



Toronto

2024-2025 Annual Report

IABC/Toronto is gathered in Tkaronto (now known as Toronto), which in Mohawk means “where there are trees standing in the water”. Our members call various parts of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) home, which are traditional territories of many First Peoples. Similarly, Tkaronto is covered under Treaty 13 and the Williams Treaties and is the traditional territory of many First Nations, including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnaabe, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat peoples.

As we gather here today, these nations continue to experience ongoing colonization and displacement — where land acknowledgements are offered in place of land itself. The city we call home was also built on stolen land and stolen African and Black labour and resources — and one cannot be remembered without the other. We also recognize how the labour of many immigrants, newcomers, and migrants continues to be exploited.

As a community of storytellers, we honour the stories shared on Turtle Island since time immemorial. We commit to uplifting Indigenous voices and advancing the ongoing work of Truth and Reconciliation by fostering honest and difficult conversations.

We honour and recognize the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the land we’re on. Mindful of the broken treaties across Turtle Island, we acknowledge our responsibilities as Treaty people to engage in a meaningful, continuous process of Truth and Reconciliation with all our relations.

IABC/Toronto is early in its reconciliation journey. As communicators, we are committed to leveraging the power of communications to achieve the 94 Calls to Action outlined in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) report every day.



The International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) is a global association that connects you with the people and insights you need to drive business results.

Supporting communication at the heart of every organization, IABC provides the insights and tools needed to lean into the future of a changing profession and prepare for what's next, while driving business forward now.

Our why

Use the power of communication to deepen understanding, inspire action and transform our worlds.

Our what

Professional communication at the heart of every organization.

Our how

We advance the profession, create connections, and develop strategic communication professionals.





Dear Fellow Communications Professionals,

This all started in a car ride in Toronto back in 1942 when three company editors discussed an idea — communications professionals deserve a community of their own. Every year we gather, grow, and give back to one another – I am reminded of how much that founding spirit still lives in this chapter. It lives in our 150 volunteers like 2025 Volunteer of the Year Niharika Nambiar, who give up their evenings and weekends. It lives in the members who show up, push back, and push us forward. It lives in the sponsors who believe in what we're building together. I want to simply say: thank you.

This chapter has never stood still. We celebrated Chantelle Cabral, SCMP® being named Chapter Leader of the Year. We hosted our first ever Trail Talks, combining a chance to network while on a picturesque hike through Cedarvale Ravine. We brought to life our OVATION Award-winning submissions in a series of in-person events. We put mental health back in to the spotlight by celebrating the 2024 IABC/Toronto Mattamy Asset Management Communicator of the Year Rebecca Shields, of the Canadian Mental Health Association York Region and South Simcoe. And much more.

We have also been honest about our challenges. Declining membership is a reality across our industry and across IABC globally. The U.S. Presidential Election in November 2024 and the ensuing geopolitical and economic disruption created a notably restrictive spending environment, characterized by the elimination of discretionary spending. This impacted our membership renewals, OVATION submissions, and sponsorship revenue.

Our profession is changing at a pace that can feel overwhelming — the questions our members are wrestling with today are ones our founders could not have imagined. But the need they identified, the need for a place where communicators can learn, connect, and grow together, has never been more real.

To every volunteer, sponsor, board member, and member who has contributed to this chapter: your generosity of time, expertise, and spirit is the reason this organization endures and thrives. To those who are new — welcome home. This place was built for you, by people just like you, and we are genuinely glad you are here.

With gratitude and optimism,

Chris Lee

IABC/Toronto President 2024-2025



THANK YOU Board of Directors

IABC/Toronto is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. It is accountable to its members and has supervision, control and direction of the affairs of the chapter.



Chris Lee (He/Him)
President



Chantelle Cabral,
SCMP® (She/Her)
Past-President



Amie Silverwood,
SCMP® (She/Her)
Executive Vice President



Via Dulay (She/Her)
Vice President, Finance &
Association Management



Yasmine El Shafei,
SCMP® (She/Her)
Vice President, Programs



Rasha Fawakhiri
(She/Her)
Vice President, PD &
Networking



Mohammad Akkawi
(He/Him)
Vice President,
OVATION Awards



Nathalie Noel (She/Her)
Vice President, Data
Analytics & Brand
Management



Andrea Walasek,
SCMP® (She/Her)
Vice President, SIGs



Irene Alifanova
(She/Her)
Vice President, Volunteers
& Mentorship



Dean Lobo (He/Him)
Vice President, IDEA



Adeola Ojo (She/Her)
Vice President, Strategic
Partnerships &
Sponsorships



LeeAnn Acton
(She/Her)
Vice President,
Communications,
Marketing & Digital Media



Caroline Long
(She/Her)
Vice President, Member
Experience

2024-2025 Highlights



#1

largest chapter worldwide



652

chapter members



150

active volunteers



84

years



10

live events



40th

OVATION Awards



15

partners and sponsors



30%

membership growth
from January renewal
period

2024-2025 The Communicator



January 2025

Accessibility and artificial intelligence

Two evolving topics that will change the way communications professionals approach their work.

June 2025

Transparency, AI and the changing role of communicators

The topic of transparency and its intersection with AI. Plus, a look at the changing role of communicators in the evolution of AI technology.

2024 Communicator of the Year

2024
Communicator
of the Year



Presented by



Rebecca Shields

Celebrating Rebecca's journey of
impact, leadership, and transformation



IABC/Toronto was proud to announce Rebecca Shields, CEO of the Canadian Mental Health Association (York Region South Simcoe), as the recipient of the 2024 Communicator of the Year (COTY) Award.

Rebecca was recognized for her leadership and contributions to community development, inclusion, mental health and addictions, cultural competency, and innovation.

Under Rebecca's leadership, CMHA York Region & South Simcoe has grown into one of Canada's largest and fastest-growing CMHA branches, supporting over 22,000 individuals annually through 32+ mental health and addiction programs and services. Her achievements include growing agency revenues from \$8 million to \$42 million and earning accolades like *Canadian Non-Profit Employer of Choice* for seven consecutive years and *Canada's 10 Most Admired Corporate Cultures*. Rebecca was recognized for her exceptional leadership in communication, her commitment to mental health advocacy, and her visionary work in fostering inclusive and supportive communities.

2024-2025 Volunteer of the Year



We were thrilled to announce Niharika Nambiar (she/her) as IABC/Toronto's 2025 Volunteer of the Year.

Niharika is a passionate and driven communications professional with global experience across public relations, internal and external communications, and public affairs. She joined IABC/Toronto in 2022 as a newcomer to Canada looking to expand her professional circle. Since then, she has become an indispensable part of our community.

From her early involvement as a consulting member of the Student Communicators Circle to helping deliver a first-of-its-kind red carpet experience at the 2023 OVATION Awards, to supporting the 2023 IABC World Conference social media campaign, Niharika's contributions have consistently elevated our chapter's work.

In 2025, as Director of Judging, Niharika played a pivotal role in managing the OVATION Awards judging process, bringing clarity and ensuring a smooth, engaging, and thoughtful experience for all judges. Her leadership played a critical role in upholding the integrity and excellence of the OVATION Awards program.

Always ready to go above and beyond, Niharika elevates every portfolio she touches, helping our chapter thrive through her dedication, collaboration, and creativity.

2024-2025 Bobbie Resnick Student of the Year



Sharmin Oanali • 1st

IABC Student President | Award Winning Communication Professional | ...

3w • 🌐

I'm honoured to receive the 2025 IABC/Toronto Student of the Year Award.

When I moved to Canada, at [IABC/Toronto](#) I found mentors who guided me, role models who inspired me, and friends who reminded me I wasn't navigating this journey alone.

This award is a reminder of the impact a strong community can have, and also a commitment. A commitment to keep paving paths for emerging communicators, to contribute to meaningful conversations, and to help create spaces where all voices are heard and communication is championed as a force for human connection.

A heartfelt thank you to [Chantelle Cabral, SCMP®](#), an incredible mentor who encouraged me to put my name forward for the leadership role with the Student Communicator's Circle. That single push shifted my entire path and gave me the opportunity to create impact.

Thank you, [Andrea Walasek](#), for being so kind, supportive, and endlessly generous with your time and guidance. You've been a constant pillar of support, helping me confidently step into my strengths.

To the [IABC/Toronto](#) Board, [Chris Lee](#), [Yasmine El Shafei, SCMP, MBA](#), [Amie Silverwood, SCMP®](#), [Rasha Fawakhiri](#), [Matisse Hamel-Nelis, ADS, CPACC](#), [Dean Lobo](#), and [Via Dulay](#) thank you for creating a culture where student voices are heard, truly valued and uplifted.

A big thank you to [Audrey D'Mello](#) for being a wonderful friend.

This award is a milestone, not a finish line. There's more to build, more to say, and more to do!

[#IABC](#) [#PublicRelations](#) [#Leadership](#) [#Communications](#) [#EmergingLeaders](#) [#WomenInPR](#) [#ovations2025](#) [#internationalstudents](#) [#Toronto](#)

2024-2025 Financial Report

REVENUE

Membership dues	\$39,626	Membership dues were up slightly from \$37,732 the previous year. Although global membership renewals had significantly been impacted by IABC's change to an annual membership renewal model, the chapter finished strong with a successful membership drive and a 30% increase in members from the January renewal period to the end of the fiscal year. Membership continues to slow down year-over-year, partly due to reduced corporate memberships and likely compounded by ongoing fiscal challenges. This is something IABC chapters around the world continue to experience. Membership declined slightly during the year from 743 at the beginning of the term to 652 members at the end of the term. This year also marked the transition to IABC's updated annual membership model, which standardizes renewal dates and impacted renewal timing as members adjust to the new cycle starting in January 2025.
Awards	\$58,085	Revenue was most significantly impacted by a decrease in OVATION Awards revenue, down \$30,240 from the previous year. Geopolitical disruption and a challenging economic environment led to a substantial decrease in submissions, down to 130 submissions, down 50 from the year before.
Advertising	\$14,720	Advertising revenue continues to decline, down \$5,961 from the previous year. This is due in part to a longstanding downward trend for CareerLine activity, as well as retracted sponsorship activity as more organizations pulled back on discretionary financial support and hiring activity.
Programs	\$12,511	Program revenue increased by over 100% up from \$5,938 the previous year, following a marked increase in in-person events as interest started to rise again following the pandemic.
2024-2025 revenue	<u>\$124,942</u>	Total revenue was down from \$152,676 the previous year due to a number of factors, including the broader economic environment, IABC's new calendar-based renewal model, and a longer term global decline in membership.

2024-2025 Financial Report

ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES

Management fees	\$83,639	We contracted Funnel Communications Inc. to provide administrative support throughout the year. This includes website management, preparation of e-Lerts, program support and financial administration, as well as timely member assistance, as required. Expenses increased 12% by \$8,863 from the previous year, reflecting the support needed by the team for an active year.
Postage and courier	\$6	Down 94% from \$87 the previous year.
Interest, bank fees	\$3,776	Decreased 23% from \$4,870 the previous fiscal year.
Meetings	\$325	Down from \$394 the previous year.
Professional fees	\$4,542	Increased by \$76 from the previous year.
Insurance	\$1,874	Increased by \$5 from the previous year.
Printing	\$711	Increased by \$17 from the previous year.
Telephone	\$758	Same cost as previous year.
2024-2025 administrative expenses	<u>\$95,631</u>	Total administrative expenses were up by \$7,716 from last year.

2024-2025 Financial Report

PROGRAM EXPENSES

Awards	\$30,163	The chapter maintained a fiscally prudent approach to the OVATION Awards at University of Toronto Hart House, with costs down from \$33,836 the prior year.
Events	\$3,494	Increased by just 4% from the previous year, despite additional focus on in-person events and in-kind partnerships with prudent approach to costs.
Communications	\$14,620	Up \$3,315 from the previous year, reflected in part, by an increase in third-party vendor costs like Hootsuite.
Executive services	\$7,179	Executive Service expenses increased from \$4,028 last year, reflecting a commitment to send chapter representatives to Dare to Lead, and the 2025 IABC World Conference.
Volunteer services	\$50	Down from \$66 the previous year.
Membership & certification	\$383	Down from \$531 the previous year.
2024-2025 program expenses	<u>\$55,889</u>	Total program expenses were up by \$2,761 from last year.
2024-2025 total expenses	<u>\$151,520</u>	The chapter continued to maintain a prudent approach to expense management, as total administrative and program expenses were up 7% from the previous fiscal year.

2024-2025 Financial Report

OVERALL FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

2024-2025 revenue \$124,942

2024-2025 administrative expenses \$95,631

2024-2025 program expenses \$55,889

Excess of revenue over expenses **\$(26,578)**

The chapter had a tough year from a revenue perspective, reflecting broader economic climate impacting awards participation and sponsorship, a longstanding broader global decline in membership, and a new calendar-based membership process which impacted renewals.

Net assets at beginning of 2024-2025 \$177,824

Net assets at end of 2024-2025 \$151,246

The IABC/Toronto chapter has financial reserves for challenging years like the years we've experienced during the pandemic, and more recent global economic uncertainty. Our unrestricted reserves are currently \$151,246. This is our savings account which is inclusive of restricted reserves of \$108,225 designed to serve as a cushion for financially challenging years.

THANK YOU TO Our Partners

