC/Toronto's role in supporting communications professionals will continue to evolve along with their needs. Some thoughts for continuing discussion:

- How to reliably measure/track the progress of recruiting volunteers from diverse backgrounds to take leadership roles within the association? Should there be an attempt to measure it?
- Extend orientation/strategy Board meeting in July/August to allow additional time for discussions and ideas related to the above recommendations. IDEA committee members should be a part of these discussions and brainstorming.
 Further brainstorming sessions with IDEA committee members should be organized with select portfolio volunteer teams.
 - E.g. Brainstorm practical professional development sessions to support communications professionals in promoting inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility.
 - E.g. Brainstorm panel discussion topics that provoke thoughtful discussion and leadership around inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility.

Next Steps



Appendix A: Forum Invitation Example

Take Action – Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility!

Protests for racial justice have been making headlines and those that are participating are making history. Action for a more equitable world is not just taking place south of the border but in Canadian cities as well. Many of you will remember the words of @RavynWngz (Tanzanian, Bermudian, Queer, 2 Spirit, Transcendent, Mohawk) who recently spoke as part of Black Lives Matters in Toronto "We need to create a humanity where everyone and everything is allowed to exist because we already do... It's a future where each and everybody has what they need, what they deserve, what they want."

If you're a part of an under-represented group and would like to take action on racial equity, please join us for an Open Forum Discussion hosted by IABC's Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) Committee on September 29, 5-6pm or October 14, 12-1pm to share your thoughts, ideas and experiences.

Importantly, your input will inform the IDEA Committee's recommendations to the Board on changes we can make in 2021 that will impact our community.

The IABC/Toronto IDEA Committee thanks you for your input!

Appendix B: Survey Questions

The IABC/Toronto Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) committee has been tasked with providing a list of recommendations to the IABC/Toronto Board of Directors for adjustments to the strategic direction of the association, along with achievable tactics, in an effort to provide increased support to our members in the areas of inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility.

Beginning in June 2020, IABC/Toronto representatives have been engaging in conversations with members and non-members within the Toronto Communications industry, gathering feedback, suggestions and thoughts around inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility.

The lists below represent achievable tactics gathered by the IDEA committee based on input from our conversations.

Please select from the tactics below, the item(s) you believe will have the most impact/provide the most support to you, personally.

Q1. Stewardship (IABC/Toronto's planning and management of IDEA issues)

- 1. Create new awards to recognize and highlight the work of communicators from underrepresented groups.
- 2. Advocate to international for improved membership data health through demographic collection and analysis.
- 3. Open member-only benefits to non-members at a fee to create more opportunities for underrepresented groups.
- 4. Create events for underrepresented groups to allow for a safe space to learn and share experiences.

Q2. Advocacy (IABC/Toronto's public support for IDEA issues):

- 1. Develop partnerships with organizations serving new Canadians in Toronto to amplify and support a diverse Toronto communications industry.
- 2. Develop partnerships with communications educators in Toronto to amplify and highlight the presence of a support system of Toronto communications professionals representing a variety of backgrounds, experiences and cultures.
- 3. Develop partnerships that will be able to provide sponsored memberships to underrepresented communicators.
- 4. Create a toolkit of IDEA resources and make it accessible to all communications professionals (both members and non-members).
- 5. Amplify and support underrepresented voices in the industry by sharing relevant articles, videos, presentations, etc.

Q3. Sustainability (IABC/Toronto's ongoing commitment to supporting IDEA issues)

- 1. 1.Publish a Diversity & Inclusion Code of Conduct.
- 2. 2.Offer professional development and networking events for underrepresented groups.
- 3. 3.Raise awareness of IABC/Toronto's resources for underrepresented communications professionals with a series of inclusive marketing campaigns.

Q4. Is there additional feedback you'd like to share about ongoing, upcoming or missing IABC/Toronto initiatives, as they relate to inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility?

Q5. Are you an IABC member? If so, what kind of membership do you have?

- 1. Student/transitional
- 2. Professional
- 3. Corporate
- 4. Retiree
- 5. 500 Club
- 6. I'm not currently a member

Q6. How many years of experience do you have as a communications professional?

- 1. <5
- 2. 6-10
- 3. 11-19
- 4. 20+

Q7. How do you identify?

- 5. Male
- 6. Female
- 7. Non-binary
- 8. Prefer not to answer

Q8. Do you identify as a member of the 2SLGBTQ+ community?

- 9. Yes
- 10. No
- 11. Prefer not to answer

Q9. Do you identify as a communications professional who is Black, Indigenous or a Person of Colour (BIPOC)?

- 12. Yes
- 13. No
- 14. Prefer not to answer

Q10. Do you identify as a communications professional from an underrepresented group?

- 15. Yes
- 16. No
- 17. Prefer not to answer

Q11. Are you a new Canadian resident?

- 18. Yes
- 19. No
- 20. Prefer not to answer

Q12. Do you identify as a person living with a disability?

- 21. Yes
- 22. No
- 23. Prefer not to answer

Q13. Is there anything else that you would like to share with us?



