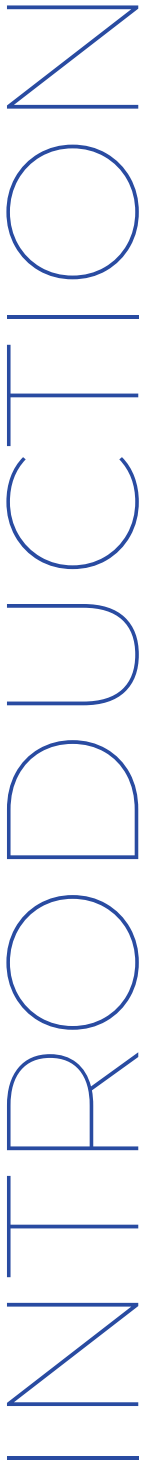


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# Sandbox Centre Impact Report

2024 Strategy &  
2022-23 Review



The following impact report encapsulates a pivotal two-year period of transformation for the Sandbox. This report will detail the evolution prior to the arrival of our new Managing Director, as well as the strategic redirection, key achievements, and sharpened focus that have taken place under the new leadership. It is crafted to reflect not only our internal milestones but also our alignment with the core values and objectives of the Barrie Council. We trust that this report will offer a comprehensive understanding of our growth and the steadfast commitment to our community's betterment.

**Navigating Transition:**

The Sandbox recently experienced a significant shift in leadership, with a six-month interim following the departure of the previous Managing Director.

**Board Support and Strategy Refinement:**

Despite these hurdles, the board of directors took a proactive stance, stepping in to steer operations and refine strategic direction. Their commitment ensured stability and continuity, providing the necessary support to the remaining staff.

**New Leadership and Renewed Vision:**

With the appointment of a new Managing Director in the second week of September, the Sandbox welcomed fresh leadership to guide the next chapter of its journey.

**Achievements Amidst Adversity:**

During this transitional phase, the team successfully orchestrated an impactful event, demonstrating the ability to deliver on the community's expectations even under less than ideal circumstances. Moreover, they innovated the concept of peer-to-peer support and learning, adapting it to better serve the evolving needs of our members.

**Market Research and Community Alignment:**

Comprehensive market research was conducted across the region to assess the demand for centers and programming akin to what the Sandbox offers. This initiative has provided invaluable insights that are guiding the refinement of our services and ensuring alignment with community needs.

**Impact and Forward Momentum:**

The collective efforts during this management transition propelled it forward, laying a stronger foundation for future growth. The board's leadership, staff's dedication, and the new Managing Director's vision have positioned the Sandbox to emerge from this transition stronger and more aligned with its mission to serve the community effectively.

# New Sandbox Model

**Operations:** Within the initial three months of their tenure, the new Managing Director conducted a comprehensive evaluation of the personnel, operations, sponsorships, and work model, implementing substantial changes. These modifications led to a needed reduction in overhead costs by approximately 41% each month over a quarter, thereby bolstering the probability of fiscal sustainability amidst a financially challenging year for private companies. Total overhead costs expected to land at a 30% month over month reduction. This supports the offset to our loan repayments, and other operational overhead fees incurred during 2023.

**Personnel:** Attrition, with departure of two staff only one was replaced, and additional responsibilities were redistributed to staff.

**Technology:** Systems were assessed and reduced from six to two to optimize efficiencies.

**Programming:** The Sandbox is adopting a helix model of support for the City of Barrie, designed to synergize with the city's development goals. This approach involves creating programs that align with and bolster our partners' current initiatives, establishing a space that nurtures the business community, and fostering the advancement of industry sectors. Through this model, The Sandbox aims to create a dynamic ecosystem of support that propels both individual businesses and the broader industry forward, ensuring sustainable growth and innovation within Barrie.

**Partnerships:** Partnered programs to be brought in house to support new model while Sandbox teams builds full roster of new programs with facilitators.

**Membership:** We are actively reaching out to businesses to foster a diverse membership base within the Sandbox. This varied composition enhances our peer-to-peer support framework, ensuring a rich exchange of ideas and experiences.

**Strategy:** Meetings conducted with companies, sponsors, ecosystem partners, and community as a whole to find gaps in the market that require support, and what elements the Sandbox has in place to further support the needs of our Barrie business community.

**Facilities Use:** Implemented governance and procedure for partnered programs, offerings, responsibilities for the business and in our space.

# Sponsorship, Memberships, Renewals

**Sponsors:** Sponsors have engaged in meetings with the Sandbox to discuss the partnership outcomes thoroughly. Our partnership model has received strong validation, with platinum sponsors renewing, signaling their confidence in our approach. While we navigate the natural ebb and flow of sponsor priorities, our dynamic engagement strategy has already attracted new partners for 2024.

The renewal rate among our current sponsors (18 in total) is robust, reflecting a solid commitment to the Sandbox. The current sponsorship landscape is in line with our objectives to cultivate a varied and robust business community.

**Revenue:** Revenue goals will be to match or exceed funding levels have been in place year over year to keep up with inflation and increased cost of expenses.

**Membership:** Experienced a natural optimization of our membership base, aligning more closely with those who benefit from our unique support model. Businesses seeking alternative support avenues transitioned away, yet a significant portion continues to engage with our programs. Notably, one-third of these businesses are reconsidering engagement under the new Sandbox model. In 2024 we are seeing month after month growth, with businesses and professionals who are seeking to become involved with the sandbox and give back. As of now, we boast 305 active membership plans, exclusive of the broader company registrations.

**Goals:** Our staff now have outreach goals, and are created targeting communications to bring in businesses with a clear message about what the Sandbox is, how we can support and the benefits of peer to peer learning.

# 2024 OPTIMIZATIONS

## What is the Sandbox's Role within Barrie Ecosystem?

The Sandbox stands as a pivotal ally for Barrie, leveraging its extensive outreach and strategies to attract medium to large businesses. By offering a comprehensive suite of tools and programs, we aim to enhance employee retention and support businesses in achieving their strategic KPIs. Our commitment extends to empowering the community with a diverse range of networking and learning opportunities, serving as a foundational platform for fostering connections and enhancing business visibility.

01

### Support Council Initiatives

Create a centre where Barrie has a unique space for businesses to seek support, connect and upskill. These efforts will help retain and grow our region.

02

### Identified Programming Needs

Creating programming that supports the community and our businesses utilizing the supports of our ecosystem. Targetting programming will also increase capital funding.

03

### Ecosystem Support

Implementing a collaborative staff model, so that our partners initiatives are not negatively impacted due to staff limitations .

# Programming

A brief overview of what is to come at the Sandbox

## **Newcomer and Equity Deserving Programs:**

**New Roots New Routes:** 11 week program created by the Sandbox that focuses on equity deserving individuals who identify as female. It will feature members from the Barrie community and the mentors from HBEC throughout the program to provide support to newcomers interested in becoming Entrepreneurs.

**Customer Service for Newcomers to Ontario** (specifically GenZ to support post secondary students to stay in Barrie after they graduate)

**TARA Talks: Women in Business:** A twice a year full day event focused on placemaking and business upskilling.

## **Leadership Programs:**

**Alpha Summit-** a two day conference for leaders. The event will include AI discussions, CEOs though leadership, ESG, Intrapreneurship, HR guidance for employee retention, a celebrity keynote.

**CEO Peer Group-** a growing peer to peer group that has just grown to two cohorts, with a third on the horizon.

**Panel discussions:** Conversations on the Cost of Replacing Staff, Employee Ownership Trust, Preparing to sell your Business

## **Partnered and Independent Programs supporting Medium to Large Businesses**

**Supervisor Upskilling:** SBX partnered with HRPAR to bring this to our space.

**Mental Wellness for Leaders:** Partnered with both Barrie Anxiety Clinic and Dr. Patapia from My Triage Network.

**ESG Programming-** peer groups, programs and panel discussions.

**SBX After Dark:** A platform for businesses to connect with the community through a focused talk.

# Programming Continued...

## Startup Support:

**Rise and Grind:** A three month program with two sessions per month with our start up coach, and Entrepreneur in residence, to support the startups that were not able to enter the SBEC starter program. Intended to help us track and support startups that are not yet linked to an incubator or program.

**Pints and Pitches:** A night dedicated to new businesses of entrepreneurs in ideation phase to come out and do a 30 second pitch of their business. Two businesses more than 1 year into their journey will present their product pitches for the group to give feedback on.

## Virtual Programs

The Sandbox has created and is still created an entire offering of virtual programs.

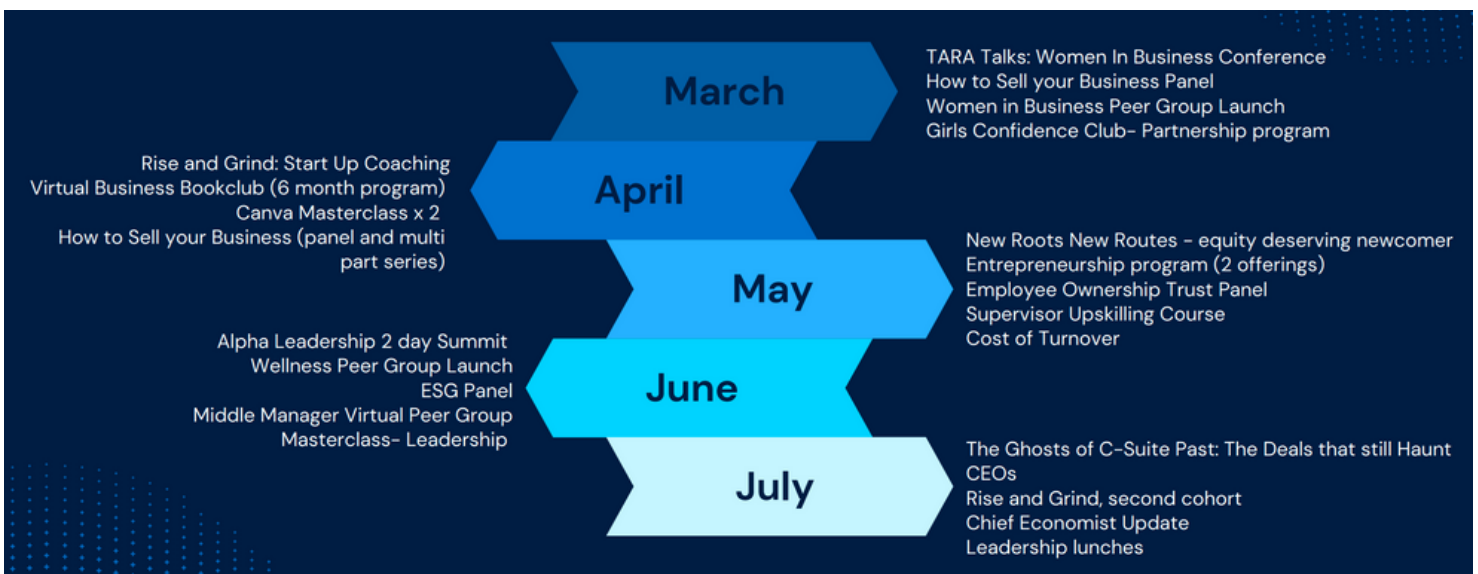
1- **Masterclasses:** bringing in local industry professionals to share their secrets, program insights and industry how to's to the public.

2- **Business Book Club**- 6 month commitment, each month a book and theme are chosen, Coles notes are provided and local experts will join zoom calls to help empower the participants.

3- **Middle Manager Peer Group**- most middle managers cannot leave work, a virtual offering will help them

connect with other individuals in similiar positions to provide peer to peer support.

4- Four more programs have been created and will be added to the virtual offerings and will then be promoted to be used by Greater Barrie Area businesses.



dates subject to change based on availability

# Technology, Tracking, Visibility

The strategic transition from six disparate systems to a single, integrated Customer Relationship Management (CRM) platform, using Nexodus, has marked a transformative period in our operational efficiency and user engagement. This consolidation has significantly streamlined our data management processes, allowing for a unified approach to handling member information, interactions, financials, and analytics. The relaunch of our website, powered by Nexodus, has not only enhanced our digital presence but also provided a seamless, intuitive platform for our community to interact with our services. One of the pivotal benefits of this integration is the CRM's direct synchronization with our accounting software, ensuring that financial operations are more accurate, transparent, and efficient.

The comprehensive nature of Nexodus extends beyond just CRM functionalities; it serves as the backbone of our website and is accessible via a user-friendly app, increasing adaptability and access for our members. This platform revolutionizes how members book spaces, register for events and programs, and engage with community resources. The introduction of community discussion boards fosters a stronger sense of community and collaboration among members, while the interactive directory and courses offer valuable opportunities for networking and professional development.

Overall, the transition to Nexodus has significantly elevated our service delivery and operational capabilities. It has streamlined administrative tasks, enhanced member experience, and opened new avenues for engagement and growth within our community. This strategic move not only reflects our commitment to leveraging technology for efficiency but also underscores our dedication to fostering a vibrant, connected, and resource-rich ecosystem for our members.

Fiscally this has decreased our expenses for the services we are required to offer to our membership. This same system will also provide our partners, and the City with the data outlined in our MOU.

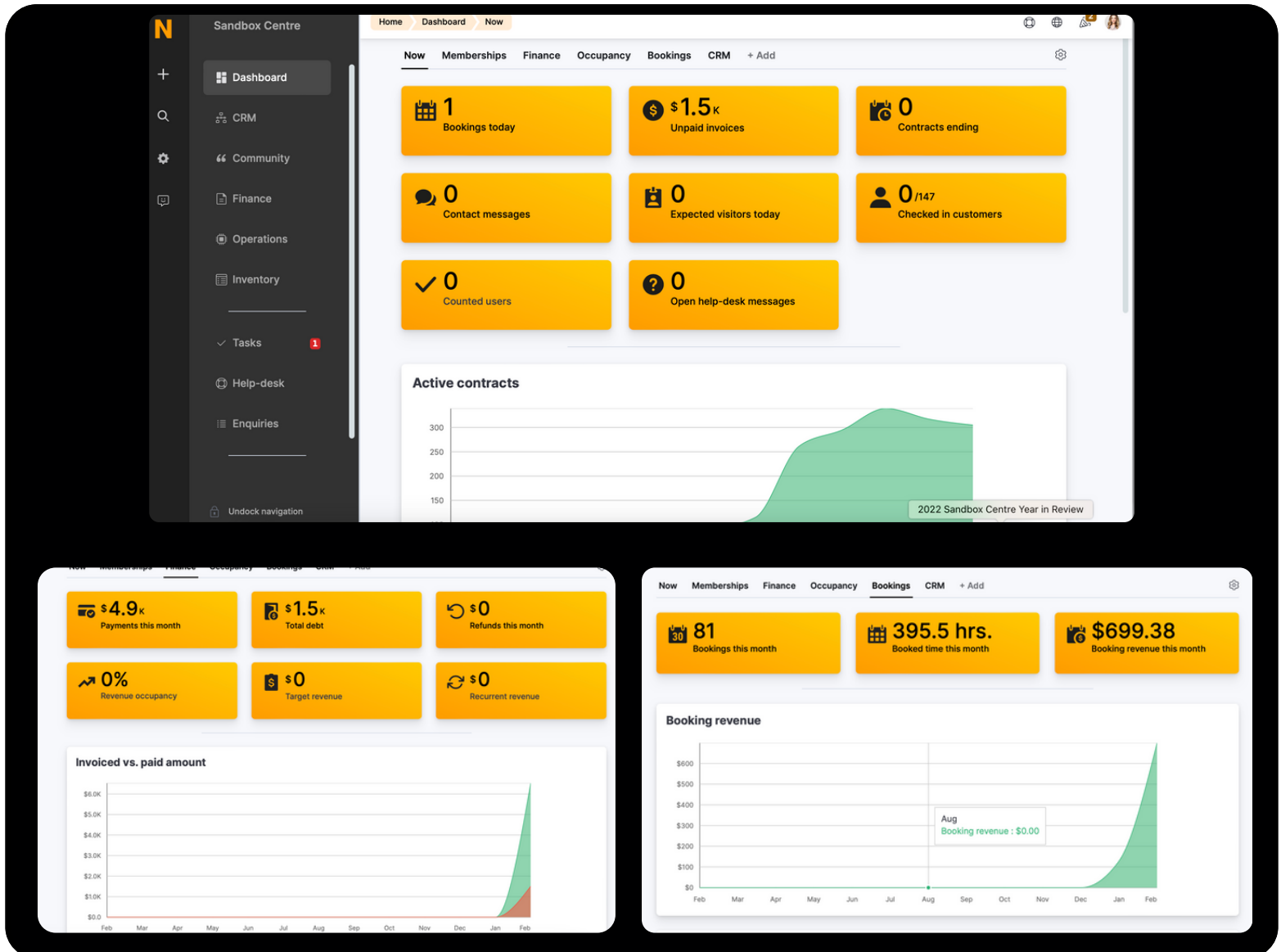


# Technology, Tracking, Visibility

**Centralized Reporting:** By consolidating data into one system, Nexodus provides comprehensive reports on bookings, event attendances, and financial transactions. This centralized reporting makes it easier for city partners to access and review all relevant data in one place, enhancing transparency across operations.

**Real-Time Data Access:** Nexodus updates data in real time, ensuring that city partners always have access to the most current information. This real-time access aids in immediate decision-making and oversight, reducing the lag time associated with data reporting and analysis.

## Brief Overview of Dashboards in Nexodus

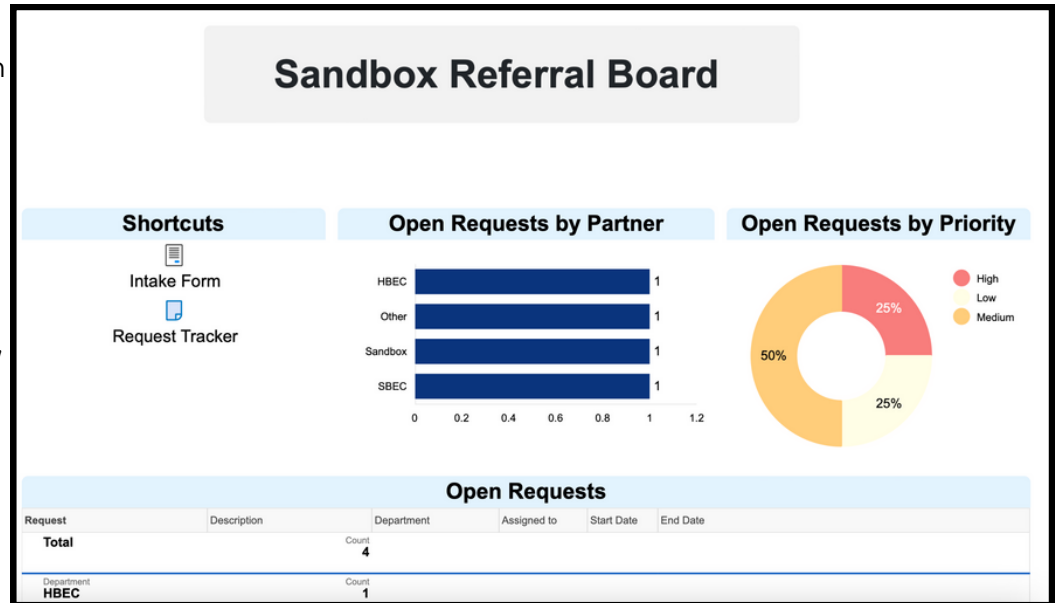


The above are testing examples on the platform

# Barrie Ecosystem Dashboards

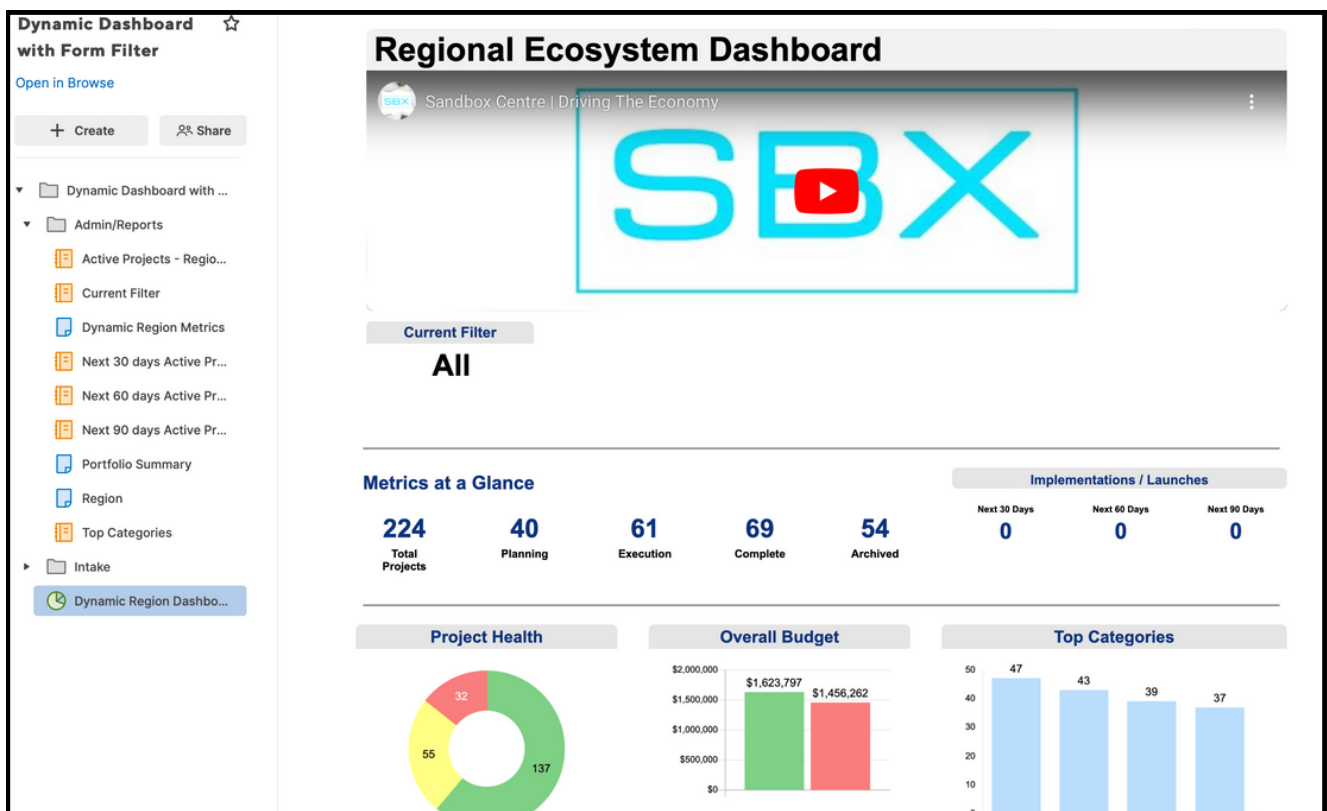
## Referral Tracking Dashboard

- **Overview:** A new in-house system to track partner referrals, enhancing process transparency.
- **Functionality:** Sends workflow prompts and data to partners for real-time referral tracking.
- **Cost Efficiency:** Free for partners, promoting widespread adoption.
- **Transparency:** Offers detailed insights into referral traffic, improving management and partner relations.



## Regional Ecosystem Dashboard

Created from the need to track the partnered projects, initiatives and expansion plans at the Sandbox. This will track growth, development and costs of these strategies. Both dashboard, workflows, and databases were created by the Managing Director which allows for in house correctoins to be made efficiently as varying needs arise.



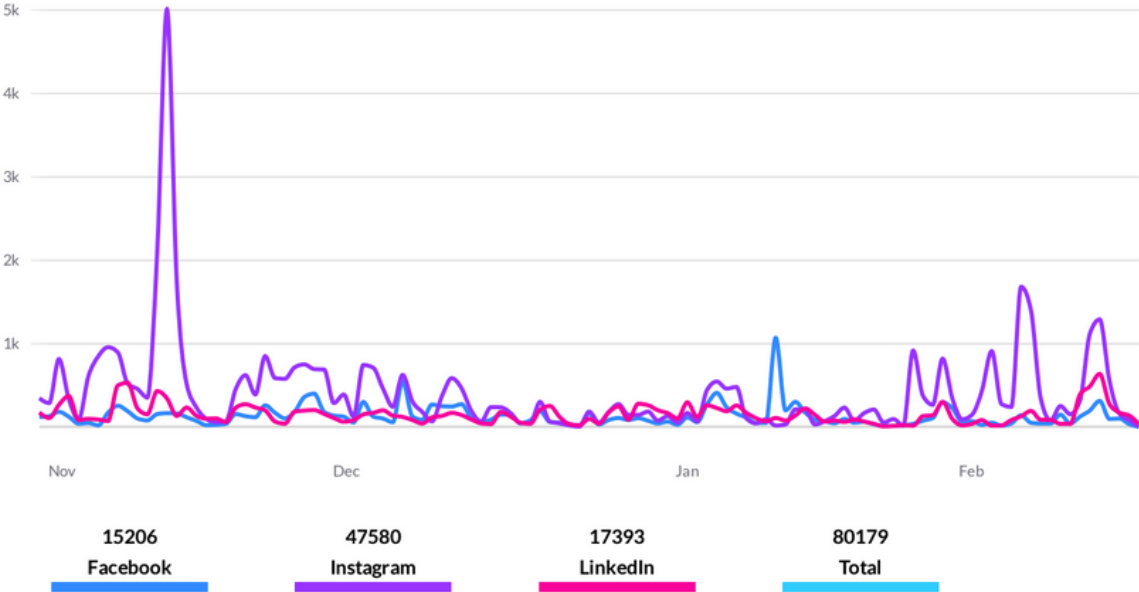
please note the data in document are all testing examples

# 2023-24 MARKETING IMPACT

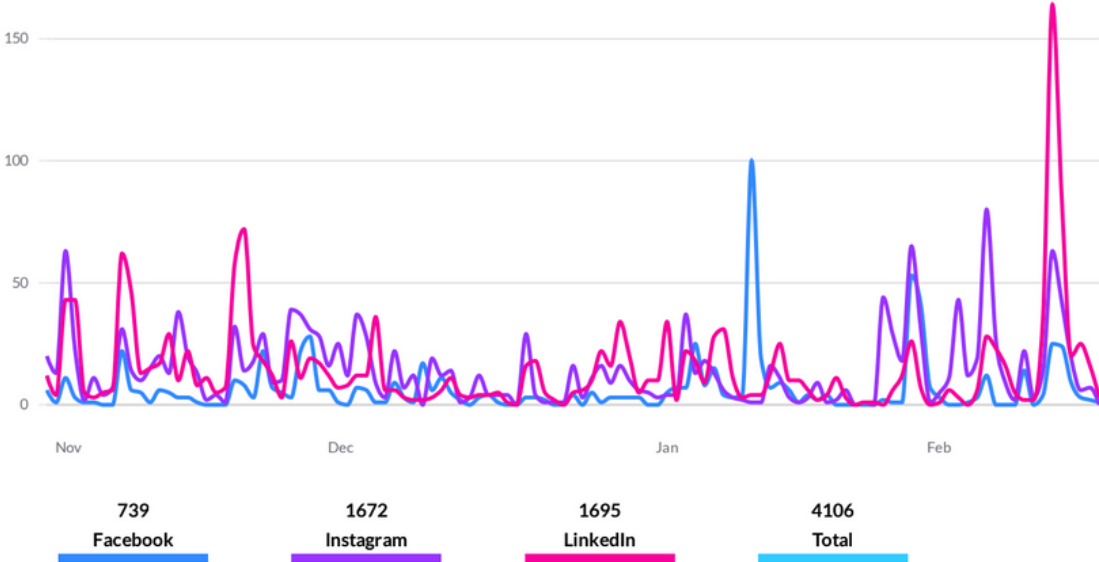
## Monthly Cross Platform Analytics

Our newly implemented program creates on the spot metrics are produces for impressions, engagement, cross platform performance demographics of audience and competitor reports.

### Cross-Channel Impressions



### Cross-Channel Engagements



# Monthly Cross Platform Summary

The summary of data indicates that while impressions provide an understanding of how widely content is being seen, engagements offer a more nuanced view of how audiences are interacting with the content.

## **Engagements:**

A steady increase in engagements from November (739) to February (4106), with notable spikes, especially in February. This suggests a growing audience interaction and heightened interest in the content provided. Peaks in engagement, particularly in December and February, indicate successful campaigns or events that captured audience attention.

## **Impressions:**

Impressions show the number of times content is displayed, with a significant peak in December (47580) compared to a more moderate count in November (15206) and January (17393). February saw the highest number of impressions (80179), indicating extensive content reach. Variations in monthly impressions highlight the fluctuating visibility of content, with specific campaigns leading to substantial increases.

## **Benefits of Cross-Platform Reports:**

**Strategic Content Planning:** By analyzing when engagements and impressions peak, organizations can identify which content performs best and plan future strategies accordingly.

## **Audience Understanding:**

Engagement data helps understand what content resonates with the audience, encouraging active participation and strengthening community ties.

**Campaign Evaluation:** High impressions during specific periods can indicate the reach of campaigns, while engagement levels measure their effectiveness in terms of audience response.

## **Resource Allocation:**

By understanding which platforms and types of content yield the highest engagement and impressions, resources can be allocated more efficiently to maximize ROI.

The reports are instrumental in measuring how content is reaching and resonating with the community, allowing for data-driven decisions to enhance future social media strategies and community engagement.

# FUTURE EXPANSION

The expansion of the Sandbox, is forecasted to occur through three avenues

1

**Create robust digital and in house offerings.**

- encourage the space use for our businesses to gather or work.
- create a “powered by Sandbox” digital offering of programs to support businesses who cannot attend our programs as well as extending our reach to the surrounding areas outside of Barrie
- continue to provide a space for startups to use while they are enrolled in SBEC or HBEC programs.

2

**Build Programming that addresses gaps in the ecosystem, to support collective as a whole.**

- support SBEC and HBEC
- create retention support efforts through offering programs for our medium to large companies
- retention efforts support growth and attraction
- create equity deserving programming to support newcomers to stay in Barrie

3

**Create a partnered Intrapreneurship Incubator** with Invest Barrie to establish a unique model that does not yet exist in Simcoe County. It would elevate Barrie to become the centre of Innovation North of Toronto. This will be sustained through primarily private capital funds, and will create a landing pad for the Innovation Community.

# 2023 and 2022 Review

# 2023 OVERVIEW

## Key Indicator

## Activity / Project

Raising the visibility and profile of the City of Barrie and generating activity and investment in the downtown to support growth and intensification of a dynamic creative hub.

- Number of visitors to SBX, annually. **2,685**
- Testimonials from Sandbox users, regarding the benefit of the initiative- **2 per week**
- Number of participants from outside Barrie, annually. **270**
- Social media metrics for SBX – number, reach, annually:
- **9,581** Followers. **80,189** impressions, email list of over **5000** active subscribers

Activating the Regional Innovation Cluster to better serve the established businesses, intrapreneurs, innovators, and SMEs seeking to scale.

- Number of active provincial, national, and international partnerships established, annually (ecosystem partners). **31**
- Number of formal and active collaborations with business and innovation ecosystem partners. **6**
- Number of referrals and connections to ecosystem partners. **134**
- Number of dedicated programs specifically designed to help companies diversify, nurture innovation, and invest in research and development. **5**

Engaging businesses through networking opportunities, business programming, professional development & access to talent, partnership resources, and a modern business hub and collision space through SBX.

- Number of existing companies and number of their employees, engaged with SBX programming and activities. **131 Businesses, 350+ engaged employees**
- Number of peer-to-peer learning hours. **230 hours**
- Number of member connections made through SBX activities. **11,740**
- **Georgian college moved into the space**
- **SBX kicks off in-person equity sequence program cohort for the fourth time with Tidal Equality.** SBX holds workshop for members focusing on understanding the fears around the conversation of Suicide with Hayley Peek Consulting.

# 2023 OVERVIEW

The report will reflect a period where data is not as robust due to a leadership transition within the organization. This gap in data is attributed to the strategic focus on maintaining operations and laying the groundwork for new leadership rather than on data collection. During this time, priorities included market research to realign our services with community needs, engaging with the community to strengthen connections, and building relationships with sponsors and personnel that are essential to our mission. These activities, while not always quantifiable, were pivotal in preparing for the next phase of our strategy and will have lasting qualitative benefits.

## **Optimization of Software**

During the final quarter of the year, our operational infrastructure underwent a significant consolidation process, reducing our systems from seven to two. This streamlining effort inevitably affected our capability to track visitors in our space and monitor event attendance. The transition to a new CRM and social media management tool required extensive work from our staff, including meticulous data migration and adapting our operations to align with the functionalities of the new systems. As a result, there was a temporary impact on our data collection and reporting capabilities.

## **Market Research**

In order to explore the viability of expanding our peer-to-peer support model, the team embarked on an insightful journey, conducting comprehensive market research and traveling across the Simcoe County region. Our objective was to identify communities that could significantly benefit from the Sandbox model hub, similar to the success we've experienced within Barrie. This initiative was driven by the aspiration to create satellite locations that could serve as local hubs, fostering innovation, collaboration, and support among entrepreneurs and businesses in surrounding areas. Through this process, we gathered valuable data and engaged with diverse stakeholders, gaining a deeper understanding of the unique needs and opportunities in each area. However, as our exploration progressed, it became evident that the landscape of opportunity was shifting, prompting us to pivot our strategy. Instead of physical expansion, we are now focusing on leveraging digital platforms and hybrid models to extend our reach beyond Barrie's limits.

## **Collaboration with Highschools**

The Sandbox supports the co-op programs at our local high schools. In the last quarter of 2023 we took on a new co-op student. In 2024 we have accepted two new students. This initiative along with hosting and facilitating junior achievers has allowed the Sandbox to provide additional support for families looking to have their children experience entrepreneurial and professional experiences.



# 2023 - Programming and Relaunches

## **RECON**

The period of transition was utilized by the staff to orchestrate a tour of our ecosystem, inviting key members from Simcoe County and surrounding areas. This initiative was aimed at fostering potential collaborations and deepening mutual understanding of the challenges we each face. It was an opportunity to showcase how, through peer-to-peer support within our collective, we can enhance the services we offer and create more value for the community we serve. The Sandbox hosted the Barrie focused meeting in house in August.

## **Locations**

January - Hamilton @ McMaster Innovation Park >> 10 attendees

March - Toronto @ DMZ >> 15 attendees

June - Durham @ 1855 Whitby >> 35 attendees

July - Collingwood @ Impossible Metals >> 15 attendees

August - Barrie @ Sandbox Centre >> 20 attendees

September - Muskoka @ reIGNITE >> 30 attendees

November - York Region @ VentureLAB >> 20 attendees

## **Peer Jam- Relaunch of Peer Circles**

The relaunch of Peer Circles, aptly named "Peer Jam," marked a significant milestone in the evolution of our peer-to-peer support model at the Sandbox. With the invaluable interim support of the Chair of the Board, this initiative represented a comprehensive rebranding and reengagement effort aimed at strengthening our community's collaborative fabric. Implemented in May and June, Peer Jam introduced a refreshed protocol and the innovative concept of 'captains' to lead and facilitate discussions, ensuring a more structured yet flexible approach to peer support.

This strategic revitalization attracted the attention and participation of the business community, drawing in leaders from various sectors and welcoming 45 participants in each cycle.

**IP Innovation Clinic:** SBX hosted a three part webinar series presented by Invest Barrie and supported by Barriston Law in March 2022. The series offered information across a wide range of topics that aided businesses and entrepreneurs in making sure their business, idea, or product is protected. Per webinar, IP Innovation Clinic students provided a high level 30 minute presentation with suggestions and tactics to grow your business using a legal strategy. Over 103 participants engaged with the series! Topics included: Intellectual Property Law Considerations For New Businesses & Entrepreneurs, Mechanics of Filing a Patent, and the Benefits of Incorporating an IP Strategy Into Your Business Plan

# Unique Programming Opportunities



Ambitious AF: Fearless Growth & Connection For Women in Business, was a bold and brave conference hosted by Sandbox Centre in partnership with Accelle. This dynamic full day event was designed to empower and inspire women in business by providing unparalleled networking and learning moments, fostering an authentic environment where everyone can be themselves, and uncovering serendipitous opportunities for growth and development.

Through engaging and high-value learning segments, this conference aimed to celebrate the ambition of women in business, create memorable experiences, and unlock potential, big or small, in the right time and right place.

This event marked pivotal shift for the Sandbox wherein paid programming/events were created and executed successfully. Furthermore it signified a need for additional support for creating intentional events and programs. With that said a programming committee was created to add advisory oversight for the staff and the overall strategy and concepts at the Sandbox.

The Sandbox in 2024 has created several paid events, and programs which will help foster, leadership, empowerment for equity deserving groups as well as business upskilling. Those of which will be discussed later in this report.

The Ambitious Impact Report is attached as an additional attachment to the committee for review. Below please find a few high level insights on the event.

*See next page for feedback and attendance of the event.*

# ATTENDEES



22 WERE SPONSOR TICKETS

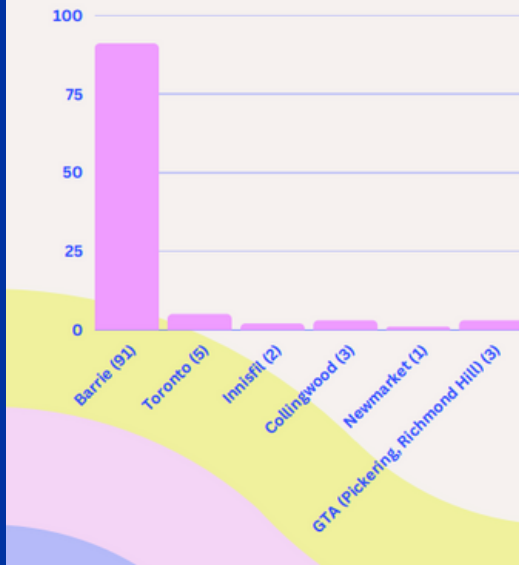


6 TURNED INTO SANDBOX MEMBER LEADS  
3 CONVERTED MEMBERSHIPS

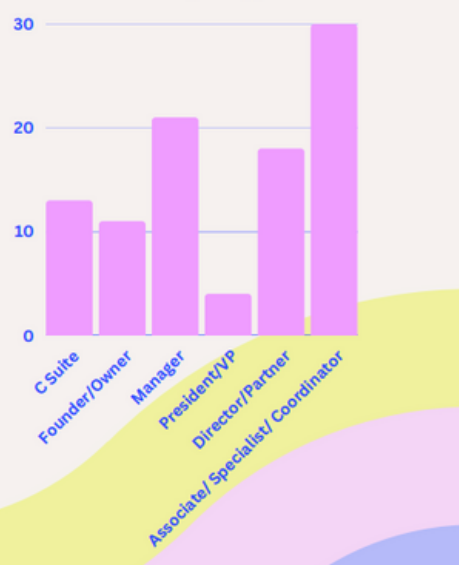


13 WERE SPEAKERS

ATTENDEES BY CITY



ATTENDEES BY ROLE



# SURVEY FEEDBACK

## OVERALL RATING



9.2/10

ATTENDEE SATISFACTION SCORE

91.2%

COMPLETION RATE

139

TOTAL VIEWS

### OUT OF 10, PLEASE RATE THE FOLLOWING:

- 9.1/10 Interactive Networking Session with Kristina Cleary
- 8.8/10 Ambitious Survey with Marie Wiese
- 8.9/10 Ambitious Panel with Marie Wiese and Panelists
- 8.8/10 Interactive Wheel of Life Session with Kristina Cleary
- 9/10 Work Life Harmony Panel with Nasheen Liu and Panelists
- 8.7/10 Keynote Speaker: PLAY with Jan Omstead
- 9.4/10 Registration Process
- 9.4/10 Pre-Event Communications

- 9.6/10 Directional Signage
- 8.3/10 Room Set-Up & Seating Arrangements
- 9/10 Light Breakfast
- 9.3/10 Lunch Options & Experience
- 9.4/10 Cocktail Celebration
- 9.1/10 Audio & Visual Experience
- 9.4/10 Headshot Opportunity & Experience
- 9/10 Length Of The Event
- 8.9/10 Pace Of The Event

97%

HOW LIKELY ARE YOU TO RECOMMEND THIS EVENT TO A COLLEAGUE OR FRIEND?

100%

WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN ATTENDING FUTURE WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP EVENTS?

100%

WERE THE NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES AT THE EVENT EFFECTIVE AND BENEFICIAL?

# 2022 OVERVIEW

## Key Indicator

## Activity / Project

Raising the visibility and profile of the City of Barrie and generating activity and investment in the downtown to support growth and intensification of a dynamic creative hub.

- Number of visitors to SBX, annually. **2,685**
- Number of participants that are SBX members or clients, annually. **1,904.**
- Number of participants from outside Barrie, annually. **270**
- Social media metrics for SBX – number, reach, annually:
- **9,476** Followers. **106,146** impressions and **67,416** web impressions annually.

Activating the Regional Innovation Cluster to better serve the established businesses, intrapreneurs, innovators, and SMEs seeking to scale.

- Number of active provincial, national, and international partnerships established, annually (ecosystem partners). **30**
- Number of formal and active collaborations with business and innovation ecosystem partners. **4**
- Number of referrals and connections to ecosystem partners. **134**
- Number of dedicated programs specifically designed to help companies diversify, nurture innovation, and invest in research and development. **4**

Engaging businesses through networking opportunities, business programming, professional development & access to talent, partnership resources, and a modern business hub and collision space through SBX.

- Number of existing companies and number of their employees, engaged with SBX programming and activities. **112 Businesses, 350+ engaged employees**
- Number of peer-to-peer learning hours. **215 hours (71 sessions)**
- Number of member connections made through SBX activities. **18,262**
- **Testimonials from participating businesses, regarding the impact of SBX programs on their business growth.**  
**LINK TO VIDEO**

# LOOKING BACK AT 2022

## Execution on former strategy objectives

01

### Peer Learning (215 Hours Invested & 71 Sessions Hosted)

The value peer to peer learning brings to organizational growth continues to be on the incline among CEOs worldwide. According to the Harvard Business Review, 55 percent of employees will often turn to their peers when they want to learn something new. Through Sandbox events and professional development programming, we're exposing people to new perspectives which offers an opportunity for members to show up to learn by teaching others. Showing up to give is woven into the DNA of Sandbox; professionals investing in 215 hours learning and sharing lived experiences across 71 sessions that varied in industry knowledge.

02

### Marketing and Media (9,476 Followers)

What is the Sandbox? Who are they? Expanding our reach and awareness about what actually happens at the Sandbox is always top of mind. Whether it's in person or online, we take every opportunity to showcase the incredible work of our business community and how we support their journey to success. Some say "be a leader not a follower", but being a follower isn't such a bad thing when it comes to staying connected digitally to SBX! Our digital followership is: 106,146 impressions across our social media channels, 117,900 reel plays, 6,083 interactions (shares, comments, likes).

03

### Local Business Membership (112 Teams)

Every big wave starts small. We are grateful for the growth of our Member community in 2022, seeing an increase of 153.5% from 2021. With a total of 112 businesses, including over 645 total individuals, our Membership consists of a diverse makeup of business leaders willing to rise the tide for one another. Fun facts: 53% of our Membership consists of service-based companies and 31% of our Members are women-owned/operated companies

04

### Strategic Partnerships (30)

Contributing to building a more connected and shared business community, we have been fortunate to form integral partnerships with organizations who are dedicated to driving innovation and economic growth in our region and beyond. These partners' commitments represent a significant investment in entrepreneurs, intrapreneurs and changemakers.

05

### Connections (18,262)

Creating right-place-right-time collisions in our hub, where connectivity is enhanced through introductions that are warm and human, intentional, and purposeful. On average, Sandbox Members make 5 new connections through engaging in dedicated programming, networking and professional development opportunities. Most importantly, it is a result of leading with relationships first, saving the business cards for later, and knowing there is power in giving back knowledge and support so that others can grow and succeed.

# Sandbox Supported Initiatives

*"SBX continues to partner with XcelerateHER to address gaps in resources and to ensure that that women are successful in business. This year brought the expansion of launching XcelerateHER into the City of Orillia allowing for more support and linkages that unite women entrepreneurs.*

*Through an untraditional virtual landscape, SBX partnered with BDO Canada to host an intimate and interactive session exploring the unknown advantages of women empowerment in the workplace and the importance of being an internal champion for growth. Six female trailblazers in business who are committed to moving the needle on equity in the workplace contributed to the conversation. Businesses included TELUS, Raia 'Coach' Carey, Tidal Equality, She's Newsworthy Media, and BDO Canada LLP.*

*In true SBX fashion, we continued to place importance on our Women in Biz socials. Co-led by partner Jan Bailey of Ovation Speaker Training, these sessions allowed women in business to truly connect and learn new ways of communicating effectively while leading with who they are as a person first and leaving their job title or role to be a secondary component. These sessions supported 103 women in 2022!"* **Megan Hall**

## Trade Accelerator Program

For it's fourth consecutive cohort, SBX had the pleasure of hosting the Trade Accelerator Program (TAP) for companies in Simcoe County looking to enter new markets. This year's participation included 10 companies focused on developing an export plan, exploring opportunities for international growth, and expanding their knowledge on specific available resources that could propel them to success.



## Networking and Programming Sessions

SBX Social Hours brought together our member community hosting over 713 attendees that participated in unique social networking experiences to expand their network.

Programming designed to help companies grow and scale is a focus. In 2022, Funding Roadmap helped companies develop a strategy to pursue and unlock alternative sources of funding. The Strategically Growing Your Business program equipped leaders with actionable tools needed to drive growth and profitability 2-3 times higher than their industry average with greater clarity, focus, and predictability.

Placing importance on creating visibility for Sandbox Members and showcasing the value their business brings to our community was a must in 2022. We introduced the Advisory Network - click here to check it out! 52 businesses (and more to come) are profiled in our nontraditional directory where website visitors can connect with our collective of advisors listed to receive support in growing your business or career journey.

# INTEGRAL COLLABORATIONS

2022

## HIGHLIGHTS

ACTIVE  
COLLABORATIONS  
WITH BUSINESS &  
ECOSYSTEM  
PARTNERS

30

### reIGNITE Conference

Learn. Connect. Thrive. Sandbox supported the launch and execution of the inaugural reIGNITE conference where an exclusive camp community of entrepreneurs, start-ups, angel investors, leaders, venture capitalists, and innovative business peers took part in a three-day relaxed, feet up, fire-on kind of retreat. Over 80 individuals travelled to Muskoka, ON, experiencing interactive opportunities to develop skills, make new connections, and explore in-demand topics including web 3.0, change leadership, branding, strategy (the actual thing), building and maintaining a growth mindset, work-life balance, partnership programs and more. Not to mention, Canadian icons SLOAN rocked the camp making it a weekend to remember.

### Xcelerate Summit 2022

Back live in person! Central Ontario's premier business conference brought together the familiar and the new of our surrounding business community. Sandbox had the pleasure of continuing to serve as a presenting partner, while acting as a staple venue in the mix of locations in downtown Barrie being used to host over 50 speakers and 100 attendees. Whether you are starting your business, growing, or scaling, this year's conference offered entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs alike unique experiences to expand their network and elevate their business toolkit.

### Simcoe Muskoka Craft Beverage Forum

The Simcoe Muskoka region is home to one of Ontario's most prominent clusters of beverage entrepreneurs. Sandbox had the pleasure of being a supporting partner of the first Simcoe Muskoka Craft Beverage Forum alongside The City of Barrie, County of Simcoe, Henry Bernick Entrepreneurship Centre, Trillium Network for Advanced Manufacturing, Muskoka Tourism. Held at SBX, the region's beverage entrepreneurs came together to discuss the successes, challenges, and potential paths forward for beverage entrepreneurs and the beverage cluster. Over 60 participants came together for an afternoon of connecting, peer learning, and craft beverage sampling. Talking about all perspectives of the industry, keynote speakers Billy Alexander, Director of Programs Culinary Tourism Alliance, and Kelly Watson, Director of Culture & Community at Muskoka Brewery, kept the energy buzzing leaving conversations among the crowd hard to bring to a close.

### Ask an Expert Series

Finding timely information for your business to succeed in all areas is crucial, especially when the global landscape is evolving at a rapid pace with unforeseen hurdles. Sandbox was one of seven partner organizations supporting the County of Simcoe's Ask an Expert Series. Six online webinars were delivered to support businesses with receiving expert advice on topics such as strategic planning, digital marketing, employee wellness and mental health, corporate inclusivity, valuing your business, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and more. Over 440 participants engaged with these sessions.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Sandbox is adopting a revitalized strategy to bolster medium to large employers, simultaneously empowering local businesses with diverse support levels. This dual approach aims to create a robust and dynamic business ecosystem, fostering growth and innovation across different company sizes and sectors. By offering tailored resources, networking opportunities, and developmental programs, The Sandbox is positioned to meet the unique needs of both established corporations and burgeoning enterprises, thereby strengthening the overall economic fabric of the community. This strategy not only facilitates the scaling of medium to large businesses but also nurtures the growth and resilience of local businesses, ensuring a balanced and inclusive support system for the entire business landscape.

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*We thank you for your continued support in our efforts to contribute to the Sandbox.*

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## CONTACT

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